Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

KFK [redacted]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is KFK [redacted]. My date of birth is [redacted] 1954. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before care

2. My mother's name was [redacted] and I'm named after my father, [redacted]. They were both bad people. We lived in [redacted], West Dunbartonshire but my dad was originally from the next village, [redacted]. I was born in my granny's back room in [redacted]. I was the second child in my family. My mother had a bad experience in the hospital giving birth to my sister, so she just had me in the back room.

3. My older sister, [redacted], died of a heart attack about ten years ago. She was a year older than me. I also have brother, [redacted], who is about five or six years younger than me, a brother, [redacted], who is about eight or nine years younger, and a sister, [redacted], who is about ten years younger than me. I don't communicate with [redacted] in any way now. There was a big gap between me and the youngest. I was virtually out of the house by the time [redacted] was born.

4. We must have been staying with my grandmother when I was born. There was talk of my mum and dad staying in a garret, a wee attic at the top of my granny's house, just after they got married. I have no memory of that place at all. I don't have many memories of my first four or five years. I can't remember my first day at school, which often bothers me. Anything that I can remember after that was just horrendous.

5. My mum was fairly violent and I would say she was certainly mentally ill. She didn't like anybody, but she certainly didn't like me. My dad was a semi-alcoholic at that time. My mum tried to kill me and my sister, [redacted]. I was about seven years old. We were staying at my gran's house at the time because my granny was dying. My mum had a breakdown. That was when she really fell out with me because I wouldn't die like a man. I remember it very distinctly. [redacted] I knew there was something wrong. My mum said that we were going to a better place. I told her that I didn't want to go and that I was staying where I was. [redacted] said that she would die like a man so she wouldn't get hurt because my mum was hitting us at the same time.

6. Just by luck, my Uncle [redacted] came back to change his shirt. He was about eighteen, nineteen at the time. If he hadn't come back, I wouldn't be here today. I spoke to my Uncle [redacted] recently and asked him whether he thought it had just been a cry for help. He thought it had been a real attempt at suicide and that my mum was taking us with her.

7. My dad wasn't there when my mum tried to gas us. He was away doing whatever he did. My mum believed that my dad was going with other women. I'm not sure whether he was, but it drove my mum crazy. Around the same time, I remember my mum [redacted]. She never felt a thing. There was no pain or emotion, nothing.

8. Nobody would do anything. Everybody was afraid of my mother. Her brothers and sisters were terrified of her. My granny was afraid of her. She was such a violent woman. You always try to please your mum and your dad. I always tried to please them, but I never seemed to be able to.

9. My Aunty [redacted] was the most stable person throughout my life. She was my mum's sister. My dad's sisters stayed in a different village. Two of them emigrated to Canada early on. The other sister was alright, but she had a big family of her own. If she saw me she would give me a shilling, but she didn't have much of a role in our lives. My

Aunty [redacted] had moved down to Bradford by this point so she wasn't really involved day to day. Aunty [redacted] husband, my Uncle [redacted], was a top criminal. He had been banned from Scotland by the High Court, so they had to stay down in England. My Aunty [redacted] did come up when my mum had a big nervous breakdown. She took us to the circus at the Kelvin Hall at Christmas time. For years, I kept that tradition going for my wee brothers and sister. I would take them to the circus every Christmas. At least they could go into a magical world for a time.

10. Nobody would tackle my mother. She was a wee, stocky woman and she would go into a violent rage. She did all sorts of things to me. She did things to my brothers as well, but not so much. Once, she stabbed me in the arm with a tin opener. Another time, I was breaking bottles into the bin and she hit me with the poker right around my head. She threw a bottle at me on another occasion. It caught me right in the private parts. The blood was phenomenal. One of my aunties came round. I was saturated in blood. She said I needed to go to the hospital, but I wouldn't go. I never saw a doctor growing up. I wasn't allowed to see a doctor for any reason. I only saw a doctor once and it was to lance a boil on the back of my neck. My friends and I used to go on what we called a prescription run. We would go to ladies' doors and get a loan of prescribed medication for our mothers. They would then repay it when they got their own drugs. We never took any of them ourselves.

11. It was a crazy first ten years or so of my life. I would run away from home. I remember running away when I was about seven. I was going to England to make my fortune. I thought I was Dick Whittington. Obviously, I didn't get very far. I got back into the house. I climbed in a window and hid under the bed. I've got an image of myself, lying under the bed behind a case and hearing people coming in and out, looking for me. Eventually they found me and, of course, that just led to more violence.

12. When my father was out working, he reckoned that was his role. He was out working all the time, as a lorry driver and on farms. He carried a very big chip on his shoulder. He always said that if his father had had the money, he would have been able to stay at the academy instead of going to the public school. He felt that he had underachieved in education. He was a beautiful writer. He could construct letters and he was a great

poet. However, he was a nasty man and a manipulator. He destroyed my later life as well as my younger life. My mother was mental, but he wound it all up in the background.

13. My mum did work as a seamstress. I wouldn't say she worked a lot, but I do remember her going to work in a hospital in Erskine. There was no money around when I was growing up. We never got pocket money or anything like that. The only time I got money was when I went to the farms with my mum or my dad to pick tatties. I would give them a hand and I would get some money. I would steer the tractor and get ten bob for that. I had one birthday party when I was growing up. Once you reached twelve, there was no Christmas. You'd reached secondary school so you didn't get Christmas after that.

14. We moved around a lot when I was at primary school, but I did attend. We moved to Bradford to try and get away from my mum's mental illness. We then moved to [redacted] in Argyll and Cardross. My dad worked on farms. Inevitably, my mum would have a breakdown and she'd have to get back to [redacted]. That was all during my primary school education so I attended four different primary schools within five years. It wasn't conducive to any kind of settled education.

15. By the time I reached secondary school, I attended if there was nothing else to do. I went to Vale of Leven Academy. I'd go in the winter when it was too cold. I did what I wanted to do. I was put on a bunking slip, which meant that I had to report to the headmaster six times a day to get it stamped. I just didn't go. I used to sign it myself. I was never punished for not going to school. I think the school was glad when I didn't attend because I was disruptive. They were quite happy for me to be on the street and away from the school. There were a few good teachers. Mr McCallum was an absolute gentleman. The English teacher, Ernie Strathern, told me that I should be a writer because I had such a fertile imagination when it came to telling lies to get me out of trouble. He was a great teacher. I didn't sit the eleven plus so I got a class average for that. I could read and write and do the basic stuff. I was alright with basic arithmetic, but I was never taught fractions.

16. Whenever I was out, I stayed out. Any time I got free of them, I tried to stay free of them. I just wouldn't go home. Another time, I stole five shillings out of my mum's purse to go and see Santa with my pal. My mother had taken my granny out of hospital to die in the house. She was in the back room beside a fire. I thought that if I went in the room with my granny, nobody could touch me. I was my granny's favourite boy. I fell asleep in front of the fire. The next thing I remember is waking up with such a pain in my back. I'd lost my breath and I remember falling onto the floor. My dad had a wellington boot and he hit me on my back when I was on the couch. I don't know whether he meant to hit me, but it did connect right in my kidneys. At that stage, I had never felt pain like it.

17. It was a violent, disturbed childhood. My sister and I should have been taken out of it. It just wasn't right. It continued all my life. I can't remember my mother or father giving me a kiss or a cuddle. They never came to see me in any of the institutions that I was in, apart from once when my dad came to Mossbank and got drunk. There was no love, none whatsoever. I loved my mum and dad to bits. I thought they were the greatest people on earth. I did everything I could to make them love me. I just wasn't successful at all. When I look back on it, I realise it was no wonder I became involved in criminality.

18. I started to get involved in petty crime. I stole a bike. I couldn't even go on the bike because it was two big. I went to the juvenile court and I got two years' probation at the age of ten. That was the first time that I had any social work involvement. When I went to see the probation officer, I was warned not to say anything when I left the house. My mother and father told me that what happened in that house stayed in that house. I wasn't allowed to talk about the violence or the mistreatment at home. My probation officer's name was Mr Kilpatrick. I would just go and tell him everything was great. Mr Kilpatrick never visited the house. I had to go and see him at [redacted] School, which was just up the road from my house. He set up a desk there and whoever had to see him went there.

19. Subsequently, they built a social work office in our village. My second social worker was Miss KFP [redacted]. She was a bit of a character. Then there was Mr Marshall, who was

a bad man. He was a probation officer trying to act like a social worker. He was used to dealing with criminals, not with weans. He didn't know what to do or how to do it. I was associated with that man for seven or eight years and I don't think he ever said a civil word to me. He recommended a deferred sentence for me when I was fifteen. I went in to thank him for it. He said, "Don't worry about it, KFK . I only recommended you for that because it'll get you your borstal when you're sixteen." I thought he'd done me a good turn, but he was just planning to get me into borstal. I never did go to borstal so he failed in that ambition.

20. I completed my two years' probation when I was twelve. By that time, I was a man of the world and had entered the system. As soon as I entered secondary school, I started breaking into shops. There was a wee gang of us doing it. We mainly stole clothes, sweeties and any cash that was there. We weren't great criminals and we got caught most of the time. That led into the homes, to Bellfield and ultimately approved school. As soon as anything happened in the village, myself and another five or so boys would get the tug for it. Sometimes, we got charged by the police and sometimes we didn't. In the main, it probably was us.

21. Nobody really cared about us. A couple of my pals had fathers who were alcoholics. There was no stability in their lives either. We just did what we wanted. I was never reported missing when I stayed away from home. I used to stay in the local farm shed and places like that. I was semi-feral, but nobody cared. When I was out of the house, my mum and dad would say it was nice and peaceful. I never felt like I was part of the family. I was always called, "KFK ." My mum and dad would say, "You're a KFK bastard." They wouldn't even give me their own name. Little did they know that by saying that, they were bringing themselves into disrepute because it would have meant that my mum had been with another man, but I was always a KFK and never a KFK .

22. The were friends of mine. Their father was an alcoholic. Their mother lived a life of misery. There were four sons and they virtually got their own way all the time. I stayed with them a lot of the time. I was more a part of their family than anybody called KFK . I'm still friends with the brothers to this day. We've all kept in touch.

The only time I ever saw a doctor growing up was after my mother stabbed me in the arm. My arm swelled up. It was the mother of the [redacted] family, [redacted], who took me up to the hospital to get a tetanus injection. That was the only time I was allowed to go to the hospital or see a doctor. [redacted] was like a mother to me.

23. When I started to reach puberty, the authorities couldn't let me continue to run about. Violence was starting to creep in and I was running about with gangs. I can understand why the authorities put me away, but they had no right to do what they did to me once they put me away. They took my freedom from me and I wasn't going to run from them. I met them head on. I'm not saying that I was an angel, but I didn't deserve what happened to me. I was a wean, a totally and utterly confused wean.

24. I remember Detective Sergeant [redacted] at Alexandria Police Station. He was banging my head off the doors of the police station. My mum and dad came to get me and I was crying. I remember [redacted] saying to my mum, "He misses you that much, Mrs [redacted], he's crying for you." I wasn't crying for my mum. I was crying because [redacted] was hitting me. I knew him after I stopped all the criminal stuff. He acknowledged what he had done over the years. I never held it against him. He was playing his game and I was playing my game. He was trying to brutalise me but I wouldn't be brutalised.

25. When I was twelve, I ended up at juvenile court for breaking into a local shop or assault. I'm not sure what it was for because there were a few offences happening around that time, stupid, petty things. I was always taken from police custody straight to court. If it was a weekend, the police would take you to Bellfield Remand Home. My parents must have known that I was appearing in court, but they never came. Occasionally my father would write a letter. I was represented by different lawyers. It was usually the duty solicitor. I appeared in front of Sheriff Bryson. He was an old-style sheriff. He just looked at me and sent me away. Sheriff Stone took over from Sheriff Bryson. He was a more modern sheriff. He would listen to you and then send you away. I was sent to Bellfield, which was me cutting my teeth in the criminal world. I was taken straight from juvenile court to Bellfield. I was remanded in custody for approved school reports.

Bellfield Remand Home, Dalreoch, Dumbarton

26. Bellfield was an intimidating place at the top of a hill. It was a big Victorian house. When you walked in, there was a large reception hall. To the left was the dining area and to the right was the television, sitting area. At the back was the kitchen, the smoking area and the digger. Half way up the stairs was an office where the administration took place. The stairs turned to the right up onto the landing where dormitories were.

27. I had three separate spells in Bellfield, two when I was about twelve and then a third spell when I was about fifteen. When I went to Bellfield the second time it was much the same. The staff hadn't changed and the regime hadn't changed. I think I was sent to approved school after my second spell at Bellfield. My third spell at Bellfield was after I had finished at approved school.

28. There were between about thirty to fifty boys in Bellfield, aged from twelve to about fifteen, sixteen. They would come and go quite a lot for remand and then approved school, so it was mainly short stay. However, there were two or three boys who stayed for eight or nine months. It may have been that they couldn't find them a vacancy.

29. The headmaster was called Mr Johnstone, but we never saw him. The other staff that I can remember are Mr KFT, who we called KFT, Mr KFN, Mr LIG, Mr KFS, KFQ and AIA, who arrived later on. I also remember a member of staff who was a lovely man. He was going to pay my bail money for me on one occasion when my father wouldn't pay it. The staff wore civilian clothes. We wore uniforms. We wore shorts and short sleeves, a bit like a scout's uniform.

Routine at Bellfield

First Day

30. I was taken to Bellfield in a police van. There were adult prisoners in the van as well. We were all just handcuffed to one another. Bellfield was the first drop off because it was only up the road. I'll never forget the initial welcome into Bellfield. They had a big, tall wicker basket. It was filled with a yellow coloured liquid for delousing your hair. They used to pour it all over your naked body. It burnt your skin like nothing else. I can't remember the name of it, but it was nippy. You knew when somebody was just in because the smell stuck to him for about four days. It was a painful introduction to custody. I think it was a short, sharp reminder they used to wake us up where we landed.

31. I was met by an officer or teacher called KFQ [redacted]. I went in, got washed in the yellow liquid and went up the stairs. I was usually in dormitory one. I then went back down the stairs and joined the throng.

Mornings and Bedtime

32. Dormitory one was a big dormitory. You stayed in the same bed throughout your time there. We had a bedside chair where we could leave our clothes at night time. Everything was provided and we didn't have anything of our own. We weren't allowed to talk and we had to face the wall. Still to this day, I have to be lying on the edge of my bed facing the wall. I can't sleep on my back or on my belly. It was conditioning from that time and it's stuck with me.

33. The doors were kept locked at Bellfield. If we needed the toilet during the night we had two choices. We could annoy Mr KFS [redacted] or we could pee out of the window. Most boys peed out of the back window. Mr KFS [redacted] slept on a chair outside dormitory one and we didn't want to disturb him.

34. Some boys did have problems with bed wetting. They would be given clean sheets, but they were humiliated by the staff and other boys. Some boys wouldn't tell the staff if they had wet the bed. They would sleep in the wet sheets rather than admit to it.

35. We were always woken up by KFS at 7:00 am. A bell rang first and then he would batter on the door. We had to be on the floor. If we weren't on the floor by the time KFS banged on the door, we were in trouble. We had to make our own beds and they were changed once a week.

Mealtimes/food

36. I couldn't complain about the food in Bellfield. It was well-cooked and well-done. You were given a choice, small, medium or large. If you chose the large, you had to eat it. If you didn't eat it, you got put in the digger. That was my only complaint about the food. If you ordered a meal and you didn't eat it, you got a wallop.

Washing and bathing

37. There was no privacy at all. There was one communal shower area with eight or nine showers in it. If there were twelve or thirteen boys in the shower area, it was rough and tough to get a shower head. The staff were always looking on at shower time. It felt uncomfortable. You were a boy starting to develop into a young man and these old men were looking at you. It was also uncomfortable having other boys looking at you. We tried to laugh it off.

School

38. We didn't attend school at Bellfield. When I went back in 1970, they did have a school room set up at the bottom of the gate. I was too old by then and I wasn't going to go back to school. It was supposed to be compulsory, but lots of boys didn't attend.

Daytime activities

39. Some boys were picked to use the buffer, which was used to polish the floor. Some other boys were selected to work in the garden. Mr KFQ [redacted] didn't like me so I never got picked. If you didn't get picked for those things, you sat in a big room on your bum. All the windows were open, winter or summer. The day was only broken up by meal times. Occasionally, we would be taken for a game of football. There was a very small area at the back of the grounds where we played football, but it wasn't very often. Too many boys escaped over the wall. I think that meant that the staff were reluctant to take us outside. There was nowhere to go when we were in the building because it was all locked up. Once we got out onto the football field, they knew that boys would run away.

Leisure time

40. We were able to watch the television at night time. *Top of the Pops* was the highlight of the week. We were allocated four cigarettes a day, but they weren't provided for us. The staff would allow you to give a cigarette to someone else if they didn't have any.

Peers

41. There were local gangs in Bellfield. There were gangs from Clydebank down to Dumbarton. Those of us from [redacted] always thought our gang was superior to everyone else. We were called '[redacted]', Dumbarton boys were 'The Dinky', Alexandria were 'The Hoods' and Clydebank had 'Clydebank Cumbie' and 'The Real'. We were always the best, or that's what we were told. There was always someone from [redacted] in. People would step in if you were in trouble or you would step in if they were in trouble. We could handle ourselves when it came to other boys.

Visits/Inspections

42. My parents didn't visit me at Bellfield. It was [redacted] from our front door. Visiting times were between 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm on a Sunday. I always waited

in anticipation, looking out the window. A name would be shouted and it was that person's visit. I waited and waited but I never got a visit.

Assessment process

43. I was at Bellfield to be assessed for approved school. As I recall, the assessment was an interview. I was taken upstairs to the headmaster's office, which was mid-way up the stairs. He asked what I was there for, what I had done and whether I knew that I had done wrong. There wasn't any kind of psychological profiling or anything like that. We were deemed to be a bad boys and we were heading for a life of crime. I don't think the purpose was to rehabilitate you. I wasn't a brainy boy, but I wasn't a dummy either. I could understand what was happening roundabout me.

Healthcare

44. I never saw a doctor or a nurse at Bellfield. My head was split on two occasions, but all I got was a bit of a dab down and a plaster. They weren't very severe injuries, but they did bleed.

Running away

45. I didn't try to run away from Bellfield. I reckoned that I was there and I wanted to get it done and get out. We used to call running away 'shooting'. I had plenty of chances to shoot because Bellfield was [redacted] from my home. What would I have been running to? If you went to a family who hid you or supported you then it might have been worth running. As far as I was concerned, I was running back to violence. I picked which violence I was going to get and I never ran away once.

46. There was a big wall around Bellfield and all the doors were locked. I saw some boys go right out through the window. They were from Dunoon. They got a chair and smashed through a big, bay window. Off they went down the path, heading for Dunoon. If you could get to dorm six, there were slatted windows. If you removed two or three of the slats, you could get out. They used to put boys doing 28 days detention in dorm

six. There was no need for them to run away because they were only doing 28 days and then they were home again.

47. It was a remand situation so our movements were restricted. We didn't attend church or anything like that. There were boys whose homes were two or three hundred yards away from Bellfield. If we were playing football and the ball went over the wall, so did they. I saw five or six going over the wall at the same time. They could be in their houses in ten minutes. Before the police could be called, they were getting changed and ready to go.

Discipline

48. The digger was like a wee cell at the back of Bellfield. It may have been a wine cellar or something like that. It had no windows. That's where boys were put if they'd been a bit out of order, sneaked a cigarette or if they'd ran away. You could be put in the digger for a couple of hours, sometimes overnight or sometimes for a couple of days. You were deprived of everything in the digger. I know a boy who even had his clothes taken off him. He had a really hard time in Bellfield. He'd been on the run for a couple of weeks and they put him in the digger with no clothes. It was freezing. He was there for three days. His name was [redacted].

Abuse at Bellfield

49. We would sit round the wall in a big television room. They took the chairs away during the day. We sat on the floor and we weren't allowed to talk. We had to look straight ahead. If we were caught talking, we were beaten. We used to call it the gangster talk because we'd talk out the side of our mouths. Our heads would be facing forward, but we'd communicate out the side of our mouths.

50. There was a particular member of staff called KFN [redacted]. I think his first name might have been KFN [redacted]. I know he was a referee and linesman, because I came across him years after leaving Bellfield. We would be sitting in old wooden chairs. We had to have

our arms folded, facing the television. Two officers would sit at the door. They would pick someone out for no reason. If it was KFN , we knew what was coming. He'd sit you between the two chairs. You would drift away or your mind moved to other things. If we moved our heads in any way, shape or form, he would come down on us with a wooden or metal ruler. He would call you a pest from hell or a devil's disciple. KFN had a twisted face. He was a bad man. He had no compulsion about hitting weans and no compulsion about violently abusing weans. He should have been punished for what he did.

51. We used to call Mr KFT 'KFT' because he . In hindsight, he might have . He also hit the boys. There was a comic out years ago that had a character in it who was a gardener, called . Mr KFQ was the gardener at Bellfield. He had special boys that he took out into the garden every day. Somebody shouted ' ' at him. He took the towel rail off and hit me with it. I didn't shout it out, but he blamed me and he didn't like it. He split my head. It wasn't split right open, but it was painful and it bled. I never forgot that. Three or four years ago, I recognised him in the doctor's surgery. He said he was a bit deaf and asked me to listen for his name being called. I told him he should remember me because he split my head when I was a wee boy. He said it couldn't have been him and it must have been someone else. I told him that it was him.

52. Old Mr LIG split my head as well. We were playing billiards. There were only three balls. The spotted ball carried an extra point. I didn't know the rules. I saw a ball lying over the pocket and I pocketed it. Mr LIG hit me over the head with the snooker cue, by my ear. He split my head. I asked him what that was for and he told me that I'd potted the 'doogie'. I didn't know what the 'doogie' was, I just saw the ball and I wanted to pot the ball. I never played billiards again and I was absolutely useless at pool after that. LIG wasn't the worst of teachers. He wasn't vindictive, but he was reactive. If he was in a bad mood, you got it.

53. The other violent officer in Bellfield was KFS . I think he had been a sergeant in the army or the Territorial Army. He always wore a blazer and he was always smart. He was always very aggressive towards all of the boys.

54. There was a strap at Bellfield, but I never got it. They tended to deal with you there and then with a slap, a kick or a threat. Sometimes the threats were worse than the actual physical contact. I had red hair. They told me that was a bad thing to have and it meant that I had a short temper. That was exactly how I responded. I thought that if I was a criminal, I would be the best criminal. If I was a hooligan, I was going to be the best hooligan and show them. I wouldn't let them break me, no matter what they said. My mum and dad had tried to break me and they hadn't manage it.

55. The third time I was at Bellfield, there was a guy there called AIA . He was middle-aged with darkish hair, balding in the middle. He was a very liberal guy. He would give us stubs of cigarettes. By that time, I was fifteen. I had already been in approved school. I knew what the score was and I played the game a bit. AIA took a bit of a shining to me. I thought he was alright at first. He tried to get me to go back to school. By that time, they had set a school up at the bottom of the gate. I was too old by then and I wasn't going to go back to school.

56. AIA used to take us on country walks, which were a completely new experience for me. He would take me out to my own village on a Saturday. People would see me and they would give me cigarettes and things like that. AIA would allow it. He would even give us cigarettes. It turned out he was a paedophile. He was convicted for it.

57. He only touched my private parts on one occasion. I told him not to play those games and used some expletives. I knew what was going on. I think he got the message because he never bothered me again. He just ignored me. Until then, I thought he was an alright guy.

58. Boys wouldn't go to the school because of AIA . He was too touchy feely. Once the word got out about AIA , boys just wouldn't go. Attendance was supposed to be compulsory but it was mainly voluntary. The authorities must have become aware of what was happening with AIA because they shut the school room down. I don't know whether it was opened up again.

Reporting of abuse at Bellfield

59. The staff would tell us that we deserved to be there. There was absolutely nobody I could have told about what was happening at the time. If I told anybody what was happening at home, it would have brought more violence upon me. My parents wouldn't have been happy about that. I was afraid and I was stupid. I was the daft one who always stood up to my parents. If they hit my wee brothers, I would stand up to them. There was nobody to turn to. I couldn't turn to the police. They were knocking me about from the age of eleven.

Leaving Bellfield

60. I was in Bellfield for three or four weeks the first time I went there. I'm pretty sure that I was given probation after that first remand and I went back to live at home. At that time, Mr Marshall and Miss KFP were my social workers. I always remember Miss KFP threatening me. Her father was an Inspector in the police. She would tell me that she was going to bring her father down to sort me out.

61. I started drinking around the time that I was in and out of Bellfield. There was a local dance hall just up the road. I still love my music to this day. The first night I ever got drunk, the band didn't turn up. I was drinking Eldorado wine. I didn't think I was getting drunk, but I obviously was. I got such a leathering for that. My dad took the wire out of the back of the television. He put me into a cold bath and he leathered me with the wire cable. Afterwards, I thought it was a bit hypocritical. I got fly for it. I realised I couldn't go into the house drunk. I'd stay at my pals' houses if we were drinking. I was a regular drinker from the age of twelve, thirteen.

62. The second time that I was at Bellfield, I went back to the juvenile court. The reports recommended a longer stay in an approved school. I was given one to three years in an approved school. After that, I had to wait for vacancy. I waited about six weeks and then Mr Marshall came in a wee dark blue Morris 1000 car. He said I was leaving that day. I didn't have much, but anything I had was put into the car and I was taken up to

Mossbank. I said cheerio to whoever was about and I was away. That would quite often happen to other boys as well. They got a vacancy and they would just disappear.

Mossbank Approved School, Millerston, Glasgow

63. I was fourteen when I went to Mossbank. I was told that my sentence was between one to three years and that it was up to me how much of that time I served. Mossbank was at Hogganfield Loch in Glasgow. It was ran by the local authority in Glasgow. It was a very imposing building. Bellfield was big, but Mossbank was an actual school. It had originally been called Glasgow School of Mechanics. It had a very bad reputation for violence.

64. Mossbank was massive. It had a big, long driveway, which we called the long walk. There was a football pitch and big gardens at the front. There was a central part of the building where all the dormitories were. As you walked in, there was a long corridor down to your right which lead to the classrooms. On the other side of the tennis court area were the workshops. The kitchen was at the other side of the building. There was a communal dining hall. It was an old school. It had damp and the paintwork was flaking off. It had an old, disused, open-air swimming pool which was used as a dump. Everything that didn't work was flung into the swimming pool. It was full of old chairs, old desks and that kind of thing.

65. Mossbank was split into houses. There was Douglas, McDonald, McDonald 2, Fraser and Cameron. I was in Douglas House and [redacted]. If your behaviour was good, you were promoted through the houses. There were over one hundred boys. We were all given a number when we went in. I was number [redacted]. The age range was about thirteen to sixteen. I can only remember one boy who was on the sixteen mark and he had been recalled. He had been released and reoffended. They took a roll call two or three times a day. It was either, "All present and correct," or, "one off to the dentist", "two abscondees" and that kind of thing.

66. I'm almost certain that the headmaster's name was Johnston, but we never saw him. He was never around at all. I think there were about fifteen to twenty staff altogether. There were three staff in the workshops and two or three women working in the kitchens. There was a Pakistani or Indian member of staff. Everybody called him '[KFM]' including the staff. I don't know what his real name was. He was [SNR] [SNR]. I remember Mr [MTT], who [SNR]. If you were one of [MTT]s boys you were treated with kid gloves. The other masters didn't bother you. He had the power to give you your points back if you lost them. [KFM] and Mr [MTT], '[MTT]', were the two [SNR].

Routine at Mossbank

First Day

67. I remember my first day and driving up the long walk. I went right into the middle block of Mossbank, which was for administration. Everything seemed totally out of proportion. It was disorientating because of the size of it. I remember meeting Mr McLean. I'm sure he described himself as a welfare officer. He was a skinny guy. He said it was up to me to determine how long I was there for. That was it, I was then handed over to a senior boy. I was taken to get my clothing, bed, shower and went into the general population. The senior boy told me about the bells and the basic routines of the school. My mentor was [redacted], whose brother [redacted] went on to be [redacted]. He was the captain of [redacted] when I first went into Mossbank. He was a big bully.

Mornings and Bedtime

68. In Douglas house, there were about 25 to 30 boys in the dormitory. McDonald one and two had roughly the same number of boys. The numbers were lower as you went through the school and boys were getting ready for release. We got up at about 7:00 am. We had a quick wash at the sink and made our beds. We then went down for

breakfast. After breakfast, there was a roll call at around 8:30 am and then we went to school or a workshop.

69. Things quietened down from about 7:00 pm. The last roll call was at 9:00, 9:15 pm. We would then go up the stairs and make our beds and we were in beds, lying down for 10:00 pm. We had to face the wall, away from the person in the next bed. There was a night watchman. I never knew the guy. He was an older guy with a cap on, which is all I remember about him. I never really saw him. He did a final check and put the lights out at night and he put the lights on in the morning. I think he must have been there through the night.

70. A lot of the boys had issues with bed wetting. I have a guilty feeling about it. The staff used to turn the bed wetters' chairs around. Allegedly, it was to let the night watchman know where the bed wetters slept. We would turn chairs round for a laugh. I've often wondered why those chairs were getting turned around and why boys of fourteen, fifteen years old were wetting their beds. It was always the most vulnerable boys. The only answer I can come up with is fear. I couldn't testify to them being sexually abused because I don't know that, but why would they wet the bed? There was no support for the bed wetters at all.

Mealtimes/food

71. I was number [redacted] so I sat at number [redacted] seat in the dining hall. There were no arguments, that was where you had to sit. There was enough food at Mossbank. I worked in the kitchen for three or four months so I could get anything I wanted. On Friday it was minced pies and mashed potatoes. I remember the lovely gravy. The women who cooked were civilian cooks and they did well by us.

School/training

72. There was a school at Mossbank. The housemasters were also the teachers. They didn't bring teachers in. It was just general education. I wasn't a dummy at school, but I wasn't interested in education either. I could read and write, but quite a lot of the boys

at Mossbank couldn't. We had to go to school until we were fourteen and eight months. After that, we could leave and go into one of the workshops. There was the joiners, the painters or the brickies.

73. The teachers in the workshops were a bit more liberal than the teachers in the school. We always addressed the staff as, "Sir," but it was a little different when you got into the workshops. We could call the teachers in the workshops by their names, Mr Cruikshanks or 'Crooky' and Mr Rankine. I do think the workshop masters tried to make a difference. They treated us like young adults instead of young hooligans.

74. I went into the kitchen because I wanted to be a chef. I had to get up a bit earlier because I had to help make the breakfast. I got to bed a bit later because I had teas to make. I got extras here and there. I wasn't under the supervision of the teachers as much when I was in the kitchen. I stayed out of their road most of the time. I was allowed unsupervised smoke breaks. There was an outside toilet, which was the only place in the school where we were allowed to smoke.

75. After working in the kitchen, I went to the joiners. I was useless at joinery and still am to this day. Mr Rankine was the joiner. I went with him to fit swish rails at Kerelaw. Kerelaw looked so different. We were in an old, dilapidated school. We went down to Kerelaw and it had four-bedded units and modern facilities. It looked good and I thought I wouldn't mind going down there, but it turned out to be a hell-hole.

76. The workshops were really just to pass time. There wasn't really any serious introduction to an apprenticeship or anything like that. You just turned up at the joiner's and did what you wanted to do. I made a wee bookcase for my mum. I thought she would be really impressed by it, but she wasn't really. For my level of skill, I thought it was brilliant. It lasted for years. That was the only thing I ever made in the joiners. I was actually given a book as a prize for good attendance at school. I found that funny because I was in an approved school.

77. We built wee boats that we used to sail on Hogganfield Loch. I called mine '[redacted]', which was my mother's name. I got a prize for that dingy as well.

Leisure time

78. We finished school or workshops around 4:00 pm. We could then move around freely inside the confines of the building. We couldn't go outside unless the staff had organised a game of football. They did organise football quite a lot. We played on the black ash if we were playing an internal match. If we were playing another school, we played at the front on the grass pitch. The grass pitch was kept for special occasions. They did take us swimming at Mossbank. We got down to Shettleston Swimming Baths about once a month on a Friday.

79. They brought in some singers and folk bands to Mossbank. One of them was [redacted] When he came into the school at lunchtime, he was already half cut. I can remember him crying when he had finished at tea time. He would say, "I'm taking these weans home with me. I know what you bastards are doing to them in here." I think he'd been to St. John's Approved School. It was quite emotional and it was quite liberating to hear an adult swearing and saying those things to the staff.

80. When you were a senior boy, you were allowed out to go to the pictures in Dennistoun on a Sunday night. We would sneak clothes in and leave them outside the approved school. We would have a wee drink. By the time we got back from the pictures, everybody would be in bed. Nobody would bother you so we used to come back drunk. I was a regular drinker by that time.

Trips and Holidays

81. Mossbank took us on a summer holiday. It was the only summer holiday I'd ever been on. They took us up to Stonehaven. We slept in camp beds in a school. I remember the local lassies calling us 'Loons'. I thought that meant 'loonies' and immediately frightened them off, shouting that we weren't loonies. I didn't know about 'loons' and 'quines' at the time. I'm blaming the fact I shouted at the girls for scaring them off, not my looks.

Religious instruction

82. We were made to go to church on a Sunday. There was a chapel inside the school. We had Sunday clothes and we had to be nicely dressed for church. We wore cords, a shirt and blazer. When we were on public display, we were well turned out.

Visits/Inspections

83. My mum didn't come to visit me at Mossbank. My dad came to visit once. He took me down to Millerston, which was the local village. He bought me a quarter of sour plooms. He stood me at the traffic lights and told me to wait for him. He said he'd be back in about half an hour. He reappeared at 1:00, 2:00 pm, which was closing time. He was drunk and got me into lots of trouble with a master called Mr KFV. My dad thought he was intellectually superior to everyone and he started arguing with Mr KFV. When my dad went away, KFV took it out on me.

Home leave

84. I cut out my drinking completely when I went to Mossbank. We only got one day's leave so we couldn't go drinking. At first, we got home once a month on a Saturday. That went on for a couple of months and then we got home every Saturday. We got home at 10:30 am on a Saturday morning and we had to be back in for 5:30 pm the same day. It was quite hard for boys from [redacted] because we had to get a bus into Glasgow city centre then a bus or a train down to [redacted]. We had to do the same on the way back. It was a two hour journey for us to get home and to get back so there was very limited time at home. Other approved schools got Friday to Sunday or Saturday and Sunday but we just got one day. At Easter time, we got a long leave from Friday to Monday.

85. We didn't get pocket money or the chance to earn money. If our parents didn't give us anything, we didn't get anything. I remember my first leave home. I hadn't seen my parents for about four months and I was so excited to see my mammy and daddy. I always remember there was nobody waiting for me when I got home for that first leave.

There wasn't even anybody in the house. I got a couple of hours with them, but that was it. I asked them for my bus fare back to Mossbank and the price of ten fags. My mother said that I'd cost her 28 shillings so she wasn't giving me anything. 28 shillings had been taken off her family allowance because I was in the institution. Because she'd lost that, she wouldn't give me any money. I usually had to steal and beg to get money for getting back to the approved school.

86. Mossbank gave us our fares home, but parents were expected to provide the fares back. I remember getting close to the time to go back to Mossbank on that first visit. No money was coming across. A friend of my mother's had a car. She was visiting from England on holiday. She and her husband, [redacted], offered to take me back in the car. We got lost in Glasgow and we were about an hour and a half late. I thought I'd get into real trouble because I was so late. We didn't. I think the staff accepted what [redacted] told them. They accepted that it wasn't my fault so I didn't get punished for it.

87. As you came closer to being released, you got a long leave from Friday to a Sunday. It was about four weeks before you left and it was a test to see whether you came back. When the leave started to increase towards the end of my time at Mossbank, I was able to get back to my drinking. I was definitely an alcoholic.

88. My dad had a period of sobriety when my wee brothers were growing up. I used to call them the golden children because they got everything. There was stability in the house, although there was a degree of violence towards my younger brothers. My mum did set about them. By the time I got to the age of fourteen, fifteen, I would stop it fairly quickly. I was a wee skinny thing but I could handle myself. I wouldn't let her hit them, not in front of me. If I was there, I would stop it.

Healthcare

89. There was a big tunnel which ran from the classrooms to the chapel. There was a dare on that if you could go from one end of the tunnel to the other, you'd get the bottle of lollipops which sat in the chapel. You could only do it at night time. I remember a boy

called [redacted] going into the tunnel first. A pal of mine had a fretsaw with him to kill the ghosts. They got about fifty yards up the tunnel and the panic was on. Somebody shouted, "Turn," but my pal didn't turn. He lashed out with the saw, right into [redacted]s face. He didn't mean to hit him. The boy was in a right mess, down the front of his face. He was taken to hospital and I don't know how they talked that one away. There were crazy things like that. Nobody ever did get the lollipops. I was always too scared to try it.

90. We never had a toothbrush or anything like that. Shortly after I arrived at Mossbank, I was sent to the dentist. I had four teeth taken out. My tea was sent up to my room and I was given toast. I was still spitting out blood. They gave me toast to toughen up my gums. I've only been to the dentist once since. I've pulled out my own teeth instead. I'm terrified of the dentist because it was such a brutal experience.

Running away

91. I never saw the point of running away from anything. If there was something to meet, I always tried to meet it head on. I would rather get things over and done with and take my punishment. If I wasn't guilty, I would fight it. If I was guilty, I had nothing to complain about. It was as simple as that to me.

Discipline

92. They used a points system for discipline. You got ten points every week. If you lost more than ten points, you didn't get home at the weekend. It was quite difficult because it was really easy to lose points. You lost points if you smoked outside of smoking time, threw a member of staff a dirty look or just did things that boys do. You had to beg the staff to give you your points back on a Friday night. The older teachers who worked in the workshop were alright and they'd give you some points back. If you were one of MTT [redacted] boys, you went to MTT [redacted] and he would give you a clean slate. When you became one of MTT [redacted] boys, you were protected.

93. They didn't use a strap or a belt, but we would be disciplined with a wooden paddle. We had to go up the stairs into the governor's chambers. You would get half a dozen slaps with the big bat. It was painful, uncomfortable and demeaning.

Peers

94. There would always be a boy called the 'donner'. He was the top boy. He had boys to discipline. Teachers would go to him and tell him to sort another boy out. I was made house captain [redacted] I think I was quite a stable pupil in an unstable situation. I think they knew that I wasn't a bully, but I could handle myself. Other boys could respect me without fearing me. [redacted] was my vice-captain. I wasn't the best fighter but I was good with my tongue. I was always trying to keep the peace. I could defend myself and I wasn't afraid of anybody, no matter what size they were. I was never impressed by someone's height or weight, just what was in their heart.

95. There were six of us who got really pally at Mossbank, [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], [redacted] and me. I still speak to a few of them to this day. There was another group who palled up. You couldn't have any one person run the approved school without the help of his pals. It was alright in that respect. We kept a balance. We thought we were the good boys. We didn't like bullying and we didn't like boys getting their cigarettes taken off them.

96. [redacted] loved the joiners. That was what he was going to become. I've tried to get in contact with him over the years but I haven't been able to reach him. There were some very talented footballers and I wondered how they didn't make a living out of football. I remember [redacted] was a fantastic footballer player. I still talk to him, but he never made it at football. There were boys who had great talents that could have been and should have been exploited. There were also bad boys, like [redacted], who became famous and had a bad name in Paisley. I don't think any of them became murderers. There was a boy in there who had one arm. I was terrified of him. Stupid things like that intimidated and frightened me, but I'm very proud that they couldn't brutalise me.

97. Internal violence amongst the boys was kept to a minimum. I lost a tooth when one of my pals cracked me over the head. He became a good friend of mine over the years. He knocked the tooth right out my head. I often think about him when I feel that tooth. There were a couple of gang fights when I was in Mossbank, but they all separated out into 'square-go's'. They were sorted out that way.

98. There was one boy called number [redacted]. I don't know his name. He ate with his mouth open [redacted]. He got the name '[redacted]'. If there was one boy that I could go back and apologise to, it would be him. I wasn't a bully, but I made that boy's life a bit of a misery. Maybe God will let me do it before I die. I was supposed to be a responsible young man at that point. I was made the captain [redacted]. I didn't allow any inter-relationships between boys in my dorm. I wouldn't allow boys to masturbate each other. If I was in charge and I caught boys doing that to each other, I would do something about it. It did happen, but if I found out about it they would have me to answer to. When I look back, I think I was a judgemental boy but that was the way it was.

99. When I was a house captain, I had to do escort duty. I hated doing it. A boy came in and he was overtly homosexual. I took him to the showers and he put a big turban in his hair, like a woman would do. I told him to take it off, but he wouldn't. I took him back to the office and told them the boy needed to go to a different school. I was honest about it. They wouldn't change it. We went back up the stairs and I did hit the boy. It was the only time I ever lifted my hands to anybody in Mossbank. I had to get out of Douglas House. I requested a transfer and, to give them their due, they did move me. They knew it wasn't a safe position for me or the boy to be in.

Abuse at Mossbank

100. The staff used to call me a skelly bastard. That was nothing new to me. My mother called me that all my days. But when it was said in front of my peers, it was like a red rag to a bull. They laid it on me. I couldn't show weakness. If I showed weakness, I'd be next in line. I wouldn't just have the masters to answer to, I'd have the other boys

to answer to. You couldn't show weakness, sympathy or empathy. Looking back, it's horrible to think that's what they turned you into. It's horrible for me as a human being.

101. I remember Mr MTT gave me a shake one night when I was in my bed. He took me into the television room to watch the football highlights on a Saturday night. I thought other boys would join us, but nobody else appeared. The football finished and I started to get spooked. I don't know whether I spooked myself, but it was really chilling. I thought I was getting set up for something. I didn't know whether it was a beating or what it was. I panicked so much that I flew up the doors and right up the middle staircase. I don't think I slept a wink that night. I was absolutely terrified. Even to this day, I would swear that something was planned for me that night and it just didn't happen.

102. I've got a friend who went to Mossbank. I've been telling him to come forward to the Inquiry, but he has to go to the police. He told me that MTT spanked him with big bats while he was naked. I don't know why a boy would have to be naked while he was getting spanked. I never got that sort of punishment. Those punishments were supposed to be administered by the headmaster, but it was almost always done by MTT .

103. There were tennis courts at the bottom of the school. There were no tennis rackets, but there were these big, wooden panels. They were so heavy, we couldn't lift them let alone play tennis with them. Nobody ever used them. They were used when we needed to be disciplined. We had to go up the stairs into the governor's chambers. You would get half a dozen slaps with the big bat. It was sore. You were getting whacked with wood. It was uncomfortable and demeaning. You were fourteen, going on fifteen and you had to take your pants down to get this bat. It was designed to be demeaning. We were totally powerless and could do nothing. I only got the bat once and I was struck six times. It was right at the end of my sentence. I had been given my liberation date of . Number complained about me. I was told that I could either take six hits or my licence would be cancelled. I took the six and got on with it. There were seven boys getting released that day and I was the last one out.

104. The staff would tell you they could either give you a slap or they'd take four or five points off you. What were you going to do? We took the slap and shut up. The member of staff called KFM was nippy and he didn't spare the rod to save the child. He could give you a wallop for nothing. Looking back on it, his colleagues were calling him KFM because of the colour of his skin. Society has changed since then.

105. My dad came to visit on one occasion. He got drunk and argued with Mr KFV when he took me back to Mossbank. My dad left and KFV was in a bad mood, so I got it off KFV. I was standing outside the staff room. I remember him whacking me right across the head. There was nobody else there. He was going on about my father, asking me if my father thought he was more intelligent than him. He was turning it onto me. Verbally and physically I got a couple of cracks off him. I was told to keep my nose out of his business.

106. There was a teacher called Mr LWH. He was a good rugby player. He didn't really like football, but he knew we all loved it. There was a bit of a tear on who could get a hit on him on the football park. We were playing on the black ash. I thought I'd have a go at LWH and it was the sorriest thing I've ever done in my life. He went by me and I clipped his heel. He rolled over about five times on the black blaes. I don't know how he kept his hands off me because you could see that he'd lost it. He didn't hit me. I wondered what had happened.

107. About four or five games after it, I can vaguely remember hearing a steam train coming to my right hand side. I can certainly remember when Mr LWH took me apart. It knocked me about fifty yards along the blaes. I can remember splitting the blood and the dirt out of my mouth. What a crack he gave me. It was a rugby tackle on a football park. He nearly killed me.

Leaving Mossbank

108. I was in Mossbank for ten months. I got out because they were closing Mossbank down. They were getting rid of boys. Other boys were transferred. My pal was

transferred to Geilsland School because he wasn't making progress. I left on [redacted] 1969 when I was fifteen. I was given four days to get a job. They told me to phone and let them know if I had a job. If I didn't get to job, I had to go back after the [redacted] leave. I got a job in a local factory called C&F Taylor's. I started that job on [redacted] 1969. I was right out of approved school and straight into work, but it didn't last long.

109. I did something stupid after leaving Mossbank and ended up back in Bellfield. I was out on licence, but I didn't get a recall. Mossbank was closing down by then. Kerelaw was opening up. I was lucky that I missed Kerelaw, as I know what it turned out to be. There were changes coming in at that time. In 1970, 1971, they started to change from juvenile courts to Children's Panels. I was too old for them by that point so it was always the sheriff court for me.

Life after leaving care

110. After I got out of Bellfield for the last time, I left [redacted]. I was still only fifteen and I had an opportunity to go down to Cambridge with a friend. We left with two and sixpence and a quarter ounce of tobacco. We headed south to make our fortunes. Unfortunately, my friend's sister wouldn't take me in. I was on my own in Cambridge. I headed for my Aunty [redacted] in Bradford. I had no idea where I was or where I was heading to. I hitch-hiked. I'd never done it before, I only knew that I was heading for Bradford. I had a big suitcase with two shirts or something in it. I couldn't get a lift so I started to walk along the motorway. I didn't know you couldn't walk along the motorway, but the police didn't take long to come and tell me that I couldn't do that. I lied to them and told them that I was sixteen. It took me three days to get from Cambridge to Bradford.

111. My Uncle [redacted] was serving a long prison sentence so it was just me, my Aunty [redacted] and my wee cousin, [redacted]. I lived in Bradford for seven or eight months then I came up the road, home. I was drinking heavily by that time, but I wasn't getting into much trouble.

112. In 1972, I joined the Workers' Revolutionary Party (WRP). They organised a march from Glasgow to London, marching against unemployment. We walked for six weeks. We were trying to trigger a national strike, but it didn't work. It took me away from [redacted] and it took me away from trouble. It took me down to London at the age of sixteen. I got on well with the leaders of the party, Gerry Healy and Mike Banda. I was young but I was safe.

113. The leaders of the WRP took a shine to the [redacted] boys. We were all unemployed, but we were vocal and two or three of us thought that we understood political processes. Some of us stayed in London. Gerry Healy got me a job working in the West End. I went from there to prison because of violence, drink and football. I went to a place called Ashford Remand Centre. I was there for about three weeks. When I went back to court, they tried to give me detention but they had discovered a murmur in my heart so they couldn't give me detention. They gave me a £25 fine instead. I still owe it to this day. I think it was the only thing I ever got away with in my life.

114. After the remand centre, my friend and I went to stay in Uxbridge. We worked on the farms and stayed in the hay sheds. It was brilliant. We had freedom, we had money and we could virtually do what we wanted. My friend decided he wanted to come home and I followed him. I wasn't getting into trouble at the time, but I was drinking heavily. I fell in with older company again and I was drinking five or six days a week. I was on the street corners, begging and drinking. I ran into an old acquaintance and got involved in a gang fight. I was fuelled by alcohol. I was sentenced to three years detention when I was nineteen.

115. I served my sentence at HMP Barlinnie. I didn't get into much trouble and stayed clear of it. I dealt with any skirmishes myself. It was quite a rough environment, but it was an environment you could survive if you kept yourself to yourself and stood up for yourself when you needed to. That was my last time spent in prison. I fell in with quite a heavy crowd when I was in Barlinnie. They were organising a wage snatch. I realised I could do one of two things. I could become a criminal or I could walk away. I decided that I'd walk away. I kidded the people I was with that I was going to the toilet. I walked straight out the door and I never went back.

116. When I was 21 or 22, I was working in the sawmill. I used to go to my mum's house every Friday night and give her £5 before I went home. I was only earning £25 a week. I went to wash my hands one night. My mum said to her friend, "Go and watch which towel he uses. I don't want my weans catching what he's got." I suffer badly from psoriasis, although I didn't know that was what it was at the time. My mum's friend told her that it was psoriasis and that it couldn't be caught. My mum was making a clear distinction between me and my siblings. She didn't see me as one of her weans. That still hurts me to this day.

117. I didn't stop offending after I left Barlinnie. I was convicted of breaches of the peace and drunk and incapables, all those kinds of things. The alcoholism became really bad. I then met my wife, [redacted]. She was the best thing that ever happened to me. She didn't stabilise me immediately. How she put up with this badly damaged human being, I have no idea. I was 21 and she was 17. Everybody that we knew gave us six weeks at best. We're still together after 45 years. We have our arguments, but we never take them into the next day. We always say we'll finish the argument when we go to bed. We have four children, seventeen grandchildren and one great grandchild. We have all these weans and grand weans that I absolutely adore and love.

118. My alcoholism resulted in severe pancreatitis. Even then, I didn't believe that I was that ill. I still convinced myself, as alcoholics do, that the doctors were overplaying it. I tried to drink a couple of times and the pancreatitis reared its ugly head again. I went into alcohol rehab 32 years ago. I intended to get sober for six weeks and then dish out some revenge for some things that had happened to me in the community. Some people had treated me quite badly. Although I was drinking and making a fool of myself, there was always something in me that wanted to make a change in my community. I was always trying to create something and make things better, but the alcohol just overtook that. I was an emotional and physical wreck.

119. When I went into the alcohol treatment unit, I thought I'd be there for six weeks to get my head sorted out. I'd then go back and deal with the people in my community intellectually and expose them for what they were. After I'd been in for just over a week, I woke up one morning. I look back on it and I think it was a spiritual event. The

first thing I would normally do was look for drink, but I didn't look for alcohol. The next thing I would normally do was think about what day it was, who got paid and how I would get drink. I didn't think that. It puzzled me all that day. By teatime, I was thinking that if I didn't need alcohol that morning and I didn't want it at night then I was finished with alcohol.

120. I made the announcement that I was finished with alcohol. The staff told me not to be silly and that I was barely ten days into the programme. I told them that was it, I was finished with alcohol. It was like an elastic band snapping in me and the desire to drink alcohol just went. [redacted] came up to see me later in the week and I told her I wasn't going to drink again. The number of times I'd told [redacted] that was phenomenal, but lo and behold she believed me. I haven't had a drink from that day to this. I've never really wanted to drink. I gave myself a test. I told myself that I'd never drink again until I found a situation where adding alcohol would make it better. I've never found that situation and I don't think I ever well. Alcohol only ever took me apart. I lost a granddaughter when she was fourteen weeks old. It ripped me apart emotionally, but I recovered from it and I didn't drink. For all the crises in my life, I've never drank again.

121. I never got away from [redacted]. I tried it a few times, but I couldn't do it. I'm just a [redacted] man, plain and simple. I did the usual labouring jobs. I'd been involved in bits and pieces in my community. I was approached again, but I didn't want to get involved. Community politics is as dirty as real politics. It's a dirty environment to be in. We started something new. We started a housing association. We refashioned [redacted] housing and social services. We adopted a phrase that we wouldn't give people a higher standard of housing to enjoy their poverty in. We tackled all their issues, such as lack of educational attainment, lack of income, lack of general facilities for young people. All of these issues were sitting there. Giving people new houses wouldn't change any of that, they would just have a better house. We wanted to give them something to aim for, to give them targets and to give them power to decide what they wanted to do.

122. We became really successful. We were the first housing association [redacted]

[redacted]. We won various awards for all sorts of things outside of housing. We also kept our housing going. I still think we built some of the best houses in the area.

123. I was awarded [redacted] services to the community. It was quite a funny experience. I'm a rebel and I don't lie down or turn over for anyone, I don't care who they are. My friend wrote a book and he mentioned me in it. He said I was the only person he knew who won an argument even if I lost it. I just wouldn't give up on it. If it was right, it was right and I wouldn't give up. When the letter arrived and I opened it and saw it was a [redacted]. I thought someone was winding me up. I was KFK [redacted], a rebel socialist. You weren't supposed to contact anybody about it. I was sitting there like an idiot. Nearer the time, I got another letter and I realised I was actually being awarded [redacted]. I didn't have a suit or good shoes, so I had to go and buy a suit. [redacted] had to go and buy a dress.

124. When I was awarded [redacted], I wasn't talking to my dad. I thought I'd go round to his house and tell him that I'd been given this award. I asked him if he wanted to come [redacted] and he said, "Nah, I don't do those things." I took my Aunty [redacted]. She was the most stable woman in my life. The black sheep of the family took my Aunty [redacted]. I'm very proud of it, but it caused a big rift in my family and with a lot of my socialist friends, who said I should have sent it back. My father said I should never have taken it.

125. I was involved with the [redacted] over a few years. I met people there with genuine honesty. It was a very enlightening experience. It opened my eyes up to bigger opportunities. Scotland is a very small community. I chaired the [redacted] for a while. I never wanted to be in that power circle, but I wanted change and positive change. I don't think I have enough mental energy to go back into that field and do the job that I once did. I'll always be involved in my community at some level. At the moment, I'm looking at something called Men's Shed. It's quite a big organisation globally. It's a shed for men for recreation and hobbies. I'm hoping to set something like that up. I don't want to go back to what I was doing. I want to go forward and try something that I haven't done and see where it takes me.

126. My father died three years ago. He had fallen out with me at the time so I didn't attend his funeral. He didn't want me there. My mother died about thirty, thirty five years ago. We all knew that she had cancer, but we didn't know she was coming to the end until she died. We were all adults, but she didn't tell us it was the end. She died in the Great Western Hospital in Glasgow on her own. I've always felt guilty that she was on her own.

Impact

127. I do believe that my young life led me into drinking and hiding. I was a regular drinker at Mossbank. I became a full blown alcoholic after I left. I never drank for pleasure. I drank to get drunk. There was a party in there somewhere and I was going to find it. I never did find the party. I found plenty of empty bottles, but I never found the happiness I was craving and looking for. I never found the love that I thought was going to be in every bottle. All I found was rejection.

128. Every time I picked a bottle up, I used to hide. I was running away from things. There was nowhere else to go. Where could I go? There were no agencies and there was nowhere to go. I couldn't go to the police because they were hitting me as well. I got battered in the young offenders' and the institutions. Violence was a recurring part of it. The only place I could find any relief from it was in a bottle and then I became violent myself. The mental impact on my life has been absolutely horrendous.

129. My experiences in care affected me badly when I was young. I'm coming up for 67 and I'm still plagued with it. How can I be blamed for something that I had no role in, no control over? It's crazy to call it a care system because they really didn't care. There was no compassion in your containment. There was containment and then there was prison.

130. I was talking to a friend yesterday who was saying that the homes didn't do us any harm. He'll never know and I'll never know. It did us harm. For me to rationalise it, I've got to make it feel like it was okay. Otherwise, I'd want to hit men who did things like

that to kids. They shouldn't have done that. They could have treated us better. It's always bothered me that I had nowhere to run to. Even now that bothers me. I was incarcerated in Bellfield and I had nobody to run back to. I only had my Aunt [redacted] and she was down in England. I was never going to make it that far.

131. From about the third year after my sobriety, I would say that my life has been really good. Now, my life seems to be in good place. I'm not as healthy as I should be, but I've lived an interesting life at least.

132. I swore that I would never lift my hands to any of my kids. No matter what they did, I never disciplined them in that form. I would ground them and do all sorts, but I would never, ever lift my hands. I wouldn't let them lift their hands to their weans. At least that came out of what happened to me. Violence isn't the way. You can't batter people into submission and expect them to be reasonable people.

133. I've remained strict but straight down the line. I had a drug addict sitting in my house the other week. My wife and I spent £30 to get her gas, electricity and twenty fags. I would never turn anybody who is struggling away. I think that comes from experiences in places like Bellfield. I never want to see anybody that helpless and disenfranchised that they have nowhere to turn. I can't change. It's who I am. It doesn't matter what happens to me, I'll always be involved in my community at some level.

134. I still have difficulties trusting people. Sometimes it's too easy and I want to trust them so much. The people I've trusted the most are the ones who have let me down. I put trust and faith in political leaders who have let me down, as a person and an idealist. I have some good and some bad relationships within my family. I think a lot of trust left me because of my experiences as a child, but I still have the friends I had when I was a kid. I know I could go to their doors and get what I needed and they know they could come to mine, no questions asked. Some people I trust and welcome openly, but others I'm very, very wary of.

135. I have lucid dreams. Sometimes they're great, other times they can be horrible. I'll be back in bad situations in my relationships with my mother and my father. The dreams

are very real. I still sleep right at the edge of the bed, facing the wall. I find it difficult to cuddle my wife because then I'm away from the wall and close to something. I just doesn't feel right. It's because of conditioning in Bellfield and Mossbank and its stuck with me. It still bugs me that I wasn't more of a support to number [redacted] and I was a hindrance to him. There are things that I reflect on. I feel good about some things and I feel really bad about others, but it never broke me. It never broke some of my pals. We stayed firm.

Reporting of abuse

136. I reported the abuse that I experienced a couple of months ago at Dumbarton Police Station. When I was a boy, they wouldn't have listened to me. It just wouldn't have been relevant to them. The police were hitting us. I know some of them now. I don't hold grudges. It was the circumstances we were all in. There was nowhere I could have turned to and felt safe. Aunty [redacted] was the only refuge I had in the world. I'm really thankful that I had her.

Records

137. I've never tried to access my records. I think I would like to see them now. I'd like to see what they thought of me. Was I a pest, was I an annoyance, was I a rebel? I hope that I was rebellious. I know that I wasn't an angel.

Hopes for the Inquiry

138. I hope that the Inquiry will unearth the truth. I know that it's a big task, but I hope it can expose how harsh these regimes were and bring a bit of compassion and understanding to it. I still deal with weans who have been in care. [redacted] and I were foster carers for a while. Some of the children we cared for still come to us. It seems to me that not a lot has changed. Maybe the violence has calmed down a little bit, but

the process is still the process. Children go into care, they come out at fifteen, sixteen and there's no structure. A lot of them are falling into drugs virtually right away.

139. We can at least inform the policy makers that even without the violence and the degradation, it still isn't right. We need to look at new and different ways of keeping these weans out of care in the first place, if we can. We certainly need a more positive attitude. When they move on in life, they shouldn't move on with this care background. Care should at least be some kind of comforting experience with people who care about children. There's still a stigma. Not that long ago, a woman said to me that I had been a bit off the wall. She was talking about a wean, sixty years ago. That wean died a long time ago. Because I still live locally and families don't change that much, memories are long.

140. If I could talk to the people running the care homes, I would ask them to try and understand the weans and to stop judging them. 90% of the issues aren't the child's issue. They come from unstable backgrounds and they have poor community links. It's not the child who is at fault. Too often, I think they pin too many labels on children to make it easy for society to cope with. It doesn't make it easier for the child. They need to try to stop judging them and start to care. You never know how many weans you'll help that way.

141. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed..... KFK [redacted] .....

17 June 2021

Dated.....