

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GFA

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is GFA and my date of birth is 1958. My contact details are known to the inquiry.

Background

2. I had a normal childhood until I was six. We moved to Hillhouse in Hamilton. My father had a piano and also played the violin. He had been a French Polisher on and we weren't poor. Things started to go wrong and the family became dysfunctional when my father started drinking. He had been in the war and was becoming mentally ill. He was drinking non-stop and there were whisky bottles lying all over the place and I remember picking up a bottle of beer and got lifted outside because I was drunk. I didn't even drink it all. Everything just went wrong. He was in and out of prison and mental hospitals. I remember him ripping the doors off.
3. Dad's mental issues were as a result of post-traumatic stress disorder caused by what had happened to him during the war. He wasn't just some sort of bum, he was an educated man but it ruined our childhood, in fact it ruined my life. My mother moved to Stonehouse, which is just passed Larkhall, to get away from him but he followed. You didn't get benefits in those days.
4. Although my dad was violent towards my mum he never laid a hand on me, though one night he did chase me round the room with a big knife calling me "a

German bastard". He started stabbing into a clootie dumpling that my mother had put on the table then he was up against the wall acting as if he was shooting a machine gun. The next thing was that two guys in white coats came and took him away. He never hit me once but he wasn't a very good father.

5. I have an older brother called [REDACTED] as well as two sisters, one older than me and one younger. When we moved from Hillhouse in Hamilton to Stonehouse I had to move schools and I felt out of sorts there. The accent was different and I just felt isolated, I didn't have any friends. I was ten years old and didn't like it at all. As far as I was concerned I may as well have moved to Australia.

Life before care

6. I first ended up in court in [REDACTED] 1969 but don't remember what happened then. I was back in court on [REDACTED] 1970. I had been in a building site the day before and there was an open shed there. I was sitting in the shed reading "The Topper" and saw three empty lemonade bottles and decided to take them. My brother [REDACTED] was with me out on the street. A guy called Hunter grabbed us and called us thieves and took us to the police station where we got charged with housebreaking and theft. I was eleven years old. I hadn't broken into anywhere and hadn't stolen anything.
7. That was on my records until a few years ago. I also got charged with threatening somebody with a knife. I had a wee penknife which I showed to another boy simply to show it off the same way I would have done with a new toy car. I certainly hadn't threatened anybody with it. That charge was a complete fabrication.
8. I was in the court next day and was expecting a severe warning from the judge. I didn't get a warning, I got three years. I was that small I could hardly see over the dock. I was eleven years old and he gave me three years for stealing three empty lemonade bottles. My fourteen year old brother, who had been with me,

got one year. I couldn't believe I got three years and to this day I still can't understand that.

9. There was no lawyer defending me and I had never been in trouble before. The judge said "[REDACTED] (my brother) one year, ^{GFA} [REDACTED] one to three years". I remember there was a scuffle in the court and my mum was shouting that they were trying to take her children from her. She was blaming some woman who was in a wheelchair who was either a social worker or maybe a prosecutor. I'm not aware of any Social Worker representing me. We got driven to the remand home in a police car. I can't remember whether I was wearing handcuffs or not.

Calder House Remand Home, Bardykes Road, Blantyre

10. The home had three wings. The bottom floor was for girls then there was a wing on the left and another on the right. There was a shower room between these two wings. There was a TV on each wing and you didn't mix with anybody from the other wings. I was on a separate wing from my brother. We were kept apart throughout our time there. I was in that home from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] 1970. There was a guy with a handlebar moustache and another guy with a beard who had previously worked in Africa. There were other members of staff but I don't remember them

Routine

11. The routine was, up at about 8 am then shower and breakfast. The food was okay except for the chemical taint off it which I think was caused by the plastic plates we used.
12. On a Wednesday we got P.E. doing things like press ups etc. The teachers would say things like "Get your legs up or I'll knock the spunk out of you!" It's

the sort of language you might hear in the army but I was only eleven. I was one of the youngest in there.

Leisure time

13. We could watch TV at night and I think we could play draughts. I really don't remember much about the routine. I think that bedtime was about 10 pm and there were three or four to each room.

Visitors

14. I had no visitors while in Calder House. I don't recall if I could write to my mother while in the remand home. I know I did later when in the approved home.

Schooling

15. My education ended the day I appeared in court, [REDACTED] 1970. We were in classes but there was no schooling or education. We were just shouted and bawled at all day by the staff. We were terrified of them. I hated the place. It was like a child's prison. There were no bars on the place but there may as well have been.

Abuse - Calder House Remand Home

16. The first thing I remember was me and my brother in the showers. I was embarrassed because I had never seen him naked before. A tall guy with long hair and a beard squeezed 'Lorexane' [REDACTED] onto my brother's hair. Then he came to me and squeezed it in onto my hair and it was running down my face. He then put it under my arms and then in my pubic area. He then lifted my leg and squeezed it up my bum. He then grabbed me by the hair and put it on my

face then in my mouth and I started to have an asthma attack. I was turning blue and couldn't breathe.

17. It was unbelievably cruel. At the time I thought he was being very cruel and sadistic. I was eleven years old and had just been sentenced to three years and on my first day that was what he was doing to me. I was standing under the shower trying to get it out of my mouth. That was the first time I had had an asthma attack apart from a slight one I took when I was eating an orange when I was younger. My brother didn't say or do anything as this was going on.
18. The only other thing I remember about that place was about two or three weeks later getting locked in a cupboard. I was only 4' 6" and could just about touch both sides of the cupboard it was that small. I actually like being alone and often go fly fishing on my own.
19. I don't know why I was put in the cupboard. I think the cupboard door was locked. I was given a razor blade and I had to scrape a tile which I spent all day doing. I was put back in the next day and the tile I had scraped had been recoated. This time I got a different razor blade which was sharp on both sides. I had complained about this blade because it was hurting my fingers. I just didn't get the point of why they were getting me to do this. This went on for two weeks and they kept changing the blades they gave me. They recoated the tile every day. I was let out at the weekends.
20. Sometime in [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] I was standing next to a radiator to get a heat, it was cold and I was just trying to get a heat. I got grabbed and taken into a room where there was a woman. She told me take my trousers off and started to examine my willy. I started to get an erection. That was the first time I had ever had an erection.
21. I apologised and she asked me to lie back or sit back and started rubbing my privates. She then covered it with a face flannel. I don't recall her saying anything but I believe she was masturbating me though I didn't ejaculate. I can't

work out why she did that to me or why she was examining me there. I hadn't complained about anything being wrong with me down there. She suddenly shouted "Get dressed, get out". I don't know who she was, maybe a cleaner or a cook.

22. I don't recall any physical punishment apart from the incident in the shower and being locked in the cupboard. I think they must have documentation about me being in the cupboard. It was bizarre the way they kept re-polishing the tiles I scraped every day. I've never forgotten my time in that cupboard. I could never work out why they did it. Was it some sort of experiment? I wouldn't have refused to scrape the tiles because the place was 100% discipline and when you were only eleven those people were scary. If they told you to do something then you did it.

Leaving Calder House

23. I was in class one day and my brother got told he was going to an approved school. I was crying because I didn't get a chance to say goodbye. The man who had taken him out came back in about half an hour later and said "wrong brother". I was taken away without any chance to say goodbye.

Dr Guthrie's School, Liberton, Edinburgh

24. I was taken there on [REDACTED] 1970. We went there in a car and went up the M8 and I remember the road being empty. Dr Guthrie's is in Liberton, Edinburgh. When we arrived I was taken into SNR [REDACTED] room. The person who took me there just disappeared. SNR [REDACTED] was called Mr GFC [REDACTED] and he said "I am your father now". He was as cold as ice as were all the staff.
25. I reckon there was about seventy or eighty boys in Dr Guthrie's. Other staff I recall are Mr GVI [REDACTED] who was only there for a few months, Mr GFG [REDACTED] Mr KMI [REDACTED] who was a nice man, Mr LYI [REDACTED] who was a horror story, a horrible man, and a

man with blonde hair who spoke with an extremely posh accent. He may have been called Mr ^{GFB} though I'm not sure. He was a paedophile as far as I was concerned. He used one of those walking sticks that you could turn into a seat. He was involved in athletics and used to take the younger boys, and only them, to the swimming pool that the school had. I remember once it had so much chlorine in it we could hardly breathe.

26. At night there would be a night-watchman, a lovely old guy. He would tell me about his time in the First World War, the gas attacks etc. He repaired watches and showed me his tools and how to fix the springs. I used to love talking to him.
27. Mr ^{KMI}, who was a teacher of religion, was a nice man. He got me a Flying Scot bicycle that I was able to race with and I was beating guys that were years older than me. I used to race at Meadowbank. When I left the school I contacted Mr ^{KMI} to see if I could continue riding the bike and he gave me a number for a social work department but when I went there they looked at me as if I was stupid and said that if I wanted to ride bikes I should join a bike club.
28. The place was horrible. In the dorms there would be eight beds on one side and eight beds on the other. There were sixteen in each dorm with a smaller dorm at the end with six in it. There were no decorations in the dorms, no curtains, cheap linoleum, it was very basic. There was no visual stimulation.

Routine

29. The ages were mixed. I was in Belhaven, the next block was called Churchill, and at the far end of the long corridor were Argyll and Sutherland. I had to sew my number on every piece of clothing myself. I think I was number ■ That was it; you were just a number to them.

Pocket money

30. There was a list put up out in the yard which showed how much pocket money each of us were getting. The money was really just to pay your fare home on a Saturday. I used to walk from Glasgow to Stonehouse just to save money. That would take me a couple of hours.

Christmas / Birthdays

31. There were no Christmas decorations. When it was your birthday you got ice-cream.

Visits

32. At first I used to write letters to my mum but she disappeared about October 1970 and after that there was no point in writing to her and I received no visitors and never saw any social workers, not even after my mum disappeared. I had nobody from the moment I entered that place to the minute I left.

Pocket money

33. I was never given spending money, only bus fare and after my mum disappeared there was nowhere for me to go so they even stopped giving me that.

Abuse - Dr Guthrie's

34. I was taken upstairs and, on my first night, was in the shower with another young boy who had been whipped and was black and blue. I just remember looking at him and thinking "Oh God, I've got three years of this". I was still only

eleven years old. I didn't speak to the boy and I think he was deliberately put there to put the fear of God in me. I'm sure it was psychological terror.

35. The regime there was terrible. I remember, not long after I arrived, I was sound asleep and was brutally awoken one morning and found myself getting shouted at "Get up ya lazy fucking bastard". This guy was right into my face screaming this. My sheets were then thrown all over the place. This happened to me on at least three occasions. I don't recall this happening to anybody else.
36. I remember once I was playing ping pong. It was my shot and I had the ball. Another boy took the ball off me and I started to cry as an eleven year old would. A member of staff came up to me and slapped me so hard I could feel it go right through me. I've worked as a bouncer and have had broken ribs but I've never felt anything as sore as that slap. It was brutal; he could have broken my jaw. None of the other boys said a thing when I was slapped and I realised I was on my own in that place. The others simply didn't care.
37. Mr LYI taught P.E. He used to ask for volunteers but he was brutal and used to really hurt me. I stopped volunteering because I just couldn't take the punishment anymore but he kept picking me. He was a psycho that just seemed to enjoy hurting me. I don't recall if he did it to others.
38. He had a medicine ball that he would throw at me and really hurt me. He threw it at me one day and I put my hand up to defend myself. It broke my hand and I had to get a bandage put on it. I was lying in bed later that night and the night-watchman heard me crying. He came over to my bed and asked what was wrong and I told him what Mr LYI had done. He looked at my hand which was all black and took me to see Mr GFC who he had to wake. I heard them having an argument and shortly after that I was taken to hospital in Edinburgh where an x-ray showed I had a big crack in my hand. They couldn't put a stookie on it.

39. Mr LYI also broke my other hand with a big Victorian key. He then rebroke the first of my hands that he had fractured and, when my other hand had healed, he broke that one again as well. I don't recall anybody being present when he did these things. I started trying to avoid him. He was a psychopath. I would hide in nooks and crannies just to get away from him.
40. He also took me into a room two or three times pulled my foreskin back and put Vaseline on my penis. I'm sure if I had got an erection he would have raped me.
41. LYI was quite a big guy, he was fit and powerful. I think he worked as the painter in the place, not that he was very good at it. I also think he was a black belt in either Judo or Karate. He was a horrible, horrible man. I think the reason he picked on me was because he got into trouble after he broke my hand with the medicine ball and I had to be taken to hospital. I can't remember if there was ever anybody around when he assaulted me.
42. Mr LYI was an evil man and he probably hurt other boys though I didn't actually see it. I don't know if any of the other boys complained about him, I just know he hurt me over and over again.
43. Mr KMI was a fundamentalist, extreme Church of Scotland. I remember complaining to him about having to watch some of the other boys, who were between twelve and thirteen, have a homosexual orgy. All he said was that if a Church of Scotland education was good enough for King James then it was good enough for me. I was going through puberty and there I was having to watch what was like a gangbang every night. I used to wake up and some of the other boys would be trying to masturbate me but I didn't like it. I didn't like it because I thought it was immoral. I've nothing against homosexuality and I do know it's not learned because it never made me a homosexual despite watching so much of it when I was young.
44. One night I was lying in bed on my side. I was in the second or third bed up. There was a boy called █████ in the dorm who was always highly sexed despite

the fact he was only twelve or thirteen. In fact I remember him giving oral sex to three boys on one occasion. I saw Mr GFG standing next to bed. GFG then grabbed him by the hair, pulled him out of the bed and marched him out the dorm. I heard say "I don't want to do it. I don't want to do it". I don't know what he did to and, as a thirteen year old boy, I thought he had caught him masturbating and was maybe going to give him a cold shower. However, looking back as an adult I think it was something more sinister though I can't say what.

45. On Christmas Eve in 1971 I had nowhere to go so was still at the school. My mum had disappeared, I had no one else and I was the only person left in the school. I was watching TV at about 4:30 pm. A cartoon came on and I thought "Brilliant". Mr GFC came in and asked me what I was doing and when I said I was just watching cartoons he grabbed me, turned off the TV and told me to find a brush and sweep up the square. It was dark outside; the stars were in the sky. I was standing in the square brushing up and I can honestly say it was the lowest point of my life. I remember looking up in the sky and thinking that even God hated me, Jesus hated me and I asked myself "What have I done to deserve this?" It was a truly horrible experience that I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy. It was a terrible way to treat a child.
46. To be fair to Mr GFG, he came up to me and asked what I was doing. When I told him that Mr GFC had ordered me to sweep the square he grabbed the brush and told me to follow him. We went into the main corridor and I heard him have a heated argument with Mr GFC and Mr GFG shouted "Are you trying to turn him into a psychopath?"
47. Sweeping the square was a dreadful experience, it was horrible. There I was on my own on Christmas Eve in this big square and I just thought that God, Jesus and everybody else all hated me. It not only ruined that Christmas but turned me into an atheist. That was a crime in itself as far as I was concerned.

48. The next thing I remember [REDACTED] was being back in Calder House home. I've no recollection of how I got there. [REDACTED]
49. Mr ^{GFC} [REDACTED] was a horrible man who never showed me any emotion. He was in charge of all discipline in the place. He always seemed to take pleasure in it and was brutal when doing it.
50. On another occasion I was in the square wearing my shorts. For some reason they had sewn up the pockets though I did have a pocket at the back of the shorts which I used for my tobacco. I had started smoking when I was eleven. I was freezing and had put my hands down the front of shorts to keep them warm
51. I got grabbed by a member of staff and taken to Mr ^{GFC} [REDACTED] office who pulled my trousers down, bent me over a table and belted me over the bare backside. I think he only hit me the once. He then told me to get out and not to put my hands down there again. To this day, because of that incident, I never put my hands in my pockets.
52. Normally when he gave you the belt he hit your hands though often enough he would miss and hit you half way up the arm. It was a big thick leather strap he used. You would have big black and blue marks up your arm.
53. I don't know if a discipline book was kept if you received corporal punishment. I don't think Mr ^{GFC} [REDACTED] was a bad man but he was extremely cold and he was brutal if you got the belt from him. He was one of those that if you ignored him he ignored you. You were just a number to him.
54. We would all be naked and the man who I believe was called Mr ^{GFB} [REDACTED] would line us up. He would bend you over his knee, while you were naked, and spank you. You could feel his erection in your stomach. The next time he did it he was also playing with my bum. When he did that I walked away and went into the pool. He told others to tell me to come back and that I would enjoy it but I stayed

away. The spanking wasn't a punishment; it was supposed to be fun. This happened on at least three occasions.

55. This same man used to also show us films of naked boys from the school who had left by that time. The film had been taken at Thornton Loch and had been taken before my time. I remember thinking the film was in colour and high quality. The boys in the film were naked and doing summersaults and jumping about. Looking back I think it was child pornography and I just knew that it was immoral.
56. He used to take us to a wee burn called Moinot Water which ran into the Tweed. He took us to guddle fish. There was a wee pool that we dived into to collect stones and was about six or seven feet deep and the same wide. He was filming us as we did it using a silver cine camera. He was clearly recording our naked bums so he probably even has a film of me. Even at twelve or thirteen I knew that what he was doing was wrong.
57. I also think he was filming us watching the films of the naked boys. I don't remember if the films had sound. The films weren't sexual as such but the boys were all naked and jumping about with each other. I wouldn't be surprised if he filmed the orgies I was talking about earlier.
58. Mr ^{GFC} [REDACTED] knew this was going on., We were all taken to Thornton Loch for three weeks. I remember it poured rain for the first two weeks. While there I remember Mr ^{GFB} [REDACTED], if that was his name took me and a few others to Cove Harbour in a Land Rover. He pulled over at one point and took one of the boys into a cottage for 45 minutes and as far as I'm concerned he was having sex with the boy. My belief is that this man didn't rape me because, unlike some, I made it clear I didn't want involved with him.
59. I've no recollection of my release other than being given my bus fare and shown the door. This was in 1972.

Geilsland School, Beith

60. When I left the home I started breaking into shops and when I got caught I got sent to Geilsland but I deserved it. In there Mr ^{EZD} broke me with kindness. I have no complaints about Geilsland other than having to work with blue asbestos when I was required to strip old irons. I know they knew about the problems with blue asbestos even in 1974.
61. I got no education in any of the places I was in. My education stopped at the age of eleven when I was sentenced. My English was terrible and I couldn't spell and I didn't even learn the alphabet till I was 21. In Geilsland I at least got taught engineering because I was good at Maths. I got told a few years ago that, when you were in an approved school, they could educate you any way they wanted to. I was basically self-taught.

Impact

62. In the early eighties I started to get a lot of pain in my left shoulder. In the nineties I was lifting weights when my arm suddenly became paralysed. I collapsed. In 2006 I got a CT scan which showed I had spondylitis and had a hole in my spine that was round and causing me pain. This had been caused by Mr ^{LYI} stabbing me in the back with the Victorian key. That's what he did to me, stabbed me in the spine and broke my hands.
63. My dad was in hospital. He had fought for his country and yet here was his son getting abused in Dr Guthrie's. That was a disgrace. Society had locked me up for nothing. I was never a thief when I went in that place but it brutalised me, I had no emotions. I hadn't a clue about left and right or right and wrong. This was all because of the way I was treated for two and a half years.

64. I keep getting flashbacks about being raped in the shower. In the flashbacks I am being held up and masturbated from behind. I started getting these flashbacks when I was in my flat in 1980 when I was 22 years old and it was eight years after I had left Dr Guthrie's. I have no idea who was involved in this abuse of me.
65. I don't know why I have the flashbacks. When I have them I can clearly see over the walls into the cubicles and am being held up and masturbated from behind. I have no idea when or if this happened to me yet it's there in my mind. I just feel there is too much detail that I recall for it not to have happened especially the fact that, in the flashbacks I can see into the cubicles. I wouldn't have been able to see into the cubicles without somebody holding me up.
66. My education was bad and that made it difficult for me especially during the high unemployment of the 1980 s. I had no qualifications and all I was good at was Maths. I'm self-taught in English and although I've managed to get several qualifications I always struggled to get a job. I went to an adult job centre but all they offered me was a job in a charity shop.
67. I can't forget being locked up in the cupboard or the cruelty that was handed out to me. I can never forgive the judge that sentenced me and how small I was, barely being able to see over the dock. I've certainly never understood why he gave me three years for nothing.
68. 1982 was the worst for me because I was then an adult and I suddenly realised how badly the system had treated me. However, I switch it off because I'd end up going mad if I kept thinking about it and I simply wasn't going to allow that to happen to me.
69. I used to have a tendency to jump in the middle of the night and if anybody touches me when I'm asleep then I jump up immediately. I'm sure this goes back to when I used to get the covers ripped off me. It never leaves you.

Other action taken

70. I know that in the nineties Mr ^{GFG} was [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I remember
he said that anybody [REDACTED] against him was a liar, that they were
all liars.

Treatment / Support

71. I've never been for counselling.

Reporting of Abuse

72. There was a matron in Dr Guthrie's who would look after our health. She was a German woman, a big strapping woman and I recall her bursting a boil I had on my stomach. I couldn't tell her how I received any of my injuries because you would be scared to tell anybody in case it came back on you. The only one I could really speak normally to was the night watchman but I never saw him again after he woke up Mr ^{GFC} that night.
73. I told those in the hospital about what Mr ^{LYI} had done when he broke my hand when he threw the medicine ball at me but I don't know if anything was done to him. I didn't complain to anybody in the home about it because I was too scared of him.
74. I've never had a Social Worker in my life that I recall.
75. The first time I complained about all this was about 1988 when I complained to a lawyer whose name I think was Pomphreys in Hamilton. I complained about

all of those I've mentioned above. He said he couldn't do anything as I had no witnesses. I told him that, if that was a case, I wanted to take them to court because under the 1945 Education Act I was entitled to an education that I had not received. I waited a fortnight but when I went in to see him he said I hadn't been entitled to an education as I had forfeited my rights because I had been a criminal. I have found out recently that this is true.

76. At the beginning of this century I complained to, what I think was called the Jack McConnell Inquiry but they completely blanked me. Then in 2014 I wrote to the Scottish Social Services but all they did was tell me to go to the police. How could I have gone to the police when it was them who had locked me up all those years ago? It was them who took me from my mother. I've no dislike for the police but it was them who started all this.

Records

77. I've tried to get my records about my time in Dr Guthrie's but the lawyer Scott Moncrieff, who represents the Church of Scotland says they are under a hundred years D notice. I've never made a personal application for my records because it would apparently have to go through Scott Moncrieff.
78. I don't know if getting my records will do me any good. I can't even find a photograph of Dr Guthrie's on the internet despite the fact that it was a place that was open for decades. If you look it up on the internet it comes up "access denied". I've been told there are three stages of suppress those being 30 years, 50 years and 100 years. My records come under the 100 year rule.
79. Maybe under Freedom of Information I could get something but it's not something I am interested in because it's not going to have any details about what happened to me.

Lessons to be learned

80. I'd like the system to apologise to me, apologise for taking me from my mother, for assaulting me, for sexually, physically and emotionally abusing me, for locking me in a cupboard. If you did that today you would get locked up for ten years.
81. The people that did all this to me have got away with it and are now either dead or very old men.
82. I think they should have had this Inquiry 25 or 30 years ago. Mr LYI would be in his seventies or eighties now but I wouldn't want to see him punished now. Yes, I would have wanted him to suffer what I did but I wouldn't want an old man hurt in the way I was.
83. I don't know if it would have made a difference if I had had a social worker. The problem is that if you commit a serious crime you deserve to be locked up but not for stealing three lemonade bottles. And you don't deserve to be sexually, physically and emotionally abused.
84. I don't know how you should treat a child who commits a serious offence.
85. In Geilsland they had morals and Mr EZD was a good man. I ran away at sixteen because I was sick of it. Mr EZD said he could keep me till I was eighteen and even until I was 21 if he thought I was a danger. He beat me with kindness. He died last year
86. All I want is an apology for what happened to me for nothing more than stealing three ginger bottles.
87. 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.

GFA


Signed.....

Dated..... *7th March 2017*