

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of [HDT] [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is [HDT] [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1969. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born and grew up in [REDACTED] with my dad [REDACTED] my mum [REDACTED], my older brother [REDACTED], and my older sisters [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. My brother is about five years older than me. [REDACTED] is two years older than me, and [REDACTED] is about ten years older than me. My parents both worked. My dad worked in a quarry and my mum had a couple of cleaning jobs.
3. I didn't have much to do with my family. Growing up, there wasn't much emotion shown to me. I wasn't shown love but I wasn't unloved. A man was expected to be a man and not show emotion. You just had to get on with life.
4. Nobody had much money on those days. We had a couple of family holidays in a caravan. In the school holidays, I would have breakfast, then go out and play all day. I wouldn't come home again until I was hungry.
5. When I went to high school, I couldn't cope with it. It was the move from [REDACTED] Primary School a small village school to Kilsyth Academy, a huge school in Kilsyth. I

started not going to school, dogging school we called it. I was close to my sister [REDACTED] and we used to play truant from school together. She would lift my brother's bank card, get money, and we would go into Glasgow together.

6. Other times we would hang about in the woods with older boys who were dogging school. They would be smoking and drinking Buckfast wine but I wasn't interested in those things, I was an athlete at that age.
7. Although I was dogging school I got on well with my peers, I was in the football team. I used to help run the football team but I have always felt like a lone wolf. I think I frustrated the teachers because although I wasn't daft, my head was elsewhere and not focused on education.
8. I ended up in front of the truant officer. He sent letters to my parents but I would just burn them so he came to the house one evening. My dad went mad. Then I went to a local hearing about why I wasn't going to school. It wasn't the Children's panel, it was something to do with the local authority. I had to see a social worker too. The first social worker I saw was a guy called John who I couldn't be bothered talking to. After that, I saw a female social worker and she laid the cards on the table and told me that if I didn't go to school then I would go into care.
9. There was a building for Morses catalogues. Me and my mate sussed out how to break in to it and we started stealing to order. I had some of the stolen stuff in my house and my dad found it. My dad called the police about the stolen property. I never really forgave my dad for that although I can understand why he did it.
10. I had to see a psychological counsellor at the school. I met with him and he offered me a piece of plastic fruit. Trying to be funny I said, "I'll maybe have it later." That was a big mistake because he wrote that down. I got into a few scrapes, nothing major. I went to the Children's panel. I knew what was coming because the social worker told me I was going away for a wee holiday. It culminated in me being sent to Cardross Assessment Centre for a three week assessment. The social worker drove me to

Cardross, she was revelling in it because she had told me what would happen if I didn't go to school.

**Cardross assessment centre, [REDACTED] 1984**

11. I was sent to Cardross from the Children's panel when I was about fourteen. There was a mix of boys and girls but in different areas, with male and female members of staff. I don't think there were more than ten children there, but I mainly just had contact with the boys. The oldest kid would be fifteen, the youngest under ten years old. I can't remember names, I didn't keep in touch with anyone from my time in care.

**Routine at Cardross assessment centre**

*First day*

12. When you drove up the drive to Cardross, the building on the right was more modern than the building on the left which was an old house. On the ground floor there was quite a big open place where we went to eat sometimes. To the left was more of a lounge area. The social worker took me to an office then showed me to my bed. I was introduced to people but I can't remember more than names like [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I was only in Cardross for three weeks.

*Mornings and bedtime*

13. We got up about 8.00 am, had a wash, and wandered through for breakfast. At night we went to wash our faces when we got told it was time for bed. I would read for a bit and then put my light out when they came round to tell you lights out.

### *Mealtimes/Food*

14. We had cereals for breakfast during the week, we just helped ourselves. I think at weekends we went down to the hall for breakfast because we got a cooked breakfast that the staff brought over to us. The food was alright, you seemed to get more at weekends.

### *Washing/bathing*

15. I can't remember if the toilets were separate from the showers. I remember locking myself in the toilet when I heard that the staff member who abused me was looking for me again. I remember having showers but I don't remember having a bath. There wasn't any problems at shower time. It was a clean place and they encouraged you to keep clean.

### *Clothing/uniform*

16. I took my own clothes in with me to Cardross. They would check with me when I needed clothes washing and checked if I had enough underwear. My mother brought me fresh clothing when she came to visit.

### *School*

17. The classrooms were in an old sandstone house. You went up the stairs and they had a table with cartons of milk. You got various assessment things done. I think they were trying to work out if kids could read and write and whether they knew right from wrong but there was some education as well as these assessments. There was a mixture of rooms with different children in each one. It seemed to be separated based on age, with maybe some of the kids having learning difficulties. They had a big long shed, like an outhouse where you would do arty stuff.

### *Leisure time*

18. We got to kick a ball about, depending on the weather. We were supervised when we were outside so you couldn't just walk out. Some boys seemed to get more heavily supervised or watched than others but I don't know why. They sometimes did arty stuff in the hall in the evenings, we would watch TV, or sit about reading comics. The three weeks I was there passed quickly.
19. Some of the time in there I actually enjoyed. We had a wee disco one weekend. I got to play football, and there were pool tables. It wasn't all bad.

### *Chores*

20. You didn't have a chore list but you were encouraged to keep your own room tidy. There was a cleaner who came in during the day. You would notice that things like your comics had been tidied up.

### *Religious instruction*

21. I don't remember anything about religion at Cardross.

### *Trips/Holidays*

22. I remember going on a day trip to Helensburgh. About four of us went with two staff members. We had a walk about and had fish and chips. We sat looking out at the old sugar cane boat. I go to Helensburgh now with my children and sit at the same bit.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

23. I wasn't at Cardross for my birthday or Christmas.

### *Visits/Inspections/Review of Detention*

24. My parents did come to visit me. I was able to spend a couple of hours with them in the hall. I wasn't allowed out with them but I was allowed to take them a walk round the grounds and show them around.
25. I can remember the female social worker coming down. I don't remember her spending a lot of time with me. She spoke to the staff about what were they all going to be doing about me.

### *Healthcare*

26. There was no health assessment at Cardross. I can't remember anything about health care.

### *Running away*

27. I didn't try to run away from Cardross, I was only there for three weeks. Those three weeks passed quickly.

### *Bed Wetting*

28. I didn't suffer from bed wetting and I wasn't aware of anyone else having a problem with it at Cardross.

### *Discipline*

29. There was an older staff member, a big heavy guy, who was old school. If there was a problem he would tell us to calm the scenario down or he would end it with a boot up the arse. But none of them physically hit me for not doing something I was told. I remember hearing raised voices between staff and children but I never saw anyone being hit. It was more about being sent to your room as a form of keeping discipline.

### **Abuse at Cardross assessment centre**

30. I think it was the second or third night I was at Cardross, not long after dinner, I was watching TV. I went to my room and a guy came in. I can't remember his name. He was staff but I hadn't really spoken to him by that point. He was about five feet eight inches tall, medium build. He had the kind of Ayrshire accent they had in that area. He said that he had to search the room because of people bringing contraband in. Then he said he had to search me. He came close to me and I felt uncomfortable. He said I had to be strip searched but I said no. he said that he would have to get someone in if I had to be forced to be stripped. I think he was banking on me not wanting to have to get stripped in front of someone else. I stripped and leant over my bed while he spread my buttocks. He raped me. I felt a searing pain as I got pushed down onto the bed.
31. The next minute he told me to get dressed and clean myself up. He told me that he would let the other staff know I had been searched properly. He said that everybody got a proper search like that and that if I tried to make trouble or complain about it, I might have to get searched again. As an adult looking back that was the start of the psychological warfare, making you keep your mouth shut or you would get more abuse.
32. That night I was in pain, I was still in pain the next morning. I couldn't go down for breakfast. One of the staff came in and asked what was wrong. He was a heavy set guy, I think his name was Steve or Stevie. I just said to him that I had stomach pains. He gave me painkillers. I want to know if there are records of them giving me pain killers that day and what they said the painkillers were for.
33. They thought I might have Appendicitis so I got taken to Vale of Leven hospital, in Alexandria. An old doctor starting examining me, pressing me. I told him the pain was inside. He said he would have to examine me fully but I think he could see I was anxious. He asked if I wanted to get a nurse brought in but I said no. He got me to bend over and he must have seen that my anus was red. He asked if I had banged

into anything, he asked if I had any diarrhoea. I said no. He then told me to wait outside and asked the staff-member who brought me to hospital to go in and speak to him. I couldn't hear everything but I heard raised voices. I heard the staff-member saying, "It wasn't me." The doctor sounded angry, saying that I was just a small child.

34. After a while at hospital we went back to Cardross. The staff-member who took me to hospital left me to watch television and said he would have to fill out some paperwork about the hospital visit. The guy who abused me never came near me again after that. I don't know if I got a lucky escape. I don't know if he got a fright. I didn't tell anyone about that incident at the time.
35. Then I started noticing that other kids at Cardross would ask if I wanted to go into their room, saying that they had comics like Roy of the Rovers and Shoot. One of them got called [REDACTED] and at least two other kids asked me to do that. I can't remember any other names. The guy who abused me would come into their dormitory asking us if everything was alright.
36. Looking back, I think those other boys may have wanted me to visit their dormitory to look at comics so that there were two of us in the room in case my abuser came in and tried anything with them. He wouldn't be able to do anything with two of us there.
37. There was one wee kid called [REDACTED]. I didn't understand why he was in Cardross, I think it was because his mother was an alcoholic. One night someone said to [REDACTED] that the guy who had abused me was looking for him. [REDACTED] took off down the stairs and ran out into the grounds. I don't know why [REDACTED] did that but I can guess.
38. Once I overcame the notion of being a wee guy from a wee village, in that environment I toughened up. You were either the injured wildebeest or a hyena. You learned to look after yourself.



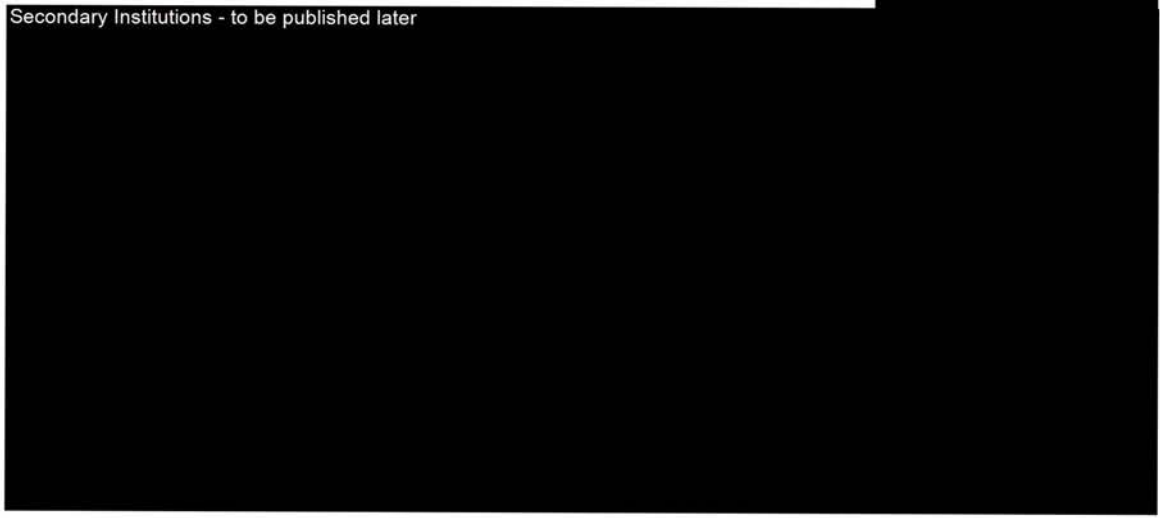
### **Leaving Cardross assessment centre**

39. After three weeks they had done their assessment on me and I went home. I didn't get to see the assessment report. The member of staff who had taken me to hospital said to me that if the Children's panel were prepared to let me back home, that I should go to school or I might end up somewhere more serious than Cardross with some really bad folk. I think he was trying to scare me in a positive way.
40. I did go back to my school, there was an arrangement where I could do a couple of classes a day to get back into it. However nothing had changed, I didn't want to go to school, and the school didn't want the potential disruption of having me there like that.
41. About two months after leaving Cardross for my assessment they had another Children's panel and it was decided to send me to Redheugh. I wasn't expecting that. My social worker had written a report saying that it wasn't working for me to be trusted going to school myself and saying that I was falling in with a bad crowd.

### **Redheugh Adolescent Unit, Kilbirnie 1984 to 1985**

42. I ended up in Redheugh a couple of months after leaving Cardross. I was still fourteen years old. I was there for about eleven months, just under a year.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later



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### **Leaving Redheugh Adolescent Unit**

83. It got to the point when I was school leaving age and as the reason for me being in Redheugh was not going to school it was decided that I should go home. I was supposed to get dropped off at home by the staff from Redheugh but the minibus broke down on the way so they gave me money for bus fare and I got the bus home.
84. Redheugh has now been turned into flats. I have driven past it but I have not been into the building.

### **Life after being in care**

85. I was back home but I had difficulty in settling in. Secondary Institutions - to be published later  
Secondary Institutions - I felt the guys I went to school with had turned their backs on me. Maybe their parents had told them to stay away from me because I had been in care,

I don't know. I got bitter and resentful. I got involved with some older guys who were a bit rough-and-ready. In 1986 I got remanded a couple of times in Young Offenders institutions and then I got a six month sentence.

86. I had a little motorbike that I got with money from selling my snooker table. I got stopped on my motorbike by the police. It turned out the bike was stolen and I had to pay the insurance company that had paid out in order to legally own it.

Secondary Institutions

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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88. When I was out of care I went on a few training courses and I got myself into a couple of scrapes. In ██████████ 1985 I had a week remand in Barlinnie prison. That was a wakeup call. When I came out, I still ran about with the same crowd. I wasn't into drink and drugs, I was just wild. In ██████████ 1986 I got a three week remand in Longriggend prison. In ██████████ 1986 I got sentenced to six months imprisonment in a Young Offenders Institution. I came out in ██████████ 1986 and from there I screwed the nut. I had a couple of landscaping jobs and then I worked in a factory. I got a flat with my girlfriend in 1992 and we got married in 1995.

89. I plodded on with life and then moved back to my home town ██████████. My dad had bought his council house but was moving into care so I bought the house from him. I started getting into security work and I now work as a security trainer. My

wife and I had two daughters. I have just been trying to get on with life and leave my demons behind. I have good days and bad days but you have got to get on with life.

## Impact

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92. I have a photograph of myself which I call the photograph of innocence. It is the last picture of me taken before I went into care. I am sitting up a tree at Lake of Montieth, wearing a yellow Scotland goalkeeper's top and playing with a rubber snake. It is the last picture of HDT the innocent boy.

93. My time in care didn't really affect my relationship with my siblings because there wasn't much of a relationship to begin with. My brother wasn't interested in football so we didn't have much in common. When I came home for weekend leave and when I came home for good, my oldest sister would be out with her pals or some boyfriend.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

94. I was managing to deal with the abuse I suffered by burying it but maybe things happen for a reason. I know there will always be trigger points that make me think about the abuse. I think if I had got a reply from the Salvation Army at the start when I contacted them, I might not have gone to the police.

95. I have been diagnosed as suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. I have often felt jealous of my wife and the close relationship she has with our daughters. I have never been able to get that close to my children, or anyone. The last time I hugged my daughters was in 2014 when my dad died.
96. The abuse I suffered has messed up my mind in all aspects of life. I have been offered a counsellor to speak to. I have spoken to people on the phone but I don't want to sit down and spill my guts because I would be worried about losing control. I don't have a problem dealing with physical pain but to talk about my emotional problems would be difficult. I realise it might help me in the long run, I might do it. My wife and my kids are my support.

### Reporting of Abuse

97. Secondary Institutions - to be published later I made a Secondary report about the abuse at Cardross. I had intended to keep that buried but it was eating away at me like a cancer.

98. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
99. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
100. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### Records

103. After I made a report of abuse to the police an officer told me that they believed the records from Cardross should be in the Mitchell Library in Glasgow. I need to get access to these records to confirm who was there at the time I was, and the names of the staff. I said to the police that Vale of Leven hospital must have archives of my visit for treatment but he said at the moment they have got nothing to prove I was at Cardross, let alone being admitted to hospital.

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### **Lessons to be learned**

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**Other information**

112. 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..... .....

Dated..... 25/05/2021 .....