

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EOH

Support person present: No

1. My name is EOH but my surname was EOH when I was born. My date of birth is 1970. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Aberdeen. I have a few vague memories of being with my mother before I was taken into care aged four. None of them are good. I can remember sleeping on a bed with no covers or sheet on the mattress. The window was open and I was cold. My mother had a pull out bed in the living room and I remember a man sleeping on it. I don't know who he was but he wasn't my father.
3. The other memory I have is being in the back of an articulated lorry eating an ice-cream. I didn't have a seatbelt on because the driver had to brake heavily and I lurched forward and my mum pulled me back and smacked me and told me to sit on my bum. That's all I can remember.
4. My brother, had a different father. When I went into care my brother, was eleven. He is five years older than me. I can remember something about him peeing in the sink. I also have a sister, . She was about nine when I went into care. An auntie told me that she thinks was born in a woman's hospital in Dundee. I don't know if that means my mum wasn't married at the time.

5. My mother is called [REDACTED]. She was born in 1945. I have been looking into my past and it would appear that my mother was married to a [REDACTED], seeing my father and another man who lived in Great Yarmouth at the same time. [REDACTED] was named on my birth certificate as my father but when I found out my mother was having relations with other men my mind started to wander. I did some research and DNA testing. I found out that a woman who is [REDACTED]'s cousin matched my DNA. So he is definitely my father. He died in 1999. I think he would have been eighty this year.
6. My mother is still alive. I tried to contact her on Facebook Messenger but she didn't reply. I then wrote her an email, printed it and went to her front door with it. I had a lot of questions about my background and where I came from. She answered some of my questions but what she told me was lies because I now have my social work records. I then wrote a more in-depth letter to her and included the information I had from the social work records. She has now completely blocked me from having contact with her. I'm not interested in having a relationship with my mother. I just wanted her to answer my questions.
7. I got into contact with family members from her side. I matched with some cousins so they asked her some of my questions and asked her to tell me what I was asking. However, she ended up blocking them too.
8. I have no memories of my brother and sister. I literally have no memories of any other kids. My mother had a big hairstyle which was probably a beehive. However, growing up, I didn't even have an image of my mother's face in my head. I can't remember any cuddles or kisses.
9. When I was taken into care, we stayed in [REDACTED] in Aberdeen. According to my records, it says that my mother had gone to the social work department telling them that they needed to take me into care because she needed to go out to work. The social work department asked her if she had family members who could look after me while she worked, she had no and that she had no feelings for me. The records say that they felt I was under threat so they decided to take me into care.

10. I can remember the day I was handed over. I had been given a new jacket and a pair of shoes. I don't know whose car it was but I was taken out of a car and handed over outside the court house in Aberdeen. I can remember being hysterical. That's all I can remember from that day. It was the beginning of [REDACTED] 1974.
11. I have been told by my father, [REDACTED], sister that I was actually taken from a house in [REDACTED] which is where we stayed. However, [REDACTED]'s sister told me that I was taken away from my father's house in [REDACTED] when I was visiting them. She said I was screaming and kicking. My mother confirmed in her email that it was [REDACTED] that I was taken from. As this isn't stated in my records, I do not know who is right.
12. My mother told me that it was my father who put me into care, not her, and that he went to a phone box and called social services. She said that my father didn't want her to have me. However, that's not what it says in my records. That's why it's all conflicted in my mind.
13. I can't remember being taken away from any house but I do remember being handed over. I have no memories of getting in the car or arriving at the [EOI-EOJ] house.

The [EOI-EOJ], Bucksburn, Aberdeen

14. [EOI-EOJ] lived at number [REDACTED] in Bucksburn. When I moved in, there was [EOJ], [EOI] and [REDACTED]. As far as I'm led to believe, [REDACTED] was there before me but I don't know how long she had been there. She's a year younger than me but she is slightly slow for her age.
15. [EOJ] and [EOI] were both overweight and both had dark hair. I think [EOJ] was born in 1946 and [EOI] was in 1943.
16. When you arrived at the house, you walked down a set of steep stairs to get into the back door. It was used more than the front door. You would walk into the dining room,

with the kitchen on the left, then it opened up to the living room. There were two bedrooms upstairs, a box room and a bathroom. The front door led out onto a communal pathway. There were other houses facing the house. The house had the vents that used to blow out hot air, and I can remember sitting drying my hair as a kid.

- 17. I shared a bedroom with [REDACTED] After a while, another kid came in. He was called [REDACTED]. We all ended up sharing a bedroom. [REDACTED] is younger than me, maybe about three years younger, but I don't know for sure.
- 18. I overheard [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] talking when I was a child saying they were both unable to have children. I think they had had foster children before me because [REDACTED] used to talk about a boy called [REDACTED]. She would say he was their first foster child. I don't know him but his son was killed in Aberdeen. I can't remember the last name.
- 19. We moved from Bucksburn to a house in Bridge of Don when I was in primary five.

Routine at [REDACTED]s

First memories of the [REDACTED]

- 20. My first real memory is of [REDACTED] wetting the bed. I can remember [REDACTED] putting a nappy on her one night. I'm guessing I hadn't been there for very long because I said to [REDACTED] something like, "you might have to put one on me because I might wet the bed". She took me over her knee, smacked on the bare backside and said "you will not be getting a nappy on, you will not wet the bed because if you do this is what will happen to you again".

Mornings/bedtime

- 21. I can't really remember the day to day routine but I'm guessing there would have been. I can't remember getting up in the morning. The bedroom was decorated in Disney wallpaper, I think it was Bambi. We had proper bedding and toys. They had an intercom upstairs in our bedroom. Sometimes we would giggle and carry on. [REDACTED]

and [REDACTED] used to argue all the time. [EOJ] [REDACTED] and [EOI] [REDACTED] would be downstairs watching TV. I can remember hearing the theme song to Coronation Street. When I hear it now, it takes me right back to then. We would hear [EOJ] [REDACTED] and [EOI] [REDACTED] saying "shut up" on the intercom. If they told us to shut up more than three times then I knew there would be trouble.

22. [EOI] [REDACTED] would come upstairs and he would give us a beating with the slipper or the belt. I learned the first time I got the slipper for carrying on not to do it again. I learned to go to bed and be quiet and to let [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] giggle and argue because it would be those two who would the belt or the slipper. [EOJ] [REDACTED] and [EOI] [REDACTED] could hear everything we were saying so I kept quiet. I used to be just as scared waiting for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to get it, watching them screaming being smacked, so I would hide under the covers. It was always [EOI] [REDACTED] who dished out the slipper or the belt.

Washing and bathing

23. We had a bath once a week and we were all in the same bath. When we moved to the house in Bridge of Don, it had a shower. We weren't allowed to have one every day but we were then allowed to have our own bath or shower.
24. We used to get our finger nails clipped downstairs and our ears cleaned with cotton buds. [EOJ] [REDACTED] used to poke the ear bud into your ear, making you cough, because she had pushed it in too far. She would put your head on her lap and if it wasn't in the right position she would yank it.

Food and Mealtimes

25. I think [EOJ] [REDACTED] fed us 'chipper' chips from the chip shop all the time. One night I said to [EOJ] [REDACTED] "oh you're cooking your own chips, I like your own chips better". She made them but she burnt them and made me eat them. They were cinder black. She said something along the lines of, "let's see how you like my chips now." I had no choice but to eat them or I would have got the hiding of my life. I can remember saying that to her so I'm assuming we got chip shop chips a lot.

26. We had a chicken roast dinner on a Sunday but I can't remember much about day to day. I can't remember having breakfast. We always sat at a table and chairs and never had food on our laps.
27. As a young child, I can't remember her food but as I got older, I remember it was bad. If you didn't eat the food you would have been put to bed and got no supper. You wouldn't get anything else to eat for the rest of the night.

School

28. I went to Hillocks Primary which was about [REDACTED] from where we lived in Bucksburn. I think I started in [REDACTED] 1975. I walked to school with a friend who stayed in the same street. She was called [REDACTED] too. I would walk up to meet her.
29. I can remember singing songs from Grease with my friends in the playground. One of my friends used to let me try her shoes on because she had the ones that I really wanted. I have some good memories of singing in one of the Easter concerts. I can remember being really proud of myself. I also remember Christmas parties. There was a big tree in the hall. I can't remember school work or teachers.
30. When we moved to Bridge of Don I went to Upper Westfield Primary. I think it was 1980. After leaving primary, I went to Bridge of Don Academy. It was great, I loved going to school. I was getting out of the house and I could be myself. I was a bit of a class clown and liked making my friends laugh. I was with my friends. I loved being with my friends and walking home from school. It was my happy time. As soon as you walked through that front door you didn't know what was coming.
31. [REDACTED] EOJ never gave me praise. It just wasn't in her nature to be like that. The only time she made a comment was when I got my school reports home and she would tell me that I had to stop speaking in class.

Clothing

32. There were no qualms in terms of us being mistreated by not being dressed properly either. I think when we were younger, she liked that she could dress us up. I think the clothes were all new. As we got older, she would tell us that we would wear what was bought for us and that she didn't care that it wasn't fashionable. When I got older, I was called a 'mink' by the other kids at school. So obviously we were clothed but in the other kids eyes' I looked like a mink. After we moved to Bridge of Don, I think that's when I started to feel like a mink at school.

Healthcare

33. There was one episode when we lived in Bucksburn, I had been given the little box room on my own. I can remember being sick constantly, just all the time. I don't know why I was sick. One of [EOJ] and [EOI]'s friends worked for a pharmaceutical company and he told them that I should see a doctor. I can remember a doctor came in to see me. I ended up in hospital for two days. I can't remember how I got there, whether they took me or not. My records say that I had a gastro something and constipation.
34. The box room was tiny, the only thing that fitted in there was a single bed. I don't know how long I was in there. There was a set of bunk beds and a single bed in the other room. I was in the bottom bunk for a while. I can't remember who was above me or who was in the single bed.
35. I can't remember going to the doctors in Bucksburn. I had lots of problems growing up with my knees. They were sore a lot. I was back and forth to the doctor about that a lot. I would go to the doctor in Bridge of Don but [EOJ] wouldn't come with me.
36. I can remember going to the dentist once in Bucksburn. I was being given a filling and I flinched because the dentist hadn't given me enough anaesthetic. He said "you better just stay still and let me get this done". It made me scared forever. From then on I was terrified of dentists. I can't remember his name but he was [EOJ]'s friend.

37. The dentist moved away. I can remember we went away for the weekend to Inverness and she was going to visit him. When we got to his house, he wasn't in. We waited for what felt like hours in the car for him to come back. Looking back, I think she was obsessed with him.
38. When I started my period, I literally didn't know what to do with the sanitary towel. I had the sticky bit stuck to me then I worked it out. [REDACTED] didn't even tell me what to do. I felt like an idiot.

Chores

39. I was about twelve when I had to start ironing for the whole house. We were meant to be going to church one day and I can remember there was a screaming match upstairs with [REDACTED] shouting at [REDACTED] because I had ironed his shirt wrong and got lines on the sleeve. She came down shouting "look what trouble you've caused" and told me I had to do it right.
40. I cleaned the house from top to bottom on a Saturday, everybody's bedrooms, and the bathrooms. I started at half past eight and it took me until 12.30 on a Saturday afternoon. I had enough time to get washed and go out with my friends in the afternoon. I did the cleaning until I was about seventeen. It was always just me. I had to mop the floors and polish. I had to make sure that everybody's dirty washing was taken downstairs to the laundry. The only room I didn't do was their room. You couldn't actually get into it as it was disgusting. It was filthy. There were clothes lying and dirty underwear lying on the floor for weeks. There were empty bottles of fizzy juice at her bedside table and piles of papers at the side of the bed. I never went into that room.
41. I would never take any of my friends back to the house because it was embarrassing. There were two dogs and three cats as well, it just had that unclean smell. The only room that was clean was mine. I always made sure I cleaned properly so that it didn't cause any problems.

42. We got pocket money from about £2.50 up to £5. I started working when I was thirteen. I saved enough money up to buy my own school uniform. I worked in a clothes shop in Aberdeen market. After that, I got a job at the beachfront in a café. I worked there until I got married. Then I got a job in a jewellers. I asked my boss in the café for extra hours so I ended working in the summer holidays full time when I was fifteen just to get out the house, I had to keep myself sane, not hearing the screaming all the time.

Religion

43. [EOJ] and [EOI] were religious. We went to Newhills church in Bucksburn. We went to Sunday school. I absolutely hated it and didn't pay any attention. I don't know if they were really religious or if it was more of a day out for her so that she could meet people and show off how many children she had now.

Holidays and trips

44. We went on holiday to a caravan site when I was nine or ten. I think it was in John O'Groats. At this point, they had another foster kid called [REDACTED]. She came when we still lived in Bucksburn. She was their little princess. They absolutely adored her and they made it obvious to the point where I didn't like her, I hated her. She got everything and we got nothing. She got love and affection. She got anything she wanted. She was only a little tot when they got her so in my mind she was the baby they could never have. I was about eight upwards when [REDACTED] came to live with us, she was little, maybe only about ten months old.
45. [EOJ] and [EOI] used to go to the clubhouse and leave me to look after the other kids. We were put to bed and it was dark. I could hear the music blasting out from the clubhouse, it was Amy Stewart's Knock on Wood. I could hear people walking past the caravan drunk but I had that initial feeling of wondering who it was and if they were going to try to get in.
46. I was probably a little bit horrible to [REDACTED] on that holiday. [REDACTED] hated daddy long legs. [EOI] and [EOJ] were at the club house so we were sent to the chip shop to have

our supper. I was given the money and told to get the kids their supper. There were daddy long legs flying around in the chip shop and because I knew [REDACTED] hated them, I was catching them, pulling their legs off and throwing them in her face. I now it was cruel but I hated her so much for getting everything and us getting nothing. It was just my way of dealing with it. I don't think she told them.

47. One time, they took us to one of the ski centres which had the ski lifts. It wasn't far from Aberdeen, maybe an hour away. One of [REDACTED] EOJ's friends were there too. We were all excited because we were getting to go on the chair lift. It was me, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. When we got there, [REDACTED] EOJ said to the three of us that we had to wait in the car and not move. They took [REDACTED] out and up on the ski lift. I can remember the three of us sitting in the car roaring and crying saying "I hate her, she's horrible". It was even more reason to hate [REDACTED], but it wasn't her fault. They were really cruel.
48. I can remember going to the cinema once with [REDACTED] EOJ. It was me and [REDACTED]. I'm not sure if [REDACTED] was there at the time. We went to see Dumbo. I don't like that film for some reason. I haven't ever watched it again.
49. [REDACTED] EOJ wasn't really a person who would take you out places to play. If she took you out it was only to someone else's house to go and see a friend. It wasn't like she would take you to the park or to the carnival. She would squeeze your hands before you went into their house really tight and say "don't ask for anything, don't ask for a drink or biscuit, anything at all". It got to the stage where we would get out the car, she would glower at me and I would know not to ask for anything. If we were offered anything in the house, you would always have to look at [REDACTED] EOJ first and she would say "of course you can". It happened in every house we visited. She had two faces. She was like a split personality and knew how to fool everybody.

Other family

50. There were three aunts who were called Auntie [REDACTED], Auntie [REDACTED] and Auntie [REDACTED]. They were [REDACTED] EOJ's cousins. They were gentle and kind. I loved going to

visit them, you knew that they loved you. I loved those three aunties, they were really classy ladies. There was just something about them that I loved.

51. We once went on a trip to a 'but n' ben' in Inch, it was more like a big farmhouse. I can remember the freedom of being out in the fields playing with the old tractors. It was Auntie [REDACTED], Uncle [REDACTED], [REDACTED] [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] two daughters.
52. [REDACTED] behaved differently around her own family. She wouldn't raise her voice when she was in their company. She was like a completely different person in their company. You would chance your luck and go out a bit further so she wouldn't be able to use her screaming voice to get you to come back. She would wait until she was out of sight of other people and she would grab you by the scruff of the neck and say "don't you ever do that again". She was just the same when she was with [REDACTED] family for some reason.

Christmas and Birthdays

53. When we moved to Bridge of Don, there was a point when she started to get more and more children. It was for more money. We had birthday cake. On Christmas Day we got a black bag which had its own space on the sofa. They toys were in the bag. I can't remember specific birthday presents from them. I once got given a little jewellery box with a ballerina from an auntie. We moved from Bucksburn when I was Primary five.

Visits and Inspections

54. My social worker was a nun. She was called Mary McDonald. I remember being taken to the Catholic Church in the city centre to see her. She stayed in the sleeping quarters of the church. I can't remember ever having a one to one with any social worker. [REDACTED] was always there. It was never just Mary and me. I would never say anything in front of [REDACTED] because I knew what would happen. I can't remember what I said at the visit. If there were other visits I would have just said everything was fine.

Adoption

55. The only time I remember a social worker coming to speak to me was during the adoption. I was christened in 1982 and told that I was now adopted by them. They had changed my name to [EOI-EOJ]. However, my records state that the adoption was not finalised in [REDACTED] 1984. In my mind, [REDACTED] was adopted by [EOJ] and [EOI] first.
56. The social worker told me that the reason I was adopted last was because [REDACTED] was in care with them before me and her mother wouldn't agree to it but when I read my paperwork I realised that wasn't entirely true. The day I was christened, [REDACTED] was too.
57. In my records it says that Mary McDonald, the social worker, was holding up my adoption. It appears that there was a lot of controversy about my adoption. The records say, "*Mary McDonald has a very uneasy feeling about [EOI]*". It stated that she felt that the social work should be in contact with my school to ask about me. I must have said something to her but I have no recollection of it.
58. My records state that it was taken out of her hands and passed onto senior social workers. However, senior social workers put the adoption through. It says social workers visited and they thought there was nothing wrong with [EOI] and that Mary McDonald was being overly cautious. The notes say that Mary McDonald wrote a letter stating that she was unhappy with the decision and resigned. I gave this information to the police.
59. As a child I always wondered if I had made it up. However, when I saw it in black and white that Mary McDonald had an uneasy feeling it made me realise I was right. May McLennan took over after Mary McDonald resigned. I think I only ever spoke to May McLennan once. No one ever spoke to me and asked me how things were going. In that house, even if a social worker had come and asked me, I would never be left alone with anyone. [EOJ] made sure that no child was left alone with a social worker.

60. The social workers came to the house quite a lot. I was made to clean the house and make the living room spotless. There was always coffee and fancy cakes. My memory is only of ^{EOJ} and the social worker in the living room. We were always told to get out and play. So we were never privy to any conversations that went on.
61. Not many people came to visit the house. I can remember her friend, my Auntie and her husband , coming to the house once. I remember Auntie painting my nails for me. Apart from that not a lot of people came to visit her. She would go to people's houses more than they would come to her.

Running away

62. I thought about running away all the time. I was too much of a wimp. I would lie in my bed and cry thinking about it. I knew when I got caught, the fear of being on the other end of her. I would say to myself "I wish I was dead". I said that a lot when I was kid.

Discipline

63. There weren't any rules as such. I think we just all learned from a very early age that we had to behave. I learned very early on to do what I was told and not to say anything because the repercussions were worse. The boy, , was very rebellious as a kid. He would say things like, "I'm not eating it". So he would get a hiding, the belt was used, the slipper was used, fists were used. and both got more physical abuse than me.

Abuse in foster care with the ^{EOI-EOJ}

64. After I got the belt once I learned very quickly that I didn't want that to happen again. I really knuckled down, I was really quiet as a child. I would hear people saying that I had a chip on my shoulder because I was so quiet and I wouldn't really speak to anyone because I was trying to protect myself. I didn't want to be hit by the belt or the slipper. I didn't get as much physical abuse as the rest of the kids but it affected me seeing them getting that done to them.

65. EOJ [REDACTED]'s voice alone when she screamed was enough for us to know "uh oh". There was no structure, I think as kids we savvied it out quickly. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] would get a hiding on a daily basis. It was literally on a daily basis. EOJ [REDACTED] would use the belt, slipper or his fist. It would be for capering or stealing a biscuit or something. You had to ask for something and if you were told no then you couldn't take it. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] didn't care. EOJ [REDACTED] had her bit in the fridge with her own cheese, juice, ham etc. We were told not to touch it, that kind of thing. So that's why they would get smacked or a hiding.
66. She was the kind of person who would actually count the chocolate biscuits in the tin to check if anyone had taken any, then we would all be sat down and asked who did it. For some reason, she actually believed that it wasn't me, because it was always [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
67. EOJ [REDACTED] would scream in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s faces, shake them, she would then hit them wherever she could, it would be wherever her hand landed, it didn't matter. She used a slipper as well. I was petrified by the screaming. They would be grabbed by the scruff of the neck, punched on the arms and slapped on their bottoms. It was as if she was fighting with someone. It was so aggressive.
68. On a couple of occasions, in Bridge of Don, I witnessed [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] start fighting and EOJ [REDACTED] would egg them on and say things like, "go on punch her, [REDACTED] kick him". They would literally be on the living floor tearing chunks of hair out. She would sit egging them on laughing. She would say "do it better". It was really scary. To me that was evil. Sometimes EOJ [REDACTED] would see that happening, other times it would be during the day when he was at work. One time [REDACTED] got a black eye. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] fought with each other all the time. It put me under so much stress as it was so aggressive. I would try to tell them to 'shut up' and to stop it as if they found out we would all get it. They went hammer and tongs with each other. I didn't fight, I just kept back from it all.
69. I got my own room in the house in the Bridge of Don so I spent the majority of the time in my bedroom. I didn't want to be anywhere near it. Hearing the screaming in my bedroom was scary enough.

70. The first smack I got over the nappy and then the incident in the bed with the belt was enough for me to learn to keep quiet. [REDACTED] EOJ was evil. She was really wicked. It was her tongue for me. That was enough to keep me in tow. Her tongue was cruel and sometimes that hurt more. She would tell me I was a "little bitch" and that I was horrible. The verbal abuse was every day. If you got a smack, it was over and done with but the things she said stayed in your head forever. You couldn't go a day without [REDACTED] EOJ losing her mind and screaming something at me. We would all get screamed at. She would say "you're all little bastards".
71. She would just go from zero to a hundred. She had a very short temper, you had to be careful how you worded things to her, the fuse would go, the look on her face would change, and you would know you were in trouble. She would get angry if a shoe was left lying in the lobby and she had tripped over it, she would go berserk.
72. I would be coming home from school walking up the street and I would hear her screaming. I used to think "oh God what's happened?" I would think will she pick on me when I go in the front door? That was the constant fear.
73. One summer's day I was out playing in the garden with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] EOJ screamed at the top of her voice for me to get back into the house. I went in and back upstairs, she was screaming and swearing that the bedroom was a mess. She said I was the eldest and that I should be looking after it. She told me that if I didn't buck up my ideas that I would go with what I came with. Then she went to the cupboard and took out a fairy tale book that didn't have the front or back hardcover on it, a big white t-shirt with a hole in the middle of it and said "this is what you came to me with and this what you'll go back if you don't buck up". I was sobbing. For years I believed that was my stuff. She left the bedroom and left me to tidy it up. I can remember crying as I picked up the toys.
74. There was one night, it was a dark winter's night, and [REDACTED] EOJ asked me to go to my Auntie [REDACTED]'s house to drop something off. I was probably in primary five at the time.

Auntie [REDACTED] was married to [REDACTED] brother. I loved her as she was so quiet and gentle. I would walk round the school that I went to as she lived [REDACTED].

75. [REDACTED] told me to drop the thing in to my Auntie [REDACTED] and then go to the shops and wait for her and that she would pick me up. So I dropped it off at Auntie [REDACTED]s, went to the shops and stood there and stood there waiting for her. I cried as I didn't know what to do. I knew if I went home and she went to the shops and I wasn't there, I'd get it. I knew if I went to my Auntie [REDACTED]s and she goes to the shops and I'm not there, I'm going to get it. So I waited, I don't know for how long. She eventually drove up, opened her car door and laughed "hahaha I forgot about you, I went and done my cleaning job". I didn't know what the best thing to do was so I just stood there. She was evil.
76. Even in 1988, when I was eighteen, she hit me. I came from work and as soon as I opened the front door, I could tell by her face that she was in a bad mood, she said "I'm sick of this house, it's a fucking mess". I told her "I'm working full time, there's other people who can help you now, why should I have to do it?" It was the first time I had spoken back to her. It was still my job to clean the whole house from top to bottom on a Saturday morning. I said "I don't want any supper, I'm going out tonight." as it was my friend's eighteenth birthday.
77. I went upstairs to have a shower and get ready. She came after me, grabbed me by the hair, whizzed me round and slapped me across the face. She took her rings off her fingers, threw them into my face and said "you're nothing but a little slut, see these, they were going to you in my will when I die, but you're getting fuck all now". She stormed out the bedroom. One of her friend's was in the house and she came up to the bedroom and asked if I was okay. I managed to compose myself and got ready. I went out to a friend's eighteenth birthday party. I was told to be home on the last bus.
78. When I got back to the house she had locked me out and I was left to stand outside chapping on the door for an hour. Her bedroom was above the door and the window was open so she would have heard me. I heard her saying to [REDACTED] "you better go and let that fucking the slut in". I had stood outside for an hour. I was too scared to go to

my boyfriend [REDACTED]'s house because then his mum would have been involved. I was eighteen and I was still scared of her.

79. I think [REDACTED] was scared of her as well. I've seen her hit him too. She would punch him. I saw her take her plate of food and literally throw it at him across the table. The majority of the time he would just get up and walk away.

Other foster children

80. We moved to a bigger house in Bridge of Don in 1982/83. The house was in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in Bridge of Don. There were three storeys. It was me, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. The house didn't have any heating on the top floor. I slept on the top floor so I bought myself an electric blanket. It was fine apart from always being filthy and messy. I lived there until I left in 1989.
81. It felt like hundreds of children went through that house. It was unbelievable. In one bedroom there were two sets of bunk beds so it had four kids in one room at a time. Sometimes there was also a travel cot for kids who came to stay in that room. I was lucky that I got a bedroom to myself. There could be up to eight people at any time.
82. There was a boy called [REDACTED] who came into care when we lived in the second house. [REDACTED] was the same age as me and went to Bridge of Don Academy. He wore glasses and looked a little bit nerdy. [REDACTED] EOJ [REDACTED]'s tongue was evil to him.
83. She made me go to a visit at [REDACTED]'s grandparent's house. She wouldn't go and she made me go and supervise the visit. He was telling them EOJ [REDACTED] would shout at him all the time. I was given the silent treatment the whole time. I was so uncomfortable. I just sat there quietly because I was too scared to speak to any adult. I don't have any memories of him after that so I don't know if he was taken away or not.
84. Another girl called [REDACTED] came to live there too. She was one or two years older than me. We ended up sharing a room. I had always wanted a big sister, someone to confide in. I loved her to bits. I thought she was great.

85. One night, there was a knock on the door and I heard screaming and shouting. I could see [REDACTED] had come home drunk. She was practically unconscious. She was wearing a white pinafore and had messed herself. It was all up her back. [REDACTED] took her in and took her by the hair of the head, dragged her through the lobby into our bedroom and threw her on the bed and covered her up with a quilt and left her. I had to sleep in that bedroom that night with [REDACTED] covered in faeces. I cried because she should have put her in the shower, treated her with some dignity. It was humiliation for [REDACTED].
86. Some kids would come for a night, others would be there for anything up to six months. [REDACTED] would take babies from a couple of days old right up to [REDACTED] age and she was a couple of years older than me. We were often made to look after the younger ones.
87. After we moved to the bigger house another girl called [REDACTED] came. She was younger than me. There was a boy called [REDACTED] too. There was lots of other children in between. Every single one of these children saw the things that went on.
88. [REDACTED] also child minded some kids. There was a girl called [REDACTED] who had cerebral palsy. She was only three or four. I don't think she could speak. She would even smack her. I saw her doing that. My stomach would turn. The parents would come for her and [REDACTED] would say "oh she's been wonderful today". It still plays on my mind that I couldn't say anything. I was seventeen by then. I should have been able to say that she shouldn't be doing that.
- [REDACTED]
89. They adopted a boy called [REDACTED]. He had cerebral palsy. He was about four when he came to stay. I was sixteen at the time. He couldn't speak and wore callipers on his legs to help him stand. [REDACTED] would take his nappy off and smack him because he had dirtied himself. He couldn't help it. He couldn't protect himself. He would get excited and jump up and down. He would do something with his hands when he was excited. [REDACTED] would go nuts and scream at him to shut up. She would smack him

on the fingers or dunt him in the arm and tell him to stop doing it. His eyes would well up and his lip would quiver. It broke my heart.

90. She taught [REDACTED] sign language but it was to say things like "fuck off". She had a friend whose daughter who would come over to visit sometimes. [REDACTED] just loved her. She had a big chest and she taught [REDACTED] to sign "big boobs". [REDACTED] and the friend thought it was hilarious. I would look at her and walk away in disgust.
91. I met [REDACTED] when I was sixteen. I knew he was the man I loved and saw him as my protector. [REDACTED] would come to stay in the house. We weren't allowed to sleep in the same bed so I would sleep in the living room and give him my bed. The house had three stories.
92. [REDACTED] slept in one bedroom and [REDACTED] slept in the one across from it. On a Saturday night, I would sleep in the living room. [REDACTED] would manage to get out of his bed, crawl along the lobby floor and fall down the stairs. This happened every Saturday night for about six weeks. I would be the one to help him up and console him and put back in bed. I would ask her to put a stair gate on. [REDACTED] would never get out of her bed to help him. He was someone who couldn't protect himself.
93. After they adopted the four of us, she continued to foster. [REDACTED] adopted [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] too. After I got married, she adopted another handicapped child called [REDACTED]. She had to do it privately through the court. That would have been 1991-1992.

Sexual abuse by [REDACTED]

94. When we lived in Bucksburn, there was one night [REDACTED] was out, [REDACTED] took me out my bed and into his bed with him. He was naked from the waist down, he touched me and rubbed his penis up and down my leg. [REDACTED] came home opening the front door and he told me to get back into my bed. That's the only time I can remember that happening. I'm hoping it only happened that time. I was anything from four to six. The way [REDACTED] was there is no way I would ever have spoken to her.

95. He would try to give me a kiss and put his tongue in my mouth. He would do that all the time. I don't say I hate anyone, but I hate him. He was so sleekit in what he tried to do. I used to think it was just me but I have spoken to [REDACTED] and she has said the same thing.

Sexual abuse – other foster children

96. I'm still close with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] now. [REDACTED] went through the same thing with him. She told me that [REDACTED] used to wrestle her and he would fall onto the sofa taking her with him and he would have a hard on every time.
97. I can remember coming home from work one day and a girl called [REDACTED] was gone. I was told from other kids in the house that she had accused [REDACTED] of sexual assault and the social workers had taken her away. I think this was in 1986. As far as I know nothing was done about that.
98. There was another girl called [REDACTED] who stayed with us for a while. She was about seventeen or eighteen. I can remember being at home one day and there was a big hullabaloo. I could hear [REDACTED] screaming and shouting. I listened and I heard her saying to him "if I find out you've touched anyone, I'll take a knife and I'll literally stab you to death". I found out from the other kids downstairs that [REDACTED] had accused [REDACTED] of sexually assaulting her. There was a girl called [REDACTED] who told [REDACTED] mum that she hated [REDACTED] because of what he did to her. She didn't say anything else because she got upset but I can surmise what she meant.
99. It makes my stomach churn to think how many times he's probably done something to [REDACTED] because she still lives with him. [REDACTED] was more vocal with him which tells me she hated him for a reason. When I went to visit them on a Sunday before I cut them off, I literally wouldn't speak to [REDACTED]. I wouldn't even say hello to him because I hated him so much. He knew I hated him.
100. [REDACTED] would have been capable of meeting someone and having her own house. They stopped all of that. She had met a guy at the Special Olympics. When I left the house,

██████ was basically EOJ ██████ slave. EOJ ██████ would be out visiting her friends and ██████ was left with the kids. EOJ ██████ and EOJ ██████ were getting older and ██████ was becoming more hard work so they kept ██████ in their grasp. I think that is why ██████ has had the life she has had.

101. Everyone thought they were wonderful for taking kids in. There was only a couple of people who knew what they were really like and they treated their kids badly so it didn't matter.
102. ██████ entered them in a competition on the TV programme ██████. They once won a two week holiday to the Maldives. It was a prize for being 'the best parents'. That was in 1996 to 1997. ██████ was left to look after the children while they were away.
103. They went holiday again when I had my son. It was around 1996. They had a set of twins who were in foster care. ██████ was looking after them. I went over to the house and the twins were in high chairs screaming. ██████ was screaming at them to be quiet. She said she was sick of them. I told her to take her own kids back to her house and told her that I would look after the kids. I changed their nappies and let them play on the floor. She had had them in the high chair for God knows how long.
104. My foster brother, ██████ disappeared in around 1993. He has issues. He was a drug addict. EOJ ██████ became softer with ██████ as he got older.
105. I had no opportunity to speak to a social worker about what was going on in the house. I have no recollection of speaking to a social worker one to one. I've spoken to ██████ and ██████ about this. ██████ told me that he remembers on one occasion a social worker came to visit and they were getting EOJ ██████ point of view before him. The social worker said to him "I hear you've been a bad boy". The social worker was getting her point of view before the child. I don't think that is the right way to do it.
106. I wouldn't have known how to go about speaking to the police. I didn't even tell friends at school because I was too scared they would tell their parents and that it would get

back to [EOJ]. I never spoke to a teacher either. I didn't feel I had that choice. There was nobody there, nobody asked me if I was okay. In all that time, nobody asked me that question in fifteen years.

Leaving the [EOI-EOJ]

107. I was in care with them until I left to get married in 1989. I have no happy memories of those years. [redacted] and I were head over heels in love and engaged for three years. I wasn't allowed to wear the dress or veil I wanted for my wedding. I wasn't able to have any friends there. [EOJ] still had control over me even at that age.

Life after care

108. We got married in [redacted] 1989. [redacted] and I wanted to get married in a registrar's office but [EOJ] wouldn't allow it. We got married in Newhills Church. We had to stay with them for eight weeks after we got married because the council hadn't given us a flat. One day [redacted] had enough and phoned the council. We got keys to a flat the next day.
109. I would tell [redacted] dribs and drabs but I kept the majority of it to myself. It wasn't until 1999 that I started to tell him more. He had been in the house so he had seen the way they treated the kids. He had a good idea of what was going on.
110. I had my son [redacted] in 1992. We bought a house in 1996. I had my daughter [redacted] five years later. They have the same [redacted]. I wanted to call my daughter [redacted] but my husband liked the name [redacted]. After I had [redacted], [EOJ] didn't speak to me for three weeks. I didn't know why. I found out eight months later when I got my birth certificate that my mother's name is [redacted]. I would never have called my daughter [redacted] if I had known. [EOJ] thought that I had named [redacted] after my mother. [EOJ] hadn't told me anything about my biological parents when I was in care. In the last year [redacted] knows everything.

111. I stopped speaking to [EOJ] and [EOI] in 2002. I cut myself off from them after [EOI] phoned to complain that I hadn't given [EOJ] a proper Mother's Day present. I told them that I was done. I was shaking like a leaf. I expected [EOJ] to come over and give me a telling off but she didn't. I never saw her again. As the weeks, then the months and the years went on it was a massive relief. It was the best thing I ever did. I wish [redacted] and I had run away and got married in 1989 but I wasn't strong enough to do it then. About a year ago, I saw [EOI] in the supermarket, I actually hid behind [redacted] and I was shaking. It'll always be there.
112. I ask myself why I kept going back to visit and it was because I didn't have the courage to cut the ties. I would never let them babysit my kids. [redacted] and I made a pact that when we had kids we wouldn't go out and that we would look after them ourselves. If we ever did go out, [redacted] mum and dad would look after them. I didn't trust the [EOI-EOJ].
113. I did cleaning jobs when the kids were small. When [redacted] started primary school, I did a book keeping course so now I work for [redacted] company doing the books.
114. My brother and sister and I call it the 'house of horrors'. I can remember going to visit them after I was married, there were police officers in the house regularly having cups of tea. [redacted] and I felt it wasn't right so we would often take ourselves away from the situation.

Reporting of abuse

115. After I spoke to the Inquiry in around July 2020, the police contacted me within a couple of days. I went to the police station to give a statement. I was there for about four hours. I provided the names of other children who were in care with the [EOI-EOJ]. I think the police are still trying to trace some of the children to get a statement from them. I haven't heard anything else from them.
116. I have told the police that we are running out of time, [EOJ] is now dead and we don't know how long [EOI] has left. I think the police could be doing more to keep us

informed. My friend who is a social worker told me that I should be making the social work department accountable because they had a duty of care towards me. I want to deal with the police enquiry first. When I contacted the police, [REDACTED] was my main concern. My fear is that she's been in that environment all of her life and she's still living with [REDACTED] EOJ. To me what they did to her was so cruel because she could be living a normal life now.

Impact

117. I think I went through a lot of years of my life thinking that no one liked me. I was so quiet. [REDACTED] company used to have architects balls, I would go to them like a bag of nerves. I would hardly speak to anybody because I didn't know what to say to people. I thought the best thing was just to be quiet. I had no confidence. I used to think nobody liked me. I think that was down to what I got from [REDACTED] EOJ and [REDACTED] EOJ.
118. I think my children have made me stronger. When I had my son, [REDACTED] I felt an incredible amount of love for him. I said to myself "you have got to be a stronger person for your children". I realised that I had to look after them and make sure that they become good adults. My children made me a stronger person. I think my bond with them is stronger because of what I didn't have when I was young. If [REDACTED] gave the kids into trouble I used to get angry with him. If he shouted at them, I would have that horrible feeling back that I had when I was at the [REDACTED] EOJ-EOJ. The love you feel you for them is like nothing else. I am over protective of my children. I worry about them all the time. My son is married so I'm glad he has someone else to look after him. I'm happy with that.
119. When I went to work at the beach front café, my boss taught me a lot of life skills. He was a big influencer in my life. I learned nothing from the [REDACTED] EOJ-EOJ. My daughter will come to me about anything. I would never have done that with [REDACTED] EOJ. They didn't teach me or guide me about anything. For a woman who couldn't have children, you would think that she would throw all of her love onto the children who she took into her house. I think she was really bitter that neither her nor [REDACTED] EOJ could have their

own children. She took it out on all the children in her care apart from [REDACTED] because she was the youngest.

Treatment/support

120. I haven't had treatment or counselling but I don't need it because I have such a good circle of people around me. I can tell my best friend or [REDACTED] anything.

Records

121. I started thinking that I should get my social work records. The woman at the social work department provided me with information about the Inquiry. When I first asked for my records they were very slow in coming back to me. I had to keep chasing them up. They advised me that there wasn't a great deal of information contained within my records. They told me that I could go into the office to read them. After help from my friend, who is a social worker, they allowed me to go into the office to get me my records.
122. A person called Grace Shanks gave me my records. There is no record of social work meetings or meetings between me and the [REDACTED] EOI-EOJ. The lack of information is ridiculous given the length of time that I was in care. There was clearly a lack of communication from the social work department over the fifteen years. I was very angry when I first got them about the lack of information in them. I was so angry that I wanted to take legal action against the social work department. I have about two pages of medical notes too. They detail my problems with my knees and the time that I was sick.

Lessons to be learned

123. I think the social workers should vet foster carers in a more in-depth way. If the social workers had done visits to bedrooms they would have been appalled. [REDACTED] EOJ put up a 'smoke screen' to fool them. They didn't ask the children if [REDACTED] EOJ was a wonderful

person. I hope that the social workers do a better investigation into people looking after children now.

124. I don't know how [EOJ] and [EOI] got to be in that position in the first place. I don't know if they were so desperate in the seventies. I can't remember [EOJ] talking about money but at one point in the eighties the more children in the house the more affluent she was acting. She was buying Royal Dolton figurines. I do think it was for money. There is a part of file that says [EOJ] had asked about an adoption allowance for me. The money was backdated for nine months. For me it was all about the money. I mean, why would she want to adopt me when I was fifteen? I was nearly an adult. She would have received a disability allowance for [redacted] and [redacted]. She got a people carrier car for the two kids being disabled.

125. I hope that vulnerable children are looked after better. I think they should make the system better. Make them vet the foster parents better and look after helpless children who are in there not through their own fault so that they don't grow up with bad memories. Some people can go off the rails because of their upbringing. I was lucky that I didn't turn to drugs or drink. It's very important that the child can speak to someone. However, if the child is in an abusive household they will be too worried about that happens when they go back to the house. I think more thorough vetting is key. If a child tells a social worker that they are being abused, they should be taken away from the house and not put back there.

Other information

126. 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..... [EOH]

Dated..... 26 May 2021

