

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

BCY

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is [REDACTED] BCY My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1959. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

**Background**

2. My mother's name is [REDACTED] My father's name was [REDACTED] My family were gypsies. My father was an orphan when he was six years old and was also brought up in care. He committed suicide because of how he was treated by my mother. She used to falsely accuse him of bashing her and smashing up her house. He was sent to jail on testimonies given by my brother and sister. My mother made them tell lies so he'd get jailed. He was repeatedly sent to prison for things he didn't do.
3. I have two brothers and a sister. I've never met my oldest brother. His name is [REDACTED] I would like to meet him. My mother twisted his two arms and broke them. This was never brought to the attention of the police. His father allegedly took the child and ran.
4. My other brother is called [REDACTED] He's three years older than me. My sister's name is [REDACTED] I think there's just a year between her and [REDACTED] The only time I can remember living with them is when I was returned to my mother when I was about eleven.
5. I was born in Aberdeen and was only with my mother for a very short time before I was put into care for the first time. I don't know how old I was. I don't

remember anything before then. My granny told me that my mother thought I was the devil and that she used a Brillo soap pad on me and took every bit of skin off my body.

6. The first children's home I lived in was at 23 Rubislaw Den North in Aberdeen. I don't know how long I was there. I'm sure it was a sort of nursery home. I can only remember seeing little kids there. I remember there was a glass conservatory at the side of the building. It was a happy place. I don't remember any trauma. I was then returned to my mother when I was about three years of age. I have gone through some of my records with my support worker Peggy Taylor and it appears that I was back with my mother from around [REDACTED] 1963 until [REDACTED] 1964.
7. My mother was living in a caravan in [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] when I went back to her. I don't know who else lived there at the time. I don't remember very much about the short time I was with her. All I know is that within about five months of being back with her, she seriously assaulted me. She ripped me wide open down below with her bare hands, and made fissures in my bowels by stabbing me with knitting needles. She also broke two of my limbs and put a large pin, like a kilt pin, through my mouth.
8. I don't remember the whole incident. My old GP, [REDACTED] gave me all the details from my records. I do remember fighting like hell with her when she tried to force my little body over her knee. I was squirming and screaming and trying to hit her with my hands. I remember how horrible, painful and gruesome it was. My sister, who was seven at the time, told me she was there when it happened. She said that the police came, and all of the older women and mothers in [REDACTED] were going to lynch my mother.
9. I think I went to the Sick Children's Hospital in Aberdeen. My legs were in traction for a long, long time. I can remember lying in bed screaming. I had to learn how to walk again. I don't know exactly how long I was in hospital. A social worker called Mr Slater used to come in at mealtimes to feed me, as he's

the only one I would take food from. I do remember having a stookie on my broken arm and my dad taking me to a hospital, which I think was in Elgin, to get the stookie off. Because of what I'd been through, I thought they were going to cut my arm off and I remember running away screaming.

10. I went into Aberlour Orphanage after that. I think my brother and sister were in that orphanage as well at some point.

11. I spent most of my childhood in children's homes. I can remember most of the abuse I suffered, but I'm not very clear on names, dates or the amount of time I spent in each place.

### **Aberlour Orphanage, Aberlour**

12. I think there were more than a thousand children in the orphanage. It was a big place. It was originally run by [REDACTED] BLK [REDACTED]. That was long before I went there. It had been a workhouse a long, long time before that. It was located just as you go into Aberlour from Elgin. The McPherson Lorry business was right across the road from it. There's a lot of new houses there now. The only thing left of the orphanage is a tower.

13. I think I was in there for only a few months. I don't have a lot of memories of it. I didn't get any counselling or anything like that after what my mother had done to me. I was expected to just fit in and get on with it.

14. I went to school when I was only four. It was situated in a quadrangle on the premises. There was a teacher called Mrs [REDACTED] BGY [REDACTED] who lived in the village. I remember her hitting me for wrapping the pleats of my skirt around a ruler. I was just sitting there in my chair innocently playing with the ruler; I didn't know I was doing anything wrong. I must have been showing my blue school pants. She came over to me and whacked me indiscriminately with a two or three prong belt and kept going when I fell to the floor. I met her in Elgin years later and

asked her if she remembered me. I told her what she'd done and that I'd never forget her. She just walked away.

15. I also remember seeing a boy sexually arousing himself at school. I didn't know what he was doing at the time, but I knew it wasn't right. I had been sent by the teacher to go to see someone and I came across him in the cloakroom area outside the classes. I think he said something to me and I ran straight back to my class.

16. Another memory I have of the place is that one of the kids, who was about fourteen or fifteen, used to go around with a teacher's tawse offering money to the smallest kids to take the belt off him. He did it to me more than once.

17. I also remember that the kids used to fight each other with abalone shell knives. They used to buy them with their pocket money from the local store in town. I remember seeing two brothers called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] with the knives. They are well-known in Buckie.

### **The Dowans, Aberlour**

18. The Dowans was smaller than Aberlour Orphanage. The house had upper and lower gardens. You went through Aberlour High Street to get to it. The local doctor, Dr Caldwell, lived next door. He was known as Dr John. I was sad to read in the paper recently that he had died. The people who owned the Walkers Shortbread company had a big house beside the home as well. I was great friends with [REDACTED] who played football for [REDACTED]

19. The home was run by [REDACTED] BCJ and [REDACTED] BCI. The last I knew, they were living in Alford in Aberdeenshire. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] The other staff were Frances Innes and Margaret Morris. They were both from around the Huntly area. They were okay. They had no part in any of the abuse. They were just told what to do by the

BCJ/BCI They were submissive. I've been told that Margaret Morris is in Elgin now, but I can't find her.

20. There were about fifty children in the home, boys and girls, whose ages ranged from very young to about fifteen. We slept in dormitories. I remember I was put in a crib and kept in a locked room for the first week I was there. I think I moved there from the Aberlour Orphanage because it had just opened up as a home. Princess Margaret came to mark its opening. I remember standing holding her hand with a little boy called [REDACTED]. He's been on the computer looking to speak to people who were in the Dowans with him. There's a guy in Elgin called [REDACTED] who was in the Dowans with me as well. He said he's been contacted by people who've been trying to get him to stick up for them, but he's happy now and doesn't want anything to do with it. He said that he doesn't want to turn his head back.

Abuse by the BCJ/BCI

21 [REDACTED] BCJ/BCI [REDACTED] picked on the most damaged children. A lot of the kids didn't get anything done to them but others, like myself, got it all the time. We were brutalised and treated like nothing. We were classed as bad. I think it was basically down to how damaged you were – the more damaged you were, the more you were thought of as bad. That meant you would get it all the time. [REDACTED] was one of the ones who didn't get touched. He was tough. Although I was young, I realised what was going on. I think I was born aware.

22. I remember a girl called [REDACTED]. The BCJ/BCI sent [REDACTED] to Coventry and wouldn't allow any of us to speak to her. She was older than me. She used to cry all day. I remember seeing her like that for about two or three weeks. I don't know why she was crying all the time. It was really sad to see. I was as stubborn as a mule and I remember going to her and asking what was wrong. She told me to go away as they would "do me" if they caught me. She then just disappeared from the home.

23. In the winter, they used to leave us outside all day at the weekends in clothes which were inadequate for the weather conditions. We used to group together and go to the back door and get the strongest person to knock on the door and beg for us to be let in. I remember one time I was standing there sucking on my fingers which were totally white. A lot of the kids were crying. We were almost hypothermic. One little boy with blonde hair went to the door and [REDACTED] BCI slammed the door, which took his finger right off. I don't know what happened to that boy. I don't remember his name. I only know that he was small and blonde. I don't know if he got treatment for his finger. He disappeared from the home after that.
24. The kids used to play outside in the gardens and when the [REDACTED] BCJ/BCI came out, we would run about hysterical as we knew what was coming next. They would stand at the front door of the house and start whirling their fingers and pointing towards us until they eventually decided on a target. They would then point to one particular child which meant that we all had to run and pile on top of the child. That happened to me a few times when I was very young. I nearly died when I was about four.
25. They used to get the older kids in the home to throw the kids who had wet their beds down the stairs. There were about eighteen concrete steps. This was done every single day. The [REDACTED] BCJ/BCI would come into the dormitory in the mornings and go round all of the beds feeling them to see if they were wet. They would then put the bed-wetters to one side and let everybody else go. The older kids then had to take the bed-wetters by the arms and legs and swing them before throwing them down the stairs. The older kids were aged between thirteen to fifteen. They did it out of total fear. I was thrown down the stairs heaps of times. I think I was only about four when it first happened. I was tiny. I weighed only two stone and four pounds when I was four.
26. The [REDACTED] BCJ/BCI used to hit me with canes across my backside and the back of my legs. I had welts on the back of my legs. Because of everything I'd been through, I wouldn't let them hit me and they'd tie me to the bed to give me the

hidings. They caned me over my clothes, but the clothes were flimsy nylon pyjamas or school skirts and knee high socks.

27. They also used broken straps from the armchairs as instruments of violence. The straps were rubber and were about twenty-five inches long and about three inches wide, with metal clips on the end which slotted into the wooden arms of the chairs.
28. They often had violent temper tantrums. They had a [REDACTED] who they used to boot down the stairs.
29. We used to get school work to bring home, but my head was so screwed that I couldn't do anything right. If I spelt a word wrongly or couldn't write, they would make me sit in a corner with my legs crossed and my arms folded for the whole night until bedtime, or throughout the weekend sometimes. I had to eat my food in the corner and put my hand up to go to the toilet. They did the same to other children too. I was terrified to get a word wrong.
30. I remember we all ran away once and I was the one who was furthest behind when they came after us. I was that scared of them, I shouted "I'm trying to help you catch them". You learned what you had to do to save yourself.
31. I ran away a few times. I remember one time I got the fright of my life when I ran away with another girl, whose name I can't remember. We went down to the High Street and there were two guys in a black 1950s car. One of them had a black beard and glasses and looked as scary as hell. He was trying to get us into the car and we ran back to the home and took the hiding.
32. I was also starved in the Dowans. We were given pork pies on a Tuesday and I couldn't eat them. I hated the jelly, fat and pastry. The same pork pie was then put down to me from the Tuesday through to Friday. I was really only fed three days a week.

33. [BCI] bathed me and another girl on one occasion. I think her name was [REDACTED] but I can't be sure. He touched me inappropriately and told me that I wasn't right down below. That happened when I was about nine and it's stuck with me ever since. He didn't do it again – that one time was enough for me to know that I was a freak.

#### *School*

34. I was told that I was backward, but I wasn't backward enough to go to a special school. I went to Aberlour primary school, which was the local school. An old man used to wait for all the wee girls on our way to school and give us sweeties for holding our pants open and letting him have a look. I think his hands went down too. That went on for years. He'll definitely be dead now. He was an old man then.

#### *Inspections*

35. The home was inspected by people called the Cravens and the Leslie's. They were from Aberdeen. Basically there was a Trust Board for the children's homes and people used to come in to make sure everything was okay. The Leslie's and the Cravens had that responsibility for the Dowans. They were the top people at the Dowans. They came about twice a year. The [BCJ/BCI] made us dress up in our best clothes when they were coming, and they'd warn us that we'd get it if we didn't shut our mouths. We were only allowed to speak when spoken to. We were well drilled.

#### *Contact with family*

36. I remember my mother came to see me with my father shortly before the home closed. The minute I saw her face, I remembered the gritted teeth and bulbous eyes and her tearing into my body. I ran upstairs and refused to go back down. I was shouting "That's her. That's her". I had been having nightmares about the




attack for years. That was the only time she visited. She had come because they were closing the home and they were going to be sending me back to her.

*Closure of the home*

37. I think the home closed because of reports of abuse. I was the first one in the home to notice that something was going on. I think I might have said something, but I'm not sure if I did. There were a lot of people coming into the home. I saw lots of people with suits on. They were people from Aberdeen. I don't think they were social workers. They were connected to the Leslies and the Cravens. The [BCJ/BCI] were being asked a lot of questions and they refused to answer any. I read that in my records. They were then told to leave the home. I didn't see any police. They weren't charged with anything. They should've been jailed for years for what they did, but they were allowed to just leave. It was all whacked under the carpet.

38. The home was closed instantly after that. I was the first child to be taken out. I was kicking, screaming and crying when they removed me.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later



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43. I got a letter from my mother saying that she loved me and was sorry for everything she had done to me. I was then returned to her.

**Living with my mother – [REDACTED] New Elgin**

44. I don't know why I was sent back to my mother. I have no understanding whatsoever as to why they sent me back there. There's a letter in my records from the warden of Aberlour to [REDACTED] BCJ and [REDACTED] BCI which says that there were very grave concerns about me going back there. I don't understand why I was sent back to that complete and utter psychopath when people clearly had concerns.

45. It was the social work department that made the decision to send me back. I think the children's panel would have been involved, but I can't remember. I think I went back in 1970.

46. It was absolute hell living with my mother. Nobody did anything to prepare me for going back. There were no visits or anything like that leading up to me going back. I was just taken back and dumped.

47. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were living with my mother at the time. My mother used to call me 'the lodger'. My dad wasn't there. I think he was in prison. My brother tried to rape me when I first went back.

48. The house was absolutely filthy. There were no sheets on the bed. I was never allowed a bath. Within about a week, I had scabies and lice. My mother sold all

my clothes from the Dowans to the rag and bone man who used to come round with a horse and cart.

49. My mother used to speak to my brother and sister in gypsy language, which I didn't understand. That's another thing that makes me really angry. Why was I sent back to gypsies when I didn't know I was one? My mother used to knock lumps out of me and also used my sister and brother as weapons against me. She'd tell them in gypsy language to batter me, but I quickly picked up what she was saying and ended up smacking the two of them.
50. I was sent to bed at six o'clock at night. Before I went, my mother would put on a man's voice and say to me "Wee wummin, I'll be up at twelve o'clock with the belt and you're getting it". She threatened me with that every single night, but she only came up some nights. When she did come, she leathered me with a belt and buckle across the backside. She also used to scare us all by knocking on the walls and speaking in a man's voice. We used to think there was actually a man in the house.
51. I got starved in that house as well. My mother used to give [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] full size plates of food, whereas I got side plates with rotten food and fruit.
52. She deliberately kept me off school so she could cut her wrists in front of me and take heaps of tablets. I used to walk right round New Elgin praying that she would die before I got back.
53. She took a mad temper tantrum one day because I hadn't cleaned the house to her specification. She punched me, ripped my hair out and dragged me by the hair into a corner and kicked into me.
54. I think my mother was a psychotic sociopath. I've managed to get copies of some records and they state that she suffered from nervous exhaustion. She was repeatedly in the hospital. They said she had a nervous disposition, but she was an evil bastard.

55. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were never treated as badly as me. [REDACTED] got hidings, but not to the same degree as me. I was beaten all the time. I think I was targeted because she nearly died giving birth to me.

56. I think I stayed with my mother for just under two years. She nearly took my head off with a mirror and that's what led to me leaving. I had to run away. She lifted the mirror off the wall above the mantelpiece and threw it at me. I ducked and it just missed my head. It went straight through the living room window. I ran to Elgin police station. I was then sent to another children's home called [REDACTED] I think I was twelve at the time.

### *School*

57. I went to New Elgin Primary School when I was living with my mother. The social worker took me into primary six and told everyone that I was just out of the orphanage. My clothes had been sold and I was dressed in rags. I got severely abused by the other kids. They threw stones at me and called me a 'minker'. I didn't even know what that meant.

58. I wasn't able to do any school work at all as my head was wasted. The other kids in the class would be writing away and I'd just sit there with the teacher, with my face in my hands. The teacher's name was Zena Mitchell. She's dead now. She was quite a severe old teacher, but she was awful good to me. She knew that I was damaged and couldn't do any work. I spoke to her about how I was being treated at home. She went to my mother's house twice to try to find out what an earth was going on. I got the hiding of my life afterwards and had to ask her not to go back.

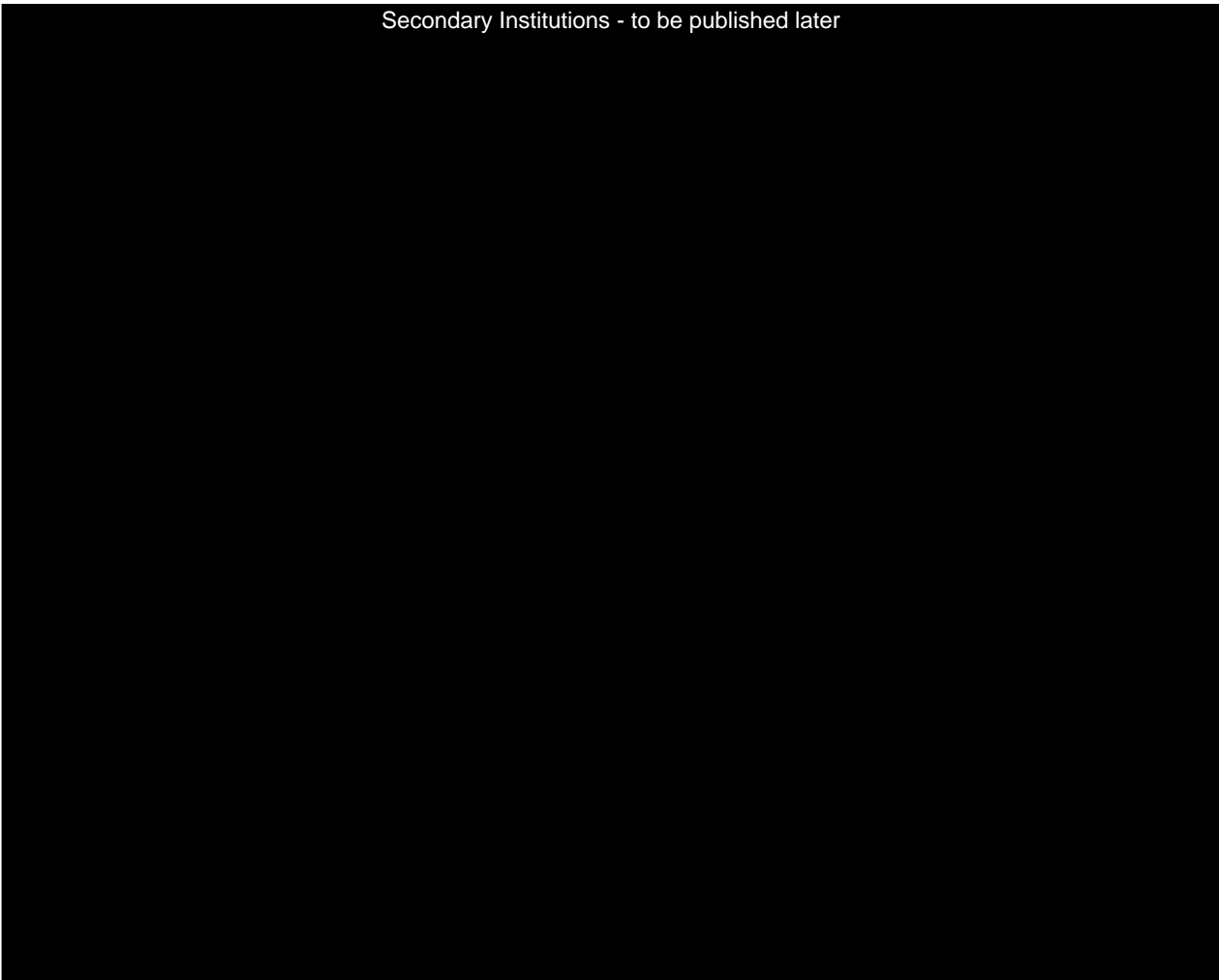
59. I think I also told the teacher that I was being starved. I was extremely thin and had pernicious anaemia, which I still have. They used to keep me back in the canteen every day to feed me up after all the other kids had left and gone back to their classes.

*Contact with social services*


60. My social worker was called Jill Carter. She was my social worker when I was in the Dowans as well. She was Tom Carter's wife. He was the director of finance at Elgin Council. She saw my mother ripping the hair out of my head and booting me about like a football. She saw my mother assaulting me many times.

61. I don't know why I was left with my mother for so long. I don't know whether Zena Mitchell passed on what I had told her to social services. I don't think they were that bothered anyway. Jill Carter saw the beatings and did nothing. She saw my sister getting a beating too. Jill didn't report it to anyone or get the police involved.

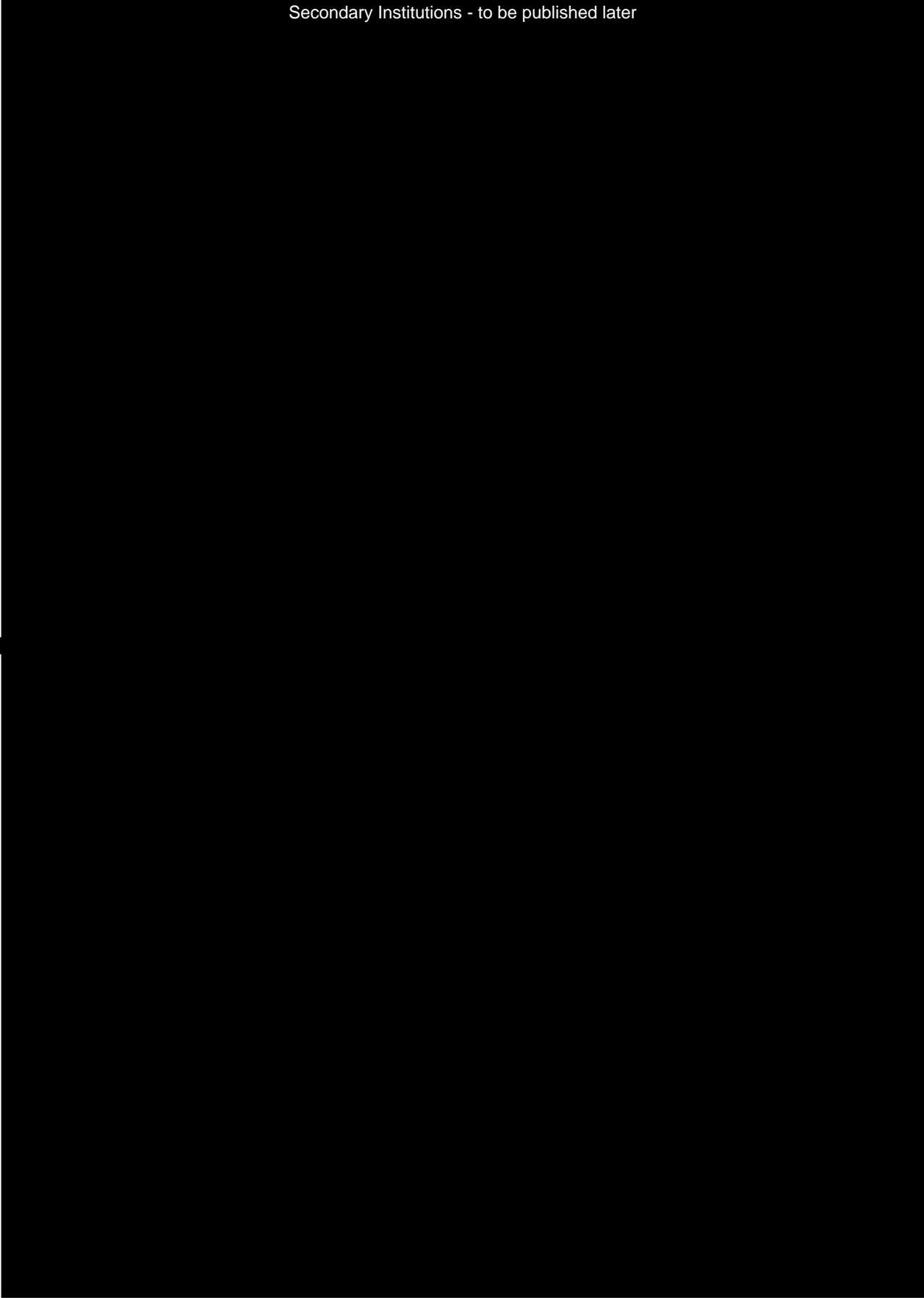
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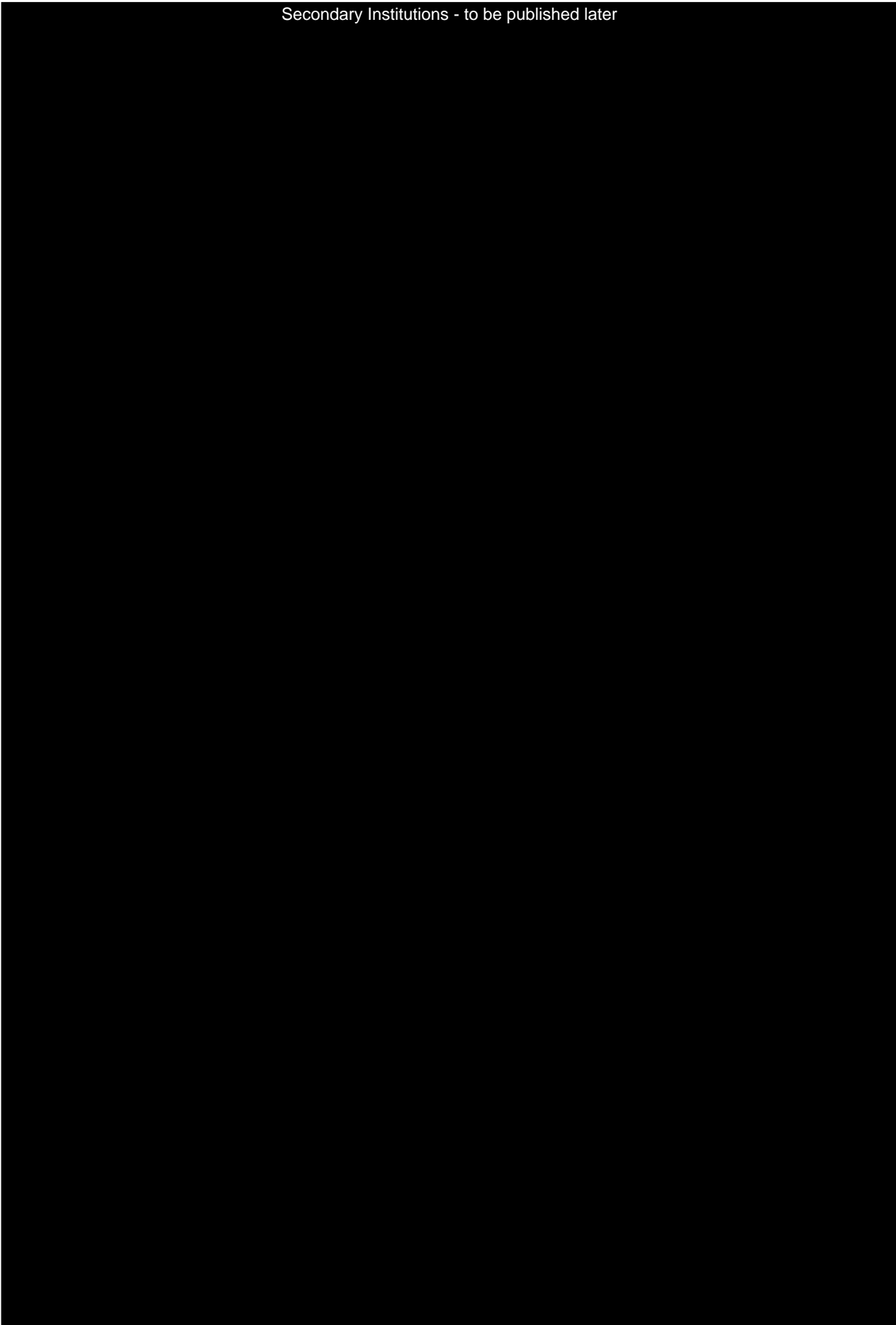
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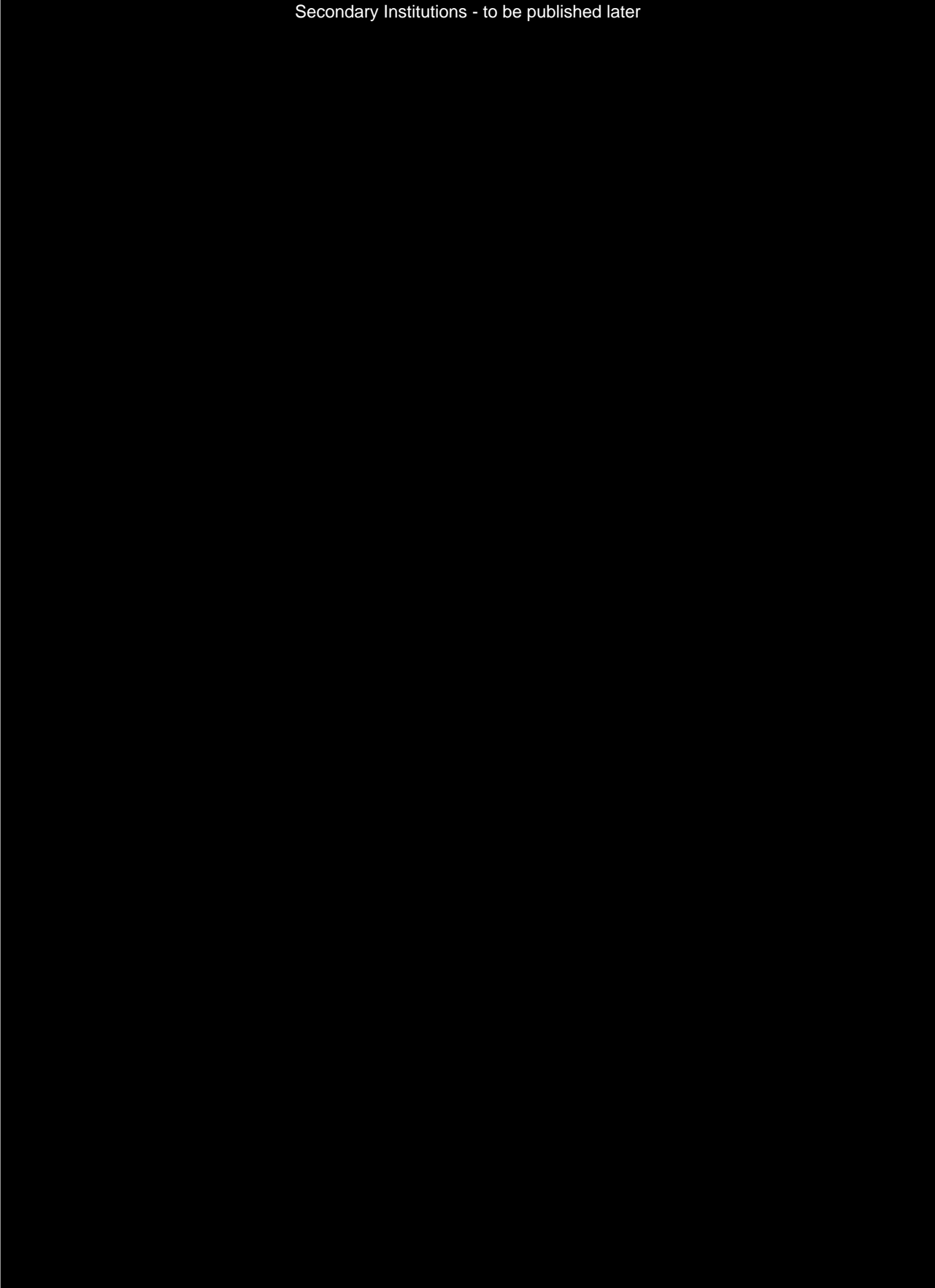


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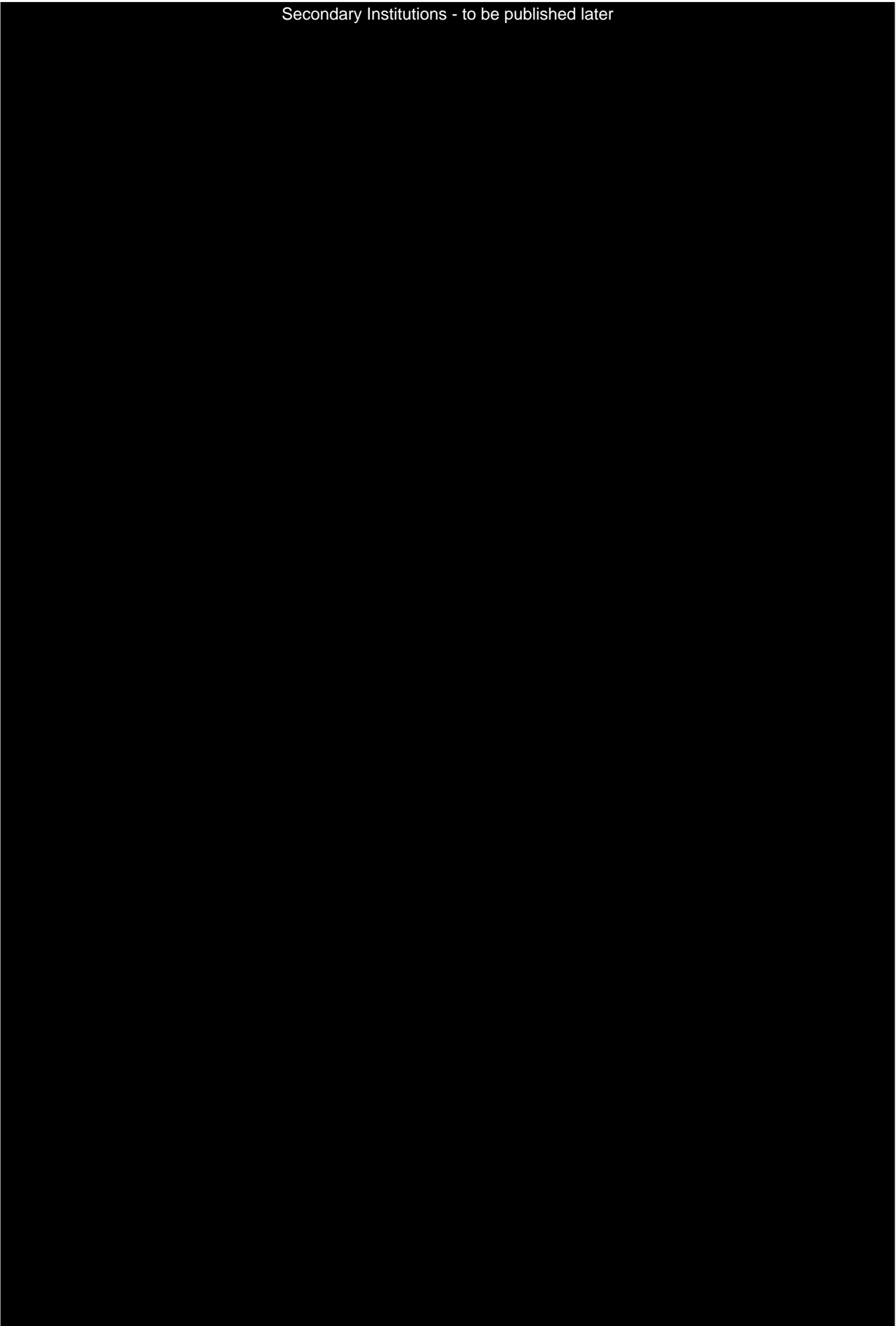




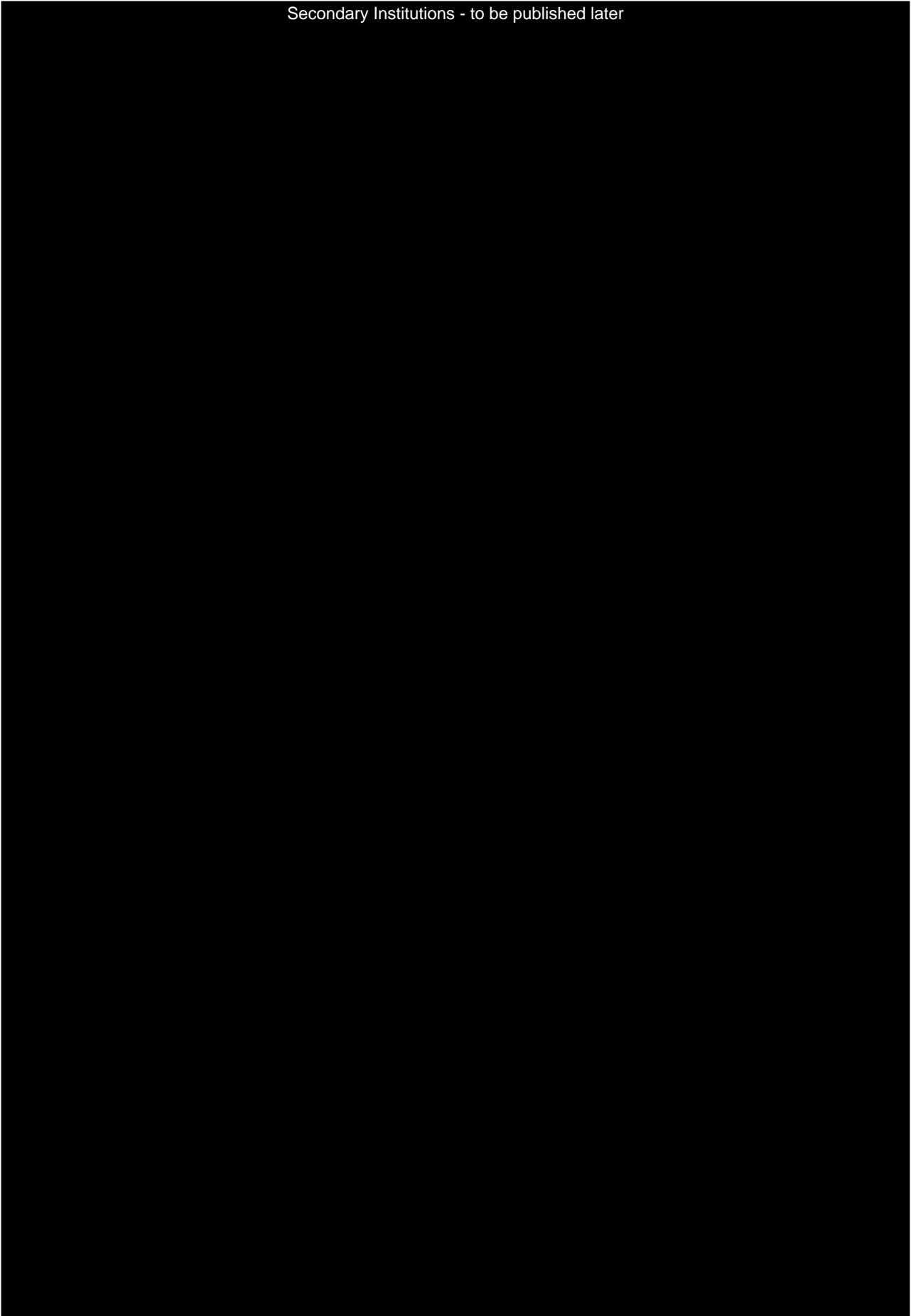
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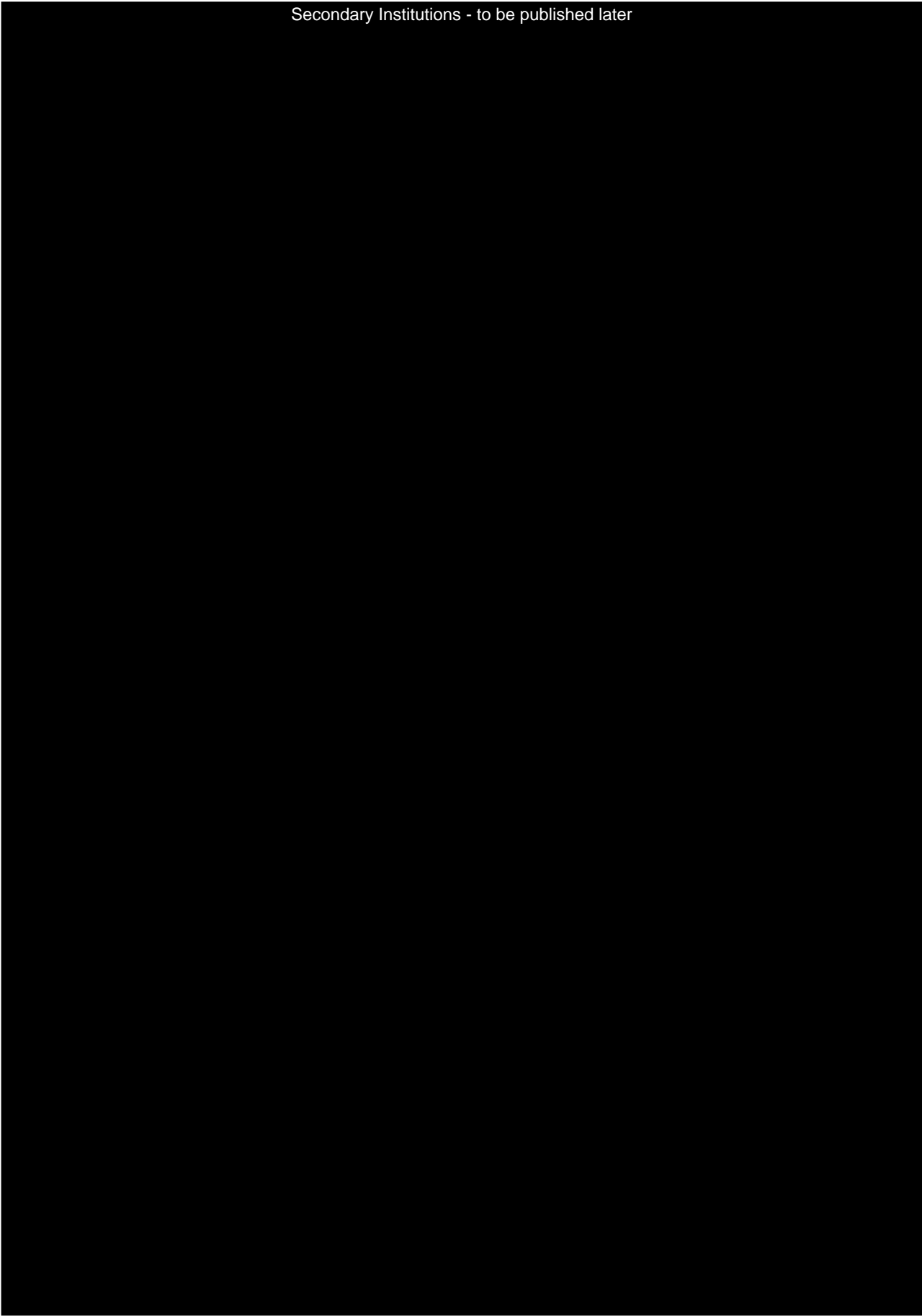
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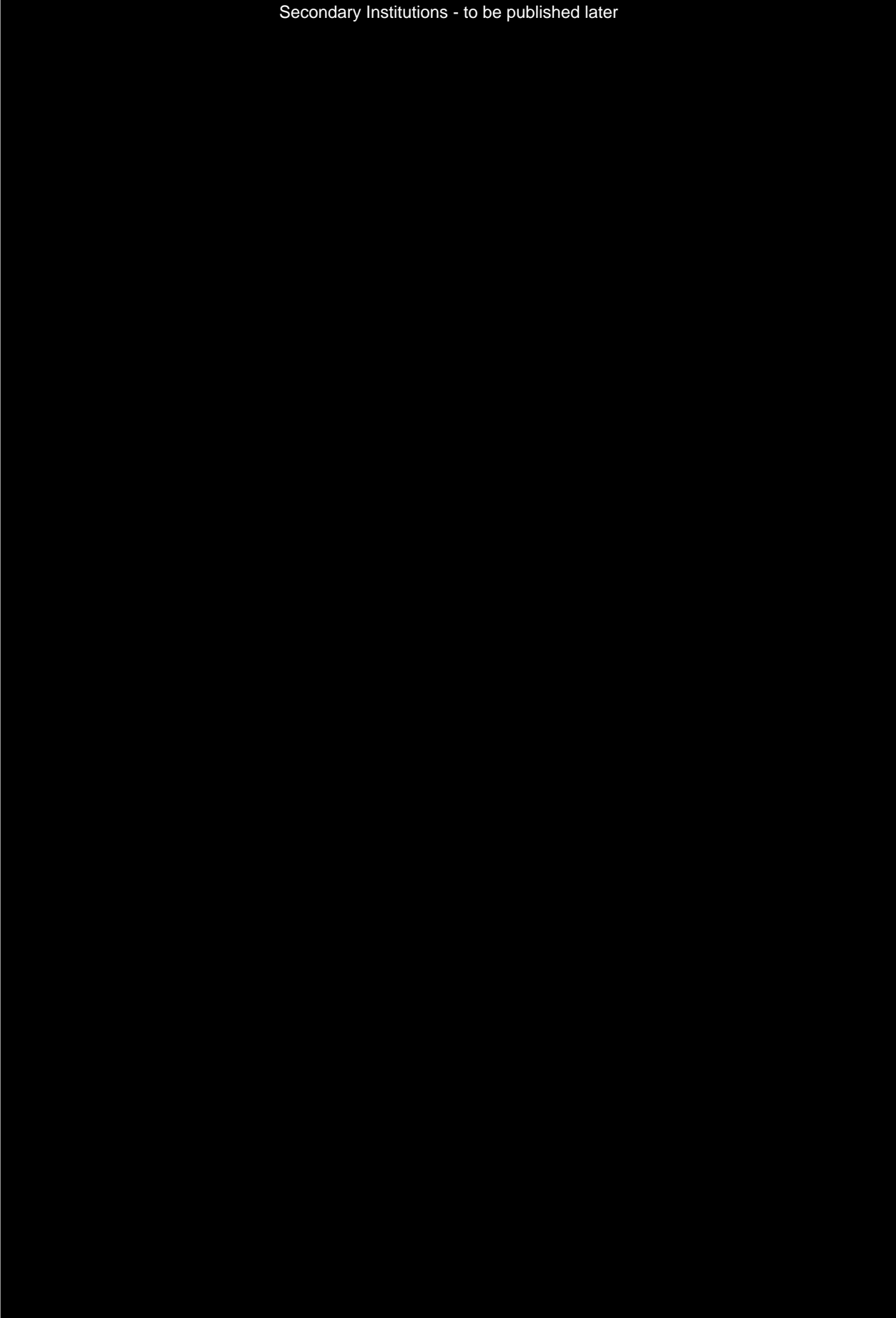
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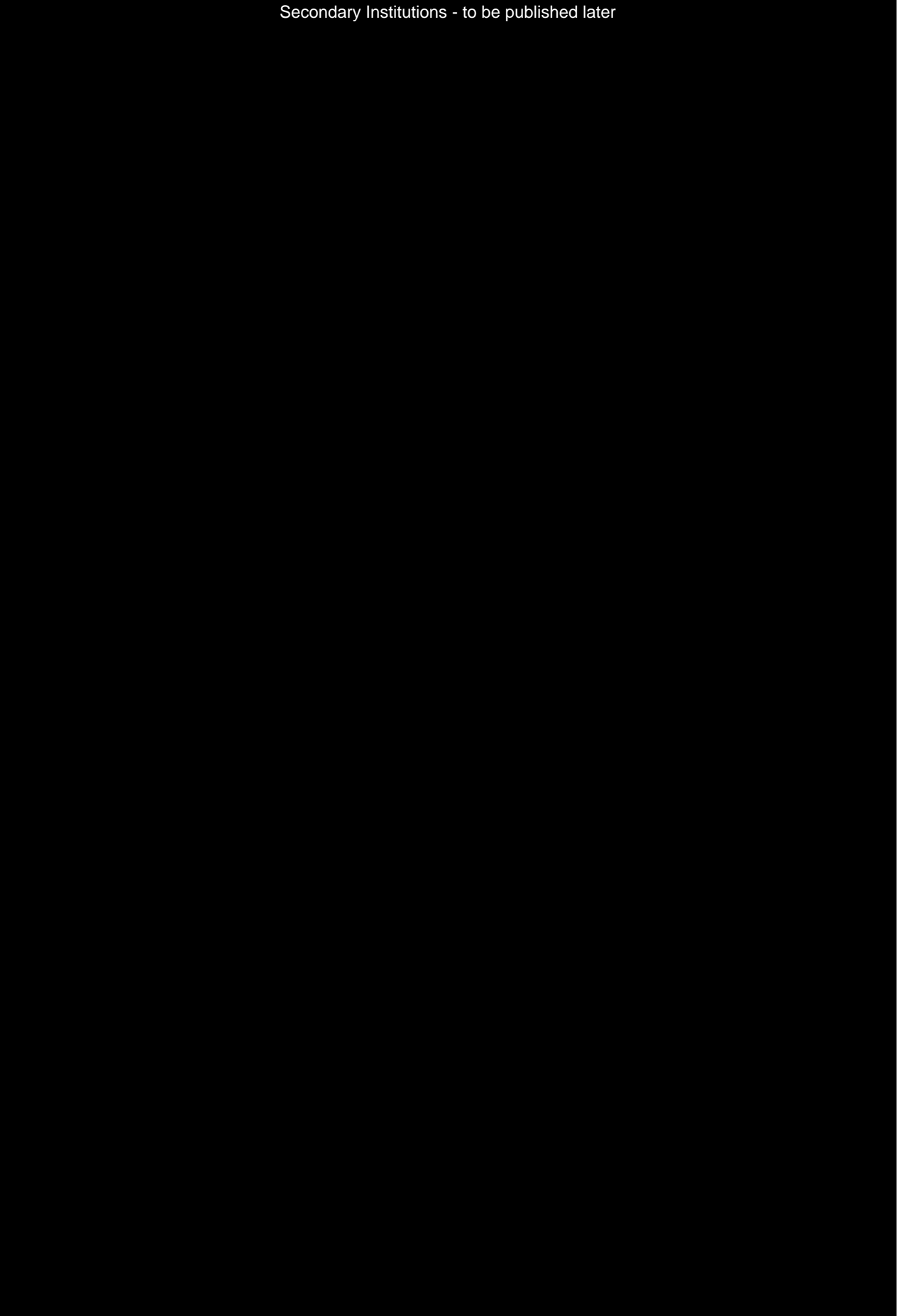
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### **Life after care**

118. I was dumped in a bed and breakfast in Aberdeen when I got out of Cornhill Hospital. I was seventeen years old. There was no aftercare whatsoever. I didn't get a leaving-care grant either. I ran away to Elgin and found my sister, who let me stay with her for just one night. I had to go out and steal shopping for her so she would allow me to stay.

119. I then slept rough on my own for three years. I was absolutely terrified. I didn't get any help or support from anyone. I had no clothes, nowhere to get washed and was dying of hypothermia. At one point I smashed all of the

windows at the police station just to get a bed for the night. I had no family who I could go to for help.

120. Moray district council wouldn't give me a house. They said my family were 'undesirables' - I was a traveller and my father was never out of prison. I was like a foot soldier marching up and down to the council each day begging for a house. The only advice I got was to get pregnant. I was told that that was the only way I'd get a house. That advice came from a man in the council named Lackie Stewart. He was high up in the council. He's dead now.

121. I was raped and abused when I was living on the streets. Guys in Elgin pretended to be my friends. They made out that they felt sorry for me and then took me back to their places and abused me. I ended up with unwanted pregnancies because I was on the street.

122. I eventually took the council to court and was awarded a house by Elgin Sheriff Court in [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] My solicitor was Ian Cameron, who later became a sheriff. He retired recently. He advised me to seek compensation, but again I never bothered.

123. I lived on £23 a week when I got my house. I had no money for coal, no washing machine and had a couch for five years which was held together with rope.

### **Impact of experiences**

124. I don't really know exactly how it's affected me. I feel totally different from everybody else. I feel like I don't fit in and don't belong. I'm a brown paper parcel without a label.

125. I feel stigmatised. That feeling goes way back to when I was singled out at school and kept behind and hidden away so that I could get two dinners.



126. I don't have a lot of friends. I'm too much for people. They've not been through what I have so they don't really understand me. I think I'm the way I am because of the violence in the homes. Also, I feel that my mother turned my body into something that's disgusting so I find it difficult to be intimate with anyone. I don't have the same joy that others do. I've never been married.
127. I don't go out much at all. I only go out if I've got someone with me who I think I'm safe with. I'm alright with people I know, not with outsiders. Lack of trust is a big issue for me. Giving evidence to the Inquiry is a massive thing for me.
128. I don't have any self-confidence or self-esteem. People who were supposed to look after me made me feel that I was shit, horrible, nasty and evil. I started self-harming when I was in care and that carried on into adulthood. I used to cut myself and took a lot of overdoses. I've got scars on my arms, leg and throat from cutting myself. I do still hurt myself at times.
129. I am fiery though. I won't stand by if I see anybody being hurt. That drives me crazy. I end up trying to look after other people and then I get hurt myself.
130. They battered the shit out of me in the Dowans for not being able to spell a word properly. It says in my notes that I wouldn't do my work in school, but did do it at the Dowans. I got the hiding of my life if I didn't do it there, so I had to try or else I'd be severely punished. I didn't learn anything at school. By the time I went to Elgin primary, my head was so wasted I just sat with my face in my hands when everybody else was working. I didn't know how to do sums. I was quite good at English, but I still don't know how to use punctuation. I enjoy writing now. I've taught myself. My writing has become much more furious since I had a brain aneurysm. I don't know if it does me any good. I've never been able to have a job. The depression, mood swings and personality disorder have stopped me from getting a job. I couldn't fit into a work environment.

131. I've suffered from depression most of my life. I've been on lots of different anti-depressants. None of them worked. I couldn't even speak when I was on some of them – I just sat there like a zombie. I stopped taking them a few months ago. I've never taken myself off them before. I felt that I had to. I don't intend to go back on them. I'm currently on Valium, although I feel that I need a higher dose. I need it to make me feel better. It's not as if it's cocaine or heroin. It's not unusual for it to be prescribed for people like me. I'm not bothered about taking it.

132. I don't have a normal sleeping pattern. I either get too much or too little. Sometimes I sleep until four o'clock in the day and sometimes I don't sleep at all. I was on Zopiclone, which is a tablet for insomnia. I'm not coping very well without it, but I think it's really bad for the liver and kidneys. The advice on the box said that you shouldn't be on them for more than three months. I was on them for about twenty-odd years.

133. I also have night terrors. That started in the Aberlour Orphanage. I used to wake up screaming my face off. I have nightmares about a floating vase racing towards my face. The vase speeds towards my face and then stops right in front of my face. I also have nightmares that someone is choking me and I sit bolt upright in my bed. There's no set pattern to it. Some weeks it happens only two or three times, and other weeks it can be as many as five times.

134. I used to take cocaine. I took it because I always felt so bad and it made me feel good. It was destroying my health though, so I decided it wasn't for me. I stopped taking it in 1996. I locked myself away for four months to come off it. I also smoked a lot of cannabis. I used it to help block things out and help me sleep. I've stopped it altogether now. I also took the odd ecstasy tablet. I've never been an alcoholic. I'll have the odd drink but I don't go overboard. I've never craved it.

135. When I look at my life now, I think that I've got no desire to destroy myself any more. I know that you die younger when you've been through the amount of

stress and abuse I've had. I reckon I've got another fifteen years to live, if I'm lucky. I don't want my entire life to have been a living hell. I want to make some sort of difference.

136. I've been diagnosed with personality disorder and PTSD. I get flashbacks of my mother assaulting me. I also have ongoing health problems as a result of the injuries.

### **Attitude of agencies in later life**

137. I was abused when I was a child in care and it has never actually stopped – it's just been abuse, abuse, abuse since leaving care. I get it from the police, the council and even when I go to my local hospital. I've been lying in a hospital bed and had three of the so-called medical professionals guffawing at me. I had a problem with my eye recently and went with great trepidation to the hospital to get it checked out. One of the snobby little nurses wouldn't even look at me. It turned out I've got a torn cornea. My GP, Dr Houlston, has admitted that I've been victimised at the hospital.

138. I've always been victimised by the housing department in Elgin. When I was in my first house, everyone got moved temporarily to other better houses so that central heating could be put in. I was the only one who didn't get the option to stay in the other house when the work was complete. Everybody else got that option, but I was told that I had to go back. I was eventually allowed to stay, but that was only after I argued my case.

139. I'm always passed from department to department when I try to speak to someone in the council about housing matters. I saw paperwork recently when work was being done in my house which said "Under no circumstances should workmen enter [my house] unless they are in pairs." One of the council workers, whose name is Danny, told me that they were trying to make out that I was a very dangerous woman. He also told me that Willie Duncan, who is the boss at the council yard, had tried to get him to make stuff up about me.

140. I basically feel like a target. Derek Bannon who worked for the Aberlour Trust said to me that I stick out like a sore thumb. He's right. That's how I feel. I feel that the social work and housing departments are covering for each other now. They don't want what happened to me in care to come out. None of them do. It's like they're all trying to cover their own backsides. I'm talking about the police, social services, the hospital and housing. The whole lot of them are on at me and are destroying me.

141. I've been beaten up by the police three times and now they're alleging that I tried to stab two cops. This is what I mean about me being a target. The charge of attempting to stab the cops came from me actually being a victim of crime and phoning the police. It's bad enough to have been through what I have in life, but to be treated like my name is Myra Hindley is disgusting. That's how I feel I'm being treated. I've definitely been stigmatised. The police laugh at me, treat me scornfully and try to punish me. They never take me seriously. Yes, I have previous convictions, but in my opinion they were created for me because of what other people did to me when I was a child. I can't express how angry I am about it. It pisses me off and disgusts me. I am certain that if I had had a decent mum and dad, and had not ended up in those homes, I would never ever have been in trouble in my life.

142. I wish I had been killed when my mother assaulted me. Nobody has ever listened to me. I feel like everybody thinks I'm a liar. I've never been believed. There has been no help whatsoever, only punishment. There's certainly been plenty of punishment, and it's still being dished out. The police are now trying to put me in jail. They hate me. I'm just a minker to them. They forget that I'm one of God's children too.

### **Impact on son's life**

143. My experiences have also impacted severely on my son. He was a planned baby. I wanted to be a mum and just be normal. I knew I wasn't normal and

that's why I deliberately had him. I was twenty-three when [REDACTED] was born. His dad had no involvement in bringing him up.

144. I didn't realise how much my experiences in life would impact on him. I thought I was going to sail through motherhood. That wasn't the case. When [REDACTED] was a little boy, I wouldn't go to open days at school or anywhere near the school at all. That was because of my lack of confidence. I didn't feel that I was the same as the other mothers. I didn't do normal things with him. All he saw was a depressed mum who cried and shouted all the time.

145. I had a social worker called Marion Evans when [REDACTED] was a baby. I remember her visiting my house one day and saying to me that she had no sympathy for the likes of people like me who had had a baby and thought life was going to be easy. This is typical of social workers. I said to her that I wouldn't expect her to have sympathy for me as she was brought up in Morningside with a silver spoon in her mouth, whereas I had a kilt pin hanging out of mine. She recommended foster care for [REDACTED] at weekends and that started before he was one year old. Before that, I was told by social workers Gordon and Jean Sinclair that he'd be removed from me if they caught me with cannabis. I was smoking cannabis at that time. Gordon was high up in the social work department. [REDACTED] didn't get removed from me, he only went for respite care.

146. The foster care arrangement went on for a number of years. He went for the weekend and came back to me on a Sunday night for his bath before school the next day. My head was wasted with depression and I used to just use my time at the weekends getting his clothes and things organised for school the next week.

147. One night when he was nine years of age, he came home with about nineteen bruises on him. I phoned the foster carer, whose name was [REDACTED] to find out what had happened. All she said was "Boys will be boys". About two weeks later there was something on the television about HIV. [REDACTED] got upset

and then it came out that the foster carer's thirteen year old son had raped him. His name was [REDACTED] MEP [REDACTED]. The police interviewed him in front of his mother and he denied it. I think the police knew that [REDACTED] was telling the truth. [REDACTED] MEP [REDACTED] ended up coming to my house about five or six years later and telling me that he had been abused as a child.

148. I completely cracked up after [REDACTED] told me what had happened to him and I ended up going to prison for six months. I got involved in trying to buy drugs to sell, so that I could give [REDACTED] a new start in another house to try and make things better for him. [REDACTED] MEP [REDACTED] had been hanging around where we lived and [REDACTED] was very distressed and wouldn't go out to play. [REDACTED] went into full-time foster care when I went to prison and was returned to me when I got out. There was no more respite after that.

149. [REDACTED] started playing up big-time when he was about eleven. He burst his spleen and wasn't well, but nobody would listen to me. He was mixing with the wrong crowd and selling drugs. He used to run away and was missing for about five days one time when he was about fourteen. I went to the police station and was told that he was there and was alleging that I had physically abused him. The people he was going around with had put him up to it. He did taekwondo at the time and had two bruises, which certainly weren't consistent with what was being alleged. That was another example of the authorities treating me with scorn. I was made to sit in a police station for eight hours, during which time I regressed to my childhood. A meeting was then held in court chambers with the judge Noel McPartlin, and about seventeen other people. It was obvious that they were baying for my blood. In fact, a policeman called Neil Cooper told me that. I knew what I was up against so I told them that I couldn't take my boy home, and that they were now responsible for him. I was broken-hearted.

150. [REDACTED] came back to me later when he was heavily into drugs, but we don't speak to each other now. At one point, he was dying in front of my eyes. He's been warned about what will happen to his heart if he takes ecstasy or cocaine again. He now drinks a lot and gets into fights. He is very violent. He has got a

good job though, so I feel that I must have done something right and couldn't have been that bad.

### **Current life and support services**

151. I don't get a high level of support from Moray council. What I get is a 'dry bath' – that's the expression I use for nothing. I am currently under the mental health social work team. They've been involved for most of my adult life. I've had umpteen social workers.

152. I had a social worker recently called Leonitta Van Hoff and all she ever went on about was her lactose intolerance. It was never about me. I couldn't get along with her. She never asked me how I was or what my problem was. It was always her lactose intolerance. It was annoying. I used to think to myself "Do you want to swap places?" I sacked her. I don't trust the social worker I've got now. His name is Ian Gordon. He says the right things, but I know what I feel. I'm very intuitive.

153. I was told that I was going for respite at Birchwood Highland Recovery Centre in Inverness. This was to get me out of Elgin for a break because life has been so hard in Elgin. I was allowed to believe for seven months that I was going there. I was then told that I would have to pay £42 a week for a whole year in order to get a bed for four weeks. Moray council caused all my problems, yet they expected me to pay for the respite myself. I didn't go in the end.

154. I have an advocacy worker called [REDACTED] She's clever and funny. She's helping me to get my records. I think she'll help me with a lot more.

155. I get fortnightly support from my occupational therapist (OT), [REDACTED] I shouldn't even have an OT, but I'm glad I do. [REDACTED] been great.

156. I also have good support from [REDACTED] from the In Care Survivors Services Scotland.

157. The Scottish Association of Mental Health (SAMH) used to be involved with me. They were a disgrace. I don't eat very much and all they used to do was take me out food shopping. Once a week they stuffed my fridge full of food, which just got thrown in the bin. They didn't even check to see what I already had in my fridge before buying more. They sacked me about two years ago. Four of them came to tell me. I don't know why.
158. I only see my psychiatrist, Dr [REDACTED] about once every four to six months. for twenty minutes. She's very compassionate towards me. I don't have a community psychiatric nurse. A referral was made by [REDACTED] for counselling and treatment from a psychologist. I am currently being assessed by Dr [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
159. I'm not close to my family. I tried to make peace with my mother, but she always went on about what she did to me. The last time I saw her she was crying and saying that she didn't know how I could cuddle her after what she'd done to me. I told her that I was sick of listening to her playing the victim and I just walked away from her.
160. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are close to my mum. They've got the same gypsy attitude. The last time I saw [REDACTED] she made reference to the injury I suffered down below when my mother assaulted me – it was disgusting.
161. I just want some joy in my life before I die. I want to keep a nice wee house and grow organic vegetables. I want to have the health I require. I had a brain aneurysm ten years ago which has affected my short-term memory. There are times when I run upstairs to do something, but because of the brain damage I forget what I'm there for. It's annoying. Another problem I have as a result of the aneurysm is lack of momentum. I want to get up and do stuff but I can't. It's like I've got an invisible ball and chain round my ankle. I also find it difficult to follow written instructions, so I find it difficult to learn new things. I don't know what I've done to deserve this.



## Reporting abuse

162. I don't know if I blew the whistle about what was going on at the Dowans. I might have done. Giving my evidence to the Inquiry is the first time I've disclosed everything. I went to the police in Elgin about [REDACTED] BHN [REDACTED] from Calder House, but I wasn't taken seriously. I made the report before I had my aneurysm. I was going mad with depression and thought that I had to do something to put it to bed. The police interviewed him and he denied everything. He's in his seventies now. I gave the police a lassie's name – [REDACTED] – but I think she was actually in another home with me. I get confused. I thought [REDACTED] was in there with me too, but maybe I'm wrong about that as well. It's either that, or she just didn't want to speak to the police about it. I do remember a boy called [REDACTED] being in the home. He was from Glasgow. I should have given the police [REDACTED]'s name as well. He was very upset when he saw what his father had done to me.

## Records

163. I've got some social work and Aberlour notes. John Ryan from the Aberlour Trust denied having any knowledge of the Dowans. Derek Bannon gave me the Aberlour notes. He was great. He no longer works for the Aberlour Trust. [REDACTED]

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

164. What I would want to come out of this is a Centre of Excellence for abused children and adults. The facilities obviously need to be separate. The bairns need to be safe. Kids can't go through stuff like that and then be left to rot like an old apple. That's why they end up killing themselves or end up in jail. That's what happens to a lot of them, and it's all because of what other people did to them. It doesn't make sense to me. It's wrong.

165. The jail is full of women who've been raped, assaulted and abused. I used to speak to all of them when I was in prison. You can tell if someone's been abused when you've been abused yourself. I used to think "Why is the emphasis on punishing people instead of trying to heal them?". I would say that only about twenty five per cent of the people in that jail deserved to be there. The rest were all victims.

166. There needs to be properly trained spotters. People who have lived through abuse and have now turned a corner would know what to look for. That would be better than snooty people who've had brilliant lives and are not in touch with reality. I'm sick of seeing daft social workers. Some of them are idiots. It's the social work department that I have a problem with. They should be charged with neglect of duty. They had a responsibility to protect every child under their care and make sure they were safe. They didn't do that for me, and it's still the case with other children now. Everything has been swept under the carpet.

167. I've felt a lot of relief getting all of this off my chest. Nobody has ever listened to me before. I am not a liar. Speaking to the Inquiry is not about money for me. I would do anything I could to help to make sure that other kids don't suffer. That's what it's about for me. I would give oral evidence if I thought it would help.

168. 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  BCY .....

Dated 24)3)17 .....