

**ABUSE IN CARE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
FOSTER CARE INQUIRY HEARING**

Under The Inquiries Act 2013

In the matter of The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions

Royal Commission: Judge Coral Shaw (Chair)
Ali'imua Sandra Alofivae
Dr Anaru Erueti

Counsel: Mr Simon Mount QC, Ms Kerryn Beaton QC, Dr Allan Cooke and Ms Aroha Fletcher for the Royal Commission
Ms Rachael Schmidt-McCleave, Ms Julia White and Mr Max Clarke-Parker for the Crown

Venue: Level 2
Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry
414 Khyber Pass Road
AUCKLAND

Date: 15 June 2022

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

INDEX**MS ED**

Questioning by Dr Cooke	193
Questioning by Commissioners	238

STEPHEN PAUL SHAW

Questioning by Ms Fletcher	241
Questioning by Commissioners	271

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR EMILY KEDDELL
AND DR IAN HYSLOP**

Questioning by Dr Cooke and Commissioners	272
---	-----

**Hearing opens with waiata ‘He Hōnore’ and karakia tīmatanga by Ngāti Whātua
Ōrākei**

[Waiata He Hōnore]

KAUMATUA: He hōnore, he kororia ki te Atua, he maungārongo ki te whenua, he whakaaro pai ki ngā tangata katoa, hangai e te Atua he ngākau hou ki roto ki tēnā, ki tēnā o mātou. Whāngaia e tātou tēnei mahi, āwhinatia mai mō koutou haramai te tangata ki te kōrero, te kite o te kaha o te māramatanga, kia tau te rangimārie i waenganui i a tātou, āke tonu ake, kia whakamaua kia tīna, haumi e, hui e, taiki e. Kia ora anō mai tātou.

[9.32 am]

CHAIR: Thank you all for coming. Great to see the numbers swelling. Thank you, Tony. Tēnā tātou katoa, nau mai haere mai ki tēnei hui anō. Our day 3 commences and I invite Dr Cooke to introduce us and welcome you in particular Ms ED. Are you all right?

A. Yes.

Q. Looking a bit nervous but that's to be understood, so don't worry. Just a little bit, okay. So, shall we start by me giving you the affirmation? You understand I'm just going to ask you if you'll tell the truth, you get that?

A. Yes.

MS ED (Affirmed)

QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE: Ms ED, you have your statement in front of you?

A. Yes.

Q. And that statement has been prepared through your own knowledge of your experience, of course, and also through your reading of your files?

A. Yes, that's correct.

Q. And you're accompanied today by your husband?

A. Yes.

Q. Welcome to you and thank you for the support. We're going to be here getting you to tell the Commissioners and those listening and watching of your experiences through the care system. I'm going to take you through your statement and you're going to read bits and pieces from it from time to time, and I have some of those marked here and if there are times when you think you want to read something, you give us a signal and we'll do that.

A. Okay.

Q. If at any time you want to take a break, we'll do that as well, there's no problem in that regard. The first thing we're going to do I think is we're going to put up on the screen a poem that you've written.

1 A. Yes.

2 **Q.** I understand that you're going to read that out to us?

3 A. Yes, please. I wrote this poem just right at the very beginning of the start of this when
4 I knew this was going to happen. The poem's called "A letter to the system". "To whom it
5 may concern, to the one without a face or name, here's a letter from a ward of yours who
6 carries so much shame. You pulled me from my parents and that I accept, and I understand.
7 But while I was there taking my journey there was no one to hold my hand. I was told that
8 I belonged to you, that it was your job to watch me grow. But I don't think you were able to
9 see me with so much toing and fro. I was quiet and shy and unsocial, and I distrusted
10 everyone as I grew. You were blind to all my bruises, please don't be blind to my scars now
11 too. In your care I learned my value, I learned my lesson, my worth, my place, I learned I
12 wasn't just a child, just another hopeless case. Your carers stole my childhood. He with his
13 dirty old man hands and her leather belt and punches, no one caring where I land. So,
14 I write this letter to you, and I ask that you take the blame. But I cannot sign it sincerely
15 because you left me in so much pain."

16 **CHAIR:** Thank you for reading that, that was a brave and difficult thing to do, but very much
17 appreciated, thank you, thank you so much. Do you want to take a breath and a glass of
18 water before you move on?

19 A. Yes please.

20 **Q.** Take your time.

21 A. I'm okay.

22 **QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE CONTINUED:** Ms ED, you're sitting here today as a woman
23 who's been through some terrible experiences, so tell us how old you are?

24 A. I'm 49.

25 **Q.** Okay, you're sitting here today as this 49-year-old woman but you're going to be telling us
26 of experiences, things that happened to you when you were just a child. So, one imagines
27 that at times you will be seeing yourself as that child you once were?

28 A. Yeah.

29 **Q.** Your name is Ms ED, that's the name we're using you by, but it's also correct, isn't it, that
30 when you were in case you were known by different names?

31 A. Yes, that's right.

32 **Q.** And you say in your statement that your mum passed away when you were 30?

33 A. Yes, that's true.

34 **Q.** Even with my failed School C maths I can work out that that was about 19 years ago?

- 1 A. Yeah.
- 2 Q. When did you find out about her death?
- 3 A. I found out three months after she had been gone and buried.
- 4 Q. Was she here in New Zealand or somewhere else?
- 5 A. No, she was in Australia and the family members that knew of her death chose not to
6 inform me.
- 7 Q. Did you go and see her grave?
- 8 A. I did, I did.
- 9 Q. What was that, was there meaning for that for you?
- 10 A. Yeah, there is a lot of meaning for that for me. She was never able to apologise for her
11 wrongs, so it was a really big thing just to go and sit with her and think about that.
- 12 Q. Over there on the right we have a signer.
- 13 A. Okay.
- 14 Q. So, both you and I have got to make sure we don't speed up too much.
- 15 A. Okay.
- 16 Q. You then say you had no contact with your dad?
- 17 A. No, I lost contact with him through early years.
- 18 Q. And you say he got really sick and there was some alcohol issues there?
- 19 A. Yeah.
- 20 Q. And there were also heart problems?
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 Q. And of course, the consequence being that he, his organs began to shut down and he was in
23 hospital?
- 24 A. Correct.
- 25 Q. Right. At what point did you again make contact with him?
- 26 A. As soon as I found out he was terminal I went to the hospital and was pretty much with him
27 until he died.
- 28 Q. How long ago was that, if you can remember? I ask that because --
- 29 A. Eight years maybe, yeah, maybe about eight years ago.
- 30 Q. If we just go back to your mum, you say in your statement that she was an only child?
- 31 A. Yes.
- 32 Q. Where did she grow up?
- 33 A. She grew up on the West Coast.
- 34 Q. And what can you tell us about her life?

- 1 A. She was an only child. Her father passed away before I met him when she was a teenager, I
2 believe. Her mother, from my mother's accounts, her mother was quite abusive and not a
3 very well lady and she actually took her own life while my mother was pregnant with me.
- 4 Q. Have you thought about the fact of your mum's mum ending her life in the way that she did
5 and at a time when your mum was pregnant with you, have you thought through or have
6 any thoughts around that?
- 7 A. I just find it really hard, I find it really interesting that this is obviously a generational thing
8 with mental abuse -- I mean, sorry, with -- I can't find the word, mental problems but not --
- 9 **CHAIR:** Mental illness.
- 10 A. Yeah, anxiety and those types of things, sorry, I lost my words.
- 11 **QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE CONTINUED:** On your statement we've turned the page,
12 just so that you and I can keep up with each other --
- 13 A. Yeah.
- 14 Q. -- which is really important. And just at the top of the page we're talking about your having
15 three older half-brothers?
- 16 A. Yes.
- 17 Q. And the same mum but possibly there are some different dads in there?
- 18 A. Yes.
- 19 Q. And you tell us that the eldest of those half-brothers passed away about 20 years ago?
- 20 A. Yes, he did.
- 21 Q. Did you have a relationship with him at all?
- 22 A. We lost contact as children because of the moving to and fro, but we had just found each
23 other again through the -- thank God for Facebook, we had just found each other again and
24 he was killed in a car accident a few months later.
- 25 Q. So, when you --
- 26 A. In the North Island.
- 27 Q. Okay, so when you caught up with each other again was there an opportunity to have a
28 good reconnection, or was it not so good?
- 29 A. It was a wonderful connection, it was really great to see him. We didn't sit and talk about
30 our past, you know, it wasn't like that, we actually -- we got drunk.
- 31 Q. Right, okay. And then you say in your statement that when he was killed you found that to
32 be particularly devastating?
- 33 A. Yeah, yeah.

- 1 **Q.** Is there anything more you want to add to that, or the word "devastating" does that capture
2 it all?
- 3 **A.** Yeah, I think devastating captures it all, yeah.
- 4 **Q.** Then there's a second brother who you say lives in Christchurch who's a bit older than you?
- 5 **A.** Yes.
- 6 **Q.** You have no relationship with him?
- 7 **A.** No.
- 8 **Q.** And you have no relationship with him because he sexually abused you, didn't he?
- 9 **A.** Yes.
- 10 **Q.** And we're going to talk about that as we go through the statement.
- 11 **A.** Okay.
- 12 **Q.** And then you have another brother who's in Perth?
- 13 **A.** Yes.
- 14 **Q.** And you tell us that the two of you are very close and you stay in contact?
- 15 **A.** Yes, yeah, as much as we can obviously now with Covid.
- 16 **Q.** Have you been to Perth?
- 17 **A.** Yes, I have.
- 18 **Q.** That's great, it's a nice place.
- 19 **A.** Yeah, beautiful.
- 20 **Q.** And does he come over here to see you?
- 21 **A.** Yes, he does, yeah.
- 22 **Q.** And we said earlier that you're sitting here today with your husband?
- 23 **A.** Yes.
- 24 **Q.** And I know that you have a son who's 16?
- 25 **A.** Correct.
- 26 **Q.** And you and your husband have been together since your boy, your boy was 8 months old?
- 27 **A.** Yes.
- 28 **Q.** Yeah, so the two of you have raised him?
- 29 **A.** Yes, absolutely.
- 30 **Q.** And you've also got a foster child?
- 31 **A.** Correct.
- 32 **Q.** Who you've taken in your care, the two of you?
- 33 **A.** Yes.
- 34 **Q.** And I understand that you've got -- it's a girl?

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. And you've had her for around five years?
- 3 A. Six years now.
- 4 Q. How old's she?
- 5 A. She is 14.
- 6 Q. 14. And you have orders for her, don't you?
- 7 A. Yes, our name is on the parenting order.
- 8 Q. Great. We're now going to talk about coming into care, okay? We're still on the same page.
- 9 A. Yeah.
- 10 Q. Because we say that your mum and dad wanted their social life over their children?
- 11 A. Yeah, yeah, definitely.
- 12 Q. And you tell us that they were both gamblers, they played cards?
- 13 A. Yes, yeah.
- 14 Q. And as you said earlier about when your dad had some health problems and he was an
15 alcoholic, you say here that he was a heavy drinker?
- 16 A. A very heavy drinker, yes.
- 17 Q. And even before you were born, Social Welfare had its eye on the family?
- 18 A. Yes, yeah, I found that out when I got my files.
- 19 Q. Right. And you're telling us that because of the family situation, neighbours would be asked
20 to give food to you?
- 21 A. [Nods].
- 22 Q. And there was also concerns that possibly you shouldn't -- you weren't attending kindy
23 when you should have been; is that right?
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 Q. It's helpful to say -give us an answer, sometimes people nod or whatever-.
- 26 A. Yes.
- 27 Q. It's always helpful to have the answer. Tell us about your mum's -- sorry, social workers
28 would come and pay visits to you?
- 29 A. Yes, regularly, regularly. So, they would come and tell mum she needed to do better with
30 the housework, for example, because that was one of the big problems, the home was filth,
31 there's no other word. And she just couldn't keep up with her end of the bargain. We were
32 being left alone in the home as well.
- 33 Q. Okay. And you say here that it got to the point where Social Welfare thought enough's
34 enough?

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. And obviously they must have come around and then you say that they left to go and get a
3 warrant?
- 4 A. Mmm-hmm.
- 5 Q. And a warrant's a document, isn't it --
- 6 A. Yeah.
- 7 Q. -- that gives them the power to take the kids away?
- 8 A. That's right.
- 9 Q. What happened then, you know, you've written it here?
- 10 A. Yeah.
- 11 Q. If you could tell --
- 12 A. Again, this is not from my memory, this is from reading my records.
- 13 Q. Yeah.
- 14 A. So, dad went straight to the second-hand shop and sold everything in the house to the man
15 in the second-hand shop and we put clothes and what have you in rubbish bags and caught
16 the next train heading to Invercargill. In the meantime, the social workers had obviously
17 been back to the home, found out that the family had left, and they involved the Police, and
18 the train was intercepted in Dunedin and that's where we were taken after.
- 19 Q. Because you say here that there was a big scene between dad and the authorities, and I
20 imagine that you were a little child?
- 21 A. I was 18 months old.
- 22 Q. 18 months old?
- 23 A. Yeah.
- 24 Q. And we do know that the impact on -- when kids experience things like that, it's -- they may
25 not remember it, but it's in there.
- 26 A. Yeah, yeah, for sure.
- 27 Q. You know, the trauma that they see from those kinds of incidents is always there and
28 remains with you, so you would have -- that would have been part and parcel of what was
29 happening. They handcuffed dad and they took you off the train?
- 30 A. Yes.
- 31 Q. And they took you and your brothers off the train?
- 32 A. Yes.
- 33 Q. And you tell us that you were taken home by a social worker for a few days to the social
34 workers' home?

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. Wow.
- 3 A. Yeah.
- 4 Q. Something a bit different, isn't it?
- 5 A. Apparently, they did it then.
- 6 Q. And you were 18 months, and then it tells us that in December 74 when you were 2 years of
7 age you were made a ward of the State?
- 8 A. Yeah.
- 9 Q. Tell us, and I know you've done this, you've done all the calculation, you've worked it all
10 out, you were in care from 18 months old until you just turned 19?
- 11 A. Mmm-hmm.
- 12 Q. How many placements did you have?
- 13 A. I had 36 placements.
- 14 Q. I didn't quite hear that.
- 15 A. 36 placements.
- 16 Q. 36. And some of those would have been relatively short?
- 17 A. Yes, yes, some of them were a week or two days. Some of them I had gone back more than
18 once, places like Cholmondeley Home and Methodist Home.
- 19 Q. And some of them would have been for longer periods of time?
- 20 A. I think my longest stint was just under two years with any one family.
- 21 Q. And some of those placements you suffered the abuse that you're going to talk about?
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 Q. In more than one of those placements?
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 Q. And if we turn over the page, I'm probably going to have to speed up a bit, but it's
26 important. You say that, from reading your file, that a number of the placements broke
27 down for what you say is a simple fact that you were unable to form a bond with the
28 parents, the caregivers and they struggled with that?
- 29 A. Yeah. That's what I was reading between the lines in almost every discharge note.
- 30 Q. Right. You say as well that throughout the care journey your brothers and yourself, you
31 were often separated and living in different homes at different times?
- 32 A. Yes.
- 33 Q. You may see each other on the weekend when you would have had time with mum and
34 dad?

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. And then from time to time you were placed together, and I know that you were in the
3 Cholmondeley -- I'm glad you told me how to say that word -- and the Methodist family
4 homes, you were together?
- 5 A. Yeah.
- 6 Q. And but there was one -- you say there was one family home you were together in, that was
7 at Bishopdale?
- 8 A. Yes, that's correct.
- 9 Q. That was a foster placement or, would you say a foster placement or a family home?
- 10 A. It was actually a family home. I have since learned that the home was purpose-built for our
11 family, because there was nobody to take on four children.
- 12 Q. I know that in between the 36 placements, or as part of those 36 placements, you also went
13 back to live with your mum and dad?
- 14 A. Twice.
- 15 Q. On a couple of occasions, twice?
- 16 A. Yeah.
- 17 Q. And neither of them lasted for more than a year?
- 18 A. That's right.
- 19 Q. And in terms of just look at here it says there were four or five placements from when you
20 were aged 2 to 4 but they were all down in Invercargill or in that area?
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 Q. After that you were really most of the time in Christchurch?
- 23 A. Yeah, that's right.
- 24 Q. We referred to your brother earlier.
- 25 A. Yes.
- 26 Q. The middle brother.
- 27 A. Yes.
- 28 Q. And from about the age of 4 he began to abuse you, didn't he?
- 29 A. Yes.
- 30 Q. Sexually abuse you?
- 31 A. Yes.
- 32 Q. And this was when you -- this started in the St Joseph's Boys' Home?
- 33 A. Correct.

- 1 **Q.** Which we'll come to soon. In that paragraph 14 on that page, look at that, you'll see on the
2 second line after the word "south" there's a new sentence there, "I remember" do you want
3 to read that out to us please for the rest of that?
- 4 **A.** Sure. I remember there was another child his age in the room when it happened. He touched
5 me below my waist, had his hands down my pants and he put my hand down his pants.
6 I knew it wasn't okay because it hurt, and it was sore. Eventually it went beyond touching,
7 there was also digital penetration and eventually it escalated to rape.
- 8 **Q.** Thank you. And then of course you say that you would go back home to your parents on
9 the weekends and in the holidays, and you had mixed feelings?
- 10 **A.** Yeah.
- 11 **Q.** Because you wanted to be back home?
- 12 **A.** Yeah.
- 13 **Q.** Desperately?
- 14 **A.** Desperately, my mum was on a pedestal in my eyes.
- 15 **Q.** And the Commissioners will recall there was a comment made yesterday by Dr Calvert
16 around that dynamic. But you're also saying that you knew when you went home you
17 would be abused by your brother?
- 18 **A.** Yeah.
- 19 **Q.** But it was worth it, you say, because you wanted to be with your mum and dad?
- 20 **A.** [Nods].
- 21 **Q.** And the nod's a --
- 22 **A.** Yes.
- 23 **Q.** Yes. I guess over the years when you think back on your life and your brother, you must
24 have wondered why it was that he did these things to you?
- 25 **A.** Yes, I did.
- 26 **Q.** Have you, having thought about it, have you come to a view?
- 27 **A.** Yeah, as a kid I don't think I asked why or wondered why, that wasn't there. But as an adult
28 now, there is something I'm sure that's happened to my brother somewhere along the way.
29 Normal 10-year-old little boys don't rape girls.
- 30 **Q.** And that's a question that's there and remains?
- 31 **A.** Yes.
- 32 **Q.** So, we're now going to carry on through this journey and the next one is at four you were at
33 St Joseph's Boys' Home?
- 34 **A.** Yes.

- 1 **Q.** And you have no memory of that, but you say there must have been an emergency or
2 something like that?
- 3 **A.** Yeah.
- 4 **CHAIR:** Can I just check, was that St Joseph's in Christchurch or Invercargill?
- 5 **A.** Invercargill.
- 6 **Q.** Because there was one in Christchurch as well?
- 7 **A.** Oh okay, no, this is Invercargill.
- 8 **Q.** Thank you.
- 9 **QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE CONTINUED:** Now we're over the page and we're up to
10 Cholmondeley, and how you tell us that it was a home run by nuns, although they didn't
11 seem to be dressed in that way.
- 12 **A.** Yeah.
- 13 **Q.** And other kids there, and you say obviously, you know, being small you felt there were
14 hundreds but possibly far fewer number?
- 15 **A.** Yeah.
- 16 **Q.** Like maybe 15?
- 17 **A.** Yeah, probably more than 15 now I think about it, but not 100.
- 18 **Q.** Importantly you said you shared everything but there were no belongings that were yours,
19 including underwear?
- 20 **A.** Yeah, nothing. You didn't have toys. If you had a toy you had to put it in the big toy box in
21 the main room so everybody could play with it. There were no belongings, there were just
22 no belongings, your clothes weren't even yours, you just wore whatever was left over after
23 everybody else had got theirs.
- 24 **Q.** Was there a scramble to get pairs of knickers or...
- 25 **A.** No, not that I recall, not that I recall.
- 26 **Q.** Okay. And you've already described, you've described it as being pretty impersonal. We
27 know that you were there when you were around 5 years of age. You also tell us that you
28 went back there from time to time?
- 29 **A.** Yeah.
- 30 **Q.** Do you know, can you recall the three or four times, was that within a short space of time
31 or spread out?
- 32 **A.** I honestly couldn't tell you, I don't know. It will be in my files, but yeah. I think we
33 generally went to Cholmondeley or Methodist if there wasn't a home available for us.

- 1 **Q.** And you tell us, you say -- tell us that you don't think you got abused in the home, and by
2 that I think you mean you weren't physically or sexually abused in the home?
- 3 **A.** Yeah, that's right.
- 4 **Q.** But you do tell us that it was an incredibly impersonal situation which suggests that there
5 was a slightly more subtle kind of abuse?
- 6 **A.** Yeah, yeah.
- 7 **Q.** Which is emotional abuse through --
- 8 **A.** Yeah.
- 9 **Q.** -- it being so impersonal?
- 10 **A.** I don't think I recall anybody asking, "how are you, are you happy", or even a hug. I don't
11 recall a hug from anyone ever in either of those places, Cholmondeley or Methodist.
- 12 **Q.** You also say that even at that time you had a bed-wetting problem?
- 13 **A.** Yes.
- 14 **Q.** How did they deal with that, was it addressed in any way?
- 15 **A.** I would get growled at and taken out of bed and thrown into a bath. No talking, no nothing,
16 just silence, throw you in the bath.
- 17 **Q.** You say, just moving down through the statement around your most recent memory of
18 Cholmondeley being when your parents were meant to come to a visit, come for a visit?
- 19 **A.** Yeah, I think that was my last memory of Cholmondeley.
- 20 **Q.** And you tell us that they promised you a new doll, do you want to tell us about the doll?
- 21 **A.** So it was a doll that had just come out and if you had a wee bottle you could feed the doll
22 and the milk in the bottle would disappear, and my mum and dad had promised me they
23 were going to buy me one for Christmas, and they were going to come for Christmas visit,
24 and they didn't come and I didn't get my doll.
- 25 **Q.** So, they didn't come and neither did the doll?
- 26 **A.** No.
- 27 **Q.** So, there was a double whammy of disappointment?
- 28 **A.** Yeah.
- 29 **Q.** Then of course between the ages of 5 and 10 you tell us that you were at the Methodist
30 children's home in Papanui?
- 31 **A.** Yeah, that's right.
- 32 **Q.** And you were returned there up to five or six times but --
- 33 **A.** Actually three.
- 34 **Q.** Three?

- 1 A. I went through my records and double-checked, and I went back there three times.
- 2 Q. And you say that it was even more impersonal than Cholmondeley, you use the word it was
3 run in a military way?
- 4 A. Yeah, very much.
- 5 Q. Regimented?
- 6 A. Very regimented.
- 7 Q. And you use -- you describe the buildings as having wings, left wing, right wing?
- 8 A. Yeah, yeah.
- 9 Q. Gives us an idea. But at the same time, you tell us as well that you make a reference to
10 Sister Rona, and there's a smile on your face?
- 11 A. Yeah, Sister Rona.
- 12 Q. Tell us about Sister Rona?
- 13 A. I don't know what her actual role was within the church, but she worked with the Methodist
14 Church and very closely with the Methodist children's home. She would bring food parcels
15 to my family when we were hungry and had no food, she would bring presents at Christmas
16 time to make sure the kids had presents. I had my nose broken in an attack at school and
17 Sister Rona, we didn't have a car, Sister Rona drove me to the hospital to have my, you
18 know, she was just an angel, and I couldn't figure out where she came from or why she was
19 working with us. Yeah, I never figured that out until I was older. We needed her, that's
20 why.
- 21 **CHAIR:** Can I just ask, was she at the Methodist home in Papanui or was she separate from that?
- 22 A. She was separate from that, I think she actually worked within the church.
- 23 Q. As part of their social services probably?
- 24 A. Yes, yes, but like if we had a play on at Christmas or something, she would come and, you
25 know, she was just --
- 26 Q. Sounds like a mother figure in a way?
- 27 A. She was a Mother Theresa. I cried last year when I found out she'd died, yeah. Anyway.
- 28 **QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE CONTINUED:** The last comment, or the last finishing off
29 about this particular home is that you talk about breakfast, eating porridge.
- 30 A. Yeah.
- 31 Q. Didn't really want to eat the skin on the top of the porridge?
- 32 A. Yeah, that's right.
- 33 Q. You gave it away to somebody else. What was the response?

- 1 A. I got hit over the back of the head with a ladle, a serving ladle thing, yeah, I was in big
2 trouble for that.
- 3 Q. Was it back in the days when they were wooden ladles do you think?
- 4 A. I don't know.
- 5 Q. Can't recall?
- 6 A. I don't know, yeah.
- 7 Q. You've already noted this, but it was regimented and the like and you say there was a lot of
8 emotional neglect?
- 9 A. Yeah.
- 10 Q. And that rooms were filled with cubby holes where the clothes were kept, and it was a race
11 to get the clothing?
- 12 A. Yeah.
- 13 Q. First in first served?
- 14 A. Yeah.
- 15 Q. Now we're up to your turning 8 and we're at Bishopdale?
- 16 A. Yeah, can I mention one more thing --
- 17 Q. You can mention --
- 18 A. -- in regards to the Methodist children's home? Even on our entrance file sort of thing, you
19 know, it tells you how's the health da da da, we were referred to as inmates and one of the
20 rules to the parents were you cannot bring toys to the inmates. And that was just something
21 that's not in here that I thought was quite important.
- 22 Q. Because we've heard it -- we've heard others talk about it being called inmates?
- 23 A. Yeah.
- 24 Q. Was being called inmates there, was that an isolated experience, or did you have that, were
25 you called inmates at other times and in other places?
- 26 A. I never recall being called an inmate as a child, so I don't know. But seeing it as an adult is
27 what revolted me.
- 28 Q. Now we're talking about Bishopdale. When I read this, it tells us that if you're going to
29 summarise it, parts of it were okay?
- 30 A. Yes, more than okay, a lot of it.
- 31 Q. Everyone was there, your brothers as well as you?
- 32 A. Yes.
- 33 Q. And in that home the foster parents had a couple of biological children of their own?
- 34 A. Yes.

- 1 **Q.** And a grandchild that they were raising as their own as well?
- 2 **A.** Yeah.
- 3 **Q.** And you tell us that you were -- you and your brothers I assume here were treated the same
- 4 way?
- 5 **A.** Yes.
- 6 **Q.** As their own children?
- 7 **A.** Yes.
- 8 **Q.** Is that something that presumably was a good experience?
- 9 **A.** Very much so. My first happy moment as a child happened in that house.
- 10 **Q.** And that would have been being treated in the same way presumably would be an
- 11 experience that differed in subsequent placements?
- 12 **A.** Yeah, yeah. I just felt like a little girl that was part of a family.
- 13 **Q.** Because you say that you went on holidays?
- 14 **A.** Yeah.
- 15 **Q.** In the caravan, you had your first birthday cake?
- 16 **A.** Yeah.
- 17 **Q.** Had your own room, okay. You still would visit your mum, your parents?
- 18 **A.** On the weekends, yes.
- 19 **Q.** You do say that the foster mother would get a bit snotty I suppose?
- 20 **A.** Yes. Mum and dad were really heavy smokers and with us inside obviously and no
- 21 windows opened, and so we would naturally go back to our foster home smelling like
- 22 cigarettes, and it was something that she really disliked, really disliked. And while she was
- 23 cleaning us, she would often huff, "oh you stink like cigarette smokes." And it kind of hurt
- 24 even though it wasn't my cigarette, that kind of hurt.
- 25 **Q.** And you would have felt embarrassed?
- 26 **A.** Yeah, yeah.
- 27 **Q.** We're over the page now again.
- 28 **A.** Yeah.
- 29 **Q.** You do say that you recall social workers coming to visit the house every now and then?
- 30 **A.** Yes.
- 31 **Q.** And they would ask how you were going?
- 32 **A.** Yes.
- 33 **Q.** You never told them about your brother?
- 34 **A.** No.

- 1 **Q.** You talk about that in the next paragraph, you did try to tell the foster mother about him?
- 2 **A.** Yes.
- 3 **Q.** And you say she didn't do the right thing?
- 4 **A.** That's right.
- 5 **Q.** The only reason you told her was because you wanted to stay up later and not go to bed and
- 6 you thought she would stay up and talk with you?
- 7 **A.** That's right. Yeah, I didn't understand the hugeness at the time of saying what I said, that he
- 8 touches me, and when I told her she got my brother out of bed and she wagged her finger at
- 9 him and said "if that happens again I'll tie your willy in a knot" and then she wagged her
- 10 finger at me and told me I was not to prance around in my nightie anymore, that I had to
- 11 wear a dressing gown at all times.
- 12 **Q.** So, you didn't raise it again with her?
- 13 **A.** I figured maybe it's not as important as I thought it was, or maybe I'm not as important.
- 14 **Q.** Or maybe if you're prancing around in your nightie, you were in some way to blame?
- 15 **A.** Yes.
- 16 **Q.** Then they decided to move house?
- 17 **A.** That's right.
- 18 **Q.** You went, your brother stayed?
- 19 **A.** No.
- 20 **Q.** Have I got that wrong?
- 21 **A.** My brothers went.
- 22 **Q.** Your brothers went as well?
- 23 **A.** My brothers went with --
- 24 **Q.** You say here that only one other person stayed on, who was that?
- 25 **A.** My brother, my youngest brother, yeah.
- 26 **Q.** All right.
- 27 **CHAIR:** We've got coming and going and wanting and staying. Your brother went with that
- 28 family?
- 29 **A.** Yes.
- 30 **Q.** And you didn't?
- 31 **A.** That's correct.
- 32 **Q.** And it was the abusive brother who went with them was it?
- 33 **A.** No, it was.
- 34 **Q.** It was another brother?

- 1 A. It was another brother. I believe they, all three went with them, but only one ended up
2 staying with them --
- 3 Q. Now we've got it.
- 4 A. -- which was the youngest brother.
- 5 Q. Thank you for clearing that up.
- 6 A. That's okay.
- 7 **QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE CONTINUED:** Now you go to this next placement which is,
8 we're going to have to go carefully through it aren't we.
- 9 A. Yes.
- 10 Q. Because you're nine years of age, and these were foster parents who had two sons of their
11 own and you were the only foster child there?
- 12 A. Correct.
- 13 Q. And those two boys you say, in contrast to the previous placement, they were treated like
14 kings and could do nothing wrong?
- 15 A. That's right.
- 16 Q. And it was just you. And you were there for about a year?
- 17 A. Yes.
- 18 Q. And you describe him as being small and she was being really big and you note that, you
19 observe looking back, that he was terrified of her, never physically stood up to her?
- 20 A. I really think he was.
- 21 Q. So, tell us about how you were treated in that home? You'll see that paragraph at the foot of
22 the page?
- 23 A. Yeah.
- 24 Q. I'll start it off, it says you were treated like an animal, she was very cruel. Do you want to
25 tell us about the rest of it or shall I summarise it?
- 26 A. Yeah, I'm keen to do this. She was very physically abusive and would beat me until I was
27 black and blue. She was just a nasty, nasty woman. This was the worst physical experience,
28 physical abuse that I had experienced anywhere as a child. She would punch, kick, slap, she
29 loved to beat me with the buckle end of the belt, and I still have a chipped tooth from one
30 of those beatings. I think the punishments were daily, but I can't be sure, but I know I was
31 terrified of her daily. They would often and normally for punishment, it could be anything
32 from an untidy room, bedwetting, she would rub my face in the wet sheets, she would
33 withhold food from me for days on end, and then force feed me. And when I vomited, she
34 made me eat my own vomit. Because she wouldn't feed me often, I would steal food from

1 the rubbish bins at primary school, and I was seen and ridiculed over that. Her sons used to
2 shit stir basically, throw a stone and say **[points]** "threw a stone at me, Ms ED threw a
3 stone at me", so I'd just get a hiding. She used to make me brush my hair, I had really,
4 really long hair, I had never had a haircut, and I had to brush my hair 100 strokes each night
5 and each morning, and if she felt that it wasn't tidy enough, she'd hit me around the head
6 with the hair brush. Once I enraged her so much, she cut my hair off with the kitchen
7 scissors.

8 She also would make me sleep on the doorstep if I was late home from Brownies
9 where I used to walk at 9 o'clock at night by myself. And yeah, if I was late home she'd
10 lock the door, call at me through the bathroom window, tell you "you fuck'n stay there."

11 **Q.** Okay. You'd be, during this time you were there, you were still seeing social workers, they
12 would come and take you home for the weekend, wouldn't they?

13 **A.** Yeah.

14 **Q.** To mum and dad's place, or to mum's. Did you ever -- were you ever asked by the social
15 workers about what was happening, how are you, were you being treated okay?

16 **A.** You know, I think there was the "how are you, oh that's a pretty dress", because I'd
17 obviously always be put in my best clothes just before they come.

18 **Q.** You say here that on one occasion that you recall you went to leave your mum's house, you
19 held on to the door and refused to go. And when you got back to the foster parents, you
20 cried and said you didn't want to be there. And no one asked you what was going on.

21 **A.** No.

22 **Q.** So, the social worker was present when that occurred?

23 **A.** Yes.

24 **Q.** And then you say that when the social worker left you got a hell of a -- I was going to say a
25 bit of a hiding, but I should use the words that you've used which is a hell of a hiding?

26 **A.** Yes.

27 **Q.** She said that if you behave like that Social Welfare would think something was wrong and
28 you didn't want to be living there?

29 **A.** That's right.

30 **Q.** And you were, as a result, apprehensive and scared about complaining?

31 **A.** **[Nods]**.

32 **Q.** You're going to school?

33 **A.** Yeah.

- 1 **Q.** And you say, you tell us that at times you may have gone to school with marks and bruises
2 on you?
- 3 **A.** Yeah, yeah. I often had a black eye or bruises, or my lips were often swollen or cut. That
4 foster mother used to say to me, "if anybody asks you say you walked into the seesaw", we
5 had a seesaw in the back yard. "If anybody asks say you walked into the seesaw." And a
6 teacher at school did ask and I told her I walked into a seesaw. She phoned authorities
7 because she was, I don't know, not convinced, I guess, and then it ended up being my foster
8 mother from the previous foster home had been complaining about how she thought I was
9 being treated, and finally Judith Kolf, who was the social worker for my brother, actually
10 came and uplifted me.
- 11 **Q.** Because when you said that one of the teachers phoned and spoke to the authorities that she
12 had concern, you say "I didn't look a well kid, I had black eyes and fat lips." Was that a
13 precipitating factor to being removed, or are we talking about a different occasion that led
14 to your being removed?
- 15 **A.** No, all of that together, yeah.
- 16 **Q.** Okay. Because you say that a social worker Vicki Buck came to check on you?
- 17 **A.** Yeah.
- 18 **Q.** And that was the change?
- 19 **A.** Yes.
- 20 **Q.** And she came to the house, and you tell us that the foster mother made you put on a puffy
21 dress?
- 22 **A.** Yeah.
- 23 **Q.** Play with a jigsaw?
- 24 **A.** Yeah.
- 25 **Q.** Happy families, was it?
- 26 **A.** Yeah.
- 27 **Q.** And you say here that this foster mother said to you "you're happy, you're happy" and
28 presumably that was in front of the social worker, Vicki Buck?
- 29 **A.** Yeah, or before, you know, just before they come in, you're happy, you're happy.
- 30 **Q.** And she removed you from the home, Vicki Buck, because she wasn't satisfied that that
31 was a safe place for you?
- 32 **A.** Correct.
- 33 **Q.** And you say you want to thank her for what she did?
- 34 **A.** Yeah, very much.

- 1 **Q.** We're going to put up something on the screen in a moment because it goes back to your
2 file, and there are records on the file showing that on multiple occasions the Bishopdale
3 foster mum would complain about what she thought of the abusive treatment you were
4 receiving in the foster home you went to after Bishopdale?
- 5 **A.** Correct.
- 6 **Q.** She was fearful for your safety?
- 7 **A.** Yes.
- 8 **Q.** And I understand that she complained that you had been purposely given a black eye, you
9 know, hit?
- 10 **A.** Correct.
- 11 **Q.** The social worker, and the notes will say this when it comes up, here we go, it tells us there
12 that around the complaint that had been made that you were being purposely had the black
13 eye, but those stories were there, it's recorded there that they were there to discredit that
14 second caregiver?
- 15 **A.** Yeah.
- 16 **Q.** And the social worker's saying, as you can see from the record, that she told the Bishopdale
17 social worker very firmly that she would not listen to such tales without that second foster
18 mother being there to defend herself, and that the social worker who wrote this tells us that
19 she was very informed and aware of what's happening in the household?
- 20 **A.** Yes.
- 21 **Q.** Which was misinformed to say the least?
- 22 **A.** Correct.
- 23 **Q.** And notwithstanding what was said, the social workers, up until the Vicki Buck time,
24 clearly believed that you were safe within that household?
- 25 **A.** Yes.
- 26 **Q.** You're now aged 10 to 12 and you went back to the Methodist home for a few months
27 before another placement with people who were at St Michael's Church?
- 28 **A.** Correct.
- 29 **Q.** And you called them mum and dad?
- 30 **A.** We had to; it was a house rule.
- 31 **Q.** House rules, okay. It wasn't --
- 32 **A.** It wasn't a choice.
- 33 **Q.** It wasn't a choice, it wasn't because you were provided with such care and nurturing that
34 you thought I can easily call these people who are looking after me mum and dad?

- 1 A. No, they told me when I arrived "our names are mum and dad."
- 2 Q. And it was your longest placement you tell us?
- 3 A. It was, yeah.
- 4 Q. They had their own daughter there?
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. Was she an adult daughter?
- 7 A. Yes, she was, she was attending university.
- 8 Q. And there was another foster child there, female foster child?
- 9 A. Yes, correct.
- 10 Q. And she was a year or two older than you?
- 11 A. Yeah, she's one year older than me, yeah.
- 12 Q. You tell us that you became quite close to her?
- 13 A. Very much.
- 14 Q. And she's going to come up again as we turn over the page, isn't she?
- 15 A. Yes.
- 16 Q. Okay. And you tell us that, we've turned over the page, that the foster mother herself, you
17 use the words was quite lovely?
- 18 A. Yeah.
- 19 Q. Old-fashioned, strict but fair?
- 20 A. Very, yeah.
- 21 Q. And you use the word, bit of an old battle-ax?
- 22 A. At times, yes.
- 23 Q. But you did think as well that some of the requests were a bit unreasonable and you
24 describe having to clean various bedrooms, the lounge, the kitchen, the dining room before
25 being allowed to go for a bike ride?
- 26 A. Yeah, yeah, we had to clean all the venetian blinds in the house before we were allowed
27 out.
- 28 Q. And you say the cleaning took two hours and you weren't allowed out anyway?
- 29 A. Yeah.
- 30 Q. It wasn't because the weather had changed?
- 31 A. No, normally just too late now, but we did go out sometimes, but you had to work for it.
- 32 Q. And you do say that this woman was obviously well known in the foster care world because
33 she received an award?
- 34 A. Yes.

- 1 **Q.** And she fostered for a long time?
- 2 **A.** Yes, many, many years.
- 3 **Q.** And you say that her treatment was consistent with everyone, there was no cruelty from
4 her, everyone -- from her, everyone was well -fed and clothed?
- 5 **A.** Yeah, yeah.
- 6 **Q.** But there was the foster father?
- 7 **A.** Yes.
- 8 **Q.** And he sexually abused you?
- 9 **A.** Yes.
- 10 **Q.** And he also sexually abused the young woman who we've just spoken about?--
- 11 **A.** Correct.
- 12 **Q.** You say it here that it wasn't often, you only remember three times, but you don't know
13 whether you blacked out on other occasions as well?
- 14 **A.** Mmm, yeah.
- 15 **Q.** So, the suggestion would be that it occurred more often than you possibly recall?
- 16 **A.** Yeah, possibly.
- 17 **Q.** And that it involved touching and digital penetration. And you also tell us that he would
18 drive both girls, both of you to piano lessons?
- 19 **A.** Yes.
- 20 **Q.** And have some lollies on the way in exchange for a bit of a feel is the word you use?
- 21 **A.** Correct.
- 22 **Q.** But the two of you, the two girls, you didn't say anything to each other?
- 23 **A.** No.
- 24 **Q.** And at the risk of jumping ahead, that he was behaving in the same way to both of you but
25 neither of you knew that this was happening?
- 26 **A.** No, that's right.
- 27 **Q.** That's right, yeah. I wonder if that might be a time for just morning tea and we'll come
28 back. I wonder if we could -- I'm just mindful of the time, perhaps if we did 10 minutes
29 instead of 15?
- 30 **CHAIR:** Yes, that's absolutely fine. Take a break.
- 31 **A.** Thank you.
- 32 **Q.** We'll come back in 10 minutes.
- 33 **Adjournment from 10.30 am to 10.46 am**
- 34 **CHAIR:** Hello again. Sorry we caught you by surprise.

- 1 **QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE CONTINUED:** We're on that page 9, and I just want to,- if
2 you just look at paragraph 59, that's where I'm- up to.
- 3 A. Yes.
- 4 **Q.** And we're talking about the foster father who had charge of your care?
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 **Q.** And the young woman who was in foster care with you?
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 **Q.** And you tell us that on one occasion you saw him pinning her up against the wall and you
9 saw his face and you knew it wasn't okay. Can you recall what it was about his face that
10 made you feel things weren't okay?
- 11 A. It was the same face I saw when he did those things to me, and I can't explain it.
- 12 **Q.** And he saw you?
- 13 A. Yes.
- 14 **Q.** And you say there that you thought he'd be able to see, I remember thinking at the time
15 "you know"?
- 16 A. Yes, that was actually in regards to a family friend that was in the room at the time, an
17 elderly gentleman. I looked over and I saw him and looked at what I was looking at and
18 I knew he had a clear vision too, so he must have known too.
- 19 **Q.** Understand. So what was taking place was being observed by a third party?
- 20 A. Correct.
- 21 **Q.** And that third party, you would think, knew what was going on but there was no protective
22 action taken?
- 23 A. Correct.
- 24 **Q.** You'll see the next heading which is the reporting of that abuse, and you say that it stopped
25 as soon as you told the foster mother about what had happened between you and your
26 brother?
- 27 A. Yes, that's right.
- 28 **Q.** Not between what happened between her and her husband?
- 29 A. No.
- 30 **Q.** And after that, he left you alone?
- 31 A. Yes.
- 32 **Q.** You say if you turn over the page you say at the top of the page that apparently it had been
33 worked out that the foster mother knew that you had previously suffered sexual abuse?
- 34 A. Yes.

- 1 **Q.** You say that she said you can't have secrets, black secrets if you want God to accept you?
- 2 **A.** Correct.
- 3 **Q.** And that was the circumstances in which you told her?
- 4 **A.** Yes, I wanted to get baptised, I wanted the bit of bread that everybody else got, I wanted to
5 be baptised and it was during that baptised kind of speech that she told me that.
- 6 **Q.** Then as a result of that you say that there were -- Social Welfare were told, medical checks
7 were done, your mum was contacted?
- 8 **A.** Yeah.
- 9 **Q.** Your mum came down?
- 10 **A.** Yeah.
- 11 **Q.** And you tell us that you felt supported?
- 12 **A.** Very much.
- 13 **Q.** But you also say you didn't mention what the foster father was doing?
- 14 **A.** No.
- 15 **Q.** Because as you say, in your mind what your brother was doing was worse?
- 16 **A.** Correct.
- 17 **Q.** You could put up with one, but your brother was getting more scary and more violent?
- 18 **A.** Correct.
- 19 **Q.** And this was happening at mum's house and that was getting worse, you use the word
20 escalating?
- 21 **A.** Yes, yeah, it did.
- 22 **Q.** In the next two paragraphs on that page it talks about the medical examinations and the
23 reports that were done?
- 24 **A.** Mmm-hmm.
- 25 **Q.** And it's clear, isn't it, that the findings were consistent that you had been the subject of
26 penetrative intercourse?
- 27 **A.** Correct.
- 28 **Q.** And it talks about having an infection of the pelvis, for example?
- 29 **A.** Right.
- 30 **Q.** But at the same time there's reference you'll see there to a medical report from a Dr McGill
31 dated 26 May 1983 that it's not given to the Police?
- 32 **A.** Correct.
- 33 **Q.** As I've said there's a second report that's referred to which tells us that the findings could be
34 consistent with repeated sexual intercourse over the years, but they don't prove that sexual

1 intercourse had taken place. So really, was it a situation where people were suspicious that
2 something had occurred but because there was no, - nothing definitive, that's- the word that
3 you use?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. Nothing ever happened?

6 A. No.

7 Q. You say in paragraph 65, your brother was interviewed?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Yes, and he was given formal warning?

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. Later on, you say in your -- later on in the statement you say that, later in years, you made a
12 formal complaint against your brother?

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. That he was interviewed but nothing came out of that?

15 A. No, after one year of interviewing, the Police told me that because he had a Police warning
16 they classed that as already being dealt with and so double jeopardy means he can't be
17 brought up on that charge again.

18 Q. Right, okay. So, you're in a situation where you've suffered significant sexual abuse on the
19 part of your brother, it's been reported to the two main authorities, both at the time and then
20 subsequently, but you're left in limbo land around ever having that addressed?

21 A. Yeah, still today.

22 Q. Okay. You then say that as a result of this, and this is at the time, that your mum had to say
23 that you were living with them on the weekends?

24 A. No, mum had to say that the brother wouldn't be there when I was on the weekends, she
25 had to make a promise to keep me safe.

26 Q. Right. So, the idea would be that you could be at home on the weekends and the deal would
27 be that your mother being a protective person would agree that your brother would be
28 somewhere else?

29 A. Correct.

30 Q. But he was there all the time?

31 A. Correct.

32 Q. And he lied to social workers?

33 A. Yes.

34 Q. And did your brother carry on?

- 1 A. No. But I was still terrified.
- 2 Q. But you tell us that you were forced to lie as well?
- 3 A. Yes.
- 4 Q. Because your mum was saying that if you didn't, they would take you away?
- 5 A. Correct.
- 6 Q. You had some counselling sessions?
- 7 A. Yes, I did.
- 8 Q. Play therapy, things like that you say?
- 9 A. Yeah, yeah.
- 10 Q. Was that helpful?
- 11 A. No, no, not at all.
- 12 Q. Because you say as well that you wanted to go back and live with mum and dad?
- 13 A. I did.
- 14 Q. And the way that's described it sounds as though it was a deeply felt desire to live back
15 with mum and dad?
- 16 A. Very much.
- 17 Q. And that occurred?
- 18 A. It did.
- 19 Q. So, when you went back home it was only for a few months, though, wasn't it?
- 20 A. Yeah, didn't last long.
- 21 Q. And you say that your dad, when your dad was there, he didn't care that your brother was
22 present as well?
- 23 A. Correct.
- 24 Q. Did your dad know what was going on?
- 25 A. Yes.
- 26 Q. Did your mother have a view, was your mother of the same view of dad, or was dad the one
27 in control?
- 28 A. Mum was in control, mum was in control, yeah.
- 29 Q. So, both mum and dad knew, both mum and dad particularly didn't mind that your brother
30 was there?
- 31 A. No.
- 32 Q. So --
- 33 **CHAIR:** Can I just be clear about how old you were at this time? Were you 12, 11?
- 34 A. When I went back to live --

- 1 Q. With your mother?
- 2 A. -- with my mum, I was 12.
- 3 Q. 12, right.
- 4 A. Yeah, I was 12 and I left again just after my 13th birthday.
- 5 Q. Thank you.
- 6 **QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE CONTINUED:** Because in your statement you refer to a
- 7 Cracroft statement.
- 8 A. Cracroft.
- 9 Q. It's got you there as being 14 or 15?
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. This was the daughter, the adult daughter of one of your previous caregivers --
- 12 A. That's right.
- 13 Q. -- live with her and her husband?
- 14 A. Correct.
- 15 Q. And you tell us that that was quite normal when you lived there, life was fine?
- 16 A. Yes, it was good.
- 17 Q. The only problem you've -- you identify one issue as being having to get to secondary
- 18 school on your bike and the husband, the male caregiver, was working close by to the high
- 19 school but wouldn't give you a ride?
- 20 A. Yeah, that's right.
- 21 Q. At this stage as well, you tell us that you caught up with your friend who was in the
- 22 previous placement?
- 23 A. We'd always been in touch, yeah.
- 24 Q. And you tell us that you used to go to the Salvation Army youth group together?
- 25 A. Yes.
- 26 Q. And one day at the skating rink she broke down in tears and she told you she was afraid
- 27 that she was getting pregnant, she could be pregnant?
- 28 A. Yes.
- 29 Q. And you thought it was her, between her and the boyfriend?
- 30 A. Yes.
- 31 Q. And you asked her that?
- 32 A. I did.
- 33 Q. And she said?
- 34 A. No, it's dad.

- 1 **Q.** Who was dad? Dad was the former foster caregiver?
- 2 **A.** The foster, yeah, the former foster carer from GRO-B and she showed me bruises on
- 3 her arms where he had held her down.
- 4 **Q.** She said, she told you, you say, "dad is raping me" and showed you the bruises?
- 5 **A.** Correct.
- 6 **Q.** You tell us as well that you thought it couldn't go on and you didn't want to say anything
- 7 about what had happened to you, but you felt protective for her?
- 8 **A.** Yeah. I figured my thing was just touching, and still in my head then that wasn't as bad as
- 9 rape.
- 10 **Q.** So, when you turn the page, you're obviously talking, the two of you are exchanging
- 11 stories?
- 12 **A.** Yeah.
- 13 **Q.** As it were, and you found out what was going on?
- 14 **A.** [Nods].
- 15 **Q.** And you went and told the woman who was looking after you?
- 16 **A.** Yes.
- 17 **Q.** The daughter?
- 18 **A.** Yes, the daughter of the perpetrator.
- 19 **Q.** The daughter of the perpetrator, I wanted to make that clear. And you told her this is what's
- 20 happening, this is what dad is doing to your friend?
- 21 **A.** Yes.
- 22 **Q.** And her response was, how dare you make those accusations?
- 23 **A.** Yeah.
- 24 **Q.** Is that right?
- 25 **A.** Yeah.
- 26 **Q.** What happened, you were, --what happened then?
- 27 **A.** She bundled me into the car very angry and drove to her parents' house, my ex-foster
- 28 parents, and walked in the door and said to me you tell them what you've just told me.
- 29 **Q.** And the social workers were called?
- 30 **A.** After.
- 31 **Q.** Afterwards, okay. And your friend was dragged into this, wasn't she, as well?
- 32 **A.** Yes, yeah.
- 33 **Q.** And you, -- if you go to that paragraph 77, do you see that?
- 34 **A.** Yes.

- 1 **Q.** If you go halfway down, you'll see the reference to GRO-B-10 was dragged out and she
2 was crying?
- 3 **A.** Yeah.
- 4 **Q.** Can you go -- where it said the next sentence where it begins "when I said" can you read
5 that out to us through to the end of the paragraph?
- 6 **A.** Okay. When I said he did it to me too, they asked why we would jeopardise ourselves like
7 that, especially if we wanted to live together. We were ostracised and called liars and sluts.
8 We were absolutely disbelieved. It was clear, everyone was on their side right from the
9 beginning.
- 10 **Q.** And you were taken to the police station?
- 11 **A.** Yes.
- 12 **Q.** And you made a statement?
- 13 **A.** Yes.
- 14 **Q.** And on the way to the police station you use the words "stone cold silence in the car"?
- 15 **A.** Yes.
- 16 **Q.** And you then tell us that the social worker threatened you with being sent to live in
17 Wellington and neither you nor your friend would see each other again?
- 18 **A.** Yes, that's right.
- 19 **Q.** And the Police had the same view, didn't they?
- 20 **A.** Very much so.
- 21 **Q.** You say they'd made up their mind before they'd even taken your statement?
- 22 **A.** Yeah, that's right.
- 23 **Q.** A token thing?
- 24 **A.** Yeah, I don't think even think they were writing anything down.
- 25 **Q.** We'd better do the right thing and do a statement is what you say there?
- 26 **A.** Yeah.
- 27 **Q.** And you then add "it was not going to go anywhere, the policeman kept saying why are you
28 making up these lies?"
- 29 **A.** Yes.
- 30 **Q.** So, you're getting -- would I be right in thinking that that's giving you a fairly powerful
31 message?
- 32 **A.** Yes. Yeah.
- 33 **Q.** Then the two of you were separated?
- 34 **A.** Yeah.

- 1 **Q.** You and your friend?
- 2 **A.** Immediately that day.
- 3 **Q.** You went one way, she went the other?
- 4 **A.** Correct.
- 5 **Q.** And you didn't catch up until some years later?
- 6 **A.** Correct.
- 7 **Q.** You had one or two by the looks of things temporary places?
- 8 **A.** Yes.
- 9 **Q.** And you ended up in the GRO-B family home and you tell us you were 16 at this stage?
- 10 **A.** GRO-B
- 11 **Q.** If you look at paragraph 84?
- 12 **A.** Yeah.
- 13 **Q.** It's when you were a teenager?
- 14 **A.** Yes, yeah.
- 15 **Q.** And this was a couple who were in their mid-40s, and you say that the foster father, you
- 16 describe him as being very violent?
- 17 **A.** Yes, he was.
- 18 **Q.** And you say you believe there was ongoing family violence. Did you witness that family
- 19 violence yourself?
- 20 **A.** I didn't witness family violence, I definitely witnessed emotional abuse and verbal abuse
- 21 towards his wife. He would send her to her room if she spoke out of line.
- 22 **Q.** Right, okay. Did you ever witness the consequences of any domestic violence, did you ever
- 23 see anything on her face?
- 24 **A.** Yes.
- 25 **Q.** Or on her body?
- 26 **A.** Not on her, no, no, not on her. I witnessed an incident where he had another foster child, a
- 27 girl, a year older than me, he had her by the scruff like this and he was holding her against
- 28 the laundry wall quite high up, I don't know if her feet were off the ground, and I don't
- 29 know what that argument was about, but I did witness that.
- 30 **Q.** And you've referred to that in your statement?
- 31 **A.** Yes.
- 32 **Q.** And we know that, as I understand your description of this place, it was a family home,
- 33 wasn't it?
- 34 **A.** Correct.

- 1 **Q.** Six bedrooms, bunk beds, three to four kids in a room?
- 2 **A.** Right.
- 3 **Q.** And there were four girls in your room, and you say that was a good thing because you've
- 4 still made -- you made friends with some of those?
- 5 **A.** Yeah, yeah, I still keep in contact with one.
- 6 **Q.** And at the same time, you were there, things weren't going well at home with mum and dad
- 7 and maybe you start seeing mum and dad less often?
- 8 **A.** Yes, that's right.
- 9 **Q.** And you say that there was probably -- mum was having an affair with some person who
- 10 dad knew, and there were incidents with you say machetes and violence and the Police had
- 11 been involved?
- 12 **A.** Yes. When dad found out about the affair it was his GRO-B yeah, so machete.
- 13 **Q.** When you went home on weekend on any occasions, did you ever see any of the -- that
- 14 stuff between mum and dad?
- 15 **A.** Yes, yeah, I did, yeah.
- 16 **Q.** You were at high school still at this point?
- 17 **A.** Yes.
- 18 **Q.** And you went to the 7th form?
- 19 **A.** Yes, I did.
- 20 **Q.** But you do say that the attitude by your caregivers at this point, this is in the family home,
- 21 was pretty disengaged?
- 22 **A.** Yeah, yeah, very.
- 23 **Q.** Nothing to do with them, is that about right?
- 24 **A.** Yeah, yeah, not our problem.
- 25 **Q.** And by then you're in the 7th form, you got a boyfriend?
- 26 **A.** Yes.
- 27 **Q.** And you get pregnant to him?
- 28 **A.** Yes.
- 29 **Q.** And you wanted to keep that baby?
- 30 **A.** Yes.
- 31 **Q.** And the caregivers go to the school, and they say you're going to leave school?
- 32 **A.** Correct.

- 1 **Q.** No point in finishing school because if you're going to have a baby. What was your view
2 around that, what was your -- where were you standing around this thing of I'm in the 7th
3 form, I'm pregnant, what am I going to do?
- 4 **A.** I thought there was every reason to finish my schooling. I knew I couldn't go to university
5 the next year, but I knew I could one day, and I have. I don't know why their reasonings
6 were wanting me out of that school, I don't.
- 7 **Q.** And then you tell us that you got home, everything was packed up, away you go?
- 8 **A.** Yeah. Got home from work one afternoon and there was black rubbish bags outside my
9 bedroom door.
- 10 **Q.** And you went to another family home?
- 11 **A.** Correct.
- 12 **Q.** And this is a family home which you describe in positive terms?
- 13 **A.** Absolutely, absolutely. Unfortunately, the very last home I was in was the best.
- 14 **Q.** You tell us they were beautiful, lovely people, 100% supportive?
- 15 **A.** Yes.
- 16 **Q.** Encouraged you to go to ACC?
- 17 **A.** Yeah.
- 18 **Q.** Because you were having a baby and you needed to provide, do something for your baby?
- 19 **A.** Yes.
- 20 **Q.** And at that point that's when you get discharged?
- 21 **A.** Yes.
- 22 **Q.** Around this time?
- 23 **A.** Yes.
- 24 **Q.** 1991, you're 19 years of age, have you had your baby at that point?
- 25 **A.** No, I was still pregnant when I got discharged.
- 26 **Q.** Yeah. And you say that you remember telling the judge that you're sorted, you had a house,
27 you were in a relationship, because you'd used the ACC money, being very proactive and
28 positive in putting down a deposit on your first home?
- 29 **A.** Yes.
- 30 **Q.** And you put that unwisely in the joint name of your then partner?
- 31 **A.** Very unwisely.
- 32 **Q.** Before we get on to that we'll just note your comments about education and schooling when
33 you were in care.
- 34 **A.** Yeah.

- 1 **Q.** You say that you were, although you were left to your own devices most of the time, you
2 actually did pretty well through your schooling?
- 3 **A.** Yeah, I did.
- 4 **Q.** We've got that, haven't we, by the fact that you went to the 7th form, and you got university
5 entrance?
- 6 **A.** Yes.
- 7 **Q.** And you got university entrance when you were pregnant?
- 8 **A.** Yes.
- 9 **Q.** And you also say that from your early teens you had these aspirations to do well?
- 10 **A.** At school, yes.
- 11 **Q.** Because what were people saying to you around that time?
- 12 **A.** Everybody told me that I was going to be just like my mum, I'd have a whole lot of kids
13 with other people looking after them. I was just going to be a nobody.
- 14 **Q.** And you tell us that you wanted to prove everyone wrong?
- 15 **A.** Correct. I also wanted to be the first person in my family to finish high school.
- 16 **Q.** You tell us that by the time you got to high school you knew you were brainy?
- 17 **A.** Yeah.
- 18 **Q.** You passed tests, you were going to throw yourself into that, so, you know, you could
19 see --
- 20 **A.** Yes.
- 21 **Q.** -- there was a pathway for you?
- 22 **A.** Yeah.
- 23 **Q.** It's almost transcending what had happened to you?
- 24 **A.** Yeah. I was always a reader, reading was my escape, I learned to read really early, and that
25 was how I would escape things and so I think that's why I did well at school.
- 26 **Q.** Yeah. So, we're going to talk about your life after care, and you go into that in some detail
27 in your statement.
- 28 **A.** Okay.
- 29 **Q.** We'll go through that and I'm just mindful of the time, so --
- 30 **CHAIR:** If we miss things out, we have read your full statement.
- 31 **A.** Okay.
- 32 **Q.** So don't feel if you don't say it out loud, we certainly have it here on the record.
- 33 **A.** Okay, thank you.

- 1 **QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE CONTINUED:** Because it's clear, isn't it, that you talk about
2 the first man you went out with after you were discharged was manipulative and he made
3 you sign the house over.
- 4 A. Yes.
- 5 **Q.** And he'd let you have the child?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 **Q.** He was the father of the child?
- 8 A. Yes, he was.
- 9 **Q.** And so, you got -- you tell us that you got 15,000 and you walked away, he walked away
10 with the house?
- 11 A. Yeah.
- 12 **Q.** But then there was some 10 years of fighting in the court, and you were the one who got
13 care of your child?
- 14 A. Yeah, yeah, so he'd said if you give me custody -- no, "I'll give you custody if you sign the
15 house over." So, I did that and then he went straight to a lawyer and tried to take me for
16 custody.
- 17 **Q.** Right.
- 18 A. Which he didn't win.
- 19 **Q.** No, bit of a process there for you. Compounded no doubt, I'm sure a lot of things that you'd
20 already lived through.
- 21 A. Yeah.
- 22 **Q.** And then you went into another relationship with a man who was abusive and an alcoholic
23 and violent?
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 **Q.** And look at paragraph 99?
- 26 A. Yeah.
- 27 **Q.** That tells us, doesn't it, about where you were at at that time?
- 28 A. Mmm.
- 29 **Q.** When you read that, is that a fair description of what you were doing and how you, when
30 you look back, that was your life?
- 31 A. Yeah, it is. I'll read it.
- 32 **Q.** Eh?
- 33 A. I'll read it.
- 34 **Q.** You'll read it, yeah.

- 1 A. When I left my daughter's dad, I felt like for the first time ever I'd just been able to be me.
2 I never had to sit in a room and figure out who I was before. I spread my wings. I was
3 really promiscuous, I was risk-taking, I was taking a lot of drugs, I think I was
4 soul-searching. I don't think it had to do with the family, it had to do with me. I think the
5 sexual abuse was a big part of my promiscuity, I thought that I was taking all the power
6 back and being the boss. I thought it was healthy, although now I realise, I was just kind of
7 defaulting to what I had been taught at an early age about my body and how to use it.
- 8 Q. Thank you. You tell us that you were then single for a number of years, and you met
9 another man in your 30s and he's the father of your son?
- 10 A. Correct.
- 11 Q. And of course, that didn't last and you're now with your husband who's here today and you
12 two are the parents of course of that son and your foster child?
- 13 A. Correct.
- 14 Q. You tell us about having, and you've already perhaps canvassed this as well, but the need to
15 fight what you describe as your demons, and you talk of being heavily into the drug scene?
- 16 A. Yeah.
- 17 Q. Taking pills, cocaine, but you didn't become addicted?
- 18 A. No.
- 19 Q. And there was gambling?
- 20 A. A lot of gambling.
- 21 Q. And you didn't think that was hereditary because that wasn't -- no -one else in the family
22 had had that problem?
- 23 A. Yeah, I didn't equate cards with gambling.
- 24 Q. And for a while you tell us that you were a prostitute?
- 25 A. Yes.
- 26 Q. And went through some other bad relationships?
- 27 A. Yes.
- 28 Q. And now you then went into social services, there's an empathy you found in working in
29 that area?
- 30 A. Yes.
- 31 Q. You did some study?
- 32 A. Yeah.
- 33 Q. Got some papers?
- 34 A. Yes.

- 1 **Q.** And you worked in the Women's Refuge for a while?
- 2 **A.** Yes.
- 3 **Q.** And you're now retired?
- 4 **A.** I am.
- 5 **Q.** Yes?
- 6 **A.** Not by choice.
- 7 **Q.** No, no, but you're now retired, which is good. And then you describe your children, you
8 talked to them about being really good kids and they both -- your adult children went to
9 university on scholarships?
- 10 **A.** Mmm-hmm, yes.
- 11 **Q.** And one's a nurse?
- 12 **A.** Correct.
- 13 **Q.** You have a daughter who's the manager of, -- who was the manager of a store?
- 14 **A.** Yes, that's right.
- 15 **Q.** So, when you look back on their lives, they've done well?
- 16 **A.** They've done really well.
- 17 **Q.** And you see yourself as having contributed to that?
- 18 **A.** Absolutely, 100%, 100%.
- 19 **Q.** And when you look at your son and your daughter, I was going to say foster daughter, but
20 I'll leave that out.
- 21 **A.** Yeah.
- 22 **Q.** Your daughter?
- 23 **A.** Yeah.
- 24 **Q.** You say they're coming along beautifully as well?
- 25 **A.** Yeah, they really are.
- 26 **Q.** Good. And then of course we talk -- you then spend some time talking about your girl, your
27 foster daughter?
- 28 **A.** Yeah.
- 29 **Q.** And how she came into your care and home for life and all of that kind of stuff?
- 30 **A.** Yes.
- 31 **Q.** Which we're going to -- which you get, and you've got the orders, you're on -- your name's
32 on the orders?
- 33 **A.** Correct.
- 34 **Q.** And she's been with you now for six years?

- 1 A. That's right.
- 2 Q. And you tell us that you've had no support in dealing with her with the issues that she's
3 presented with?
- 4 A. From any agencies, no.
- 5 Q. Because presumably she would have been in the care of Child, Youth -- Oranga Tamariki?
- 6 A. Yes, she was.
- 7 Q. And presumably she's in the care of Oranga Tamariki for reasons to do with her Care and
8 Protection?
- 9 A. Yes.
- 10 Q. And she may have suffered some harm, some damage, some trauma?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. And when she came into your care, no doubt you would have had to deal with those,-- the
13 behaviours, the trauma that she presented with?
- 14 A. Yeah, we did.
- 15 Q. How did you find that?
- 16 A. Really difficult. I found it really difficult. To start with I found it difficult, and then
17 I remembered that I was her once, and it started to make more sense. We couldn't figure out
18 why she kept stealing food and hiding it in her room when we have an open pantry, and you
19 know, it did take a long time before I realised yeah, hang on, this is normal, this is normal.
20 Yeah, strange wetting incidences, again, reminded me of what I had gone through. We
21 know we have a child from trauma, but we have no evidence, we have no history of her at
22 all.
- 23 Q. And you tell us that she's now well-balanced, doing well, academically there are no issues?
- 24 A. Yeah, absolutely.
- 25 Q. And her contact with her own mum is irregular?
- 26 A. Yeah, she hasn't spoken to her for two years now.
- 27 Q. You say as well there's still assistance that you think that she may need?
- 28 A. Yes, absolutely.
- 29 Q. Would she be -- is she amenable to having that assistance do you think?
- 30 A. Sorry?
- 31 Q. Would she be okay about receiving that assistance?
- 32 A. Yes, absolutely she would.
- 33 Q. Have you gone to OT (Oranga Tamariki Ministry for Children) to talk about getting that?

- 1 A. I rang OT (Oranga Tamariki Ministry for Children) not long after she came to stay. When
2 she originally came to stay it was supposed to be very small time, turned into long time.
- 3 Q. Yeah.
- 4 A. And so, I phoned OT (Oranga Tamariki Ministry for Children) and said, you know, look,
5 this girl's living with me now and they said we paid her grandparents the -- so no help.
6 I said what do I do if I need support for her or counselling for her? And they said that, you
7 know, there's a long list of counsellors in your phone book.
- 8 Q. They didn't come and talk to you about a thing called a permanent care support plan or
9 anything?
- 10 A. No.
- 11 Q. PCSS (Permanent Care Support Services) plan?
- 12 A. No.
- 13 Q. Okay. Then we talk about the impact of abuse that you've gone through. You say you've
14 had trust issues, not only with others, but with yourself?
- 15 A. Yes.
- 16 Q. You're very distrusting and find it hard to trust your own judgment?
- 17 A. Yeah, that's right.
- 18 Q. Second guessing, you say?
- 19 A. Yes, all the time.
- 20 Q. And it's affected your relationships?
- 21 A. Yeah, yeah, it has.
- 22 Q. And because of that of course it becomes difficult to talk about things?
- 23 A. Yes.
- 24 Q. And I know that you've had difficulty in the past with one or two of your partners around
25 that?
- 26 A. Yes.
- 27 Q. And possibly even took you a while with your husband?
- 28 A. Yeah, it did.
- 29 Q. But you have?
- 30 A. I have.
- 31 Q. And presumably I imagine that's because there is a trust between you and a love, and you
32 can see that in him?
- 33 A. Yes, absolutely.

- 1 **Q.** That's good. And you tell us that you suffered terrible nightmares which would wake you
2 up and you would experience flashbacks, but you don't experience as much of those
3 anymore. Do you still have nightmares?
- 4 **A.** Yes, I do.
- 5 **Q.** Still have flashbacks?
- 6 **A.** Yes, I do.
- 7 **Q.** They would be indicative of having Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), wouldn't they?
- 8 **A.** Yes, that's what I've been told.
- 9 **Q.** Are you getting any help around that?
- 10 **A.** Yes, I am.
- 11 **Q.** Okay. Thinking your background, the pathway that you've followed, you would possibly be
12 apprehensive about being a parent yourself?
- 13 **A.** I was, I was really frightened when I was pregnant with my first son, I was really worried
14 that I wouldn't love him, or I wouldn't know how to look after him. I was constantly being
15 told by my then partner how useless your family is, that's why the kid can't have my family
16 name etc. I was constantly being put down, so I really did believe that I wouldn't be able to
17 do this.
- 18 **Q.** Then of course you had a daughter?
- 19 **A.** Yes.
- 20 **Q.** And you say in your statement that you were hypervigilant?
- 21 **A.** Very, very, around her safety and sweatshirts up to here and skirts to the ankles, yeah.
- 22 **Q.** You were worried for her?
- 23 **A.** I was.
- 24 **Q.** And because of what had happened to you?
- 25 **A.** Yes.
- 26 **Q.** But she's okay?
- 27 **A.** She's okay, she's more than okay.
- 28 **Q.** And you do say that having been through what you've been through, all that stuff, that it
29 made you, and you've already described this, "I can get through this", is that right?
- 30 **A.** Yes, yeah.
- 31 **Q.** You were going to focus on what was going to benefit you?
- 32 **A.** That's right.
- 33 **Q.** And in doing that you're not going to sit in shit are you?
- 34 **A.** No, no, I'm not.

- 1 **Q.** And you haven't?
- 2 **A.** No.
- 3 **Q.** Right, okay. I just want to cover off in the last few minutes, we know you've done an ACC
4 (Accident Compensation Scheme) sensitive claim?
- 5 **A.** Yes.
- 6 **Q.** And the way you describe that it was a positive process?
- 7 **A.** Yes, it was.
- 8 **Q.** Then you've done a claim to MSD (Ministry of Social Development)?
- 9 **A.** Yes.
- 10 **Q.** That wasn't such a positive process?
- 11 **A.** No, it wasn't.
- 12 **Q.** You describe it as being horrible?
- 13 **A.** Yeah.
- 14 **Q.** That internally, although you wanted the money, externally you thought it was blood
15 money and you didn't want it?
- 16 **A.** Yeah.
- 17 **Q.** And perhaps what you didn't want was the money, but you wanted something else, which
18 was accountability?
- 19 **A.** That's right.
- 20 **Q.** And you fought for it, and you use the words "emotional roller coaster"?
- 21 **A.** Yeah.
- 22 **Q.** That's pretty powerful stuff, isn't it, you know, you can see the image of that roller coaster
23 powering around?
- 24 **A.** And it really was, it really was.
- 25 **Q.** It took two years because it was fast-tracked?
- 26 **A.** Yeah.
- 27 **Q.** Although two years and being fast-tracked sounds almost a contradiction in terms?
- 28 **A.** Yeah.
- 29 **Q.** And you tell us that you offered some money but there was no discussion, it was a take it or
30 leave it scenario?
- 31 **A.** Yeah, yeah.
- 32 **Q.** And an apology was given?
- 33 **A.** That's right.
- 34 **Q.** Was it a substantive apology in your mind?

- 1 A. No.
- 2 Q. A bit of paper?
- 3 A. Exactly.
- 4 Q. What kind of apology do you think you should get?
- 5 A. I would like an apology from *the* social workers that did this, that ignored this, from *the*
- 6 foster parents that did this, that ignored this. That's the only apology that would mean
- 7 anything to me, as if it came from the person themselves.
- 8 Q. Okay. And then you talk about you went and spoke with Judge Henwood?
- 9 A. Yes.
- 10 Q. Which again was a positive experience?
- 11 A. Really positive, yeah.
- 12 Q. That's good. And that's where the poem, you gave your poem to them as well?
- 13 A. Yeah, yeah, that was when I wrote it.
- 14 Q. We've spoken about the Police report you did to your brother?
- 15 A. Yes.
- 16 Q. So now we're going to go to the final couple of pages, which is about reflections and
- 17 recommendations. The Department of Social Welfare you say --
- 18 A. What page?
- 19 Q. Page 22, paragraph 144.
- 20 A. Yeah.
- 21 Q. "Faceless" is the word you use?
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 Q. No face, no name?
- 24 A. No.
- 25 Q. No one taking responsibility, is that what it's about?
- 26 A. Yeah, that's what it felt like.
- 27 Q. And you say that you don't hold Social Welfare responsible for what those people did?
- 28 A. No.
- 29 Q. But you told them responsible for making bad decisions?
- 30 A. Yes.
- 31 Q. About who you were placed with?
- 32 A. Yes.
- 33 Q. Not checking up?
- 34 A. Yes.

- 1 **Q.** You use the words in here that there was some really, really strong flags very early on?
- 2 **A.** Yes, there was.
- 3 **Q.** And they didn't, -- they either,- when you look back on it do you think they failed to- pick
4 them up, or were they blind to picking them up?
- 5 **A.** I think they're just blind, I think they were blind.
- 6 **Q.** The signs were there?
- 7 **A.** Yeah.
- 8 **Q.** Staring them in the face?
- 9 **A.** Absolutely. Neon.
- 10 **Q.** Flashing lights?
- 11 **A.** Yeah.
- 12 **Q.** And of course, one of your social workers wrote in the files that there were unexplained
13 bruises but nowhere else for her, so she'll remain where she is?
- 14 **A.** Yes.
- 15 **Q.** Which is telling, isn't it?
- 16 **A.** Mmm, she also said that all families have their issues.
- 17 **Q.** Right.
- 18 **A.** Like this was just a little issue.
- 19 **Q.** And again, as with a number of placements that you had, and you told us you had 36
20 placements?
- 21 **A.** Yeah.
- 22 **Q.** Which I should - we can't- forget that, you also had, you say you had so many social
23 workers they changed so many times, there was no -one to hold your hand?
- 24 **A.** Yeah.
- 25 **Q.** That's what you wanted?
- 26 **A.** Yeah.
- 27 **Q.** Help this little girl through her journey through care?
- 28 **A.** Yeah.
- 29 **Q.** And you've talked already, just looking at the statement here, you've already talked about
30 being told by the foster mother who beat you black and blue, put on your best dress, sit
31 there, play with your jigsaw puzzle?
- 32 **A.** Yeah. And because the social worker would always talk to the social parent, you know,
33 family parents first, and often we're in the room and privy to that. If we're sitting there
34 hearing them say yeah, it's great, we're not going to say the opposite.

- 1 **Q.** No, no. And you were never spoken to by a social worker in a room separate from --
- 2 **A.** Not that I can recall, no.
- 3 **Q.** Or they didn't take you down even to the local office to talk to you on your own?
- 4 **A.** Not that I recall, no.
- 5 **Q.** You never got interviewed by any psychologist or counsellor who was employed by DSW
6 (Department of Social Welfare) to say hey what's happening?
- 7 **A.** I had counsellors later.
- 8 **Q.** No, but during your time in care?
- 9 **A.** No.
- 10 **Q.** At the foot of that page, page 22 you start to talk about what needs to change?
- 11 **A.** Yeah.
- 12 **Q.** One of them is there needs to be a social worker for the mum or the foster parent and one
13 for the child?
- 14 **A.** Correct.
- 15 **Q.** So, the ideal would be that if a child gets taken into care all things being equal there is one
16 social worker who's going to accompany that child?
- 17 **A.** Yes.
- 18 **Q.** We know that sometimes it's not possible?
- 19 **A.** Yeah.
- 20 **Q.** But that's your ideal, isn't it?
- 21 **A.** Yeah, absolutely. You can't form trust or expect trust from a stranger in five minutes.
- 22 **Q.** You also talk about it's important for the foster parents to have that support as well?
- 23 **A.** Yes, yeah.
- 24 **Q.** When you look back on it, do you think the people who cared for you had the kind of
25 organisational support?
- 26 **A.** No, I don't, I really don't. One of my statements the foster mother who used to beat me
27 black and blue, I read this in my files, she'd spoken to the social worker and said that, you
28 know, I was really cold and not bonding with her. And she had actually previously lost a
29 daughter, and I think social workers could have jumped on that and actually really helped
30 her. And I doubt it, but she could have been okay if she'd had that help.
- 31 **Q.** Or it could have been a question that was asked in the first instance, or around the time of
32 why do you want to be a foster parent?
- 33 **A.** Yeah.

- 1 **Q.** Whether it's dot dot dot. Because of course not having a social worker you could trust;
2 I assume that meant that there was no-one who you could talk to?
- 3 **A.** No.
- 4 **Q.** Which you note in your statement as well. You also talk about there being a need for spot
5 checks?
- 6 **A.** Yes.
- 7 **Q.** We know what you mean but that's a non-scheduled visit that just occurs out of the blue?
8 **A.** Yeah, yeah. I would rather a social worker turn up at half past 8 in the morning when Billy
9 can't find his shoe and Susan's socks are missing or whatever, see how the family react in
10 those situations.
- 11 **Q.** Yeah. And you also talk about there should be instant action if a child's safety's in question?
12 **A.** Yes.
- 13 **Q.** Do you think that from your own experience that if a social worker had realised that your
14 safety was at risk, would you have been better off being removed and put in another
15 placement?
- 16 **A.** Absolutely, no doubt.
- 17 **Q.** Even if it became placement number 37 or 38?
- 18 **A.** Yeah.
- 19 **Q.** Safety is the thing?
- 20 **A.** Yeah.
- 21 **Q.** You also talk about having, -- it would have been helpful to have financial literacy at the
22 time you got your claim?
- 23 **A.** Yeah.
- 24 **Q.** And you were fortunate in some respects that you got it at an early time, and you were able
25 to make good use of it. Subject to,-
- 26 **A.** Yes.
- 27 **Q.** -- the man?
- 28 **A.** Yeah. I knew when I was pregnant that I'd had so many moves and so many homes and
29 I didn't want this wee baby in my belly to ever experience that, and so that's why I brought
30 a home.
- 31 **Q.** Yeah. We know that you got your files?
32 **A.** Yes.
- 33 **Q.** And it's not a surprise to me that when you got them there were massive redactions through
34 them?

- 1 A. Yeah.
- 2 Q. Did you find, was that helpful to receive files in that state?
- 3 A. Not in that state. There were lots in the files that I did find helpful, but having so much
4 blacked out caused more anxiety, yeah.
- 5 Q. You say in your statement that, for example, and you give an example that the social
6 worker visited your parents' home, it's got the street that says -- it's got the street where you
7 were living and everything's blacked out and at the bottom it apparently said "needless to
8 say will not be sharing this information with the children" and you wonder what that's
9 referring to in that?
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. It's important enough to be in the file, but why was it blacked out?
- 12 A. Yeah.
- 13 Q. When given to you as an adult?
- 14 A. Yeah.
- 15 Q. Is that the question?
- 16 A. That is the question, I'd love to know. I understand a lot was blacked out because it was
17 using my brothers' names or other people's names, I understand that, but I don't get that bit.
- 18 Q. And it also tells you, you also tell us that it wasn't until you got your files and counted up
19 the number of placements that you came to this number of 36?
- 20 A. Yes, that's right.
- 21 Q. Were you surprised?
- 22 A. Really surprised, really surprised.
- 23 Q. We're almost at the end now, so thank you for that.
- 24 A. That's okay.
- 25 Q. Looking at it, if you look back on the child that you were, and you think what should be
26 different for me, what right should I have had back then that perhaps would have made a
27 difference for me?
- 28 A. The right to complain, the right to complain. You see it everywhere now, you have the right
29 to complain, you have the right to, you have the right. I didn't know I had rights, didn't
30 know there was such a thing as rights. And I don't want family homes to look
31 institutionalised with those posters, you have rights, but I had a right to know how to
32 complain, and I had a right for that to be explained to me in a way that I can understand.
- 33 Q. And when you think about the right to complain, if you think about the way in
34 which -- we've covered this a bit, but would you want there to be very clear rules around

- 1 how and where social workers would talk to you, i.e., you should be interviewed by a social
2 worker not in the presence of the caregiver?
- 3 A. Yes, yeah, I think that definitely should happen.
- 4 **Q.** What about do you think it should take place in a -- somewhere other than the home of the
5 caregiver?
- 6 A. Yes, absolutely. Because you just feel violated in that, I'm just standing in there anyway.
- 7 **Q.** I'm going to stop asking you questions now.
- 8 A. Okay.
- 9 **Q.** There may be something as a result of that you just want to go to the Commissioners?
- 10 A. No, not at all.
- 11 **Q.** And they may also have some questions that they want to ask you.
- 12 A. Okay.
- 13 **CHAIR:** Are you happy with that?
- 14 A. Yes.
- 15 **Q.** You don't have to put up with us asking questions if you don't want.
- 16 A. I'm fine.
- 17 **Q.** You're fine, okay. I'll just ask my colleagues. No questions from this side, did you have any
18 questions?
- 19 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** I did, just following up on if you had any feelings about
20 mandatory reporting so that school teachers and others who are in close contact with
21 children who are in care if they see them being harmed, they're compelled to report.
- 22 A. Yeah, absolutely. In our day and age, I would just assume that that would happen, you
23 know, maybe I'm blinded but --
- 24 **Q.** Yeah, it's something we need to look at. But I do want to say I was really inspired by your
25 brief and your experience and all that you've been through and the amazing things that
26 you're doing to contribute to take care of children today, to place them in care. It was
27 interesting too to talk about your struggles as a caregiver and having access to services for
28 your child.
- 29 A. Yeah.
- 30 **Q.** And there was mention of payment that had been made previously to the grandparent, so
31 that was like a home for life?
- 32 A. Home for life payment.
- 33 **Q.** \$7,000 payment?
- 34 A. Yes.

- 1 **Q.** So once that had been paid then the response that you got, was that from OT (Oranga
2 Tamariki Ministry for Children)?
- 3 **A.** Yeah.
- 4 **Q.** Was that there was no more obligation on their part to provide any support?
- 5 **A.** Yeah, they said pretty much the child is the grandmother's now and any custody or
6 whatever that happens is between you and her.
- 7 **Q.** Yeah, okay. Thank you. So ngā mihi mahana ki a koe whaea, kei te mihi ki a koe.
- 8 **A.** Kia ora.
- 9 **CHAIR:** And I'm the lucky last. Just one thing that really struck me, you said right at the
10 beginning that your name was changed in the course of your care, so called care.
- 11 **A.** Yeah, in some of my files I'm put down as -- my first name's correct, but my last name is
12 my brothers' last name, we have different fathers. But I think sometimes when we were all
13 lumped together, say in Cholmondeley Home, we were just called the blah blah blah
14 children.
- 15 **Q.** Did you know that at the time?
- 16 **A.** No.
- 17 **Q.** So, you only learned it later?
- 18 **A.** Yes.
- 19 **Q.** Looking back as an adult on that, how does that make you feel?
- 20 **A.** It made my skin crawl, because that last name is the name of my biggest abuser. So yeah, it
21 made my skin crawl the first time I saw it, I was quite disgusted.
- 22 **Q.** And it wasn't you, was it?
- 23 **A.** No.
- 24 **Q.** No.
- 25 **A.** It's not me.
- 26 **Q.** Yeah, so just more evidence of the de-humanising aspects of this whole awful business?
- 27 **A.** Yes, we were just a clump of children rather than --
- 28 **Q.** Yeah. Can I just say from being just a clump of children, or inmates, which was the other
29 chilling word that you used, you have triumphed.
- 30 **A.** Thank you.
- 31 **Q.** And the thought that you were told so often that you wouldn't be any better than your
32 mother, that you wouldn't succeed, you have, as they say in bureaucracies, exceeded all
33 expectations and you've done it through just dint of your own perseverance and your own
34 courage and, if I can say, your own insights. You are obviously a very intelligent, insightful

1 person who can see past your immediate trauma to the bigger picture, and for that we are
2 very grateful, really grateful, because that's what our job is to hear the individual stories but
3 look for what went wrong, how can it be made better and you've informed us on that.

4 A. Thank you.

5 **Q.** And your children and your foster child should be very grateful that you have broken that
6 awful intergenerational cycle of abuse and neglect that your family has been almost cursed
7 with over the generations. You've broken the curse.

8 A. Yeah.

9 **Q.** So, congratulations to you, thank you to your husband. What's your name? I'm sorry, I
10 didn't --

11 **MR ED:** GRO-B-3

12 **CHAIR:** Thank you, GRO-B-3 for being with your wife and having to sit through the horror.

13 I'm sure she gets great strength from you being there, very grateful for your presence.

14 Thank you just for your bravery, we're very, very grateful. And I hope we can use the poem
15 as well, I understand CLAS (Confidential Listening and Assistance Service) might have
16 used it at some stage.

17 A. Yes, they have.

18 **Q.** It's too good to be locked away, if you wouldn't mind, I'm sure we wouldn't mind popping it
19 up on one of our publications as well.

20 A. Yes, I'd like that.

21 **Q.** Have you written anymore poems?

22 A. I write every day.

23 **Q.** Do you? I wondered about that, you're very articulate, yeah. Are you going to publish?

24 A. One day I hope, I have a book started, kind of like an autobiography from my life in care.

25 **Q.** Great.

26 A. It's in the form of poetry, and then after each poem is a wee kind of blog about what that
27 was about, yeah. I'm hoping to get it published one day.

28 **Q.** I hope you do; I hope you do, and we will all look forward to the day when we see that up
29 in lights.

30 A. Okay, thank you.

31 **Q.** Last thing, take care and take advantage of any well-being that we can offer you to make
32 sure that, you know, you will feel a bit bruised after this I should think.

33 A. Yeah.

1 **Q.** So please make sure you take as much care and support that we can offer you in the
2 well-being space so that you don't get too damaged by what's happened today.

3 **A.** Okay, thank you.

4 **Q.** But just know we're really grateful, it's time for you to have a break and you of us as well.

5 **A.** Thank you.

6 **Q.** Thank you so much. So, we'll take -- we're a little bit past time, but what time shall we
7 come back, midday?

8 **DR COOKE:** Yes.

9 **CHAIR:** We'll come back at midday, thank you.

10 **Adjournment from 11.43 am to 12 pm**