

**Witness Name:** GRO-A Ms M

**Statement No.:** [WITN0060001]

**Exhibits:** [WITN0060002-**WITN0060035**]

**Dated:** 05.11.2020

**ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE**

---

**WITNESS STATEMENT OF** **GRO-A Ms M**

---

I, **GRO-A Ms M**, make the following statement: -

**INTRODUCTION**

- 1 I would like to start by thanking the Commissioners here today for allowing me a space to share my sister Janie's and my experiences.
- 2 I would like to acknowledge Sarah and Rebecca.
- 3 Thank you, Lorraine, for the many phone calls compiling this statement, for your compassion, your, at times outrage on my behalf, I have felt well cared for.

- 4 This cannot go unspoken for all involved in doing this Commission of Inquiry that you hear the worst of society's actions against children and young people and it must be hard at times to bear witness to these abhorrent events. I would just like to personally acknowledge this from my heart to yours.
- 5 On compiling this witness statement, I still get shocked by the abuse that was failed to be seen by those who could have, and should have, intervened to help protect and provide safe cares for two very vulnerable and traumatized children who became teenagers, young adults and then adults who live and lived with the knowledge of the Church and State's judgements that continued to impact throughout our lives.
- 6 My legal name is .
- 7 My date of birth is  1962 and I was born in Christchurch.
- 8 I've had several different names throughout my life. When I was born I was known as .
- 9 For the first seven years of my life I lived in .
- 10 My mother's name was . My father's name was . When I was born I had two siblings,   born on the  1956 and   born on  1958 (who I refer to as Janie).

## MY EARLY EXPERIENCES OF NEGLECT AND ABUSE

### *Life at home*

- 11 Some of my timelines are approximate as piecing together some of the dates is difficult.

- 12 My family life was very fragmented by the time I was born. **GRO-B-4** my eldest sister, was removed by the police and taken to live with my maternal grandfather at the age of 18 months due to neglect. She lived the rest of her life with them. My family had thus already been known to Christchurch Child Welfare division since before I was born and definitely by 1958 [WITN0060002 ANG0006840].
- 13 My welfare file states that on 19 February 1964 my mother and father separated. At this time, I was in the care of my mother and had just turned two.
- 14 **GRO-B-2** and **GRO-B-3**'s divorce was decreed on **GRO-B** **GRO-B** 1965. **GRO-B-2** then married **GRO-B-5** **GRO-B-5** on **GRO-B** 1966. They had a son born on **GRO-B** 1965 named **GRO-B-6**
- 15 I have been able to see my file with the Child Welfare Division (of the Department of Education). On 17 September 1966 **GRO-B-5** spoke to an officer and reported that our mum had left us alone in the house with only Janie to care for the two younger children.
- 16 Another note on the 19 September 1966 states that there was a request made by **GRO-B-5** to Child Welfare Division that Janie and I be placed in a home.
- 17 On 26 September 1966 there was a note from the **GRO-A** Police stating **GRO-B-5** had contacted them re placing us with his sister. **GRO-B-5** also requested that we be put in a home [WITN0060003 ANG0006850]. In the notes it advised him to seek legal advice before proceeding. This was printed in a review of an adoption application as **GRO-B-5** was applying to adopt **GRO-B-4**, Janie and me [WITN0060004 ANG0006862]. It is noted that **GRO-B-5** returned to his wife (my mother) taking the children (us) with him.
- 18 It also noted that:

Janie and [Ms M] are both attending [GRO-A] Primary School. Their class teachers report that the little girls are often inadequately clad on cold mornings, and from their apparel it has been speculated that they dress themselves unsupervised in the mornings.

- 19 Let me tell you some of the experiences that cover the first seven years of my life. These are snippets and times are not so clear:
- 20 My sister Janie was really like my mother, the only mother figure I had - she was my everything. [GRO-B-1] changed her name to Janie as an adult, so I will refer to her as Janie.
- 21 I remember on the first day of school being sick behind the lounge curtain at home and then someone turning up to take me to school.
- 22 I fell in the fire while playing with Janie on the sofa. I remember sitting in the fire then being taken to [GRO-A] Hospital. I had skin grafts and still to this day bear the grafts on my left hand and inside thigh where the graft was taken from.
- 23 I remember coming out of hospital, falling off a swing and breaking my arm.
- 24 I remember going door to door trying to sell fish we'd caught out of the [GRO-A] sewerage ponds.
- 25 I remember mum being really sick and me at four trying to do the ironing, but the ironing board was too high and I dropped the iron on my eye. It wasn't mum who helped me. It was a neighbour I went to for help.
- 26 I remember spending heaps of time playing on [GRO-A] beach and stealing foods from old drunks because we were starving.
- 27 I remember sitting in the gutter crying from hunger.

- 28 [GRO-B-5] sexually abused both Janie and me. One night I had a dream about it and remembered it. I went to Janie and asked her if she remembered anything and she said yes, he had abused her too. It did happen. In my and Janie's Child Welfare Division file notes a complaint about it is mentioned so it was known to others too. A note in earlier files I saw says the house we lived in with Mum and [GRO-B-5] was so bad it would be condemned.
- 29 There is much more I could tell you about this time, but I want to move on. The next memory I have is of my mother being in bed rambling about things that didn't make sense even to a seven-year-old. Janie rang an ambulance and mum was taken away. This led to Janie, [GRO-B-6] and me being placed at Huntsbury House.

#### ***Temporary Care***

- 30 Huntsbury House was an orphanage in Christchurch which was owned and run by the North Canterbury Hospital Board. I loved it there. I had clean clothes. I had food. I went to school. I got to swim in the pool and Janie was with me. [GRO-B-6] wasn't allowed to be in the same ward as us and would sneak down to Janie in the middle of the night because he had wet the bed and she would try and hide it as otherwise he would be punished. He was only four years old.
- 31 Mum died in hospital on the [GRO-C] 1969. She was 29 years old. She would have been 18 when she had Janie.
- 32 [GRO-B-5] committed suicide on the [GRO-C] 1969. I remember someone coming up to Huntsbury House to tell us [GRO-B-5] had died. I believed at the time that [GRO-B-5] was my father but he wasn't.

## BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE

### *Anglican Social Services request we become state wards*

- 33 **GRO-B-6** went to live with **GRO-B-5** sister and we lost contact with him. I think he had a difficult life, but he has never talked to us in much detail about it.
- 34 My records show I entered Huntsbury House on 18 February 1969 and left 23 June 1969 [WITN00600005 ANG0006847].
- 35 We must have come into the care of Anglican social services when my mother died because on my records there is a letter from Reverend M.J. Goodall from Anglican Social Services [WITN00600006 ANG0006844].
- 36 The letter on 16 June 1969 to Christchurch Social Welfare (to Miss A Corcoran) suggested that Janie and I become state wards and be temporarily placed with **GRO-B-7** **GRO-B-8**. I don't know why the Anglican Social Services thought the **GRO-B-7&8** were suitable or why they sent us so far away from Christchurch to somewhere so isolated. The letter says:

Further to our telephone conversation, I am writing to give details of **GRO-B-1** and **GRO-A Ms M**, commonly known as **GRO-A**. (...) In February they were placed in Huntsbury Hill home. We had some discussion concerning the placement of 3 children. **GRO-B-5** had said he wanted to adopt them but there was very slow progress. Then **GRO-B-5** was found dead. (...) It was agreed that the children could not be cared for by their natural father.

After discussion with Mr and Mrs **GRO-B-9** and with yourself, we have sent **GRO-B-1** and **GRO-A Ms M** to stay with Mr and Mrs **GRO-B-7&8**. These folks are known to the Child Welfare Department in **GRO-B** and were willing to take the children for a time to see how things develop.

In view of the distance from our agency, we would feel that supervision of these children by Child Welfare Department would be much more helpful and in view of the inability of [GRO-B-3] to take responsibility for the children, we wonder if it would be wiser for [GRO-B-1] and [GRO-A Ms M] to become state wards. We would be grateful for your comments on this situation.

- 37 There is a hand written note on this letter from a Divisional Child Welfare officer saying:

This is similar to the query raised over the admission of the Social Services boy to Marylands and then suggesting we take over. I would appreciate your talking over this policy matter.

- 38 I know now that Marylands was a school for children with learning difficulties run by the Brothers of St John of God.

- 39 There is a reply to Rev. Goodall from Mr Lyons of the Child Welfare Division in Christchurch on 26 June: [WITN00600007 ANG0006845]

The children are not unknown to us. We heard of them by way of an adoption proposition from [GRO-B-2&5] back in 1967. We did not favour it proceeding. Acquiring guardianship by the Superintendent of Child Welfare is regarded as a serious step. The children would need to be in very unfortunate circumstances and either (a) the parents admitting a complaint or (b) this division being able to prove one.

Whilst children such as these are in your care and favoured with your support it would be legally quite difficult to sustain a complaint. On the other hand of course the parent may not be willing to agree to a complaint being laid. (...)

I am sensitive of course to your difficulty of having children so far away from your headquarters. (...) If you need any assistance in someone visiting these children from time to time I am sure that my colleague in [GRO-B] would be happy to assist. You would really only need to write to him offering him suitable information, and making this request.



40 It was odd that they needed a complaint against our parents because the reason we were in Anglican care was that we didn't have any, at least not that we could live with.

41 This 26 June letter was then sent on to GRO-B Child welfare division with a typed addition:

If Anglican Social Services proceed with my suggested course of asking you to keep an eye on these children I will send you over the small file that we have. (...) The letter from Anglican Social Services suggests that these people may be known to you. I am not inclined to suggest that a complaint be laid because this would establish a principle that would allow for many such cases to be committed to our care. I personally believe that this practice should be reserved for cases of special difficulty.

42 We were orphans for all practical purposes, so I don't understand why Child Welfare Division didn't think we were its concern. I think the GRO-B-7&8 got money for looking after us, but I don't know where that money came from. On a later social work case report police notice it was noted that we were "*Religion. Church of England*" [WITN0060008 ANG0007025]. In a letter from GRO-B-7 years later he notes that they were asked by Church of England Social Services to take us for a holiday [WITN0060009 ANG0007027].

43 Janie and I were told we would go and stay with the GRO-B-7&8 for a six-week "holiday". We remained there for five years. 1969-1974. No-one came to check on us once we were placed with the GRO-B-7&8. No-one from Anglican Social Services checked on us. No-one from Child Welfare Division checked on us. Mr GRO-B-7 raped, abused, assaulted and terrorised us for the next 5 years. He is dead now. He died in 2003. He was 50 when we went to live with him and 84 when he died.

44 There was a handwritten note on the file dated 15 July 1969 saying a man who said he was a friend of the family tried to locate us [WITN00600010 ANG0006860]. The note said:



searching of the file showed that we were not responsible for the children so I suggested Mr F get information from Anglican Services. The Rev Goodall was not available but I wrote his name down for Mr F.

- 45 It is obvious that the person from Child Welfare who wrote the note knew who we were. The man was described as very handicapped and unable to use the telephone so I am not sure how he was expected to find us.

### **ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT I SUFFERED IN CARE**

*The* **GRO-B-7&8**

- 46 **GRO-B-7&8** had a farm on the West Coast. Here I became known as **GRO-A Ms M**. Here are just some snapshots of what our life was like at the **GRO-B-7&8**
- 47 Have you ever heard a crayfish scream as it's put into boiling water? I was terrified and then later, when I went to bed there was a live crayfish in it. Mr **GRO-B-7** had put there just to see me react in fear.
- 48 On Christmas morning I opened my present and found my own pet lamb's tail in it. That was Mr **GRO-B-7**.
- 49 I learnt to laugh and show no fear. I realised that he wanted us to cry and so I learnt not to. I still don't cry very often, however distressed I might be.
- 50 Imagine being a little girl and trying to judge your carer's mood by how much milk he put in his whisky and then knowing what was coming. Watching your sister, Janie, being thrown across the room and then going to sit on **GRO-B-7**' knee trying to keep him sweet so you wouldn't be next.
- 51 We often went to school with black eyes – Janie even more than me. We both went to school covered in bruises from the stock whip. No-one ever asked us if we were okay.

- 52 Imagine having to watch the man who was supposed to be looking after us threaten his wife with a loaded shotgun, tearing her clothes off in front of you and us not knowing if the gun was going to go off.
- 53 Janie shared a story with me as an adult, that she once got hold of the gun and pointed it at **GRO-B-7** who then taunted her to shoot him, saying how gutless she was because she didn't.
- 54 Homemade pies used to be decorated with his false teeth. I have so many issues with food, hang-ups from this time.
- 55 I remember not having many friends. Kids used to tease me because I couldn't speak properly. I think my speech was affected by the trauma I was suffering.
- 56 On one occasion, one of my girlfriends was allowed to come and stay at our place. Janie and **GRO-B-7**' wife had gone over to Christchurch to visit her parents. Janie and I were never allowed to go away with her together. One of us always had to stay with **GRO-B-7**. The room where his wife slept had twin beds. **GRO-B-7** said to ask my friend if she wanted to jump into bed with us and she said no.
- 57 I was sent to the bedroom and told to come in to him when she was asleep. I fell asleep and woke up in the early hours of the morning. I was petrified because I'd fallen asleep and I went into bed with him. Can you imagine being a child lying in bed pretending to sleep, holding her breath stiff as a board and hoping against hope he would leave her alone?
- 58 Janie was my everything. Mr **GRO-B-7** could see this so he would play us off against each other. Janie and I used to fight with each other so we wouldn't have to go and scratch his back, which was always a prelude to sexual abuse including rape.
- 59 I didn't find out till years later when we were adults that Mr **GRO-B-7** used to drug Janie and lend her out to some of his mates. She was between 10 and 15 when we lived there.

- 60 I could tell you time and time and time again of things that took place that would make your hair curl. After five years of this abuse of every kind I became a walking zombie.
- 61 His wife was also around 50. This was her second marriage. She would sleep in the front room of the house because he snored and she said she couldn't sleep. I think it is impossible that she did not know about the sexual abuse. **GRO-B-7** was very violent to her so she was no protection for us. She did not defend us in Court but chose to stay with him.
- 62 We were isolated in so many ways. Physically there was only one other house in the district. We didn't feel there was anyone we could tell about what was happening every day. **GRO-B-7** told us we were responsible for our stepfather's suicide. He used to say all the time, "*Your mother's dead. You've killed your stepfather and your grandparents don't want you, so where are you going to go?*" For many years I had a recurring nightmare of escaping up this rise, not far from where we lived, and then hearing his voice saying this phrase and giving up.
- 63 You never knew when things were going to happen. I walked as if on eggshells, holding my breath. I learnt to lie as I was going to be in trouble whether I'd done something or not. If I got away with it good and, if not, I was going to be punished anyway. I stole money for food.
- 64 I remember many times sitting on the bus travelling home from school and looking out the window into people's homes, especially in winter, seeing families sitting around a fire and wishing I was in there. They looked so happy.
- 65 I now want to share with you a poem Janie wrote about that time:

I'm lying still in the darkness of the night. I know all the sounds, the squeaks of the doors opening and shutting, all of the groans the floorboards have, all having their own voice. The sounds of the house as it cools down. I'm lying awake for what may happen, praying to God if there is such a thing, 'Help us tonight'. Yes,

GRO-A Ms M awake too. I know this. I feel this in the depths of the night.

She's so still, so quiet, I can hardly hear her breathing. I sense her tension. I wish I could get her and hold her so tight that she would dissolve and be safe forever. The lounge door opens. Slowly, ever so slowly, it squeaks like a wild animal crying out for its last breath. He's standing in the doorway. I can feel him. The fear in this room is so thick you could choke on it. I lie as still as I can, so still, as still as death. I can smell him closer, smell his breath, smell his sweat. I can feel his breath on me, fear engulfs me.

#### **FIRST ATTEMPT TO GET REDRESS**

*Police and trial in the Supreme Court at* GRO-B

66 On 3 May 1974, after being at the GRO-B-7&8 for 5 years, I went to school and Janie decided to go to the police with the support of a girlfriend whose partner was a police officer. I did not know this was what she had in mind.

67 I got home on the bus after school. Mr GRO-B-7 was home. Janie didn't arrive home, so he rung his wife who was working in town. She told him that she'd given Janie permission to go to town to buy Mr GRO-B-7 a birthday present and she was to meet her at a certain time, which she didn't do.

68 Janie had a locked deposit tin where she kept her diary and money and personal things. GRO-B-7 broke into it and read in her diary that she was going to the police that day. I know now that some of the pages described the abuse he was doing to us. He tore the pages out and started ranting and raving, saying he was going to kill her. He grabbed his shotgun and took off. His wife was in GRO-B. Janie was to go to where she worked there at the time.

- 69 I was left in the house alone. I was terrified that he was going to kill Janie, the only person who I loved, and that I would be left at the **GRO-B-7&8** alone. I was 12 years old.
- 70 It got dark and I remember going to sleep. The next thing I remember was the phone ringing. I wasn't meant to answer the phone, but I did. It was the police. They asked me if I was in the house alone. I said yes and I was really scared as Mr **GRO-B-7** had a loaded shotgun and had said he was going to kill Janie.
- 71 They said Janie was with them and she was safe, to lock the doors and somebody would be there soon. The police officer and Mr **GRO-B-7**' married daughter came and picked me up. I was told to pack some clothes and that I would see Janie soon. His daughter didn't help us in any way after that. She must have known what he was like.
- 72 That night I was taken to a doctor and asked all sorts of questions and he did an intimate examination. Janie had one too. I wasn't sure why. No-one explained anything. I was then taken to the police station and saw Janie. I was so relieved. We gave statements and we sat in a room with beds (I now know it was a cell) and went to sleep. Later that night we were placed in a State Child Welfare Division family home in **GRO-B**. We stayed there until the trial. It was okay. We felt safe there for the first time in five years.
- 73 Our case was heard in the Supreme Court on 31 July 1974. We had to give evidence at depositions a couple of weeks earlier. **GRO-B-7** was charged with unlawful sexual activity. **GRO-C**

**GRO-C**

***Some of the evidence the jury heard***

74 In his statement to Police, **GRO-B-7** said we slept in the double bed with him most nights. He said his wife slept in the front bedroom in a single bed. He said the girls slept there with him so we could scratch his back. He said this happened most nights. He said his wife was aware of this arrangement.

75 Mrs **GRO-B-8** admitted that her husband had been in the double bed with me a couple of nights before Janie went to police. She admitted we used to have to go into bed with him to give him back rubs and that sometimes we would stay there the whole night (I remember that Mrs **GRO-B-8** didn't give him back rubs):

**GRO-C**

76 When his wife gave evidence in court she eventually became quite hysterical, denying that he had done anything wrong and screaming about us [**WITN0060011** ANG0006920].

77 The doctor that examined us, Dr Henry Salisbury, gave evidence that by the age of 12 in his opinion it was clear I had had penetrative sexual activity on multiple occasions but I had not yet started my periods.

78 The abuse I suffered with **GRO-B-7** was so traumatic, so complete – emotional, physical, sexual – that I had become almost incapable of thinking. It was as if I lived in total shock. I hardly remember giving evidence but I know from the transcript that I gave evidence that Mr **GRO-B-7** regularly had intercourse with me. I said that the day Janie disappeared I heard Mr **GRO-B-7** break into the cash box where Janie kept her diary and I heard the sound of pages being ripped out. I saw him get his rifle and say he was going to kill Janie.



- 79 When he was arrested, he had the loaded rifle in his car. The reason he gave to Police and the Court for this was that he'd hit a possum and had gone home to get his gun because he was the kind of person who hated anything to suffer. He wanted to go back to finish it off but when he got there the possum wasn't there.
- 80 In his statement to the police which was read out to the jury at his trial he said he forced Janie's cash box open to see if she had taken her money. When asked what was in the cash box, he said nothing except 2 or 3 cents.
- 81 He said to police he did not know where Janie kept her diary. He said it was not there when he forced open the cash box. The police officer said he had been seen and heard tearing pages out of the diary. He said that was not true and said he had torn open an envelope to see if there was any money inside.
- 82 **GRO-B-7** repeated to Police that he had not seen the diary at all on the day Janie left. The officer gave evidence that he arrested him for unlawful sexual intercourse with me and said he would search him. **GRO-B-7** refused to be searched. The officer said he had the authority to do so because he had been arrested and started to search him.
- 83 **GRO-B-7** then pulled Janie's diary from his back pocket and said, "*this is what you are looking for*". The police officer gave evidence that it was obvious that there had been pages torn out of it. **GRO-B-7** then handed over the torn-out pages which contained very matter of fact statements from Janie about having to "go in with" **GRO-B-7**. He said they were all lies.
- 84 The officer testified that in a search of the house he found a tube of sexual lubricant in the top drawer of the room with the double bed that Mrs **GRO-B-8** testified she never slept in.

- 85 Even though I was just 12 and the medical evidence was that we had been repeatedly vaginally penetrated and [GRO-B-7] had torn out incriminating pages of Janie's diary which showed I had been telling the truth about what I saw and heard him do, [GRO-B-7] was acquitted by a jury in the [GRO-B] Supreme Court of sexually abusing us.
- 86 I never understood what the jury were thinking. Did they just not want to face the truth? Or did they think we didn't matter? But then I found out that the jury were directed by the trial judge, Justice Casey, to find him not guilty on the charge related to me so I guess they didn't get the chance to make up their own mind.
- 87 I have been told that sexual offences had to have corroboration evidence back then. But my own evidence was corroborated by the doctor, by Janie, by admissions from [GRO-B-7] that he had us sleep with him and by the police evidence about the diary. I do not know what corroboration the judge was waiting for – that [GRO-B-7] would just admit it?
- 88 The jury were all men. But I would love to know what they were thinking of [GRO-B-7] when they heard and saw him and whether at least some of them thought we were telling the truth. I think some of them would have believed us. I will never know. Janie managed to get the transcript, but I am hoping to locate the entire court file to see if it sheds any light on the judge's reasoning.
- 89 The police and a social worker had laid their own complaint under s 13 of the Child Welfare Act 1925 [WITN0060012 ANG0006917]. They did this soon after Janie went to the police. The complaint was that we were indigent (in poverty) and living in a bad environment. After [GRO-B-7] was acquitted the police asked for leave to withdraw their complaint.

- 90 I don't understand how the police thought there was enough evidence to lay a complaint and then, because a jury was directed to find GRO-B-7 not guilty of rape, the police didn't go through with their complaint. I know now it was in a different court with a different and lower standard of proof but that makes it harder to understand.
- 91 There is a note from the Assistant Director of Social Work, AF Campbell, from before the trial that noted *"Should Mr GRO-B-7 be found not guilty the Police complaint will be difficult to prove. Regardless of the outcome GRO-B-7 will not have the children back"* [WITN0060013 ANG0006913]. Social services must have discussed the possibility or asked him to take us back. After everything we alleged against him, not just the rapes, this seems incredible.
- 92 One of the things that upset me was that in the note, the Assistant Director of Social Work wrote:
- "When the girls made their allegations to the Police it was necessary for the Police to remove a loaded rifle from Mr GRO-B-7' possession following threats by him to kill the girls. I feel that this was possibly an impulsive act and doubt if he would have carried out this threat, however the girls were badly shaken by the experience".
- 93 Clearly this man accepted that the threat had been made so why did he minimise it? Why did he side with the adult man against the children? Is threatening to kill a child not bad enough? The same report noted that Janie had gone to the police several times because GRO-B-7 was following or stalking her.

- 94 Everyone thought we were liars after the trial. I know now that an acquittal means the jury are not sure beyond reasonable doubt that a person is guilty. But people don't understand the court process so, by directing the jury to acquit [GRO-B-7], it was as if the judge had labelled us as liars. Whether or not that was his intention. It followed us everywhere. Everyone was warned about us.
- 95 In a note the social worker Mr Gay wrote for the file he said he was concerned at how vindictive the [GRO-B-7] were about us to the extent he refused to say where we were going to be placed in open court to keep it from them [WITN0060011 ANG0006920]. But then he says he thinks we should be separated from each other and *"I also agree with the [GRO-B-7] that any foster parents that [Ms M] and [GRO-B-1] should stay with should be made well aware of the allegations these girls have made, not only against Mr [GRO-B-7] but also against other men on previous occasions."* But we had never made a police complaint about anyone else. It was only Mr [GRO-B-7]'s defence lawyers who tried to smear us in court.
- 96 There was an order made on 12 August 1974 committing me to the care of the Director General [of Social Services] on 8 August 1974 [WITN0060014 ANG0007024]. Janie was to be under the supervision of a social worker for 12 months as she was over 16.
- 97 It was decided that both Janie and I couldn't stay on the West Coast as Mr [GRO-B-7] was making threats to kill us. The police did nothing about the threats. On several occasions he was seen waiting or following us, stalking us. The rest of our family (our father sister and grandparents) were in Christchurch so the department decided we should be in Christchurch.

98 They got in touch with Anglican Social Services who said they had nothing available [WITN0060015 ANG0006882]. On 11 June 1974 DS Gay wrote that he had got in touch with Mr M Goodall from Anglican Social Services who said they had no information on us. GRO-B-7&8 had also been in touch with Anglican Social Services [WITN0060016 ANG0006906].

99 GRO-B-7 tried to get us "severely punished" and then put away [WITN0060011 ANG0006920]. There is a letter from the Minister of Social Welfare dated 23 August 1974 who GRO-B-7 must have written to [WITN0060017 ANG0007153]. The letter said that enquiries showed that:

the girls were not known to social workers in GRO-B until the Police took action against you in May this year (...) Social workers have not so far seen evidence of any grave misbehaviour on the part of either girl since they came into the Department's care. There seems to be no reason at present to remove them from the community or to provide institutional training.

But although our behaviour was not as GRO-B-7 had claimed we still had to be treated with suspicion.

GRO-B-10 and GRO-B-11

100 We were put on a train and brought over to Christchurch. I was met at the Christchurch Railway Station by GRO-B-10 and GRO-B-11 GRO-B-11. They lived on a farm in GRO-B not in Christchurch itself. I had never met them before. Social Services separated Janie and me. No-one spoke to us about what we wanted. No-one told us where we were going.

101 My first day at GRO-B-10&11' I can remember standing on the homestead porch. I was stunned. I think I was in shock after everything that had happened to me. Janie had disappeared. I didn't know these people and to this day I can hardly bear to remember myself standing there, wondering where I was, wondering where Janie was, wondering if I'd ever see her again.

- 102 I lived with **GRO-B-10&11** until 30 June 1977 when I was placed in **GRO-B** Family Home. I absconded from their home three times over a three-week period and my files have many notes of the trouble I got into, and the reasons they thought I did it. No-one ever really asked me why.
- 103 At this time, I had a social worker whose name was Joan Cunningham. She would occasionally come and do a house visit but not very often. One such visit resulted in her reporting "*I found **Ms M** to be a very pleasant well mannered girl. Mrs **GRO-B-10** describes her as being very helpful and dependable in the home*" [**WITN0060018** ANG0006955].
- 104 I couldn't tell her all of the stuff that was happening to me at the time, especially after the court case as by then we had reputations as being "trouble" because people assumed we'd lied and the **GRO-B-10&11** were warned about us.
- 105 During my time at **GRO-B-10&11** I was regularly sexually abused by **GRO-B-11**. This came to the attention of the authorities. A social worker Mrs **GRO-C-1** made comments in notes to the director of Social Work in **GRO-B** PW Howells, in June 1976. Some of the noting is redacted but some children had made a complaint that they didn't want to go back to **GRO-B-10&11** in the holidays. The notes say that other children had complained about seeing Mr **GRO-B-11** doing things to me on the sofa [**WITN0060019** ANG0006968].



3. Mrs [name redacted] rang me most concerned; she had had [name redacted] home for the previous day and they had been telling her of their holiday. She said that they had stated that they definitely don't want to go back to **GRO-B-10&11** again because they claimed that when Mrs **GRO-B-10** was out working in a shop on Saturday afternoon, Mr **GRO-B-11** and **GRO-A Ms M** were doing things on the sofa in the kitchen which wasn't nice indicating that they were conducting themselves improperly. Whether they were cuddling or having some sort of sexual play I do not know as [name redacted] would not give me any further information, but she said she didn't want her daughters going to that sort of house. [redacted portion] ...

4. I recommend that the Director **GRO-B** look into this situation as he sees fit, as firstly **GRO-A Ms M** came into care because of **GRO-A Ms M** and her sister's accusations against the foster father, **GRO-B-7**, of indecently assaulting them [redacted portion].

106 What does this even mean? I was 14 years old. Why is the recommendation not to remove me from **GRO-B-10&11** care? Does this mean that even an independent witness wasn't enough to protect me, or that I was being blamed? Was I not worth protecting because I was already damaged goods? There is also a handwritten note on the letter which says that the **GRO-B-10&11** were **GRO-C-1**'s friends.

107 The response from the Director of Social Work in Christchurch was a letter by D.T.G. Mathias for the Director from June 1976 that said **[WITN0060020 ANG0006966]**:

1. Mr and Mrs **GRO-B-10 &11** foster parents, and **Ms M** were interviewed separately and together in relation to the allegations made by [name redacted] and [name redacted] against the foster father.

2. **GRO-A Ms M** denied any allegations against Mr **GRO-B-11**. She usually blushed when confronted with misdemeanours, but remained cool and calm.

108 I can't really remember being asked about it but I know that after my last experience with disclosing abuse and the trauma of the trial and the acquittal and being labelled as liars I would have been terrified to say anything, especially in front of the **GRO-B-10&11**. Was his reported abuse of me equated with a misdemeanour of mine? The note continued:

3. Mr **GRO-B-1** also denied the allegations and mentioned their front and back doors remain unlocked day and night to enable access for the firemen and the couch in the sitting room and kitchen are opposite each door. He was quite adamant that he would never attempt to conduct himself improperly with any girl and felt angry in relation to the allegations.

4. Mr and Mrs **GRO-B-10&11**'s marital relationship appears normal. **GRO-A Ms M** is making good progress at **GRO-B** College and they consider she seems a most happy and contented girl.

5. There appears to be no substance to these allegations, but the **GRO-B-10&11**'s are not prepared to give the children future holiday [redacted portion].

109 How could they tell what sort of marriage the **GRO-B-10&11** had from a visit? The allegations were not made by me but by other children. The other children's word clearly counts for nothing. It seems that children's words counted for nothing.

110 Nothing was done.

111 Even after independent witnesses with no reason to make anything up said they'd seen him abusing me sexually, no-one did anything to protect me. It seems as if having made a complaint once, which was the truth, I am forever seen as being at fault. Two months after the complaint, in August 1976 after I had run away for the first time, Mrs **GRO-B-10** told the social worker that she was giving up her Saturday job [**WITN0060021** ANG0006972].

- 112 The first time I ran away, it was not long after the abuse was reported and ignored. I got up in the morning to deliver pamphlets which I did to earn some money. **GRO-B-10** and **GRO-B-11** were arguing again, and I just couldn't take it anymore. I felt myself ready to explode. By this point **GRO-B-10&11** and I had relocated to **GRO-B**. I had stayed with a family called the **GRO-B-12** for two weeks while **GRO-B-10** had her second child in **GRO-B** 1975. I wished I could have stayed there. I was really happy there. I got on my bicycle and decided to bike to the **GRO-B-12** in **GRO-B**.
- 113 **GRO-B** to **GRO-B** is at least a three and a half hour bike ride so eventually I dumped my bike and I hitch-hiked there. When I got there, I hid in some trees near a paddock that their daughter and local kids were playing in and I watched them. I waited till it was dark. I was really scared of the dark. I wandered around their farm till I plucked up courage and knocked on their door.
- 114 They hadn't seen me for about three years and they welcomed me in. I told them I'd run away. They said they needed to ring **GRO-B-10** and **GRO-B-11** and I knew then they wouldn't protect me and lied about why I'd run away. I was taken back to **GRO-B-10** and **GRO-B-11**. I was then placed in **GRO-B** Family Home.
- 115 By this time, I'd developed quite a reputation. I didn't trust anyone and got into trouble stealing and doing silly things. Sometimes I had but often I hadn't. **GRO-B-10** used to accuse me of stealing silly things like a sock just because one went missing from the laundry. I don't know how well she was really, looking back. I remember I came across her shaking her fists and screaming at the sky. I was scared.
- 116 After talking to Miss Cunningham I wrote to **GRO-B-11** and **GRO-B-10**. I didn't say anything about the abuse, but I tried to be as polite and kind as I could [**WITN0060022** ANG0007074\_00003]:

I am writing to say how sorry I am for running away and causing you a lot of trouble...I gather you don't know how I feel I don't want to be hurtful but I feel it would be better if I didn't return. I enjoyed hearing from you but it only made my decision harder....

117 [GRO-B-10] wrote back to Miss Cunningham and described this as a "hostile letter" and said, "*we have done our best by her and she has caused a lot of trouble in our home through lies and pinching and now we don't care what happens she can go her own way.*" [WITN0060023] ANG0007074\_00002]

[GRO-B] **Social Welfare Home**

118 After my time with [GRO-B-10&11], while in the [GRO-B] Social Welfare Home, all us kids would sneak out the window on a Friday night and go to the bay and meet boys. We had an agreement if the girls got in first, they would let the boys in and vice versa. It worked well for a while.

119 My girlfriend and I came back in the early hours of the morning and got caught sneaking through the boys' window. We got into trouble, so I decided that when the family house parents went out, we would run away to [GRO-B]. We did so and hitch-hiked. We slept in an unlocked car on the side of the road and then went to my girlfriend's boyfriend's place and stayed the night. The next morning the cops were at the door and we were caught.

120 At the same time there are reports of how good I was with children: "[Ms M] is extremely good with [name redacted] who absolutely adores her. The [GRO-B-13] say she is marvellous with young children and she would in fact like a job looking after children."

[GRO-B-14] **and Reverend** [GRO-B-15]

121 I was placed with a [GRO-C] Reverend and his wife, [GRO-B-15] and [GRO-B-14]. They lived in [GRO-B]. I had met them when living with [GRO-B-10&11] as I used to attend the youth group [GRO-B-15] ran.

- 122 After the school holidays they came up for a transfer to **GRO-B** I wanted to stay with them and they said if it was okay with Welfare I could, as long as I went to school. I then shifted to **GRO-B** with them.
- 123 I can tell you that when I lived with them in **GRO-B** I started popping pills. One day I freaked myself out by the amount I'd taken. I was very unhappy. I wrote **GRO-B-14** and **GRO-B-15** a letter stating what I had done and then I went to bed. They found the note and made me get up, debated whether I needed to go to hospital but decided against it. They made me promise I wouldn't do it again. I didn't keep that promise.
- 124 We all shifted to **GRO-B** and **GRO-B-15** and his wife were very busy in their new parish doing weddings and funerals. I had to babysit all the time and I resented it. I decided on a Saturday afternoon, having been told I had to babysit again, that I'd pop some pills out of the medicine cabinet and mix it with alcohol.
- 125 I remember cooking tea for the kids and feeling like I wanted to lay down, so I lay down on a bean bag. The kids couldn't wake me up and went to the neighbours who got hold of **GRO-B-1** and **GRO-B-15** and I was rushed to hospital. I had my stomach pumped. It was said by a doctor I would have died within the hour if not admitted to hospital. **GRO-B-14** and **GRO-B-15** were furious and told me I'd abused their trust. I didn't understand why they were so upset.
- 126 I became part of the family and it was agreed they would adopt me. I would have been about 16 at the time. I then became known as **GRO-A Ms M**. The adoption came about because at the time I really wanted to be part of the family. I wanted to belong somewhere. I believed being adopted would give me some rights and they wouldn't be able to send me back because I'd really belong to the family.



- 127 The first time the rapes happened with **GRO-B-15**, **GRO-B-1** was out of town. I was 16 or so. At the time I didn't want her to go because I knew the abuse would happen. I had had so much abuse that my instincts told me that he was building up to something. I remember **GRO-B-15** used to play fight with me and it always ended up with him on top of me so I knew I couldn't move. The very first night she was away it started, first with fondling and then intercourse. I did not know how to stop him. I did not want it to happen. I thought once it was over it would be over.
- 128 The next day when I was cooking tea **GRO-B-15** said, "*I'm going out for a minute*". I asked him where he was going, and he replied, "*To buy condoms*". I was so stunned, and I realised the abuse was going to continue and I didn't know what to do. Even when **GRO-B-14** returned, the abuse continued.
- 129 My adoption was eventually completed on **GRO-B** 1981 when I was 19 years of age. So at the time he started having sex with me I was his foster daughter and then I was his legal daughter.
- 130 One day we'd gone to a fish and chip shop and all of a sudden I felt sick. I had to go outside. **GRO-B-15** came out and asked me what was wrong. I said, "*I'm pregnant*". He said, "*You can't be*". I said, "*I am*". He told me to go to the doctor's and ask for the morning after pill and to tell the doctor it was my boyfriend's. I did have a boyfriend at the time, but we never slept together. I went and did as I was told. I remember bleeding.
- 131 Around the time I overdosed and ended up in hospital, I started seeing a psychiatrist Dr **GRO-C-2**. I saw Dr **GRO-C-2** for a long time. I'm sure I told her that I thought I was pregnant to **GRO-B-15** but she has denied that I did. She worked for Child Youth and Family. I'd talked to her about what it was like to be part of **GRO-B-14** and **GRO-B-15** family and she'd talked to **GRO-B-14** and **GRO-B-15** about why I was being so difficult and not fitting in. I was about 16 at this time. I was very unhappy and very distressed.



- 132 I'd started working for the **GRO-B** Council and a girlfriend at work asked me what was wrong, and I told her everything. She then went to a supervisor and told him. He contacted **GRO-B-15**. **GRO-B-15** was furious with me but somehow it was covered up.
- 133 **GRO-B-14** started going to a Pentecostal church and she took me along with her. I liked it and decided that if I was to be accepted there, I would have to tell the minister about **GRO-B-15**. I went to the house where they were holding bible study and said I wanted to talk to the minister. He was busy, but I told a lay preacher and later that night talked to the minister. I think the minister and lay preacher believed me.
- 134 The minister arranged to take me out to **GRO-B** to confront **GRO-B-15**. When confronted, **GRO-B-15** didn't deny he had had sex with me but said it had only happened the once and he'd sought counsel within the **GRO-C** church and prayed to be forgiven. I don't think the minister or lay preacher did anything further?
- 135 The adoption was already finalised before I told **GRO-B-14** about **GRO-B-15** abusing me. I can remember not wanting the adoption to go through but not knowing how to stop it. There is much more I could say about this time but it's still painful to recall. I so wanted to be part of a family and I thought this would be it at last. I had been abused by every man that was supposed to look after me (except Mr **GRO-B-12**) so I thought: I am the common denominator, so it must be my fault.
- 136 I think **GRO-B-14** believed me, but she didn't do anything. A few years later she decided she wanted a divorce and so came to me to ask me to help her by saying what **GRO-B-15** had done. I was so upset that she believed me enough to ask me to help her but that she didn't do anything for me or about **GRO-B-15**'s actions. I had a lawyer at the time, and he said I didn't have to help her, so I didn't.

***Attempt to gain redress through Police***

- 137 On 24 May 1990 I went to the police and laid a complaint against GRO-B-15 [WITN0060024 ANG0007234 & WITN0060025 ANG0007233]. I was 28 years old. I am in the process of obtaining the full police file.
- 138 I went to the police about GRO-B-15 because in his role as minister of the GRO-C Church he would have kids from places like Samoa come to stay. I went out there one day and they had this young teenage girl there and she hardly spoke any English. And it just freaked me out. I thought, "*What if she ...*". I only saw her the once and I thought, "*I can't not say something*". I was wondering – "*is he fostering children or having them to stay through his role as a minister?*"
- 139 When investigated, GRO-B-15 admitted to Police that sexual intercourse had taken place, but no charges were laid. GRO-B-15 said in his statement to the police that I'd seduced him and that I was just a boarder at the time. Yet no-one questioned the fact that they had adopted me? I was legally his daughter.
- 140 The police said that they didn't think I would win a case against GRO-B-1 due to my age when GRO-B-15 started abusing me and the fact that I'd already been through the case with Mr GRO-B-7 and so it would be used against me.
- 141 I know that there is an offence of having sex with someone who is under your care and protection. I know that was the offence he was investigated for. I know that consent is not a defence. Maybe he was untouchable because he was a minister of the church. But surely a minister doing what he did to me is even worse than someone else doing it?

142 When I was with GRO-B-14&  
15 I had a male social worker. I read on my file years after I'd left their care that the first time he met me he wrote quite a favourable report about me, but GRO-B-14 and GRO-B-15 are recorded as saying that I was really good at manipulating people and he shouldn't believe what I say.

### **IMPACT OF THE ABUSE ON MYSELF AND OTHERS**

143 I have many challenges caused by the years of abuse I suffered. For most of my adult life I have chosen to see myself as crazy, because to see otherwise would mean that the whole world was crazy, and I wouldn't be able to function if this was true.

144 I've tried to escape living because I didn't feel entitled to even breathe. I have nightmares most nights. I have flashbacks, and these were increased by the 2019 shootings that occurred in Christchurch.

145 I have major depression, chronic complex post-traumatic stress disorder. I was diagnosed with dissociative disorder. I struggled with addictions all my life. I would work so hard to conquer one addiction and then need something else to cope with my life and the abuse.

146 It has affected my education. Due to the sustained long-term effects I've never been able to work full-time. I haven't married or been in a relationship for more than 30 years. I would have liked to have been married and had children.

147 The name of the man who adopted me still triggers me. He instils great fear in me, even now. When I was talking about taking part in this Commission of Inquiry, I was signing a consent form and I couldn't say his name – I literally couldn't make myself say it. My friend who was with me had to say it. I think the effect on me is still so great because I feel such a deep sadness because when I went to GRO-B-14&  
15 I thought I might actually get a family at last. It makes me so sad to think of me at that age, wanting a family so badly that I wanted to be adopted by those people.

- 148 Even after all my years of counselling there are things that won't go away. Mr **GRO-B-7** dabbled in hypnosis. The first time he tried to hypnotise me, I wasn't under, but I pretended to be – to be still. He stabbed me with safety pins and then asked me what I'd do if I got pregnant. I didn't know what pregnant was but by the way he said it I knew it was bad. He would try to use this hypnotism on me and Janie. I learnt to pretend to be hypnotised while he would stab me with pins and scissors to see if I was properly under, not to show any pain. To this day I cannot practice any kind of breathing exercise because it triggers me with memories of him.
- 149 When we had to bathe, **GRO-B-7** used to tell me how to wash. He had a particular word for genitals. Even today every time I bathe, I remember him. A simple everyday act that should be pleasant or just practical is ruined because I remember him and what he used to say. **GRO-B-7** used to say wash up as far as possible and then down as far as possible and then wash your possible. This still haunts me as adult of 58. I hear him saying that phrase. I know my bathroom is safe – I bought some lovely things for my bathroom – I say to myself we're not going to do this – this is your place this is safe – here it goes again. It's a marker of what that does to you. It is challenging simply to live day to day because of things that nobody could know, things that nobody could see.
- 150 It has had a major effect on my wairua, my connection to my heart and soul has felt deeply blemished believing I was going to hell if I didn't get things right, that I was being punished here on earth by God because of abuses committed in the name of God, by an ordained minister. And the Anglican Church that sent us to the coast to **GRO-B-7&8** and then washed its hands of us.
- 151 I continue to attend weekly therapy so that I can get support and make my life more manageable.

- 152 My sister Janie died at age 51 from cancer. She was fun loving - an avid supporter in her work with people experiencing bi-polar disorder. Janie was also diagnosed with bipolar disorder. She was a stone carver, a photographer and a rebel. She loved passionately, and along with her illness, had bouts of depression. This manifested itself by suicide attempts and admissions to Sunnyside Hospital. The love of Janie's life was Kath. Janie and Kath were together for 28 years. They had a commitment ceremony when it became legal to do so.
- 153 The loss of my sister when she died at the age of 51 did and still does still deeply impact on my life. I strongly believe if she hadn't experienced the horrific abuse on the West Coast, she would still be here fighting to have her voice acknowledged. When **GRO-B-7** died she went to find his grave and she peed on it. She laughed when she told me this but I know she was so traumatised by our time with him just as I was.
- 154 The funny thing is that I am regularly the person that people turn to in crisis, yet so often I don't feel I count.
- 155 I work in the area of child protection.
- 156 I am the producer of **GRO-A**. I have done this for approximately 14 years.
- 157 I live alone because I feel unable to cohabit.
- 158 Me and my sister were let down by the system over and over again beginning with being dumped by the Anglican Social Services with **GRO-B-7&8** and just left there. We've had to carry deeply etched scars, all the time trying to live with a sense of how insensible our lives were, how we were never believed and in fact punished because we told the truth.

159 If people had truly wanted to help us it wouldn't have taken a lot to see we were being horrifically abused repeatedly, but people were blinkered. We were not bad children. We were abused, neglected and left unprotected by the state and Anglican Social Services.

***Other issues: Relationships with my family***

160 In 1974, when I was placed with GRO-B-10&11 Janie was placed with the YWCA in social welfare custody from 31 May to the 8 September and then placed on supervision for 12 months. Janie met up with a family known as the GRO-B-16 who had many foster children. From what Janie told me about life with them, how they were allowed to foster children is still beyond my comprehension.

161 In Janie's file is an application to adopt Janie and it was granted in GRO-B 1975. Janie was nearly 17 years of age and had been removed from the West Coast, been the subject of a very public trial a year earlier. It's also noted that Janie took an overdose on the GRO-B 1974, less than a month after being sent to the GRO-B-16. The adoption by the GRO-B-16 was granted even though social worker had recommended an interim order only [WITN0060026 ANG0006856]. Why was this adoption even considered in this context?

162 In a report from February 1975 Mrs GRO-C-1, a social worker stated "I was most concerned in November [1974] when Mrs GRO-B-10 was rung by Mrs GRO-B-16 and told of GRO-B-1's adoption. Mrs GRO-B-16 informed Mrs GRO-B-10 that Ms M will no longer have a sister as GRO-B-1 would soon be a member of the GRO-B-16 family and would have no further contact with Ms M." [WITN0060027 ANG0006891]



- 163 I lost contact with Janie after this. I never knew she was adopted until I was in my 30's. The GRO-B-16 made her write to me saying that she thought we should not see each other. She told me that they made her write that letter [WITN0060028 ANG0007074\_00001]. Even now it breaks my heart when I read it. I got another letter from her where she says she loves me but "its just my mum" [WITN0060029 ANG0007030].
- 164 I didn't have a relationship with my older sister GRO-B-4 until I was well into my 20's as she'd grown up with grandfather. There is a report on my file from December 1977 that said that GRO-B-4 was trying to find me and had contacted the Timaru Social Welfare department [WITN0060030 ANG0007077].
- 165 My grandfather (my mother's father) came and found me when I was living with the GRO-B-14&15 in GRO-B. We hadn't had contact for about ten years and he just decided one day to come to GRO-B and knock on all the church doors to find out where I was. GRO-B-15 rang me at home and said, "Oh, I'm bringing Mr GRO-B-9 out for lunch". And I didn't really take a lot of notice because there were always people coming home for lunch. And my grandfather walked in the door and said, "Do you know who I am?" and I said, "No", and he said, "I'm your grandfather".
- 166 I went back to my grandfather's house, which I remembered from when I was little, and my older sister GRO-B-4 was there. That's how GRO-B-4 and I started having a relationship.
- 167 GRO-B-4, Janie and me didn't spent a lot of time together. We were separated growing up and reconnected in my early twenties. Because of our fragmented lives establishing a closeness hasn't been easy for any of us. After Janie's death GRO-B-4 and I have worked hard as adults to form connections. Doing something nice like meeting for coffee, going to movies. The latest thing is visiting the cat café. I try to protect her from the horror of my life. She fully supports me coming to the Commission.

## LATER ATTEMPTS TO GET REDRESS

### *Civil claims*

168 I read in a woman's magazine that you could claim compensation for abuse suffered in state care. Janie and I agreed to do it. We wouldn't have done it if we'd known how much of a nightmare it would be.

169 We got a lawyer who everyone recommended, and it got to the point of having hearings, but our lawyer kept on putting it off. And one day we rang and spoke to his secretary and she said, "*this is more than my job's worth to tell you this but he's not going to take the case and I suggest you go and see this other lawyer*".

170 We ended up hiring Andrew Cadenhead.

### **ACC**

171 My sister and I applied for ACC in the late 1980s and were awarded some compensation for the abuse and its effects. Janine got a payment from ACC and I got several smaller payments, but this statute of limitations thing caused us a lot of hassle because we brought a claim over 20 years after the abuse.

172 I find ACC difficult to deal with. For example in 2003 I got a letter declining my application for an independence allowance. WITN0060031 ANG0007229] This was because I had had four small lump sum payments, three for sensitive claims and one for a back sprain.

173 So for one claim I received \$5,950 from a maximum payable of \$7,000. That was 85% of \$7,000. For another I received \$1,000 from a maximum of \$5,000, which was 20%. For another, \$2,400 from a maximum payable of \$7,000, which was 34%. For another I received \$1,530 from a maximum payable of \$17,000, which was 9%. The total amount paid was \$10,880. The maximum payable for all four claims was \$36,000 so I received 30% of the maximum payable.

174 But ACC added up the individual percentages and said "As your lump sum entitlement is over 100%, this makes an entitlement to independent allowance impossible."

175 At the time of the ACC payment my lawyer Andrew Cadenhead was my executor and he mentioned that because I was adopted GRO-B-15 would be able to apply for any money I had if I died. Even though I did not imagine I would have much when I died, I was offended and deeply shocked and told Andrew that if I died and he gave GRO-B-15 any money I would come back and haunt him.

176 I asked how I could become legally unadopted and he said it would be hard to do but that he would try. I managed to get Legal Aid to assist me to do this. My lawyer had to get consent from the Solicitor-General to even make the application and this was granted on the ground that the adoption order was made by mistake as to a material fact or in consequence of a material misrepresentation. [WITN0060032 ANG0007237]

177 Mr Cadenhead was prepared to argue that GRO-B-15 had misled the Family Court about being a fit and proper person when he adopted me but in the end my application was not contested by GRO-B-15. He did not appear and was not represented.

178 On 31 March 1994 I became officially un-adopted. [WITN0060033 ANG0007235] I had changed my name by deed poll in May 1991. I choose to use my mother's and grandmother's hyphenated name, which was GRO-A, for my surname and I changed my name to GRO-A Ms M.

***Confidential listening service***

179 At the age of 50 I presented my story on 21 May 2012 to the Confidential Listening Service Panel.

- 180 After I used the Confidential Listening Service I received a letter on 21 July 2014 acknowledging the length of time that had passed and that due to an overload they hadn't began to process my application. I was then offered to be part of the fast track process. I received an offer of compensation. This offer became tainted by the process and the stress that occurred.
- 181 When I was offered this money, I was given a pamphlet entitled "Frequently asked questions". It said something like: "*With a view to helping you make a decision we really want you to accept the fast track process.*" I felt like this pamphlet contained a veiled threat in its wording. Under the section "How much will I get if we do a full assessment of my claim under the normal process" it stated "*until the assessment has been completed, we cannot tell you how much you might be offered if there is a payment offered. It might result in an offer of the same amount or it may be more or less or there is a possibility that you receive no payment at all.*"
- 182 I think this wording is enough to make people take what's offered because there's a clear message that you mightn't receive any offer whatsoever.
- 183 It was also implied that if you didn't take the offer, the process to have your claim assessed would take a long time. At this point I had already been part of this process for nearly three years and still the ministry had not even started the process of looking at my claim.
- 184 In regard to the delay, the pamphlet stated:
- we are very sorry that there's been such a delay. A large number of people have come to us with claims because our assessment process is so detailed. It has meant that we have not been able to keep up with the number of claims coming in. This is why we've developed the fast track option for eligible claimants to consider, so we can resolve your claim faster and help to provide closure.

185 I and many of the claimants were not in a position to afford legal assistance and, frankly, my experience to date with the legal system did not inspire me to ask for advice.

186 I accepted the offer on 4 June 2015. I had been on the Invalid's Benefit for most of my adult life. I work part-time to maintain my mental stability. One of the questions concerning the offer was what would happen to my benefit if I accepted the offer? and the pamphlet stated:

These settlement payments are not considered income or cash assets for the purpose of assessing your entitlement to a benefit for 12 months after the date of the payment. Any cash assets you have or income that you may make from the payment after 12 months might affect your benefit. To confirm what your entitlement is you need to discuss it with your Work and Income case manager.

187 My advocate GRO-C-3 and I tried to get answers about whether I'd be penalised for having this money after the year's grace period. I didn't want to spend it all at once – I wanted to be careful with it. We approached many people seeking answers. The considered view was it should not affect my entitlements. But I was told that after one year if I had assets of over \$8,000, then it'd impinge on my entitlements.

188 GRO-C-3 and I tried to find solutions, for example depositing it into KiwiSaver and exploring possible ways of using this money to enhance my future. Every time we thought we'd found a solution they told us I couldn't do it.

189 GRO-C-3 and I were very proactive in seeking advice and attended an appointment at WINZ on 2 September 2016. Again, we asked about this payment. The caseworker left to speak to another advisor and came back into the office and informed me that I'd lose my entitlements to the Accommodation Supplement from 5 September 2016, which equated to a \$65 a week reduction.

- 190 I started crying. I hardly ever cry. I couldn't afford to live as I had significant debts. They told me I needed to live off the money until I'd gone below income limits.
- 191 I got an email on 7 September 2016 which quoted policy and legislation but didn't say exactly where the quotes came from. That made it harder for me and my advocate to look into [WITN0060034 ANG0007162].
- 192 I was on the Invalid's benefit, now called Living Support. The pamphlet had said that the payment would have no effect on benefit for the first year. This encourages people to blow the lot in one go. But then a further humiliation is that receipts have to be provided because you are not allowed to be reckless. They literally said I could not blow it on a \$15,000 diamond ring for example. *"If the money is spent frivolously for non-essential items for example a \$15,000 ring we can apply Section 74(d) of the Social Security Act"*. That is a section which says a benefit can be terminated if a person has *"directly or indirectly deprived himself of any income or property which results in his qualifying for that or any other benefit or an increased rate of benefit"*. How dare they tell me that? What if a diamond ring was the one thing I had wanted all my life?
- 193 If I had other money, say from an inheritance or I was able to work fulltime, then no-one could interfere with how I spent the compensation money. But when you are poor (because of the effects of abuse) they don't let you have the payment as something you are entitled to. If someone like me or Janie did want to buy one nice thing, they were telling me I wasn't allowed to. I already have benefit deducted for my part time earnings. It's like they want to keep you poor.
- 194 It took me to 30 December 2016 to arrive at under \$8,000.



- 195 The settlement money became tainted. I felt like I was being raped over and over again by the very system that claimed good faith to redress an historical abuse.
- 196 Someone said something to me about the money being for my future. I realised then that I didn't believe in a future. Janie was my life and soul. I believed if she died there would be no purpose for me to live. She was my reason for living – the money was not for the future as I didn't believe there was one. She's been gone for 10 years and I can't get used to her not being here. I wouldn't see her for a time and then even when she disappeared for a while just dealing with her own situation I would know when she was coming and then she would come.
- 197 This settlement money was for events that happened to me in the past and its ongoing cost to my wellbeing. I was desperate and told my story to a reporter [WITN0060035]ANG0007161]. I went under an alias at the time.
- 198 I don't want any other survivors to have to be traumatised by the welfare state process, although I would hazard a guess that a large portion of recipients are probably beneficiaries due to the mental health effects from the state-based or faith-based abuse or neglect in the first place.
- 199 I was paid a settlement amount. I was abused in care up to the age of 19 when my adoption became legal. I didn't have a single good year of childhood free from abuse when I was supposed to be being cared for by the state and before that, the Anglican Church. If I average this payment over the years, it works out to be a small payment for every year of abuse and I'm still paying and paying. I think the amounts paid out to survivors should be able to be questioned and brought into alignment with compensation given to prisoners for a single assault in prison. I think the amount, however you describe it, is an insult.

200 I looked at a website about a class action website for victims. Some were only paid \$2,000 or \$4,000. That was less than my payment. My file was in with the CLS for three years and not looked at. So, the amount I got was a guess I suppose. No-one had looked at what I went through. I suppose that means it wasn't really funded properly.

***Police and Reverend [GRO-B-15] [GRO-C] Church***

201 After I used the Confidential Listening Service to talk about the abuse perpetrated on me, Judge Caroline Henwood helped me get the information from when I had tried to lay charges against Reverend [GRO-B-15]. Judge Henwood got the detective to tell me why they didn't proceed.

202 The detective said Police never disbelieved me but because of my age at the time and my other allegations they had taken the decision that we wouldn't win. The detective said they would make a different decision now and would prosecute.

203 I still don't understand this because [GRO-B-15] had admitted it and there was no defence of consent. I also know now that the law in force at the time included people under 20.

***Redress from the Anglican Church***

204 I made some contact with the Anglicans in 2010. It would have been after 4 September because that was when the Confidential Listening Services gave me contact with the church and I remember I rang them. The person said that because of the earthquake, their archivist was just starting to sort through records and would pass on my information and contact me when sorted. I did not hear back but didn't follow up any further. That was 10 years ago. I would really like to follow this up.

***Redress from the [GRO-C] Church***

205 I have never followed up with the [GRO-C] Church about the minister who adopted me, Reverend [GRO-B-15].

- 206 I think he is retired now. I know he became the **GRO-C**  
**GRO-B**.
- 207 I have thought about going back to police since he was never charged, and he admitted what he did. I was so worried when I saw that teenage girl in his house. But I think I never followed up again because I am still so scared of him. We tried to make a proper complaint about **GRO-B-7** and just ended up being labelled as liars.
- 208 I think I am so scared of **GRO-B-15** because I didn't necessarily expect much from the other men who were supposed to be looking after me because every man had abused me, but he was a minister. I thought I could trust him. Yet he behaved just like all the others.

#### **THE REDRESS I WOULD LIKE TO BE GIVEN**

- 209 If the state gives financial compensation for the trauma and the wasted potential that left people dependant on benefits, I would like it to be theirs to do with however they choose. It is the final insult to say: We let you down and we are going to give you some money to compensate for the fact you now exist on benefits. But we are going to take money off you at the same time because you exist on benefits. It is like all those years of blaming myself and being blamed for things is repeating again.
- 210 I do not exist on benefits because I don't want to work full time, but because I can't work full time. I would love to have had a normal childhood, even if it was in care, and to have had a career in childcare or teaching. I might have been a lawyer and working on this Royal Commission.
- 211 I do my absolute best to contribute to society in lots of different ways. If I was not on a benefit, then any compensation would be properly mine. If I wanted to buy a ring or go 'round the world I could. But it's like the State wants to constantly remind me that I am not important and they are in charge of me.

- 212 No compensation can magically make me whole again and able to do a full-time job in child protection which is what I do part time and what I love. Nothing can put me back to how I might have been.
- 213 But any compensation should be for me. To compensate me and let me do something that makes me happy. Or let me do something that makes me feel a little secure.
- 214 I think if the State is the cause of suffering and trauma then financial compensation should be given without any strings.
- 215 I would like to be re-compensated for the money wrongfully taken from me and compensated for the trauma of that process. I work really hard on my recovery and as an example my counsellor who has supported me for some time now is stopping doing ACC counselling as the reporting takes too much time, I am going to have to stop seeing her as I cannot afford to pay her out of my benefit.
- 216 I have significant debt with WINZ. Every year I submit my earnings and every year they tell me I owe them money. No matter what my budget and Mental Health Peer support worker tried to figure out. Through no fault of my own it again looks like I will be penalized this year. So, I have no faith in a system that has always caused me great distress and continues to re-victimise me over and over again.
- 217 I think there were a lot of alarm bells that were ignored. We should not have been left with the **GRO-B-7&8**. I should have been removed from **GRO-B-11&12** **GRO-B-15** should have been prosecuted. But every time another thing happens and the authorities take the side of your abuser you just think it's your fault.

- 218 I want to see change as I believe a lot of crap is still going on.
- 219 I do not think that a complainant in a trial should be labelled a liar just because the accused is acquitted. I believe by "warning" all my foster parents those men were given a green light to abuse me because they knew no-one would believe me.
- 220 Having had the court case on **GRO-B** that set the course of Janie and my being separated, branded as liars - instead of the system supporting us it chose to vilify who we were and even in my case continue to tell future foster parents to be wary because I had made past allegations against men.
- 221 I personally have had to do a lot of soul searching around pursuing this course of action.
- 222 In deciding I wanted to name the minister who adopted me, **GRO-B-15**  
**GRO-B-15** I have this time begun to feel the grief of lost dreams and hopes
- 223 I believed that I was being offered a home, a place to call my own and a family who loved me and would always have my back, yet again to be taken advantage of.
- 224 I have had to pay dearly. I have spent my life in counselling, not able to work fulltime due to my own mental health, having a fear that God, the universe, the divine, whatever you want to call it, might have negative effects for me in the future.
- 225 I am not vindictive and am not doing this out of hate, I am doing this so I can give Janie the recognition that was never given to her while she was alive.
- 226 I am doing this because I realized that I had never thanked her for trying as an 8-year little girl being abandoned by all adults in our home for a couple of days - with me 4 years and **GRO-B-6**1 and a bit - left to try and take care of us.

- 227 I am doing this because Janie had the courage to go to the police on the coast and this in turn rescued me from becoming a walking shell as I was so close to being.
- 228 We were always judged and held to account for abuses that weren't our fault, our reputation preceded us, only this reputation was false, wherever we went and tried to be heard
- 229 Janie would be here today doing this if the effects of years of trauma hadn't taken her life at the age of 51. She would have stood alongside me to tell her story
- 230 So this is my very heartfelt thanks to her and a reclaiming of the frightened child who has found the courage and supports to say to the minister who adopted me and abused me GRO-B-15 you lied about me, you shattered a very thin veil of trust, I stand here today and put the blame right back in your hands. How you take this and make peace with it is your business but know that no more will I carry your shame.

**Statement of Truth**

This statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and was made by me knowing that it may be used as evidence by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care.

Signed

GRO-C

Dated: 5-11-2020