

Witness Name: GRO-A Mr EC

Statement No: WITN0888001

Exhibits: WITN000000

Dated: 24/02/2022

ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF GRO-A Mr EC

I, GRO-A Mr EC will say as follows:

Introduction

1. My full name is GRO-A Mr EC I was born on GRO-C 1958. I am now 62 years old.
2. While in state care I was under the name of GRO-A
3. I whakapapa to Ngāti Maniapoto through my mum, and Ngāti Kuri through my dad.
4. My evidence is about the abuse I experienced in foster care, family homes and borstal.

Background

5. I was raised in the King Country, which is where my mum was from. My father was from Waitangi up north. I don't really remember her or my father.
6. The only memory I have of my dad is chasing his car up the road. That was the last time I would see him, until 30 years later.
7. According to my dad, my mum drank a lot. She would also spend a lot of time away from the house with other men.

8. When I was young, I was a whāngai to an older couple who didn't have children of their own. The father was called [GRO-B] and I was given his name. My brothers and sisters stayed with my parents.
9. My whangai parents only spoke te reo Māori. This was all I heard growing up until I started going to school. I could understand it well, but I could not speak it. I could not speak English either.
10. I was with this couple until I was about five years old. I remember helping to bury my whangai father when he died. It was after this happened that I went into care.

Entry into care

11. All I remember is being put onto a train in Taumarunui with my sister [GRO-B] and older brother [GRO-B-1]. No one told us what was happening, and we had no spare clothes or possessions. There were no adults on the train looking after us either.
12. On the way up to Auckland, we stopped at another train station. A little Pākehā-looking boy was put with us. We were told his name was [GRO-B] too, and that he was our half-brother. Because of this, my social worker Mr Thompson changed my name to [GRO-A Mr EC] upon arrival in Auckland.
13. We eventually arrived in Otahuhu. I remember being taken into the welfare office, and being taken to a place in Otara first. I remember going to Mayfair Primary while I was there. I was not there for long.
14. Shortly after, I ended up with the [GRO-B-2 / GRO-B-3]. I can't remember how this happened. I was not told anything by my social worker. I was also separated from my siblings and not told where they were going.

Residences (and other care settings)

[GRO-B-2] & [GRO-B-3] Family Home

15. I was first taken to a place to stay in Mangere. Mr Thompson dropped me and [GRO-B] off. A little while later, another little girl was dropped off.
16. This was the house of [GRO-B-2] and [GRO-B-3]. I remember that they had four children of their own: [GRO-B], [GRO-B], [GRO-B] and [GRO-B]. Then there was another young girl who went by the name of [GRO-B].

17. [GRO-B-2] was employed as a bus driver and worked for a company called Suburban Buses.
18. The first couple of days with the family went well. But a few days into it I remember that I was at the dining room table. Everyone else was eating so I thought that I could eat dinner too. But when I tried to join them, [GRO-B-2] punched me in the side of my head and yelled "who the fuck said you can have something to fucken eat?" at me.
19. He punched me so hard I hit the wall. I started crying, then he grabbed me by the arm and gave me a beating. I think he gave me a beating because I was crying so much. He would tell me to stop crying if I wanted the hiding to stop.
20. Everyone at the table laughed at me for getting a hiding. It was the first time I had ever been hit like that. I wasn't given a meal that night and I was made to clean the dishes and that. I knew from that day I was in a house of hell.
21. The next night, [GRO-B-2] put a dog chain around me and chained me to the dinner table. He then filled a large enamel bowl with leftovers from the meals and gave this to me and the family dog as our dinner. I had to compete with the dog like this every night. There was never much food left.
22. I was allowed to sit at the table sometimes, but not allowed to eat. The other foster kids were allowed to sit and eat. I was told it was because I was "the ugly one". I didn't know what that meant, but I knew it meant I was different.

Emptying the garage pit

23. In my first week there, I was told to empty a large pit in the garage that had filled with water. Mr [GRO-B-2] woke me up early, gave me a bucket, and told me to have it finished before he came back from work.
24. I did some of it, but then I had to go to school for the day. One of the other kids came running up to me when I had got home from school and was still trying to empty out the water. He told me that I was about to get a hiding.
25. Mr [GRO-B-2] came up to me while I was still in the garage and told, me to get out of the pit. As I was walking towards him, he removed a leather belt from his waist and started to hit me with it.

26. I cried so much because it hurt. My legs got a good whacking, and so did my bum. Mr [GRO-B-2] then left the garage and I was left to cry.
27. Mr [GRO-B-2] went back inside and I heard him talking to some people who had turned up at the house, but nobody either heard me or cared about me crying. But a short time later I got a shock to see that he had returned to the garage with a jug cord and threatened me with it, telling me I had better stop crying.
28. Around the same time, I was also taken out to the back of their garage where there was a tin shed built on. In this shed there was an old man lying on a bed. He was very old and sick. Both Mr & Mrs [GRO-B-2
GRO-B-3] told me that from now on, I was to sleep in this shed, with this old man and on the same little bed.
29. I remember sleeping with the old man for a few days until he passed away. I remember a lot of people turning up to say goodbye. I thought this meant I would be able to sleep in the house and tried to sneak in after I finished emptying the pit of water. However, Mrs [GRO-B-3] made me keep sleeping in the room with the body for about three or four days after the old man had died and until the funeral. . The only good thing about this was that the beatings stopped for a couple of days.
30. I would have been quite young around this time as I was going to Mangere East Primary School, in Mangere. After the body was removed, I had to sleep in the shed for two weeks before I was allowed to move into the house.

Daily abuse and neglect

31. I got whacked so many times by Mr [GRO-B-2] just for crying. It was a vicious cycle – he would beat me and then when I would cry, he would beat me more.
32. I would get beatings every single day, with sticks, jug cords, and belts. Sometimes he would use a black fire shovel.
33. Many times while I was strapped and given hidings, I was told to dance and dance. Then at the same time, while this was going on I could hear laughter throughout the house.
34. Me getting hiding was just a big fucken laugh to these people.
35. The [GRO-B-2
GRO-B-3] children would sometimes steal money from their dad's bus takings and then it was me that got the blame for it, and I got the beatings for stealing. He

would bend my thumbs all the way back. None of the other kids ever got hidings like mine.

36. To this day I have arthritis in my thumbs, and I have constant pain in my hands.
37. These beatings did not stop until I was removed from the GRO-B-2 GRO-B-3 house. I even have a long scar across my right hand where GRO-B-2 cut me after accusing me of taking his bus takings.
38. Mrs. GRO-B-3 would also hit me, but those beatings didn't make me cry because she didn't hit hard enough. She was still a mongrel though. She would make me wash her genitals and dry her when she bathed. When she was washing me, she would play with me.
39. Their biological children were also horrible. The girls were a couple of years older than me. They would make me play stupid games with them where I had to touch them, or playfights where they touched me. This touching was around the privates.
40. I would have to do every job in the house. This included washing the floor every day before school, putting washing in the old wringer washing machine, then doing it all after school too.
41. My breakfast was usually a couple of pieces of bread with some golden syrup on it. I was always hungry, so I would steal money and pinch lollies. I would go to orchards, grapevines, and farms for vegetables.
42. I was not allowed to play with toys, or to hang out with my Pākehā friends. If I was caught doing either of these, I would get a hiding. Usually, other kids would tell on me.
43. Social Welfare provided me with clothes, but I never got to wear them. They would always go to the other kids. I would always get the hand-me-downs.
44. The GRO-B-2 GRO-B-3 would always call me nasty names like ugly, gollywog, and hainamana (chinaman). There was no kindness at all towards me. Their dog got treated better than me.
45. I hated those people.
46. I would be washed only once or twice a week.
47. Sometimes I would be chained up with the dog and we had to sleep together.

48. One day, their dog started to hump on my leg. I pushed it away to stop it from doing that, but Mr [GRO-B-2] whacked me in the face and said to leave the dog alone. After that the dog was able to have sex with my leg whenever he wanted to.
49. One time, I ran away from [GRO-B-2
GRO-B-3] but got caught. I was later helping him chop up firewood, and he told me to put my leg on the block. He hit me twice with a blunt axe on my shin, which still cut me bad. I still have the scar on my leg today.
50. Mr Thompson, my social worker, visited me fortnightly at [GRO-B-2
GRO-B-3] I would make a complaint to him every time about the hidings I was getting. Every time, [GRO-B-2 GRO-B-3] had an excuse about why I had the marks on me. Mr Thompson always believed them.
51. I did not tell Mr Thompson about the sexual stuff, just the hidings. I also told teachers at school, but I was getting into trouble there as well and getting canings from them.
52. I don't know if Mr Thompson told [GRO-B-2 GRO-B-3] but I would always get a hiding afterwards for trying to complain to him. After a while, I stopped complaining because I knew it would not work.

Buried in a hole in the yard

53. [GRO-B-2 GRO-B-3] had a hole in their backyard for their dog shit and other gross things like eel guts. I used to have to pick up the dog shit from around their nectarine trees and put it in the hole.
54. One time, Mr [GRO-B-2] found me up the tree eating a nectarine. He gave me a big hiding in the shed, then threw me into the hole and filled it with dirt and shit. It was up to my shoulders.
55. I was made to stay in this hole for the night and the next day it started raining. I actually did not care too much, because it was better than getting another hiding.
56. During the night their dog came along and pissed on me. Then the dog started having 'sex' with my head. I remember that I heard laughter, so people were watching this happening. I didn't know at the time, what the dog was actually doing to me, and I couldn't stop it because my hands were buried too.

57. In the morning I was removed from the hole got hosed down by a couple of the other kids. I had sores all over me, a lump on my leg, and my fingers were all infected with pus under the nail reticules.
58. Another time, I had to go down and remove a dog carcass and a cat carcass from the pit. They had been down there at least a couple of years. When I tried to pick them up, they just slipped through my hands like jelly. Mr [GRO-B-2] was watching and would not let me out until I was finished.
59. Some weekends we all had to work at the Māngare Marae. My job at the Marae was to clean the eels that we had caught, prepare the vegetable and do the cleaning up. I had to work at weddings, birthdays, unveilings and tangi's.
60. The meals were usually a hangi and I would try and line up with the rest of the people when it came to meal time. But either [GRO-B-2] or [GRO-B-3] would make me leave the line, go outside and pick my food off the hot stones.
61. When we stayed at the Marae I would have to sleep in the same place where the coffins were placed.

Bedwetting

62. It was about this time that I started wetting the bed. I would get the worst of my hidings for doing this. Mrs [GRO-B-3] would give me a hiding in the morning, and then Mr [GRO-B-2] would give me another one in the afternoon when he got home from work.
63. I ended up wetting my bed for what seemed like a long time. I did not even know I was doing it. Sometimes the other kids would intentionally wet my sheets so I would get a hiding.
64. I would also get given cold showers as punishment. One night I was forced to stand outside when it was raining, balanced on one leg all night, without sleeping. I did this a few times. I would still wet my bed every night.

Staying with the [GRO-B-2] [GRO-B-3] relatives

65. Sometimes I would be sent around the road to another house and similar things would happen to me. I think they were relations of the [GRO-B-2]
[GRO-B-3] I remember they were called [GRO-B-4] and [GRO-B-5] They lived on [GRO-C-1] Road in Papatoetoe.

66. [GRO-B-2] told me I was being sent to this address to be taught a lesson. He said that the lesson was around learning not to steal. This was about the missing bus takings, which I had been accused of stealing but I was innocent of this.
67. The first time I stayed there, I got a hiding on my first night cause Mr [GRO-B-2] told them to give me one. [GRO-B-4] did it with a stick, but it broke, so he got a bigger one.
68. I would be put in their pig dog kennels and made to eat out of the same bowl as their dogs. I remember that the dog would piss all over me and I got covered in dog shit.
69. I didn't get much to eat here either.

Leaving [GRO-B-2]
[GRO-B-3]

70. I cannot remember why I was taken from [GRO-B-2 GRO-B-3] I had spent about two years there. I was the only one who left; the other foster kids all stayed.

[GRO-B-5] **Family Home**

71. I was also put in the care of Mr and Mrs [GRO-B-5] who at the time, were living in Clevedon. [GRO-B] was a truck driver, who was usually away working.
72. They had 3 children of their own. When I first arrived there, my oldest brother [GRO-B-6] was also there. He was about 11 or 12. He was only there for a couple of days before he left.

Sexual abuse of my brothers

73. During those few days, I heard Mrs [GRO-B-5] making a lot of noise in one of the bedrooms. I went in there to see what the noise was and saw her on top of [GRO-B-6]. She had no clothes on.
74. She told me to come over to where she was and she told me to touch her between her legs, where there was a lot of hair. I didn't want to do this and I was scared but she grabbed my hand and rubbed herself with it. Then she told me to put my brother's diddle in my hand and put it by her privates. I got up and ran out of the house and ran down the street.

75. The next day, GRO-B-6 went to school and did not come back. I was very wary of Mrs GRO-B-5 after that and tried to avoid her when I could. Shortly after that, my other brother GRO-B-1 arrived at the home.
76. Mrs GRO-B-5 started playing with GRO-B-1. He was under 10 years old at this time. I did not know how to talk about it with GRO-B-1 at the time, because we did not know any better about what was happening. GRO-B-1 was molested badly for at least two months.
77. The GRO-B-5 house was just another house of horrors for me. I was severely beaten by Mrs GRO-B-5 on a regular basis, mainly because I kept running away. She would use cords and coal shovels for the beatings. I was running away because Mrs GRO-B-5 kept trying to get me to touch and wash her privates.
78. One time, I ran away to a house up the street and hid under the house. I stayed there until the kids from this house found me and told me to get out. When I was leaving, I saw inside the house and it was then that I saw a small kid chained, like a dog to a table.
79. I remember thinking that this small kid was tiny and she was dirty. It was then that I saw it was my little sister. I had not seen her since we were on the train together. I was not able to talk to her. Years later, she told me that she was raped at that home from the age of 6 to 11, as well as being molested in other homes one she stayed in.
80. I ran back to the GRO-B-5 home and got one hell of a beating by Mrs GRO-B-5 for running away and going to their neighbour's house.

Being force-fed

81. One time, we were given tripe for dinner. I hated tripe, so did not eat it. Mrs GRO-B-5 grabbed a spoonful of tripe, grabbed my mouth, and forced it down my throat. I vomited it straight back up, so Mrs GRO-B-5 punched me in the face.
82. When she left the kitchen table briefly, I threw it out the window to the chooks, but they did not eat it. Mrs GRO-B-5 found it, brought the tripe back, and made me eat it again.
83. The same tripe was given to me at every meal time for the next few days. I was not allowed to eat anything else until I ate it. I eventually just threw it at her, spat

the food in her face and got a hiding for that.

My nana's jewellery

84. One day at the [GRO-B-5] my whāngai mother from my childhood came and visited me. She gave me a little jar of jewellery that had come from my biological grandmother. After a couple of hours together, she left.

85. The jar of jewellery was taken off me straight away by Mrs [GRO-B-5]. Later on, I broke into her room and got it back. I hid it under the deck of the house. It is still there to this day.

Leaving the [GRO-B-5]

86. A few days after being visited, I went to school and did not return to the [GRO-B-5]. I had been there for a couple of months overall. My brother [GRO-B-1] had already left but was taken to a different home.

87. At this time, I got a new social worker called Mr Fletcher. He was good.

**The [GRO-B-7
GRO-B-8] – [GRO-C] Road Family Home, Papatoetoe**

88. I was put with [GRO-B-7] and [GRO-B-8] who were a Dutch couple living in Papatoetoe. I was at this home until I was around 14. There were around a dozen other kids there. My first bad hiding from Mr [GRO-B-7] was when I had beaten his son in a game of chess. I got a punch in the face for winning the game, but it didn't stop there. Things just kept getting worse.

89. I got hit and punched many times by [GRO-B-7]. This was nearly a daily thing and continued right through to when the left the Home. .

90. I would catch Mr [GRO-B-7] playing with some of the younger foster girls and hear noises. One time, I caught him under the house with a couple of girls. He would give me a hiding for catching him. Looking back, I know he was molesting or having sex with these girls.

91. The first time I caught him, he tried to make me get into bed with him and the foster girl. I ran off instead. Mr [GRO-B-7] would also try to touch me. He would sit me on a seat and rub me down.

92. The foster kids did not talk about this with each other. When you're in a family home, you think you're there because no one else wants you. We did not think anyone would believe us, and we had gotten hidings for trying to complain before.
93. Mrs. [GRO-B-8] had a big mouth. She would always blame me for things.
94. While I was there, I was going to Papatoetoe East Primary School, before moving to intermediate. I loved school. I only missed two days of school in my life. I loved to play sports, everything apart from soccer.
95. I knew I could get away from the hidings at school, even though I still got the strap there. I did start to become a bit of a troublemaker at school though. All us Māori and Islander students would experience racism from the other kids at school.
96. I got my first tattoo when I was 13. When Mr [GRO-B-7] found out, he gave me a big hiding.
97. We would also get \$2 - \$3 each week as pocket money.
98. After a while there, us kids started to rebel against the [GRO-B-7
GRO-B-8] We would get cheeky and talk back to them, because we wanted them to move out. Eventually, their caregiver contract expired, and the [GRO-B-9] moved into the home as the new caregivers.

The [GRO-B-9] [GRO-B] Family Home, Papatoetoe

99. Mr and Mrs [GRO-B-9] were the best caregivers I ever had. They never picked on me or yelled at me. They hugged me and told me they wished I could stay with them.
100. They also let me smoke.
101. There were nine other kids in the home who all got treated just as well. We felt warm and welcome in their home. There were no more beatings or sexual abuse.
102. We would always get a good feed.
103. One time, I had run off to listen to Prince Tui Teka at the local pub. I was drinking a beer, and the police turned up. They took me to the cells because I threw a bottle at their car. While I was in there, they verbally abused me.
104. I do not remember Social Welfare giving me much support while I was with the [GRO-B-7
GRO-B-8] or the [GRO-B-9] The [GRO-B-9] wanted to adopt me when I had to leave the

home at 14. They still had a couple of years on their caregiving contract left. Social Welfare would not let them and said no.

105. I visited the home again when I was 16, and they were still there. A year later, they were gone. I went and visited them later in my life at their place in the Coromandel.

Schooling

106. Going to intermediate school in Māngare East was not too good for me at all. I was getting the strap every day from the headmaster and it was always the same thing – I got blamed for this and that. I think I received the strap about six times a day. It was a large leather strap and occasionally I would also get the cane across my legs and my bum.

107. After leaving Māngre Intermediate I went to Aorere College for a couple of months. I left college at the age of 14.

GRO-B GRO-B GRO-B-10 and GRO-B Farm Homes

108. After the GRO-B-9 I was taken to GRO-B and his wife in Clevedon. He worked as a surgeon. After a little while there, I was sent to work on a farm.

109. I went to GRO-B and GRO-B on their dairy farm in Waiuku. They were out near the Manukau Heads.

110. They were a couple of nice people. I enjoyed staying with them and I got to do dairy farm work and other things. It was at this point that I stopped going to school. I was with them for a couple of years.

111. Then the GRO-B sent me to another home in Waiuku, the GRO-B-10 family. GRO-B-10 loved hitting me, for just about anything.

112. I don't think my social worker knew about this placement.

113. One time, when I was working on this farm, I was borrowing a motorbike from a friend up the road. As I approached the cow shed on the bike, Mr GRO-B-10 was coming towards me driving his tractor.

114. For some reason, he was angry to see me riding the bike. He called me an "ugly black bastard" and drove his tractor into me. It smashed the bike and injured my legs. I was screaming my head off.
115. He got off the tractor and punched me in the face. Afterwards, I was taken to a hay barn and left there for a couple of days to recover. I would limp around having to hold on to the haybales. I would get checked on every now and again and brought something to eat.
116. I was on this farm for about 7 or 8 months. I would get paid about \$15 a week. I would be doing hay and silage every day. It was bugger all compared to the work I was doing.
117. After the [GRO-B-10] I was on a farm in Patumahoe. They were good people there. The farmer's name was [GRO-B], and he owned show cows.
118. After about 3 months working there, he was talking about retiring. He wanted to let me take over the farm. He was the second farmer I had worked for who had offered their stock to me.
119. One day, I was going up the road to another farm, and I saw someone coming up the road on a scooter. It was my sister [GRO-B]. I had not seen her since I found her chained in that house. It turns out she lived just down the road from me.
120. Shortly after, my brother [GRO-B-1] turned up to the Patumahoe farm. He convinced me to leave the farm and come into Pukekohe with him. I was about 16 or 17 years old. He told me he had a place to stay and a job for me, but he didn't. He had been living on the streets for a few years.
121. The first night there, we did a burglary. From that point, my life changed. I began to do regular burglaries and thieving. I never hurt anybody bad.
122. I ended up in court for burglaries and assaults.
123. I was working at the Market Gardens for a little bit, because I knew how to drive a tractor. I didn't like stealing, but I would often need to steal money.
124. I was drinking pretty heavily while I was in Pukekohe. I would drink a big bottle of port and then go into town and smash as many windows as I could. When the cops came to investigate, I would hide then go and smash their police car lights.
125. The cops knew me and my brother really well.

126. I also got into the gangs in Pukekohe. I joined the Rebel Outcasts. I ended up running with them for a while. After they wrapped up, I ended up joining Mangu Kaha. I was with them for about 11 years.
127. One day, me and my brother went back to Waiuku for a burglary. We broke into the sports shop and stole 76 guns, but we got caught. Instead of charging me with one burglary, they charged me 76 times.

Rangipo Detention Centre

128. After one of my burglary offences, I was sent to Rangipo Detention Centre for three months. I ended up doing just over two months of it. I was about 16.
129. You get sent to Waikeria first and go through 'classification'. The staff shave your head and tell you how it's going to work in Rangipo. They would call you names as well. They were all Pākehā: English, Australian, and South African. They were just bullies with apartheid in their brain.
130. While you're at Waikerira, you would also get shit from the borstal boys. They would call you "new eggs" and beat you up. You are there for two weeks before you leave for Rangipo.
131. There was about 60 boys in Rangipo. It was all "left right, left right", "yes sir, no sir". It was like the military.
132. I loved the fitness part of it. If you got caught walking, you were put in the pound or had to run a few kilometres. It did not matter what distance, you had to jog.
133. The staff were very strict. They acted like colonels in the army. The corrective training was based on military training, because at one point they were planning a programme for prisoners to join the army after being released.
134. Every Sunday, we did a 12-kilometre run. It was out in the forestry blocks around Rangipo. If you didn't finish in the first 10 by the end of your first two months, then you had to stay for the third month and try and make it.
135. If you got sent to the pound, you could be there for seven days or more. If you weren't used to it, you would've freaked out. You only had a little daylight, one mattress, and no clothes.

136. For the unfit boys, they had to get fit quick. They got no special treatment. We all had to wait for the last person to finish the exercises before we could finish.
137. We would work in the pine forestry blocks every single day. It would be scrub cutting and other work.
138. There was not much fighting between the boys. We were watched 24/7. There was no abuse that I saw either.

Waikeria Borstal

139. After I finished in rangipo, I went back to Pukekohe. It was only a short time later that I got sentenced to borstal for another offence.
140. I was taken to Waikeria first. I was there for three weeks, then I got sent to Invercargill Borstal for a 0 – 2 year sentence. I did just over nine months.
141. I was allowed to play in the rugby team at Invercargill Borstal and play teams outside of the prison. I also worked in the kitchen. I enjoyed these things.
142. Your first month in borstal had you on your knees polishing a concrete floor until you could see your face. They called it 'classification'.
143. Borstal really separated the men from the mice. It only prepared you for prison. You could go into borstal for pinching lollies, and come out as a safe cracker. We called it 'Rock College', because it was a concrete building and you were learning some new criminal skills every day.
144. The boys there were mainly Māori. A lot of them were not from around Invercargill. Back then, they kept you from your family. I was in borstal with [GRO-B-1] in Waikeria for those three weeks, but then they split us and sent me to Invercargill.
145. When I got released from Invercargill Borstal, I went down to the receiving office to get dressed. They had Invercargill Prison on the same site. As soon as I was released, these two police officers put me straight into the prison side. I had seen them while I was in the receiving office, giving the borstal officer some papers.
146. It was on some charges they had been waiting on. I did not go to court. When I went up for my meal the next morning, the borstal boys working in the kitchen all laughed. I did about 16 months.

Mt Eden Prison

147. I was about 17 when I got sent to Mt Eden Prison. I was sent there straight from Invercargill. I was the youngest one in the prison at the time. I was sent there for a couple of years.
148. I think they (the system) did this to give me a bit of a wakeup call. This didn't go too well and I started to play up against the system. The way I saw it was that my life was already shit..
149. I remember while I was at Mt Eden Prison I got put into a wing with a lot of men who were all facing murder charges. I was put in there by a South African screw. There was about 14 of them on remand.
150. I was put in there because I was talking back to the guard. I thought I was tough after borstal. I got a hiding from him with his baton, then he put me in there the next morning as a cleaner.
151. I was a boy still and there I was, with all these men facing serious charges. Apparently that had never been done ever before and I was put in the same wing for my whole sentence. One of them told me if I touched any of their stuff, he'd kill me.
152. Nothing bad happened to me while I was in that wing and I actually went on to enjoy prison life. I turned out to be their best mate. They would look after me and no one would touch me because the murderers were my friends.
153. Prison wasn't a very nice place to be but after what had happened to me during my life as a state ward, prison was actually heaven compared to what I had been through. To be honest, there were lots of other people like me in prison: people who had been treated poorly in state care but had a better life in prison.
154. I got charged with rape at 18. I had been with the girl, and she left. Two days later, the police charged me with rape. It was really my brother, who confessed to it but he did not turn up to court for my defence. Even the cops knew it was bullshit after a while. They released me after a year. A couple of weeks afterwards, I heard my brother had confessed to numerous charges of rape.

Life after care

155. I was in and out of prison regularly from that point. I was lucky to be out a couple of weeks at a time before I went back to prison.
156. I was sent to prison at least four times for things I did not do. I was picked on by the Pukekohe police. Most days, they would come to my house if a burglary had happened.
157. One time, they pulled me up down the street. They told me I was under the arrest. When I asked them what for, they weren't sure, but then said "rape will do". They took me back to the cells and then threw me around. They would use their batons and step us out.
158. All the lawyers I had were useless. All they wanted was their money.
159. I had met a girl when I was 16, who I got pregnant. It was while I was working in the Market Gardens, before Rangipo. I ended up having three more children with her.
160. This broke down because of my drinking and hanging out with the gang. I started becoming violent towards her. I ended up finding another girl. In total, I have 14 kids to seven different mothers. I've got 10 moko and 2 great-moko.
161. I stopped drinking when my oldest son was born. I was drunk in the hospital at his birth, and looked down at him. I thought "No more drinking". It has been 42 years now.
162. All of my kids are in New Zealand, but I have some grandkids in Australia. My relationship with my children has always been good. There was only some problems with the police and my kids after the rape charge. They accused me of doing things to my own kids.
163. My oldest son was on methamphetamine for a while, but he has stopped now. He was going through a rough patch at the time, but he's doing better.
164. My brother was in prison for about 11 years for his sexual offences. He had an incident with a knife after his release, so got put in prison for another 11 years. He's a pretty bad bastard. He spent some time in Owairaka and Campbell Park.
165. Some of my children have tried to reconnect with their Māori side with their mum. I left a bit of a gap because I was in prison, and I'm trying to help fill it in now with them.

166. My sister found our dad when I was 35. A month later, I went to visit him. He had cancer, and passed away not long after. I love my dad, but the feeling was not there that he was my dad. I'd never seen him growing up.
167. He told me he had come back from home one day, and had found out our mum had had some kids to another man. They both couldn't look after me and my siblings, so DSW got involved. He had no money, so he could not fight it. That was the first I knew about the reasons I went into care.
168. I've also caught up with my mum, but she doesn't want much to do with me. She has a better connection with GRO-B and GRO-B I took my oldest son to see her after he was born. She told me "He's not my grandchild, just like your not my son."
169. My other brother GRO-B spent most of his life in foster care, borstal, and then the prisons. He was burgling houses in New Plymouth, and got involved with Black Power there. He's passed away now. My sister is not doing great either. Two of her children are on methamphetamine. She is really traumatised from her past.

Impact

1. Up until prison, I had basically been treated like shit. I had been beaten many times, until I was black and blue, I had been emotional abused and had even watched my siblings getting abused.
2. Even though all this has happened, I try to make sure I am happy and people want to be around me.
3. I'm fully covered in tattoos. They have mainly all come from my time in prison. We even did them in borstal.
4. I had thoughts about suicide all the time during my time in care. Sometimes I still think like that, but then I remember I'm a somebody and I need to be here.
5. I have a partner that I've been with for 13 years. She has her own place. I'm usually living by myself. I'm in a Housing New Zealand placement. It isn't the nicest place, but it is a roof above my head.
6. I get triggered easily by my past. The past comes up and gives me headaches. When my partner swears at me or yells at her own kids, I have to tell her to stop,

because I had enough of that when I was a little kid. Even when I watch TV and people yell, I have to stop.

7. I also find it hard to stay with my partner. Everytime she is around, I sleep in a separate room. I don't always feel happy when she is around. I go for walks or go fishing to calm down when she has a go at me.
8. I was always unwanted as a little kid, and now I always think I am unwanted by other people or my partners. The only time I feel wanted is when my daughter or son in Kaiwaka sees me.
9. I will be on medication for life because my head spins out sometimes. It is too easy for me to spin out if I see something bad. I use weed to help with my chronic pain because the pills don't work that well though.
10. I was working on the roads for a bit as a drainlayer, but all my old injuries started to come through and I had to stop. I'm on the benefit now and it's never enough. After my bills are paid, I have about \$80 to survive on. I had to have my teeth removed because of all the fights I got into.
11. I always wanted to be a probation officer and keep kids out of jail.
12. All the hidings I had growing up have left me with permanent head injuries. The doctors have done scans on me as an adult and been able to recognise this. I've had to get both of my knees reconstructed because of the tractor incident. I still have arthritis in both of my thumbs because of Mr GRO-B-2
13. I've had counselling before, but its not going to help me. They can talk to me for however long they want, I'm still going to be the same person tomorrow. It is not going to put the butter on my table.
14. I completed a Positive Attitude for Men course a while back. I was one of seven people selected to do it. I learnt a lot about psychology and got a gold certificate for it. I feel like I know more than some of the psychologists I have had appointments with.
15. I did some work for a Christian fellowship over on Great Barrier Island. I never got paid for anything. I left there after the pastor called me a "black monkey". I was just getting used for labour.
16. People have said mean things to me, but I cannot react because if I do, I'll go back to prison. I'm not allowed to fight back.

Looking forward

17. We need to think more about the birth parents and what they need. Our kids should not be in the system, and taking someone's kid away from them is not going to help the parent or the kid. Once you do that, the connection between them is lost.
18. Foster parents need to be profiled better. More checks should be done. We should even set up cameras, so someone is also checking on them. My caregivers must not have been checked properly, otherwise how else could this abuse have been allowed to happen.
19. We should teach kids how to report things so they can bring it up. They need to know what abuse looks like so they can complain about it if it happens.
20. Social worker visits should also not have the foster parent in the room. This happened at the homes I was at. It is a lot harder to complain if the foster parent is in the room watching you.

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 i

Signed:

GRO-C

Dated: