

Witness Name: Mrs EJ

Statement No.: WITN1134001

Dated: 13.05 2022

ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE

WITNESS STATEMENT OF Mrs EJ

I, Mrs EJ, states as follows: -

Introduction

1. My full name is Mrs EJ, my name in care was Mrs EJ. I was born in GRO-C on GRO-C 1984. I am 37 years old and I live in GRO-C.
2. I am making this statement about the abuses I suffered while under state care as a child placed in family homes in and around Southland.

Early life and childhood

3. My mum had three older children from a previous marriage. Then she met my dad and had me and my brother. I have two older sisters and an older brother. Even though we were two families, we weren't brought up like half siblings, we were just all siblings.
4. My parent's relationship was dysfunctional. Dad was abusive to Mum and my sister, GRO-B. He had bad temper problems. Dad would take Mum's last five dollars to go hunting, and things like that. He was very selfish. Mum worked four jobs to keep us fed. When I look back now, my Mum did a good job considering all the things my dad did.

5. My dad was a reformed alcoholic. He grew up Catholic in a very strict household, my grandad was into corporal punishment and things like that. Dad tried to treat us all the same, but he definitely did not. He would call my sisters “sluts” and other derogatory names when they were about 15, 16 years old.
6. My mum would do everything, Dad went to work but Mum did all the childcare. My oldest brother was a [GRO-B] bogan, he was into drinking and driving around. My sister who was born before me was into that too. My other sister was a goody-two-shoes.
7. My dad was physically abusive. One time he punched me in the face when I was about five years old. He also tried to suffocate me with my pillow because I wouldn't stop crying. My mum comforted me and told me I needed to tell school I fell off the top bunk. One time he punched my brother in the nose, I had to pick him up and take him to my Mum. My mum would smack us too. If you did wrong, you would get a hiding.
8. My parents separated a few times over the years. The first time was when I was four or five years old. My dad moved in with my nana. Then my parents got back together. Later, when I was 10, they got separated properly and my Mum ended up single parent with us at home. My dad would stalk us, but we didn't want to see him. He made out that she was keeping us from him, but that wasn't the case at all.
9. My behaviour was pretty crazy and out there and my mum couldn't cope anymore. I behaved like that because I wasn't receiving what I should have received. There was no emotional support. My mum was clouded by what my dad was doing to her – she was working many jobs, looking after the kids.
10. Last year I was diagnosed as autistic. Back when i was a kid girls weren't considered to be autistic, so no one ever quite knew why I was the way I was. It was very hard being an autistic child in a world that wasn't built for you. The sensory overload probably caused me to have tantrums and things like that. Going to school and having all these things going on around you was really overwhelming. I had no friends at school. I was bullied was called a “psycho”. I had emotional outbursts because I had no emotional regulation. When I was told I was autistic, it all made sense.
11. What could be a really small thing for someone who isn't autistic, could be a big thing for someone who is. Socially, you learn to mimic social skills and

things like that. If I had been diagnosed as being autistic as a child, I think things would have been different.

Pathway into care

12. I have had many Family Group Conferences over the years, but don't remember each one. I know I was made a ward of the state when I was a child.
13. When I was at GRO-A Intermediate, my social worker, Bob Atchison, came and saw me at school. He took me out of class and asked if I was happy, and things like that. One day after, I came home from school and had a tantrum. Mum said I wasn't going to live with them anymore. I think she was finding it harder to cope with me. My mum's mental health declined fast; she was self-harming. One time she had cut her hands up with scissors.
14. In the end I was taken to the GRO-B-500 GRO-B-600 at a family home in Southland in the middle of the night. My older brother, had to manhandle me to get me in the car. I was met by GRO-B-600 in her dressing gown. My brother said to me I would only be there for a little bit, and he would come back and get me. I lost it and screamed that he was lying. After he left, I cried and screamed. I had been taken away from my bed, my Mum, my sisters. I didn't know what was going on.

Time in Care

- GRO-B-500 GRO-B-600 - Southland
15. I stayed with GRO-B-500 and GRO-B-600 twice. The first time, I arrived there in November 1996. I was 11 years old.
16. The other children I remember from that time were: GRO-B-1, GRO-B-2, GRO-B-3, GRO-B, GRO-B-4 (who was known as GRO-B-4 at the time), GRO-B, and GRO-B, GRO-B and the GRO-B-500 GRO-B-600's son whose name I don't remember.
17. I had been expelled from school because of my behaviour. So, when I went to GRO-B-500 GRO-B-600s I wasn't going to school. I would sit there all day, and GRO-B-600 would watch *Days of our lives*, or other day-time TV. She would always watch TV in the lounge, but I wasn't allowed in there. I'd have to be in the games room, or in the bedroom, or outside. I would sit there by myself all day from

9am for hours on end and would wait for the other kids to come home. I would play Tetra.

18. Now that I'm an adult, I would say that [GRO-B-600] was very depressed. She was very disconnected, and [GRO-B-500] probably controlled everything. She never actually spoke to me at all. We had very little interaction and I never had my needs met. You need adult input and to feel emotionally supported. Being taken away from my mother was very traumatic.

19. The whole time I was there I felt like I was an inconvenience, and I felt like I was their pay-check.

Abuse - Neglect

20. [GRO-B-500] would do nothing during the day apart from watch TV. She never interacted with me, never comforted me, or told me why I was there. I would cry most of the day. I didn't know when I could see my Mum or see my brothers and sisters.

21. I was always sent to bed at six-ish. It was always daylight. We would have tea and then would go to bed. We weren't allowed to watch TV because the TV was in the lounge, and we weren't allowed in there.

22. There was no food around the house. I was always hungry while I was there. We would have frozen sandwiches that she would have pre-prepared – ham, cheese, vegemite, lettuce, but had been frozen. The other kids had the same sandwiches to take to school.

23. Dinner was always really small portions, like something you would feed a two year old. It would usually consist of mashed potatoes, maybe a sausage and some peas. There were peas every night, we'd have sausages two or three times a week, and otherwise we would have mince. The meat was always fried. There was nowhere near enough food, you would take it, or starve. [GRO-B-600] would lock the pantry and lock the fridge. If you asked for food, she would say it's not time to eat. We always ate early in the evenings, when it was still light outside.

24. The [GRO-B-500] [GRO-B-600] would buy themselves KFC and they would sit there while you ate the food they gave you. When I felt really hungry, I remember thinking I could just climb out the window and run back to my Mum.

25. [GRO-B-600] would let the kids do what they wanted. Drink, smoke, marijuana. There was never any supervision of the kids in the home.

26. One time, [GRO-B-3] grabbed me and another girl and took us into his bedroom, locked the bedroom door and turned pornography on. He would have been about 16 years old. I knew my dad had magazines under his bed, but I never knew it was like what [GRO-B-3] was watching. We had to sit there while he was touching himself and I remember looking at the other girl and thinking "we need to get out of here". He had barricaded the door, so we climbed out the window. I told [GRO-B-600] what happened and she said, "Don't worry about it, he can watch that if he likes". He was allowed to watch it.
27. [GRO-B-600] and [GRO-B-500] never took us anywhere, not to the park or the swimming pool. We never went grocery shopping with them and were never included in anything they did. But their kids did. Especially [GRO-B] she was the best treated, princess, out of all of them.
28. I know there were supposed to be pocket money days, but I never got any money from them.
29. [GRO-B-600] never changed our sheets. I don't remember them ever being changed.
30. We had no new clothing while we were there. I visited my mum one time and said I needed new clothes, she said that it was up to the [GRO-B-600] [GRO-B-500] to provide me new clothes. I got nothing at all, nothing, not even second hand and my knickers had holes in them.
31. One Christmas, the [GRO-B-600] [GRO-B-500] were away. Margaret [GRO-B] (who has since passed away) looked after us, and her sister Sylvia came in. On Christmas morning I woke up and the [GRO-B-600] [GRO-B-500] had only bought me a tiny bag of lollies. That was it. I asked Margaret who was there covering the [GRO-B-600] [GRO-B-500] why I had no other presents. She was a lovely old lady and she said they must have spent the money on something else.

Abuse – Verbal

32. [GRO-B-500] would speak to me like I was nothing. One time, he was so drunk in his disgusting looking pyjamas, I closed the door in the games room so I couldn't see him and the door fell out of the runners and broke and he went absolutely nuts. I said "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, it was an accident". I jumped up on the table. [GRO-B-1] came up and comforted me and said he's not going to do anything. But he roared at me. He was bumping around everywhere yelling and swearing because he was so drunk. A drunk waste of space.

Abuse - Sexual

33. [GRO-B-500] would come home from the [GRO-B] company where he worked, off his chops drunk, and would stare at you. It would make me feel really uncomfortable. When it was just me and [GRO-B-600] there, I would feel much more comfortable. When [GRO-B-500] was there, I never felt comfortable. The other girls in the home would say "Stay away from [GRO-B-500], don't go near him". They wouldn't tell me why.
34. I would hear [GRO-B-2] crying every night. It was always straight away after we went to bed. You would hear [GRO-B-500] coming up the hallway in his slippers, he would be drunk. When I would hear him, I would pull the blankets up and hold the sheets sacred stiff, holding my breath, and hoping he wouldn't come in my room.
35. One night he came into my room and asked to tuck me in. He said that he "liked to tuck little girls in". I told him I didn't want to be tucked in.
36. The son was also weird and creepy. The other girls told me to keep a towel over the gap in the door on the hinge side of the shower door, so that [GRO-B-500] and the son wouldn't perve on me. In the shower it always felt like someone was there and watching you.

Welfare involvement

37. I think Bob Aitcheson might have visited me once or twice. Claudia would come and visit too. She was really nice. Another social worker, Joan, was a bitch. She never listened to anything you said. I had Joan over the years, if I complained, she would say "You have to do what you're told".
38. I have no memory of being asked by Social Welfare about the food or things like that.

Leaving the [GRO-B-500] [GRO-B-600]

39. I stayed with the [GRO-B-500]
[GRO-B-600] for three months, then went back to my mum. I don't remember going to a Family Group Conference with [GRO-B-500] and [GRO-B-600]. Maybe they went by themselves. I don't know, I don't remember.
40. Bob Aitcheson was present when I was removed from the home. I think I kicked him, I was pretty hyperactive.

Brief time with Mum

41. I don't know how I went back to Mum or why. I think I went to [GRO-A] college in [GRO-A]. I wasn't there long, and I got expelled. I don't know why, I probably just wanted to do what I wanted to do.

GRO-B-500 GRO-B-600

- Southland

42. In 1998, when I was 13 years old, I was sent back with the GRO-B-500 GRO-B-600 for two months. I remember it a bit better because I was older. I literally just partied. I learnt how to be streetwise and how to look after myself.
43. When I went back there was a boy there called GRO-B. GRO-B-5 was there at this time, but GRO-B-3 had gone. GRO-B-5 was a very disturbed young man. He had some very violent issues. I'm not sure if he is still alive, I think he took his own life
44. At the home, things were exactly the same when I went back. I wasn't going to school still and GRO-B-600 would watch her soap operas all day. The only difference was she couldn't control me and make me sit there all day. I would sit outside and smoke. We would drink as well, mainly rum. There was another girl there called GRO-B-6 and I learned a lot from her.
45. We would come and go as we pleased. If you weren't there for dinner, you wouldn't get none. But GRO-B-600 never asked where I was.
46. One night in the games room, there was GRO-B-5 and GRO-B-1, and some other kids. We were listening to the Spice Girls, all the windows open and we were having our own mini party. GRO-B-6 came back and told us we should leave the GRO-B-500 GRO-B-600 and get out. But I never ran away from there, not that I remember.
47. My behaviour was pretty 'out there'. I was a rebellious teenager. By this stage, I had been in the system for a while, and I learned from the older kids. Being little, you look up to the older kids. GRO-B-6 was friends with my sister. I think she must have said something to my sister about the abuse in the home, but I don't know.

Abuse – sexual

48. The second time I stayed with the GRO-B-500 GRO-B-600, I remember GRO-B-500 abusing GRO-B-2. He would go into GRO-B-2 room every night and would be in there for anywhere between 10 minutes to an hour.
49. One night I got up to work out why she was crying. She was only a wee kid. He had her lying on the bed with her nightie pulled up and was on top of her. His pants were partially pulled down to his knees and his dressing gown was still on. I believe he was raping her, or something along those lines. Maybe rubbing his penis on her. It was disturbing. I said, "What are you doing, why are you doing that?". He looked around and glared at me. I froze and then ran

back to my bed and jumped into my bed. I'm not sure what happened after that.

Social Welfare Involvement

50. I think I mentioned something to Bob Aitcheson about GRO-B-500 abusing GRO-B-2. I may have mentioned something to him about why GRO-B-2 was crying at night-time. I don't think anything happened if I did tell him.
51. Margaret would come and relieve. She would cook us really good food and take us places, like to the park. She genuinely cared about what was going on. She was a very kind, caring lady.
52. On my birthday I went back to my mum and I remember saying I didn't want to go back to the GRO-B-500 GRO-B-600 because the GRO-B-500 GRO-B-600 were weird. The first time I was at the GRO-B-500 GRO-B-600, I had really long hair and when mum saw me she said I needed a haircut and needed to brush my hair, this was because no one had been looking after things like that for me. I didn't really have any deodorant or anything like that. I think when I went back, my mum provided me with sanitary products. I started pooing my pants when I was at the GRO-B-500 GRO-B-600 and I wet the bed while I was there. I remember my Mum asking me why I smelled.

Leaving the home

53. When GRO-B-500 GRO-B-600 left the family home, GRO-B-7 and GRO-B-8, these old people came in. GRO-B-8 was weird, weirder than GRO-B-500. He would walk around the house in his undies with a hardon.
54. I asked them what happened to GRO-B-500 and GRO-B-600 and they said GRO-B-500 was an alcoholic and he had to go get help.
55. One time, GRO-B-8 threw a heavy pencil case at me, and it hit me in the face, and I got a big bump on my eye. That's how I ended up leaving there and going to the GRO-B-9 GRO-B-10. Diane White came and collected me and told me to pack my bags. I was really hungover and I remember I was wearing another kid's jersey which had cigarette burns all through it. I probably looked like I'd been dragged through a gorse bush backwards. Took me to the office in GRO-B-8 said I wouldn't stay at family home in Southland anymore.

GRO-B-9 GRO-B-10

GRO-B

56. I thought living in care with the GRO-B-500 GRO-B-600 was bad, but when I got to the GRO-B-9 GRO-B-10, that was what ruined my life. I have spent so many years trying to get over that abuse. I used to call it the 'House of Horrors'. I suffered every

single abuse you can imagine, they dished that out in that house: emotional, sexual, physical, spiritual.

57. All I knew about the GRO-B-9
GRO-B-10 before I arrived was that apparently a lovely lady called GRO-B-9 would pick me up and take me out to her place in GRO-B. When GRO-B-9 picked me up, she ran through all these rules and gave me the rundown of the house. She said there would be no drinking, smoking or anything like that in her house. I told her I did whatever I wanted to do. My first impression of her was that she was a control freak.
58. GRO-B-9 was on the Care and Protection Team. She and GRO-B-10, her husband, made themselves out to be real community people.
59. Gavin and GRO-B-9 were sheep and deer farmers and they also wintered dairy cows. They had two adopted kids, GRO-B-11 and GRO-B-12, and two biological kids, GRO-B-13 and GRO-B-14.
60. There were also some other foster children from time to time. I know GRO-B
GRO-B came to stay and a girl called GRO-B-15. I remember when GRO-B-15 arrived, she was asked about any medication she took. GRO-B-9 called her a "dirty rotten tart" because she was on the contraceptive pill, even though this was because the doctor had put her on it because she had really painful periods.
61. The first few days with the GRO-B-9
GRO-B-10 were okay. On the day I arrived, GRO-B-9 told me to have a shower and get changed because I stunk. I didn't have other clothes with me, so she made me wear some of GRO-B-11. When GRO-B-10 got in for lunch, they introduced me. I didn't really say anything because I was taught if you are silent and stay out of their way things won't be so bad. They tried to get to know me, but I was closed up and confused. I didn't think caregivers did things like that.
62. I was excited to be on the farm, I hadn't had that before. I thought they were genuinely quite nice people. GRO-B-9 cooked really lovely meals. The house was very clean and very tidy, she took pride in its appearance. Even though we had to wear clothes that looked like they were from the 1960s. I met GRO-B-11 and GRO-B-12 when they came back from school and they all seemed okay and happy.
63. But after a while, it came out something wasn't quite right. They let me settle in, then one evening, GRO-B-9 and GRO-B-10 got me to go into the lounge with the two of them and they grilled me. They asked if I was a virgin. I didn't know

what that was, so they asked if I had had sex. They asked what I got up to in the family home, asked if I was drinking and having sex. It was a very sexually oriented questioning. I said I hadn't done any of that, it was really weird. They were so manipulative; they would say something and you would almost believe that what they were saying was true. It was like gaslighting me to believe I had been having sex.

64. I was confused and told [GRO-B-11] about this. She said they would do that to every kid that came in there. They were seeing what they could do to me, how they could manipulate me and how they could perceive me to other people about what I was.

65. [GRO-B-9] would share what happened to the other kids, even though I know she shouldn't have done this. [GRO-B-12] had had a brain tumour, and the left side of his body didn't work. He relied on them to do a lot for him. He couldn't speak properly and some of his brain was affected by the tumour so he had some disabilities. He was very easily led to believe anything he was told. One time he told me he was going to kill himself because he didn't want to live there anymore. Had been there since he was three years old.

66. I really bonded with [GRO-B-12]. He was obsessed with movies and space, and I would listen to him talk about all those things, even though I didn't find it that interesting. I found out [GRO-B-10] had a liquor cabinet, so [GRO-B-12] and I would steal liquor and go drink it on the back of the farm, we would fill it up with tea when we were done.

67. I used to get friends to drop me marijuana. I think if I hadn't smoked and drank while I was there, I think I would have killed myself. Sometimes I am surprised I am alive to this day.

68. [GRO-B-9] did really nice food, nice baking. Visitors would come and have afternoon teas. When there were visitors, children were to be seen and not heard. I was silenced and even more emotionally shut down. That has followed me right through my life until about three years ago when I found my voice again.

69. Although the meals at the [GRO-B-9
GRO-B-10] were good, we still weren't allowed to eat outside of mealtimes. We would be abused for stealing food. I used to run away on the farm and hide when I needed to escape. [GRO-B-12] and I had made a hut in the trees and I used to climb right to the top of the tree and hide. The pine tree block was my favourite spot. I would also hide under the wool shed.

When I went back, they would ask where I had been, they would go on and on about the same things. "You stole a biscuit", or "You made yourself a honey sandwich".

70. When I first met [GRO-B-13], I thought he was okay. [GRO-B-14] didn't like me. I was too outspoken for her. I felt sorry for [GRO-B-11], [GRO-B-11] and [GRO-B-12], who still to this day, won't talk about the [GRO-B-9
GRO-B10].

Work on the farm

71. I worked while I was there, I was their free labourer. I wasn't allowed to go to school, even though I wanted to go to school.

72. There was always a strict routine in the mornings. We would have to be out of bed at 6am every morning, no lying in. We weren't allowed at table until we had washed our faces and got dressed. There was no TV, not even on weekends. There was always cereal on the table, old school. [GRO-B-1
0] would have his own food. I always had to sit next to him. He would have honey puffs and I would ask if I could have some, but he would say they were just for him.

Sexual abuse

73. The first time [GRO-B-13] did anything to me was when we were watching TV in [GRO-B-10] and [GRO-B-9] bedroom. We had to watch TV in there because they wanted to watch their own shows in the lounge. Often, [GRO-B-12] and I would go and watch TV in there, we watched heaps of TV. [GRO-B-12] was like my little brother. One night, [GRO-B-12] wasn't there, and I was watching TV in the bedroom by myself. [GRO-B-13] came in, sat on the end of the bed and asked what I was watching. He was making general conversation. I noticed he was really nervous in himself. His hands were shaking, he was stuttering over his words. I asked what he was doing and told him to go away because I was watching TV. He left, but then he came back. He moved up the bed, sat beside me then got on top of me over the blankets and started rubbing himself and breathing on my neck, while forcibly pushing me. I reckon he would have been in his 20s, I think I was 13 years old. At this stage I was already being abused by

[GRO-B-10]

74. [GRO-B-10] abused me more than [GRO-B-13] did. I'd go to work with [GRO-B-13] and he would tell me to suck his dick. I thought I could talk him out of it. He always had the shaky hands and his demeanour changed so I knew when it was going to happen.

75. I had to sleep in the hut outside, and they took the lock off. They were like sleepouts that GRO-B-9 and GRO-B-1₀ would rotate me and GRO-B-11 through. When GRO-B-11 was moved back inside the house, GRO-B-13 would come into my room every night. He would put his hands under the blankets. He always stunk of beer. He used to grope me.
76. GRO-B-13 took me out to his hut once and asked if I could clean it for him. Part of my jobs was taking his sheets off and making his bed for him. When I got there, he shut the door behind me, and I froze. He pushed me onto the bed and said he wanted to have sex with me. I told him to "Fuck off". I could say things to GRO-B-1₃, but not to GRO-B-1₀. Luckily, GRO-B-11 came out to see what was taking so long, so nothing more happened.
77. Me and GRO-B-11 talked about things. One time, GRO-B-1₀ came back from band practice, he played the bagpipes, I now hate bagpipes and have panic attacks when I hear them. He went into GRO-B-11 room and started touching her under the covers. She pretended to be asleep. He carried on for ages while he touched himself. When GRO-B-11 told me, I said "Why don't you say something?" but she couldn't say anything. I would always say "Fuck off". GRO-B-11 told GRO-B-9 the next morning though, when GRO-B-9 was making a cup of tea. She said to GRO-B-11 "You're dreaming, do you like having fantasies about this in your sleep?".
78. This is when I knew there was no hope for me in anyone believing me. GRO-B-9 and GRO-B-1₀ would say things to us like "Don't come back and try and say these things about us because we are looking after you out of the kindness of our hearts".
79. One time I got hurt really bad on the farm. We were rolling bales of hay down the hill. GRO-B-1₀ told me to grab both strings of the bale. I went over the top, and it ran me over. GRO-B-1₀ sat in the tractor and laughed at me. I hurt my ribs and my back. I had bleeding nose, sore jaw. He came up to me, lifted up my top and said, "Your tits still look fine". I was only allowed to wear white underwear. Another time he tried to spray-paint circles on my bra.
80. They took the lock off the bathroom door so that GRO-B-1₀ could come and watch me or GRO-B-11 in the shower. They said the bathroom couldn't be locked because of GRO-B-12 brain tumour and the risk of him having a seizure. I never once saw him have a seizure though. GRO-B-9 would make sure GRO-B-9 was in the kitchen or on the phone, but every time I had a shower, she would

- miraculously be on the phone. [GRO-B-10] would pretend to go to the toilet and wash his hands in the bathroom but then he would come in. He would open the shower door, say things like “Look at you, your breasts are so nice”.
81. After me and [GRO-B-11] would have showers, we would get dressed in the bathroom. [GRO-B-9] rule was you couldn't wear underwear to bed. There was a small gap under the laundry door where you would put your underwear in the laundry. I could see [GRO-B-10] shadow going in and picking it up. He would sniff it and rub it on his face. I caught him doing it once.
82. One time, [GRO-B-9] went to [GRO-B] and left me alone there with him. He asked me to come into his bedroom. I said “No”, but he dragged me up the hallway. He chucked me on the bed, tied me up and used her sex toys on me. I was around 13 or 14 years old.
83. I think some of the things [GRO-B-10] did to me sexually, was because he was trying to make sure I could never have kids. Once, he had just lambded a ewe and then he pulled my pants down and started fingering me. I really believe that he was trying to make me sterile. This is confusing though, because another time, he took me into the pine tree block and he said he wanted to have sex with me because he wanted to have my baby. He said “I could imagine you and I having a baby together, we could run away”.
84. The thing that I can't figure out is whether [GRO-B-10] actually ever had sex with me, or not. I would [have an out-of-body experience] any time he started abusing me. You learn to disconnect from your mind and body so you don't have to deal with what's going on. I can recall one time where I was outside with him in the winter and my pants were pulled down, and he was on his knees in front of me. I could feel something in my vagina. But I remember “waking up” and wondering “What is happening to me?”.
85. When he was abusing me, he was always kissing me, cuddle me, squeezing me. I asked him once why he was doing this to me, and he stepped back and started crying. I think it was a tactic for me to allow him to abuse me. One time I got brave and said, “Did you do this to your own daughter?” and he said “No, dads don't do this to their own daughters”.
86. I wouldn't be abused while I had my period. But other than that, it was so regular. Even when we got our periods, we had to ask [GRO-B-9] for tampons because they weren't readily available. [GRO-B-9] said I couldn't use pads and

needed to use tampons. I think she held them so she could see that we weren't getting pregnant. I think she was tracking our periods.

87. It was right under [GRO-B-9] nose. How do you live in a house and not know that there is something going on? It's almost like I was his little sex doll. I was a piece of meat. I was at his beckon call. I think [GRO-B-13] was aware of what his father was doing, and vice versa.
88. [GRO-B-9] took me to see a doctor in [GRO-B-9]. She made me have a vaginal examination. I really wanted [GRO-B-9] to leave so I could tell the doctor what was happening to me but she didn't. Every time I tried, I couldn't do it.

Physical abuse

89. I was also physically abused at the [GRO-B-9
GRO-B-10]. The violence was daily, and mainly by [GRO-B-10] because he would lose his temper. One Christmas, he stabbed me in the leg with a fork that made me bleed. It was because I didn't want to eat lunch with them because I wanted to be with my mum.
90. He would whack me round the legs. He would hit me and [GRO-B-11] with a thin walking stick which was hung up the hallway on one of the nightstands. He would also use plastic spoons, or willow branches. Anything he could get his hands on.
91. One time [GRO-B-11] was having an argument with [GRO-B-10] at the table and told him to "Get fucked". Everyone was eating their dinner at the table, and he made her pull her pants down and he looked at her vagina while she had her period, in front of everyone at the table. Then he hit her with a plastic spoon while he looked at her.
92. [GRO-B-10] force fed me sometimes. One time this was because I didn't like the steak and kidney stew [GRO-B-9] had cooked. He held me by my hair and pinned me up to the wall, trying to force the fork into my mouth. At the same time, he was telling me I was an ungrateful little bitch and I needed to eat the food. [GRO-B-9] stood there and laughed because I wouldn't open my mouth. This went on for two hours. It was strange because I went from one end of the scale to the other – starved with the [GRO-B-500
GRO-B-600] and then force-fed with the [GRO-B-9
GRO-B-10]. Another time I didn't want to eat my food, [GRO-B-10] punched me in the nose so hard it made my nose bleed.
93. Another time, he dragged me along a gravel road by my hair. He chased me with a broom. I don't know why that happened. I thought he was going to

knock me out with this broom. [GRO-B-11] came out and [GRO-B-9] came out and told him to stop.

94. [GRO-B-10] punched me in the mouth and broke my left front tooth. He was also pulling my hair at the time. This was because one of the other kids had tubed a lamb wrong. I had to be taken to the dentist. [GRO-B-10] stood in the room the whole time and made me lie and say I had been kicked by a sheep. This is what my ACC records say. I knew lying was bad and wanted to tell the truth. I don't like lies, I'm a straight shooter. I wanted to tell the dentist, but [GRO-B-10] wouldn't leave me alone. On the way to the dentist, he wasn't worried about my mouth at all, but when we got there, he pretended to be concerned.
95. I thought I was going to die one time when he dragged me off the bike and threw me to the ground. He put his foot on my face and said "No one cares about you, your family doesn't love you. You're worthless, you're going to end up as a delinquent of society, having children to a lot of different men".
96. He would tell us we would never be anything in our lives. He told [GRO-B-11] and me that we should be sterilised because we didn't deserve to bring children into the world. It was repetitive things, over and over again. It was like [GRO-B-10] and [GRO-B-9] would get off on that, it gave them some sort of satisfaction that they were torturing me.
97. I tried to run away from them all the time, there were always alarm bells going off in my head. I thought I would die there and my family would never see me again. They would target me and [GRO-B-11] though. They weren't violent to anyone else in the house. Just me and [GRO-B-11].

Emotional abuse

98. While I was at the [GRO-B-9] [GRO-B-10] I wasn't allowed to go to school or have any friends. I wasn't allowed to talk to my mother unless [GRO-B-9] was listening. I tried to tell the neighbours once about what was going on. I told a neighbour Fiona that [GRO-B-10] was touching me and asked her not to send me back. When Fiona raised it with [GRO-B-10], [GRO-B-9] said I was lying and just attention seeking.
99. One time, [GRO-B-10] and [GRO-B-9] rang the police who then took me away temporarily, because I had been raging at them. If the police had asked any questions, they would have found out what was going on. The alarm bells should have been blaring.
100. My neighbour's daughter died in a car accident, [GRO-B-10] and [GRO-B-9] made me and [GRO-B-11] go to their house and hold the girl's hand as a reminder to

ourselves never to get into a car with a drunk driver. I didn't even know her. That image has stuck in my head for life. I had never seen a dead body before.

101. [GRO-B-9] would tell people that I prostituted myself for drugs and alcohol. It was absolutely false, I hadn't even had sex willingly. I had to look up in the dictionary what a prostitute was. I asked [GRO-B-11] why they were calling me that, and she said you're not. Sometimes I think if it wasn't for [GRO-B-11], things could have been a whole lot worse.

Leaving the [GRO-B-9
GRO-B-10]

102. I don't remember leaving the [GRO-B-9
GRO-B-10] or what happened after I left their home.

Social workers

103. I told Bob Aitcheson that I was being sexually abused. He never did anything about it.
104. I also told my dad one time when I had a visit. The [GRO-B-9
GRO-B-10] were having a dinner and [GRO-B-1
3] didn't want me to go, so I went home to see my dad. He asked me what I was wearing because I had been forced to wear a Gloriavale style skirt. I told my dad that [GRO-B-1
3] was touching me and making me perform oral sex on him. I said [GRO-B-1
3] would force me to pash him and he would shove his tongue down my throat.
105. To this day, I haven't talked about this with my mum. But my dad tried to get me out of there to go live with him. It was my Mum who wouldn't let me go with my dad. My dad wanted me to go to my nana and grandad's.

Secure Unit - [GRO-B] Dunedin

106. I was sent to a secure unit in Dunedin for a few days after I had a raging incident with [GRO-B-9]. The day I was sent there I'd had an argument with [GRO-B-9] about not washing the pots the properly. I told her that in that case, she could wash the pots herself. We yelled at each other and then I threw something at her and the police came. Bob Aitcheson came and drove me over to Dunedin.
107. On arrival at the unit, I was strip searched. It was really invasive because they made you take off all your clothes. I asked them why they did it and they said in case I was hiding contraband.

108. I was locked in a secure unit alone and was segregated in a cell. In the cell there wasn't anything apart from a bed. They told me that there was a camera there to record me.

109. I was moved from the cell and into a day room and I remember sitting there by myself. Some guy came and asked me lots of questions. I tried to tell the staff there about what was happening to me at the [GRO-B-9
GRO-B-10] but they didn't to listen.

110. I was in the unit for a number of days. I don't remember what happened when I left there though. I might have gone back to the [GRO-B-9
GRO-B-10]

[GRO-B] **Family Home**

111. I also spent time in the [GRO-B] Family Home. That was really bad too. It was run by [GRO-B-16] and [GRO-B-17]. There was a boy there who was called "wee [GRO-B-18], and [GRO-B-4] (who is now [GRO-B-4]) lived there with me too. Wee [GRO-B-18] was their home-for-life kid. They had a daughter, [GRO-B] who was the most spoiled brat kid. She was nasty and would make rude comments to us.

112. I was about 13 years old and I wanted to smoke pot and drink. [GRO-B-16] and [GRO-B-17] didn't care and would let me do this. They would sit there drinking and smoking themselves. They weren't creepy, or anything like that, but they were bad carers.

113. [GRO-B-16] took me off my medication while I lived with them, without consulting a paediatrician. There was another boy who lived there who was taking it instead. I know because one day he tried to give it to me.

114. I went to school when I lived in [GRO-A], [GRO-A] High. I had no social skills whatsoever.

[GRO-B] and [GRO-B]

115. I'm still in touch with this couple. They were the nicest people I ever stayed with. I had a very short stint with them. I stayed with them briefly before I went to Auckland. She made sure I went to Auckland with clothes and paid for me to get my haircut.

Youthlink – Felix Donnelly College

116. I went to the Youthlink Trust, Felix Donnelly College in Auckland. I was about 14 or 15 years old. Kay Dickson, a social worker, took me up there.

117. It was pretty traumatic living there. I wasn't even told why I was sent to a place like that, CYFS didn't tell me. They just said I was going to Auckland. Most of the kids that were in there had done some crazy stuff, crimes, armed robbery, beating people up. I had never been involved in things like that.
118. While I was there, I became extremely withdrawn and started self-harming. Other kids would beat each other up all the time. I would get beaten up in the middle of the night and "blanket bashed". This was when they would throw a blanket over you and beat you up but run away before you could see who did it.
119. We stayed in dorms in houses around Pukekohe while I attended the College. We would be shipped there at the end of the day. The houses would have about ten other children in them and were only run by one carer. I shared a room with four other kids. In the house I stayed in the lady, [GRO-B-19], was awful. She would let us do whatever we wanted.
120. I have a memory of a boy, [GRO-B], who one time was lying in the middle of the hall playing with himself. We all could see. [GRO-B-19] came over with a broom and hit him with it so that he would stop.
121. At the Trust, they had all these different programmes and you would graduate through them. There were different courses depending on your background. When I arrived, they asked if I had been sexually abused and if I did drugs. I never actually told them that I was actually sexually abused because I didn't realise that was what it was at the time. The [GRO-B-9
GRO-B-10] had abused me so much that I thought I belonged with them and I thought it was normal. I thought that was happened in everyone's house.
122. The activities were otherwise okay. We would go to the beach, generally most of the staff there were fine.
123. My time in there taught me how to be street wise, how to run away. I don't think I learned anything else.
124. On breaks, school holidays, I would go back to my Mum's. That was weird, it was always so awkward.
125. I ended up going AWOL with a group of other kids when we lived there. I think we got sick of being controlled. We were gone for about a week and went all around Auckland on the run. We got found a week later, I don't remember having any punishment.

Police complaint

126. When I was about 21 years old, I ended up making a complaint to the police about the abuse I had suffered in care.
127. CYFS had been harassing me from the time I had my oldest daughter. Joan Harrison ended up being my social worker for my daughter. Because I'd been in care, they thought I couldn't be a Mum.
128. I remember soon after I had my daughter, I started realising that the things I had been through were not normal.
129. Throughout this time, I had still been in touch with GRO-B-9 and GRO-B-10. I would go and visit them. One day, I was visiting them, and GRO-B-10 asked me to help me on the farm. I left GRO-B in the house with GRO-B-9. I went on the farm with him, and I started having flashbacks to all these memories.
130. After that, I went to Joan Harrison and said that while I lived with the GRO-B-9 GRO-B-10 I was sexually abused. She asked me lots of questions and told me that I needed to make a statement to the Police. Her response was very cold though, there was no compassion. She rang the GRO-B Police station and told them I was coming in.
131. I went to the interview, but the GRO-B-9 GRO-B-10 had painted the picture that I was naughty and promiscuous. They had also said things like I had murdered all their animals. At the end of my interview with her. The last thing the Police officer asked me was whether I had enjoyed being abused. I thought that was outrageous.
132. I think the process of investigating them was a set up. It didn't end up going anywhere. When I made the complaint, I was stoned and half drunk.
133. I had some ACC counselling and the first woman told me I needed to put everything in a box and throw away the key. Then I had another counsellor I stuck with for five years which I now think was a waste of time too.
134. I no longer drink alcohol, and don't do drugs. I live a very clean lifestyle. My boss's wife told me it was a breakthrough. Now I know I'm autistic it has made my life a whole lot easier. I'm really clear on what happened now because my lifestyle has changed so much.

Life after leaving

135. At 17 years old, I ended up in a boarding situation. The guy I was living with in the home CYFS put me in sexually abused me. He would have been in his 40's and he had a young daughter.
136. [GRO-B-12] lived with me for a bit as an adult.
137. I didn't come to the realisation that none of this was normal until I had my daughter, and a lightbulb went off in my head.
138. The [GRO-B-9
GRO-B-10] were still in my life for a long time and would pull me back in and manipulate me. I stuck with the [GRO-B-9
GRO-B-10] and held onto all that manipulation until I was 22 years old.
139. I had a traumatic birth with my oldest daughter. They came over to visit me and they said that I really shouldn't have a child because I wasn't up to it. They said this in front of my husband. They said I needed better clothes, and a better pram. My husband was confused, he didn't understand that they were crazy. It was another way for them to control me. My daughter was taken care of and I did a good job.
140. When I left care, I didn't know how to do anything when. I didn't know how to tell the time on a digital clock. I didn't know how to count five dollars. I never did grocery shopping in my life, when I went shopping, it consisted of alcohol, ciggies, finding a tinny house and a couple of bags of chips for when I had the munchies. I never learnt any of this stuff at all. The system failed me.
141. I had learned to cook and clean when I lived with [GRO-B-9]. But if I hadn't been made to do all that, I'd have no idea what it was.

Impacts

142. The impacts are ongoing. If I didn't go through all that, my life would have been so much easier. It has affected my whole life.
143. I struggle to know what is real from my time in care because of all the manipulation from [GRO-B-9] and [GRO-B-10].

Relationships

144. I have experienced some trouble bonding with my children. I got told I couldn't raise my children and that I didn't bond with my children. But if CYFS looked back they would see that was their fault that I turned out like that.

145. With my oldest daughter, I didn't want to change her nappies when she was a baby because I thought I was abusing her. My mum told me it was okay, but I had to ring my midwife to check whether that was okay because I truly thought it was abuse. I didn't know how to interact with my daughter, I didn't know you were supposed to play with your children, and things like that. That was one of the effects of being in care.
146. I got rid of the CYFS out of my life. They hounded me for years and they took my oldest daughter into care. My oldest daughter is autistic too. I put her into care for short stints of 28 days, I couldn't look after her because she was so violent towards her little sister. She's okay now because she's on the right medication.
147. I have had abusive relationships. I have trouble trusting people. I can't let my daughter go out and do adult things because I am so worried that something will happen to her.
148. I also find I can become very co-dependent on people. For a while, I was too scared to leave the house.
149. Until three years ago, I couldn't talk to people. I had been told not to talk and to shut up. I had been so excluded from society and it made me very withdrawn and anxious. I had no friends because I never went to school. I wanted to go to school every day and I wasn't allowed to go to school.
150. I have brought my kids up so that they will have a voice and they will speak, and someone will hear them. I have three very strong-willed children.

Health

151. I have tried killing myself many times. My last attempt was November 2019. Self-harm is also something I've struggled with.
152. I used to struggle with food and binge eating. I weighed 120 kg. Then I lost it, and I have trained my brain to not want to binge eat. I eat a very rigid keto diet now, and I don't want to be overweight again.
153. I experience overwhelming emotions. I used to think I must have been put on the planet to be used and abused. Being undiagnosed autistic person hasn't helped either. I thought something was wrong with me and blamed myself for being abused.
154. Once, I told my sister about the abuse. I had a breakdown and couldn't look after my kids anymore. I hoped she would tell my mum but that didn't happen.

155. My teeth are all wrecked. I'm in the process of getting them all taken out. I think, and the dentist agrees with me, that I didn't get any dental treatment when I was in my early years. My mum would take me to the dental nurse, but once I was in the welfare system, I don't remember going to the dentist regularly.
156. Three years ago, I started working for some lovely people on a dairy farm. My boss noticed there was something not quite right and one day he actually asked me straight out whether I was okay. He asked what I looked so sad for. No one had ever pointed that out to me, I thought I was hiding it all, and functioning normally. Then it all came down like a tonne of bricks. I had a full-on mental breakdown when I was out milking the cows. I was having inner body vibrations and things like that, there was no way I could go to work. I thought people were coming to get me and everywhere I went, I thought people were laughing at me. I was so scared my kids would be taken off me because I wasn't mentally stable enough to look after them.
157. My boss knew something was wrong and said, "If you need me call me and I will come back". I was milking cows and crying having a full breakdown and my boss's wife came in. 10 minutes later, my boss also came into the shed, he said, "hey Mrs EJ" and I jumped out of my skin and punched him in the face. I felt like I'd made an idiot of myself, I apologised and kept saying sorry for crying. He told me not to apologise.
158. I decided to stay working there, but I also went to the mental health unit. I started taking medication. I lost 20 kgs. My boss and his wife were my main supports. My boss said he can't believe who I have become from what I was.
159. I still have certain smells that will trigger me. Herbal essences shampoo and the smell of diesel are some of them because they remind me of the

GRO-B-9
GRO-B-10

Financial

160. I was very scared to go into Work and Income after living with the GRO-B-9 GRO-B-10 because they had told me that I would only have kids so that I could receive the benefit. I was so scared that the GRO-B-9 GRO-B-10 would find out I was on a benefit.

Redress

161. I have done five years of ACC counselling, I was trying to unlock pandora's box and get it out.
162. I gave evidence at a court case in Christchurch when GRO-B-500 was prosecuted for sexually abusing girls. After the court case, I was paid \$20,000 by MSD. It was an ex-gratia payment. When they paid me that, it made me feel like that was all my life was worth, and that it was only worth that much because I had been abused. It was dirty money.
163. I was given no advice on how to use the money. I could have used it to put a deposit on my own house. If I had known to see a financial advisor, I would have done that or put it in a term deposit. But I gave it to my kids.
164. What would have meant more to me is if they had asked what I needed money for. If someone would pay me to have the dentures that I need, that would be helpful. It's their fault that I look like I do. I could claim for another denture, but I don't want to claim to ACC for my tooth because I lied to them when I said the ewe kicked me.

Recommendations for the future

165. I know there are hundreds of kids out there who would love to be loved by someone like me. I have thought about fostering but I don't want to be caught up in their system again. There are so many issues. The system needs to change so boys and girls don't end up in homes where they are abused.
166. What could be traumatic for one person might not be traumatic to another. Kids need to be listened to and kids need to be believed. It could be a lifesaving thing for the child. Social workers need better training to understand why kids behave the way they do. I think social workers who have children are better equipped to know what children and parent's need.
167. Instead of giving kids pocket money in care, just give them money to put in savings so that they can walk out of care with more than just a bag of clothes.
168. When kids are being signed out of care, the state needs to keep looking after the kids. They can't just give you a piece of paper and leave you.
169. There needs to be more than just police checks. Two references for being a carer is not enough. They should be talking to previous employers and getting reports from actual psychologists to make sure someone is stable.

They could use psychometric testing to make sure someone is fit and stable to look after kids.

Closing remarks

170. Time in care taught me how to survive, not how to thrive. But I am a survivor and I'm proud of that.

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: 13/05/2022