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2 **JANET LOWE**

3 **EXAMINED BY MR OPIE**  
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6 **MR OPIE:** Tēnā koutou, Commissioners.

7 **CHAIR:** Good morning.

8 **MR OPIE:** Counsel's name is Opie and I appear as Counsel  
9 Assisting the evidence of Jan Lowe we have in the witness  
10 box for us. Ask for the affirmation first?

11 **CHAIR:** Certainly, thank you, Mr Opie. Good morning,  
12 Ms Lowe.

13 A. Mōrena.

14 **CHAIR:** How would you like to be referred to, Ms Lowe or  
15 Jan?

16 A. Whatever comes out.

17 **CHAIR:** I'm going to call you Jan. (Witness affirmed).  
18 Thank you, I'm going to get Mr Opie now to lead your  
19 evidence.

20 **MR OPIE:**

21 Q. Thank you very much for being here today, Jan. Mōrena,  
22 good morning to you.

23 A. Mōrena.

24 Q. I know it's been a long road to get here and I just want to  
25 remind you that you can take breaks any time that you want.  
26 Signal to us and we can stop.

27 Just to go through some preliminary matters. Can you  
28 confirm that your full name is Janet Elsie Lowe?

29 A. I do.

30 Q. And can you confirm that you have provided a written  
31 statement to the Commission dated 16 September 2020?

32 A. Yes.

33 Q. And do you have a copy of that statement in front of you?

34 A. Yes.

1 Q. And can you confirm that, to the best of your knowledge,  
2 that statement is true and correct?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Thank you. We will go through your statement now. If you  
5 just want to start with the early years. When you were  
6 10 years old, you went to the Whatman Children's Home run  
7 by the Salvation Army. We will talk about your experiences  
8 there. Before we do, I just want to ask you to tell us a  
9 bit about who you lived with before you went to Whatman?

10 A. I had a family. I had a mother, father, younger brother  
11 and me. My father was 30 years older than my Mum and he  
12 had been married before and had four daughters that felt  
13 he'd made a stupid marriage, so they had no contact with  
14 any of us. So, I cannot remember anything, I was never  
15 afraid of my parents in any way. It was always loving, it  
16 was a very Christian home, I remember a lot of praying and  
17 just generally being loved, accepted and affirmed. I  
18 enjoyed having a brother, though I think I was rather  
19 unkind to him at times. He was 4 years younger and I  
20 coaxed him into coming to school with me one day when he  
21 should be at home with my parents, and they had to come and  
22 get him.

23 So, my mother had cancer and it was about 1956, 1955,  
24 drugs and things I think were pretty non-existent because  
25 we moved to a bach that was just across from the hospital  
26 and lived there until we got a Housing Corp house and my  
27 Mum died from there but there were lots of times she wasn't  
28 around, which didn't seem strange, it seemed quite normal.  
29 And I think my father worked really hard at keeping it  
30 normal.

31 So, I wasn't involved in her cancer and I was really  
32 shocked when I found that she wasn't going to get better  
33 and come home with us, but I had been protected. So, yeah,  
34 it was a good life before.

35 Q. And why did you go to Whatman?

1 A. I had already been to Hillsbrook Children's Home, I think  
2 my father had pneumonia at that time, 3 months in there,  
3 loved it, not a problem, didn't have to do all the work,  
4 never hit, cuddled, lots of books, toys, big tent that we  
5 could all play in outside. It was like family. I think  
6 Whatman was a shock for me, and this isn't a criticism of  
7 them but having so many children, I just got lost. I was  
8 used to having one-on-one with my family, my parents.  
9 Friends of my family's friends, they would come in and it  
10 would be normal. And into Whatman where there was very  
11 little adult interaction unless it was on a negative basis  
12 and I wasn't used to any of that.

13 Q. Can I wind you back? Why couldn't you stay with your  
14 family? Why did you have to go into Whatman?

15 A. My father and mother were Salvation Army people and when my  
16 father couldn't cope when we came back from Hillsbrook, he  
17 contacted the Salvation Army and asked if they could help  
18 because he wasn't managing. We lived in Hastings and he  
19 was going to move to Masterton to Kandahar which was a  
20 nursing home. We went because of his contacts with the  
21 Army and his affinity, I guess it was. He approached and  
22 it was organised for us to go there and he did move to  
23 Masterton.

24 Q. You were admitted with your brother on the 5th of September  
25 1958? You were 10 years old when you were admitted?

26 A. Yes.

27 Q. Did your brother stay at Whatman as long as you did?

28 A. No.

29 Q. Why was that?

30 A. My father had four daughters in his first marriage and I  
31 was the fifth daughter and then he had a son. And I am  
32 assuming, I don't know, but I think that he probably wanted  
33 to ensure that my brother was secure if he died because he  
34 was nearly 80 at that point, so he went through CYFS, WINZ,  
35 whatever it was in those days, Child Welfare, and he was

1 adopted by a family in GRO-B His name was changed. I  
2 wasn't told where he was or anything. One of the Salvation  
3 Army male staff when I asked where my brother was, I  
4 thought that he had measles or something and was in the  
5 quarantine wing because I hadn't seen him. When I asked  
6 where he was, I was told he's been adopted and you won't  
7 see him again.

8 And for a 9 or 10 year old, that was absolutely  
9 devastation and that I was still left there. My father was  
10 living in Kandahar in Masterton in a nursing home. He  
11 didn't have a car. That was at the Landsdowne end of  
12 Masterton. Whatman was out in the country up Reynolds  
13 Street, up the other end, so I had very little contact with  
14 him.

15 Q. With your father?

16 A. Mm.

17 Q. With your brother, how long was it after Whatman until you  
18 saw him again?

19 A. When I went to work, I was 20, I went to a swimming pool  
20 and a woman who had been a child at Whatman told me that  
21 this family had adopted her sister and they had also  
22 adopted my brother, so that was how I found out his name.  
23 And at lunchtime I rang all the schools and he was at  
24 Hutt Valley High, so I went down, I had one photo, the  
25 photo was about that big, and asked someone at the gate to  
26 find my brother and he came out, this big hairy man/boy  
27 that I didn't recognise and, like, we both - well I  
28 certainly stood there crying. I knew my brother and it was  
29 exquisite, that feeling of having a family, but the reality  
30 was it had been 10 years in-between where his adoption had  
31 been broken, he'd gone into Epuni Boys' Home. I had had  
32 after Whatman a lot of foster homes where there was not  
33 good stuff happen.

34 Q. We will come to that. So, you said it was the time period  
35 of 10 years after he left Whatman before seeing him again?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. So, beginning at paragraph 41 of your statement, you talk  
3 about life at Whatman in general and some of your memories  
4 from those times. And because of time constraints I won't  
5 ask you to go through all of that. It is in the evidence  
6 before the Commission. And instead, I will ask you to go  
7 to paragraph 64 of your statement.

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. This is where you're talking about the physical and  
10 emotional abuse that you experienced at Whatman. And one  
11 of the staff you refer to there is Mrs Irvine?

12 A. Mm.

13 Q. Where did Mrs Irvine work?

14 A. In the laundry. The children did all the work after  
15 school, we got sent to the laundry, the kitchen, other  
16 areas that needed work done. I often got sent to the  
17 laundry. She was stout, I guess, very small Scottish woman  
18 with her hair rolled up in a sausage behind her head, and I  
19 was afraid of her before she even hit me because she would  
20 not speak. I would be called names with her if I - I  
21 ironed hankies, if I did them wrong. But this one  
22 particular day I was on laundry duty. She was  
23 unpredictable and I didn't know how to act to not be part  
24 of her rage. There were no signposts for me to read adult  
25 behaviour and she was unpredictable. Her way of  
26 disciplining me was to hit me around the face or the head  
27 or punch me or pinch me. And two times, two things  
28 happened. Oh, she would call names or throw things.

29 Once when she hit me on the head, I couldn't straighten  
30 my neck up. And when I went back to the laundry, she kept  
31 pulling it up and telling me to straighten my neck. So,  
32 yeah, that was the first big abuse.

33 When I was older, a young adult with children, I had  
34 numerous neck and back problems.

1       The second thing which I remember was we had those  
2       rollers with the cloth around them and she would hold one  
3       end of the sheet and I the other and we'd followed it and  
4       my job would be to push it through these rollers. And on  
5       this particular day, I have a photo somewhere, I was about  
6       10 and I would have been about that tall, I was short.  
7       She, I for some reason had pushed the sheet through the  
8       roller crookedly and it was going off and I froze, just  
9       stood watching it because I didn't know what else to do but  
10      knew there would be trouble. She got out of her chair  
11      which was just behind where I was doing it and punched me  
12      on the side of the head. It felt like my head had blown up  
13      with water as though I'd been in the swimming pool, but it  
14      ached, ached and ached.

15      I told one of the staff but I'm pretty sure, and I don't  
16      remember exactly, but I'm sure I would not have said that  
17      she had done it because if she knew I'd told on her, I  
18      would be in more trouble the next time I went back.

19      So, I did tell staff I couldn't hear. I couldn't hear  
20      at school. And it wasn't until I was in my 20s that  
21      I - even before that, in one foster home they sent me to an  
22      ear specialist and it was nerve damage, which is why I  
23      couldn't hear properly. And even today, it still affects  
24      my life and I resent enormously that that was done, that  
25      that was an acceptable thing.

26      And years later when I talked to the manager's wife at  
27      the home and asked what - told her that I'd been hit around  
28      by this woman, asked why they kept her on because the  
29      manager's wife said she knew and she'd been told many times  
30      not to hit the children. I asked why they kept her there  
31      and it was that it was hard to get people in the laundry in  
32      a children's home, so that was why she was allowed to stay.

33      And when we formed the group years later, her name was  
34      one of the common ones that kept coming up with the boys  
35      and people who wet their beds, she was just an angry woman

1 and I don't think life had been easy for her either but  
2 that should never have been our problem really.

3 Q. And Jan, what did you feel before you went to work in the  
4 laundry?

5 A. Oh, they had an outside toilet. In the mornings I would  
6 get anxious after breakfast because we'd sit out and wait  
7 for school. Go to school and it would be like a big breath  
8 on the way because I was out of the reach of Whatman. Have  
9 school, come home for lunch, walk home, walk back to  
10 school, and then in the afternoon when I knew I would go to  
11 the laundry, I would get diarrhoea, just absolute nerves,  
12 shaky, not able to process anything good about going into  
13 the laundry.

14 A little bit later, and it was to do with I think the  
15 laundry and the other things, I was sitting on the swing  
16 thing outside and all the colours went differently and the  
17 sounds went differently and I couldn't see myself. My  
18 hands didn't look like they belonged on me. And I thought  
19 that was a sign of insanity, I thought that I'd really lost  
20 it.

21 When I had a counsellor through ACC, I was told it was,  
22 and I've forgotten the name but it's a condition and it's a  
23 way of getting out of a bad situation, just - I'll come to  
24 what it was, sorry.

25 Q. We can come to that later.

26 A. Yeah.

27 Q. There was also a Captain and that Captain's full name is  
28 redacted in the statements, maybe just refer to her as the  
29 Captain.

30 A. Yeah, she was kitchen.

31 Q. She was in the kitchen?

32 A. Yeah.

33 Q. Can you tell us about your experiences with Captain?

34 A. Same fear. When I think back about Whatman, even the  
35 people that didn't hit me there was a fair, wake up feeling

1     afraid, feeling afraid when I came back from school, and  
2     just living with the fear and trying to make sense of the  
3     world that I was living in and I couldn't because I didn't  
4     know how to read people.

5   Q. How did you interact with the Captain?

6   A. I did breakfast and helped with dinner or helped do the  
7     dishes at lunch. They had toasters along one wall and they  
8     were the ones that you pull out and put about six slices of  
9     bread in. My job sometimes was doing toast and if that was  
10    burnt, she would grab me by the head and hit me on the side  
11    of the wall or she had a row of ladles etc., spoony things  
12    that she would hit with if I did something not right.  
13    Sometimes it would be stirring porridge in a great big pot  
14    and if there were lumps in it, I would get into strife.

15         She was also on, on a Wednesday for a bath, that was the  
16    Whatman night for having a bath, and if I didn't get out in  
17    time of the bath, she would smack across my back, smack  
18    with her head which hurt.

19         But then when we were talking about this recently, I was  
20    11-12 in the period and she used to bath me with one or two  
21    other people in the bath at a time, but she would wash me  
22    all over and then I would get out and get dry and go  
23    through and get my clothes on. And I tried to relate that  
24    to my own children and I wouldn't even have gone in their  
25    bathroom door when they were 7 or 8 because that was just  
26    not - they wouldn't have accepted that, and it just seems a  
27    strange thing to have happened.

28   Q. There was also a Lieutenant, and again this person's full  
29    name is redacted, so I will refer to her as a Lieutenant,  
30    she helped with the children at Whatman and what did she  
31    ask you to do?

32   A. She was not abusive to me. She was indifferent, I think,  
33    but not abusive. Some days she would get me to go into her  
34    room and either rub her feet or she would undress from her  
35    top down, lay on her stomach and I would need to rub her

1 back. And I could hear children outside making noise and  
2 didn't know why I'd been picked to do this. I didn't like  
3 it, didn't want to do it. It made me different and trying  
4 not to feel different was very hard at Whatman because just  
5 about everything that happened wasn't normal, it wasn't  
6 ordinary.

7 So, although she didn't hit me, she had had very little  
8 else to do with me, other than if I rubbed her feet or  
9 rubbed her back, and that could go on for what felt like a  
10 long, long time, you know, as a kid.

11 Q. You've talked about those three staff members. Did you  
12 feel that at Whatman there was a person that you could go  
13 to if you had a problem or that you trusted?

14 A. No. I was afraid of all staff because I knew from  
15 Mrs Irvine and the Lieutenant that they would hit out and I  
16 wouldn't ever have a reason why, wouldn't know why and I  
17 learnt to mistrust adults and not - I expected not to be  
18 liked, not to be listened to, not to be part of the lot of  
19 people that they were kind to. I just stayed very  
20 solitary, didn't make friends very easy there, yeah.

21 Q. You talked earlier about your conversation much later with  
22 the wife of the then manager of Whatman and what she said  
23 about Mrs Irvine. Can you recall what she said to you  
24 about the Captain?

25 A. Yes. I asked her about that as well and told her what had  
26 happened, and she said that they had known she was doing  
27 that, but she had done things in a way that they found hard  
28 to "catch her at it". Those were her words "catch her at  
29 it". And, yeah, there was nothing to say to that.

30 Q. So, you spent approximately two and a half years in  
31 Whatman?

32 A. (Nods).

33 Q. And the experiences that you had with these staff members,  
34 how long did they go on for, of those two and a half years?

1 A. It felt like all of them. It felt like there was - I never  
2 have a feeling of a time when I was safe at Whatman and  
3 when I got sent out to work at 11, that made me more  
4 different than everyone else, especially when I was sent to  
5 clean house for a girl in my school, in my class, it was  
6 her parents, and just humiliated, embarrassed, different.  
7 In a way, it felt like a punishment. It didn't feel like  
8 it was a good thing.

9 Q. We will just come through now to paragraph 78 of your  
10 statement and you're talking there about neglect?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. And why did you feel that you were neglected at Whatman?

13 A. Because adults didn't come up to me and make contact or ask  
14 if I was okay. All of us in the home had had parents in a  
15 home at some stage, good or bad, and we never were allowed  
16 to talk about anything that had happened. There was no-one  
17 to talk about things. When I got periods, I was sent home  
18 from school, I didn't know why, thought I was in trouble,  
19 taken upstairs, given a belt and pads, told to put them in  
20 the bucket and that was my understanding of periods. There  
21 was nothing.

22 Some things I learnt from older girls when I asked. I  
23 think it just was the fear of going to be in trouble as  
24 well, I felt neglect and, also, we had second clothes or  
25 shoes that maybe didn't fit properly, no toothbrush. And  
26 my father was on a pension all the time that we lived with  
27 him and I always had a toothbrush, I always had toothpaste.  
28 And at Whatman we had this saucer of salt by the basin and  
29 no-one watched to make sure we cleaned our teeth but if you  
30 chose to, you put your hand in the water and then rubbed  
31 the salt around and spat it out. I have an issue with that  
32 because when I checked to find out what they were given in  
33 terms of allowance for the children, toothbrush was so  
34 minimal, they could have given one to people but no-one had  
35 them. And I want to know what their place was with the

1 money, what they did with it, because it wasn't given to  
2 us. We didn't have outings, didn't have pocket money.  
3 They had a book- room that I wasn't allowed in and I assume  
4 others weren't. It was very barren to me and very lonely.

5 Q. And can you recall any instances of when you were ill and  
6 what happened then?

7 A. Yes. They had a room for people with measles, it was on  
8 the front of the building downstairs where I thought my  
9 brother was when I couldn't find him, and I was covered in  
10 spots, so I was put in there. There was nothing to do,  
11 nothing to read, nobody came in. I don't know how long I  
12 stayed there but one night I waited for someone to bring  
13 dinner and they didn't, it didn't come. And then I waited  
14 to have the light turned off because the whole home was for  
15 me very regimented. I couldn't get up and just do things  
16 or didn't get up and do things for myself in case I was in  
17 trouble. I waited to be told what to do, when to do it,  
18 how to do it. Whistles blew telling us to get ready for  
19 schools. Bells rang when you had to stand in the playroom  
20 and then line up and walk in file to have dinner. If any  
21 of us spoke over dinner, and I didn't sit with my brother,  
22 we had to stand up and eat our meal. I wasn't smart enough  
23 to know to eat sweets before I ate everything else, I'd get  
24 them out of the way, I'd just leave them until last and  
25 then they'd be cold but then I'd have to stay behind until  
26 I'd eaten it all. And often late for school. In a way,  
27 school just became somewhere to get out of Whatman. It  
28 didn't become a place that I loved to be because I learnt.  
29 No, I was just happy to be out of there.

30 Q. We will come to talk about that now. In April 1961, your  
31 father did take you out of Whatman?

32 A. He was asked.

33 Q. Can you tell us about why he did that at that time?

34 A. I had a line running up my leg, it was red. I'd asked at  
35 the home, nothing was done about it. Went to school and

1 they had sports outside and I saw this line on my leg from  
2 my foot running up and asked one of the teachers why, what  
3 it was, why I had that. My father was contacted. He  
4 didn't have a car, so I don't think he took me, but he  
5 organised for me to go to a doctor. And it had poisoned,  
6 it was poisoned. So, my father contacted Mrs Hill and told  
7 her he was really unhappy at the way they'd handled all  
8 that. She asked him to get me out of the home. She gave  
9 him a couple of days to take me out. So, at that point I  
10 was advertised over the pulpit at the Presbyterian Church  
11 in Masterton.

12 Q. We will come to that.

13 A. Okay.

14 Q. If I could ask for document 10 to be brought up, please.

15 This is a letter that your father wrote to Major Hill?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. The manager of Whatman at the time?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. If we could go to page 2 of that document.

20 A. It was when I was 11, I was sent out to work in people's  
21 houses. It was, as I found out later when I started  
22 looking into what had happened at Whatman and what people  
23 knew and who knew things that were happening there, it was  
24 well known that if you needed help at Whatman they'll send  
25 people out. And there were boys that used to go and get  
26 windblown apples that were on the ground or potatoes, that  
27 would be a whole day's work in the weekend. I got sent out  
28 to clean two houses. I was the only person I knew that had  
29 to do that. The others, we had to do a whole morning's  
30 work in the home, the staff didn't do a whole lot of the  
31 work there, the kids did it. Scrubbing stairs with sand  
32 soap inside and out, scrubbing the porch, polishing silver,  
33 cleaning - scrubbing the floor and then someone polished it  
34 and we had old jerseys and we went up and down, had a line  
35 to go up and down and polish the dining room.

1           So, I did that in the morning. In the afternoon, after  
2 lunch, I was given a bike, not mine, and the address of two  
3 places to go and clean. In both, I had things like folding  
4 washing, doing dishes, clean toilets, cleaning baths, one  
5 of them I had Sand Soap outside and I liked the glistening  
6 of it in the sun, that was the only good thing I remember.  
7 I got 5 shillings for both homes and I drove - rode home  
8 past a dairy which looked good and couldn't go and couldn't  
9 buy anything because I had to hand over all of the money to  
10 the home, which I did. My father questioned it and was  
11 told that I was working to buy myself new Sunday shoes and  
12 they never came.

13 Q. Just in that letter, he says, "I understand that Janet's  
14 Saturday morning wages had been"?

15 A. No, it was Saturday afternoon.

16 Q. "... kept in the office as a fund for new Sunday shoes.  
17 These should be supplied if possible in readiness for the  
18 change to her new home", did you get the shoes?

19 A. No, and I didn't get the money back. When I asked Mrs Hill  
20 years later why I'd been sent out to work, she said it was  
21 so I could experience life in a real home and I despise  
22 that because I'd had a real home and I didn't have to go  
23 out to work and give my parents money. So, I don't know  
24 what they did with it, but I assume it didn't go through  
25 Head Office where most of the rent or whatever for kids  
26 went. So, no, I got no clothes. The next time I went to  
27 CYFS or Child Welfare took me out to buy me dresses,  
28 underwear, shoes that fitted and there was nothing good, no  
29 good clothes that I had at Whatman.

30 Q. Just now turn to paragraph 38 of your statement, just go  
31 back a wee bit. It's talking briefly about the foster  
32 homes that you went into after Whatman.

33 A. Mm.

34 Q. And just to clarify, the Salvation Army didn't have  
35 anything to do with the foster care placements, did it?

1 A. I want to state something about that. I wrote out what I  
2 got from Whatman, what I learned about who I was. This  
3 really is for all the kids who lived in Whatman, I would  
4 like to give a word picture really of how it was for lots  
5 and lots of us. There were a few who were favoured. Those  
6 who had parents who came regularly, like every second  
7 weekend or every weekend or whatever, they were treated  
8 well. I can remember some of them having music lessons and  
9 piano in the dining room. Those of us who had no-one come  
10 very often, and there was a phone in the office, my father  
11 had a phone at Kandahar and I wasn't allowed to ring him,  
12 nor he me. So, we went to the Salvation Army Church. He  
13 went too for a little while and then he changed to Baptist  
14 because he'd been Church of Christ when we lived in  
15 Hastings and he didn't see me. And in Church, I wasn't  
16 allowed to sit with him, I had to sit with all of the kids,  
17 we all wore a uniform to Church and I couldn't sit with my  
18 father. I could walk past and put my hand at the back and  
19 touch his hand or something but there was no - sorry.

20 Q. Do you want to take a break?

21 A. No, thank you. I just want to say that what I learnt from  
22 there, that I never was going to be safe because I couldn't  
23 read any adults, what they were thinking or what I was  
24 doing that annoyed them. The fear, I felt there that I  
25 didn't matter to anybody. I learnt there my beliefs about  
26 myself, that I was unlovable. I had an extreme fear of  
27 adults which overlapped into school, so I didn't do well  
28 there either. I didn't feel secure around anyone. I  
29 didn't expect to be believed if I told about things like my  
30 leg being poisoned. I had a really phobia/fear of making  
31 mistakes and not knowing I was making them, that I would  
32 then be in strife. Fear, absolute fear, of physical  
33 violence, not that I knew when it was coming. I don't  
34 remember any of the older girls hitting me, but I don't  
35 remember fitting in with any of the other kids at Whatman

1 either, so it was quite solitary. I didn't reach any  
2 potential at Whatman, either at school or in terms of just  
3 learning people skills, how to manage life, I guess. I was  
4 confused about adult behaviour and couldn't work it out. I  
5 didn't know what I was doing to be disliked and felt  
6 punished.

7 In the latter years, I learnt to absolutely implore  
8 injustice in all of its forms. And if I have any positives  
9 that have come from Whatman it is that learning about  
10 injustice in hindsight and that I have the responsibility  
11 for me to speak out and do something about it.

12 My friendships after Whatman, even at Whatman, were all  
13 transient. I got out of them before people found out how  
14 awful I really was and before they left. And my father was  
15 the last safe person in my life and when he died or when I  
16 didn't have contact with him, that went and there was just  
17 nothing there. That's it.

18 Q. Thank you, Jan. Are you sure you wouldn't like a break?

19 A. No, thank you.

20 Q. We'll carry on.

21 A. I always cry.

22 Q. We will just deal with the foster homes that you were in  
23 after Whatman. If I could just ask you to go to  
24 paragraph 38 of your statement.

25 A. Yes.

26 Q. And if you could read paragraphs 38 and 39, please.

27 A. After leaving Whatman, I went to a foster home for  
28 approximately 8 months. My Dad had organised this. That's  
29 the one at the Church. And they were Presbyterian, middle  
30 aged, sort of 50-60 couple and their kids had all grown up  
31 and had children themselves. Later, in Christmas of 1961,  
32 I went to live with another foster family, the M's and  
33 stayed there until August 1962.

34 The Ms and the first foster home were related by  
35 marriage.

1 Q. Okay. And could you read paragraph 39 too?

2 A. Yeah. After the M's I was placed in a series of other  
3 foster homes. Between August 1962 and February 1963, I had  
4 six changes of foster homes. Some of them are ones I went  
5 to twice. I only stayed at some of these homes for a very  
6 short time, such as 9 or 13 days. From the time I left  
7 Whatman in 1961 through until 1966, I had moved 19 times.

8 Q. And if we now just go to paragraph 96 of your statement.  
9 You say that some of the foster homes that you were at you  
10 suffered abuse and you refer to the M's as one of those  
11 homes?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. What happened at the M's, if you could tell us?

14 A. At the M's, he raped me and I obviously had no idea at the  
15 time, but other people did and approached the Department  
16 that he had done similar things to his own daughters and  
17 that I shouldn't be allowed to go there. My father went up  
18 and had an argument with CYFS, telling them what he'd  
19 heard, and my Dad was called a troublemaker and they were  
20 going to put the Police on him if he didn't backtrack it  
21 all.

22 He started off coming in the bathroom when I was in the  
23 bath and their house was one of those old square ones with  
24 the big windows that look like eyes. The layout of the  
25 house, come in the backdoor, the toilet outside was  
26 straight in front, turn left, turn right into the kitchen.  
27 They had a poultry farm and she would often have dead  
28 chickens with their heads chopped off when I came home from  
29 school. And I used to try and see how long I could hold my  
30 sense of smell and my breath because I found it pretty  
31 awful.

32 Then their son, who was 20, living at home had a  
33 motorbike accident and had to go to Dunedin to the spinal  
34 unit and he had a plaster cap put on his head because I  
35 think they had to take some skull out and Mr M, I was left

1 with him. It was sort of open slaughter really. Touching  
2 whenever I walked past him, sitting me down on his knee.  
3 When the earthquakes came, I'd shut my door and I was quite  
4 scared of it and I remember that it's earthquakes because  
5 that was the first time he raped me. He came into my  
6 bedroom. He was in his 50s by the way at that time and I  
7 was the end of 12/13, beginning 14 while this all happened.  
8 He told me that fathers did these things for their children  
9 that helped them grow into women and that if I told  
10 anybody, people didn't always understand things like this  
11 and if I talked about it to anybody they would send me back  
12 to Whatman, which was motivation enough to scare the hell  
13 out of me because I did not want to go back.

14 So, it was just yet another thing in my life that I had  
15 to put up with and just get on with it. And I remember the  
16 night after the first rape I couldn't sit - we lived in the  
17 country and it was about a 20 minute/half our ride to  
18 school, I couldn't sit on the seat because it hurt too  
19 much, I had to ride the bike standing up. And that was the  
20 first of a lot of times that he came in. He gave me a  
21 calf, that I had to go - he'd come and wake me up, often  
22 with his hands over parts of me and I could have this calf  
23 and feed it if I went out with him while he did the milking  
24 and in the milking shed was a good touching place. There  
25 wasn't really anywhere safe in that house with him there  
26 because I knew what he would do, I just didn't know where  
27 it would happen, and I never had anyone back to their  
28 place. I was scared that other people would see and it  
29 would be my fault because the way he explained things to  
30 me, I was privileged having him do this and it was  
31 me - although I didn't physically ask for it, that it was  
32 me somehow encouraging him to do this.

33 Am I allowed to talk about years later meeting his  
34 daughter?

35 Q. Yes.

1 A. I left their place, always thought it was my doing, my  
2 fault, even when I was in my 30s/40s, still thought that I  
3 had created that. And I worked as a community development  
4 rep for the Council in Hamilton and put out a community  
5 newspaper. We'd missed the deadline one day and I ended up  
6 taking it to Thames and waited for the paper to be printed.  
7 Went for a walk. In the chemist shop, the husband of one  
8 of the daughters who knew me invited me back to their house  
9 for lunch. I hadn't seen them for years and years and  
10 years. Went back really uncomfortable because I had this  
11 feeling that they knew what I had done and that it had been  
12 me who was responsible for what happened to their father.  
13 I remember the Police at one stage and I remember going to  
14 Court years earlier when I lived with him and I thought it  
15 was because of what he'd done, but it was because they were  
16 adopting me and his wife had chosen not to carry it on and  
17 I had to go, Child Welfare wouldn't move me because the  
18 adoption had gone too far and it needed to go to Court to  
19 be broken or whatever they did.

20 So, when I was in Thames, just really uncomfortable,  
21 didn't talk about it until the husband went back to work  
22 and I apologised to the woman, the daughter of him, saying  
23 I'm so sorry that I caused trouble for them because his  
24 wife, Mr GRO-B's wife had seen me in the street one day  
25 before this and asked why I'd ruined their lives, and that  
26 just reinforced that I had somehow been responsible for my  
27 own rape.

28 Apologised to her and she started to cry as well, and  
29 she said she knew because it had happened to all of them as  
30 well. And the first time ever, probably in my 40s, I  
31 think, that I understood that this shouldn't have happened,  
32 and it wasn't - I didn't make him do this, that he chose.  
33 So, she and I talked about it. She thought her mother  
34 knew, as did I, because when her mother came back from  
35 Dunedin with their son she was very different to me, very

1 aggro, and I thought it was because she knew what I'd been  
2 doing, yeah. So, I got moved from there eventually to the  
3 family home.

4 Q. From paragraph 108 of your statement, you talk about the  
5 impacts of the abuse on you and you've already given quite  
6 a lot of evidence in that regard. Turn over to  
7 paragraph 109, if we could.

8 **CHAIR:** Just to let you know, Jan, we've read your brief of  
9 evidence, so we know - although you are not reading every  
10 single bit, we have read it and we do know it.

11 A. Thank you.

12 **CHAIR:** We are not missing anything out, don't worry about  
13 that. Okay?

14 A. Yeah. I can be quite verbal if I think I want people to  
15 understand something.

16 **CHAIR:** That's right. I just wanted you to know that, that  
17 we do know all the bits that aren't being read, we do  
18 understand.

19 A. Thank you.

20 **MR OPIE:**

21 Q. I just want to ask, the abuse that you experienced in your  
22 childhood, how do you think that affected you in your role  
23 as a parent?

24 A. I was a rubbish parent. Never, ever hit my children, never  
25 put them in foster care when things got too tough, but  
26 never also knew about emotions. Couldn't understand my own  
27 emotions. Was not there for them emotionally. And they've  
28 always felt that I've had, some confronted it with me, some  
29 have just brushed over just totalled me up as someone  
30 that's not worthy of being a mother. So, I had last night  
31 with my daughter and two of my grandchildren and that is my  
32 family. My other children have no contact, my  
33 grandchildren, and it's a source of sad but I can't change,  
34 I don't know how to change it. We never learned at Whatman  
35 anything about how to fix relationships or how to sort

1 things out. There's just no social at all. You just stood  
2 up. Sorry, I don't know what else to say.

3 Q. No, no, that's fine. I'd like now to start talking about  
4 the redress that you sought. Do you want to have a break  
5 now or are you all right just to carry on?

6 A. Carry on, please.

7 Q. Carry on. So, this is starting from paragraph 147 of your  
8 statement and I will just paraphrase some of it. You first  
9 sought redress from the Department of Social Welfare and  
10 you achieved a settlement with the Department in 2000. And  
11 then you decided to raise a claim against the Salvation  
12 Army and your lawyer, Sonja Cooper, did this in a letter to  
13 the Army dated 15 February 2001. I just want to look at  
14 the response of the then Salvation Army lawyer's letter to  
15 that letter, and that's document 17, if we could call that  
16 up.

17 A. The thing about CYFS, was that they apologised and they  
18 acknowledged what had happened, said it shouldn't have, it  
19 wasn't my fault, and the Army did nothing like that. What  
20 they did was put it onto me or deny that it had happened.  
21 And had they not written this letter, there would have been  
22 no group of people taking class action, there would have  
23 been no people speaking out against them. But because they  
24 chose to run, disbelieve it, deny it, and then again dump  
25 it on me and bully, that was the other thing, the other  
26 word that I use when I think about Whatman, was the  
27 bullying by the staff.

28 Q. Let's look at the letter. This is a response to when you  
29 raise your claim?

30 A. Yes.

31 Q. If we could go to page 3 of the pdf. And then just under  
32 the heading "Other identifiable causes", if we expand that,  
33 please. It says, "Ms Lowe is a woman who was born into a  
34 family where her father's family shunned them because of  
35 the age of her mother. Ms Lowe's mother was her father's

1 (at least) second wife. She was 30 years younger than Mr  
2 Lowe".

3 A. That was a judgment and they knew nothing. My father, I  
4 don't believe my father's family shunned, his daughters did  
5 but he was friends with his brother, my Uncle William, and  
6 he was in my life at this beginning. So, that is not  
7 accurate.

8 My mother was the oldest of 12 and she had died before a  
9 lot of her other siblings were born, so they didn't know  
10 about us. But this one felt like a bully and that they'd  
11 made a judgement because my father had been married twice.  
12 He wasn't worth knowing or was not greatly valued and he  
13 had had will be widowed twice and there was a 20 year, well  
14 15 years difference between when his first wife died and  
15 when he married my mother. So, I don't know who wrote it,  
16 but it was just dirty.

17 Q. And then if we could just go to page 4 of the pdf, please,  
18 and call out the first paragraph, enlarge, under the  
19 heading, "Conclusion".

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. This says, "The Salvation Army has already been put to  
22 significant expense in investigating the claims of Ms Lowe.  
23 We do not believe there is any merit in her claims and have  
24 advised the Army accordingly. We invite Ms Lowe to  
25 discontinue any claim against the Army now. If she agrees,  
26 our client agrees to bear its own costs incurred to date".  
27 How did that statement make you feel?

28 A. Bullying and it made me mad and from that because I  
29 remembered names of people, one who sat at my table came in  
30 and said Lieutenant GRO-B was playing with his diddle and  
31 I didn't know what that meant at the time, I had no idea  
32 until I was older, and I remembered names of people that  
33 had been abused, sexually abused at the home, and from  
34 that, wrote to all the newspapers in New Zealand and asked  
35 for people -

1 Q. We'll come to that, Jan. I think we can take that document  
2 down.

3 A. Dirty, dirty. And had they had any conscience or any  
4 intent of putting things right, they would not have written  
5 that.

6 Q. We're now at paragraph 178 of your statement, and there  
7 you're starting to talk out media that came out in 2001.  
8 You say you spoke to a journalist from the Evening Post and  
9 an article was published about some of your experiences in  
10 Whatman and foster care?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Can you just put up Document 120? That was the article,  
13 you can see it there on the screen, Jan?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Why did you decide to speak to a journalist at that stage?

16 A. Because I wanted it public, out in the open, Salvation Army  
17 was denying that anything ever happened untoward in any of  
18 their homes, they were loving, caring, kind places, and I  
19 knew that not to be true. And I wanted to have a chance to  
20 say how it had really been and that wasn't given me at that  
21 time, other than through the media. And from there, I then  
22 did a journalism diploma and I could write my own stuff,  
23 yeah.

24 Q. Did you hear from other people after you had?

25 A. Yes.

26 Q. You say also that you decided to try and contact other  
27 people who had been at Whatman, and how did you do that?

28 A. Through the paper, putting ads, and wrote letters, I think,  
29 to all the papers asking that people that had lived in  
30 Salvation Army care contact me, leaving my number and my  
31 address. I had over 100, plenty over 100, writing in with  
32 their stories. Some were good, some were saying that they  
33 loved it at the home and they had their brothers and  
34 sisters and it was a good place. Others talked about the  
35 abuse and reading it, it was from all of the homes,

1 Hodderville, Eltham, The Grange, Wellington ones, one in  
2 Temuka, Whatman, and it was like there was a template for  
3 abuse that they did the same, the staff did the same things  
4 to the kids. And I know some whose family went to the Head  
5 Office and made a complaint and the perpetrator was moved  
6 to another Children's Home, a Salvation Army run, where  
7 they did the same thing again because the same names came  
8 up numerous times.

9 Q. And so, after all those people had written into you, what  
10 did you decide to do then?

11 A. I contacted everyone back, thanking them and asking what  
12 they wanted to do. Some didn't want to do anything. They  
13 just wanted a chance to talk about it. The rest of us  
14 decided to form a group, so we had a meeting in Auckland, I  
15 live in Hamilton. We contacted everyone on the list of  
16 people who had rung. They met us. I think nearly everyone  
17 in Auckland, ranging in age from mid 90s down to living in  
18 Temuka in the 70s, so there was quite a diverse range of  
19 ages.

20 There was not honesty from the Army in terms of -

21 Q. Shall we just talk about the group? What did you decide to  
22 call the group?

23 A. Peter decided to call it Salvation Army Survivors.

24 Q. And what was the group's purpose? Why did you form it?

25 A. Cohesion, so that we could sort of collate all the  
26 information that people had. Looking at what to do next,  
27 that we would work as a group rather than as individuals  
28 because the Army picked off individuals bit by bit and  
29 didn't either contact them back. One person was told if  
30 she wanted money, go and shake a tin in the corner like  
31 they had to do. That wasn't the point of it. She didn't  
32 have a chance to talk about her abuse. People were told  
33 their abusers had died, which wasn't true. There was no  
34 sense that the Army was in any way sorry for what had  
35 happened, neither did they want to know about the abuse

1 that had been happening that we were talking about. We  
2 were put down as sinners at one church meeting that someone  
3 went to, spreading lies about the Army, and that was their  
4 tenor, their way of dealing with it. And I think had they  
5 not written that letter, there would have been no group and  
6 there would not - they would not be in this situation but,  
7 in hindsight, I am really glad we're here because it can be  
8 out in the open. They did abuse, they knew they'd abused  
9 and they covered it up, and I want that out, I want it out  
10 in the open.

11 Q. We will just look at a story now on TVNZ's national news,  
12 it's document 23. This is just a transcript from that  
13 article. I'll just read some of it to you. It says,  
14 "Salvation Army Commissioner Shaw Clifton says more details  
15 are coming to light. An over-harsh regime of corporal  
16 punishment and a minority of calls of highly significant  
17 episodes of sexual abuse. A week ago, they were  
18 investigating 8 complaints of abuse, now 28 more". And  
19 says, "The majority of complaints originate from  
20 Hodderville Boys' Home in Putaruru and Whatman Children's  
21 Home".

22 A. There were 45 in the group when he says they're  
23 investigating 28, so I don't think the numbers are right.  
24 And I would be interested in as part of the Army coming  
25 clean, that they talk about how many complaints they did  
26 have and how they treated people with complaints.

27 Q. How did it feel for you meeting and hearing about other  
28 people who were also claiming that abuse had happened at  
29 Whatman?

30 A. I felt like I'd come home. I felt like I didn't have to  
31 prove anything, I didn't have to go looking any more. I  
32 didn't have to blame myself for what happened because that  
33 was Salvation Army's bad, not ours. And I think that for  
34 all of us, there was a sense of relief that other people  
35 knew what happen happening and, yeah, all of us have lived

1 with it. You can't switch it off. I can't pretend it  
2 didn't happen. It's always in my life and when I can't  
3 hear properly, I think of Mrs Irvine. I see Salvation Army  
4 uniforms and I feel a disgust at the way that they have  
5 discounted and carried on as though they are really good  
6 guys, and some, many maybe are, I'm not disputing that.  
7 What I am saying is they knew there was abuse going on in  
8 the homes and I think somebody I talked to in CYFS said  
9 that he knew and the Department knew that the money that  
10 they were giving the home wasn't going used for the purpose  
11 in which it was given, and I want that explained.

12 Q. If I can just come to another article which is document  
13 number 38, and you refer to this in your statement. It's  
14 an article that was published in The Press or a transcript  
15 of what was published in The Press on 13 March 2004.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. It refers to you, "Salvation Army abuse survivors  
18 spokeswomen", you are referred to as the spokeswomen and  
19 you said you want public acknowledgment the abuse happened  
20 and for the Salvation Army to say it's sorry. How did it  
21 feel identifying yourself publicly as somebody who had been  
22 abused?

23 A. I think most people knew that I was different from  
24 everybody else, so people that started to get to know me  
25 knew there was something odd about me and then I  
26 couldn't - when I talked about it, it made sense. I think  
27 I asked for a public apology which happened late at night,  
28 on not a mainstream radio station.

29 Q. We will come to that apology.

30 A. Yep.

31 Q. What effect do you think speaking to the media had on your  
32 claims against the Army?

33 A. I think its intent of speaking out was to allow people that  
34 hadn't yet had a say or hadn't linked in with the group or  
35 didn't know what to do with what they were feeling, it

1 allowed them a forum or a place to start from. So, there  
2 were people from England, people from Australia, lots more  
3 people from New Zealand, people from Whatman. And from  
4 that, it came a way for them to either challenge the Army  
5 if that was what they wanted or somehow make sense of what  
6 had happened to them.

7 The Army offered representatives and I wrote back saying  
8 that we would agree to it if they paid all costs and paid  
9 travelling for people that needed to go wherever, Auckland  
10 I think. I didn't ever hear back, about that one.

11 Q. In 2004, the law firm Grant Cameron & Associates started  
12 representing you and the other members?

13 A. Yep.

14 Q. How did that come about?

15 A. I had put articles in all of the papers, South Island and  
16 North Island. John Miller in Wellington, I talked with  
17 him, he was sympathetic and said he would help. And then  
18 he rang me back to say he was too busy, he couldn't in all  
19 fairness take it on. And shortly after that, Patrick from  
20 Grant Cameron contacted me and came up to Wellington, we  
21 went out to lunch and he offered to help, their firm. So,  
22 we talked about who he was. I had names of people, what  
23 their issues were in writing and took with me to see  
24 Patrick and he had his firm act as a group action, class  
25 action lawyers. Out of that 45, two had died I think, but  
26 most of the people in were happy to have someone making  
27 sure it was heard and not covered up again and, yeah, that  
28 was the way they were doing it.

29 Q. Paragraph 206 of your statement, you say in 2005 you agreed  
30 to meet with the Army?

31 A. Yes.

32 Q. And before the meeting your lawyer forwarded an email to  
33 the Army saying what you were looking for. If I could just  
34 pull that document up, that's 45, please. And if you could  
35 just highlight the paragraph beginning, "But first off".

1 Those are setting out the reasons then that you were asking  
2 for a public apology?

3 A. Yep.

4 Q. Do you just want to para-phrase or you could read it if you  
5 want or talk to them?

6 A. A public apology to me is coming clean on what has  
7 happened, acknowledging there was abuse and doing it in  
8 such a time and a way that it's going to reach the people  
9 that are involved or have been involved in it.

10 We weren't told about a media, radio apology that was  
11 going to be made. I think it was a Monday night, but it  
12 was certainly not main time TV or radio. It was on a  
13 radio, we didn't know about it, didn't hear about it until  
14 later, that the Army said, yes, they had had a number of  
15 people who said they were abused, not that we know they  
16 were, and that was their apology and for me that's not  
17 respectful to the people that were abused. It was still  
18 part of the cover up and I haven't heard anything  
19 different. I haven't heard that they have acknowledged -

20 Q. We'll come to that.

21 A. Yeah.

22 **MR OPIE:** I was just wondering, Commissioners, Jan didn't  
23 hear the opening statement of counsel for the Salvation  
24 Army.

25 **CHAIR:** Yes.

26 **MR OPIE:** And they did helpfully send us the transcript of  
27 that, but I did want to show it to her on livestream so  
28 that she could see it. And I wonder whether now would be a  
29 good - I wasn't able to do that before we started today -

30 **CHAIR:** You are planning to show it to Jan in writing, are  
31 you?

32 **MR OPIE:** I was wondering if we could have a break and she  
33 could see it and we could come back or we could take an  
34 early lunch. I am in your hands.

1     **CHAIR:** (Commissioners confer). Nobody knows what they  
2     want to do. I think let's just stick to our time. We'll  
3     take a break. You have a look at it and if as a result of  
4     the break, it's decided that we will just take the lunch,  
5     you just let us know. So, we'll leave it in your hands and  
6     in Jan's hands to figure out what she feels like.

7     **MS JANES:** May I just interrupt?

8     **CHAIR:** Of course, you can.

9     **MS JANES:** We are having some technological difficulties in  
10    the second row. I wonder if you could take the lunch  
11    adjournment now, that will allow the Salvation Army to move  
12    into the front row where they're not having technological  
13    trouble and allow Janet Lowe to -

14    **CHAIR:** All right, that's another reason to take lunch now.  
15    How do you feel about that, Jan, because you are the most  
16    important person in the room.

17    A. I think lunch is a good idea, we are all hungry.

18    **CHAIR:** All right, well, I think we've now reached a  
19    consensus. We will take the lunch adjournment. If we came  
20    back at 1.45, that will give us a good lunch break and then  
21    we'll start afresh, with everybody hopefully getting the  
22    technology they need, so we will do that now.

23

24            **Hearing adjourned from 12.38 p.m. until 1.45 p.m.**

25

26            **MR OPIE:**

27    Q. Jan, in the break you were able to see on the livestream  
28    the opening statement from the Salvation Army, including  
29    the apology in that and the other comments that were made.  
30    How did that make you feel?

31    A. Mixed feelings about it. At the beginning it was -

32    **CHAIR:** Just talk into the microphone.

33    A. Oh, sorry. A sense of disbelief really at the beginning,  
34    that they had acknowledged it after we had tried for so  
35    long but, in hindsight now, with a bit of time going, I'm

1 hopeful that as an organisation they will change the things  
2 that need to be changed so that this can never happen  
3 again. It won't be children, but they'll be care and IHC  
4 people and if they can put these things right it will be  
5 better for them and better for the people that they are  
6 working with because we tried for years to get an apology  
7 and it hasn't happened really. So, thank you, Salvation  
8 Army, I think it should be noted that you have done this.

9 **MR OPIE:**

10 Q. Thank you, Jan. I just want to, we won't spend a lot  
11 longer on this, but just take you back to 2005. At that  
12 time, there was a reference to the work that you were doing  
13 as part of the Salvation Army abuse survivors around the  
14 legal action, can you talk a bit about the work that you  
15 were doing at that time?

16 A. It seemed to evolve. I didn't know I was going to be as  
17 involved in it as I was. We were trying to get some form  
18 of resolution from the Army, in terms of acknowledgment  
19 that stuff had happened, but that was pretty constantly  
20 denied. And my role, which I sort of got put into without  
21 meaning to, was just to keep everyone together and make  
22 sure that we were all heard somehow or other, and I stay in  
23 touch with the majority of people from the group. Some  
24 have now died, some are here, and I would do it all again.  
25 And I think that's part of my thing as well, if something  
26 is unfair don't wait for someone else to fix it. I have a  
27 responsibility, I think, to put right where something is  
28 not right.

29 Q. You talk in your evidence about the settlement that you  
30 reached with the Army in 2005, and I'll just go before then  
31 to a document, it's a 30 November 2005 letter that  
32 Mr Houston of the Army sent you, and that is document  
33 number 18, if you can pull that up?

34 If we could go to page 3 of that document. I just want  
35 to call out the paragraph which starts with, "The Army

1 wishes to unreservedly apologise to you, Jan, for the  
2 experiences you suffered at the hands of people entrusted  
3 with your care. Do the utmost to heel and bring to an end  
4 unhappiness suffered by you. It acknowledges your  
5 entitlement to feel anger and frustration and thanks you  
6 for the work you've done to help others come forward".  
7 That is the apology given to you personally?

8 A. But the others in the group had to waited 3 years to get  
9 their apology, so I'm not sure why I got mine early, but it  
10 wasn't consistent and it didn't feel honest or given in  
11 good faith, that I get one and no-one else does.

12 Q. Thank you, we'll come to that. And then at paragraph 213  
13 of your statement, you set out the settlement terms that  
14 you reached with the Army. Could you just read those out,  
15 please, or sorry read out paragraph 213?

16 A. I signed a settlement with the Army on 12 December 2005.  
17 The terms included payment to me of \$37,500 plus \$1,500 as  
18 a contribution "towards treatment for hearing loss,  
19 associated with my experiences while in the Salvation Army  
20 Home".

21 Q. After you reached that settlement in 2005, did the  
22 Salvation Army Abuse Survivors group continue?

23 A. Yes, it did but looser, but it continued until everyone got  
24 their apology. For some people, we had Nathan Guy  
25 intervene and deal with the Salvation Army trying to get -

26 Q. We will come to that shortly. Did anybody continue with  
27 legal action in the Courts that you know of?

28 A. I think one man did, I think he was from Australia, and I  
29 think from what I've heard he did.

30 Q. Does that mean that most people from the group reached a  
31 settlement?

32 A. I think, including me, that most people from the group were  
33 sick of fighting, were sick of trying to be heard and that  
34 money wasn't going to take away the memory or the long-term  
35 effects, so it was never about them paying us, it was about

1     them acknowledging, and that didn't happen, or certainly  
2     that one for me was not everybody's experience.

3 Q. If I could go now to document 51. This is a copy of an  
4     article published in the Dominion Post in June 2007 and it  
5     said, "Sallies' abuse victims still suffering".

6 A. Mm.

7 Q. If I could enlarge the bit in bold there, please? So, what  
8     was going on at this time?

9 A. Waiting for apologies and I didn't make that heading and  
10    I'm now a journalist and I wouldn't put a heading like that  
11    in an article at all, because we didn't see it as suffering  
12    or didn't see that we were that sort of victim. We thought  
13    and saw that because we'd lived in the homes we had  
14    different lives and that there was a lot of abuse that had  
15    been covered or not brought out in the open and that was  
16    what people were waiting for.

17 Q. And what was the issue with, it refers there to promised  
18    apologies and copies of taped interviews, what was the  
19    issues with those?

20 A. At the mediation with Salvation Army, they agreed that we  
21    would get, everyone would get their apology in a couple of  
22    weeks. When Nathan Guy took over it was about a year later  
23    and he was told things like the computer had broken down or  
24    the person that did it wasn't there anymore. There was  
25    always a reason why people hadn't got their apologies.

26        Some of the tapes, some people said that their tapes  
27    they'd asked for were not what they said. One man said  
28    there were words in there he didn't know what it meant, and  
29    they had given him a transcript of his tape. They hadn't  
30    given him the tape.

31 Q. So, who was Nathan Guy at the time?

32 A. The MP.

33 Q. How did he become involved?

34 A. I talked to him and told him, he knew some anyway, told him  
35    about the group and the abuse and asked if he was able to

1 do anything to get them to give apologies that they said  
2 they would to the other people. And he tried I think for  
3 about a year, a year and a half, and got nowhere either.  
4 They didn't respond to him.

5 Q. Is it right though that in the end, they did?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. With Nathan Guy?

8 A. But it wasn't two weeks later from the mediation, it was  
9 over two years later, I think, and was no explanation about  
10 why they hadn't done it earlier and why it had been so long  
11 in coming.

12 Q. And I just want to take you now to section 7 of your  
13 evidence where you talk about what more needs to be done,  
14 and that's starting at paragraph 226. You first refer  
15 there to the issue of a public apology?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And then over in paragraph 233, if I could ask you to turn  
18 over to that, you are referring there to other steps that  
19 you would like to see taken. I just would like to ask you,  
20 please, to read from paragraph 233 to the end of your  
21 statement?

22 A. Other than the Army advising me that it has employment  
23 processes to ensure that all staff are vetted before they  
24 are appointed, I do not know what framework the Army has in  
25 place to prevent abuse, to address any abuse if it is  
26 identified, including removing abusers from its staff, and  
27 to compensate those who suffer abuse in its care. I also  
28 do not know what framework is in place for monitoring care  
29 the Army currently provides, such as for the elderly, who  
30 in some ways can have similar vulnerabilities to children.  
31 I think all such care needs to be registered and monitored.  
32 It would assist me to understand what these current  
33 frameworks are, so I can see positive change and progress.

34 I have been asked what would most assist me in healing.  
35 This is a really hard question, and I don't know if I will

1 ever really heal. Some days I feel I am making progress  
2 and others I do not. One way or another the abuse is  
3 always with me, sometimes deeper and sometimes closer to  
4 the surface. I almost always cry when I talk about it and  
5 it feels very present, even though it happened years ago.  
6 It has and continues to have a large and dark impact on my  
7 life, and as far as I know on the lives of all the SAAS  
8 members. Many of us have had hard lives.

9 I'd like to add in there that there were suicides and  
10 alcohol abuse, drug abusers, that I don't know if the Army  
11 followed up on or knew about.

12 I think that all efforts must go into helping people to  
13 understand the long-term impacts of abuse and into  
14 prevention. Once abuse has happened, it has happened, and  
15 it can't be taken away.

16 I think that where there is a will, there is a lot that  
17 can be achieved. I am hopeful about what we can do.

18 Q. Thank you, Jan. I don't have any more questions. If the  
19 Commissioners, have any questions, I will hand over to you.

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1  
2 **JAN LOWE**

3 **QUESTIONED BY COMMISSIONERS**

4  
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6 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Kia ora, Jan.

7 A. Kia ora.

8 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** I am Andrew/ Anaru, I have a question  
9 about how you see the processes, both MSD and the Salvation  
10 Army process and your view about whether they ought to be  
11 independent, I will put it that way.

12 A. Independent from?

13 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** From the Army itself. So, instead of  
14 having Murray Houston come and meet with you and a third  
15 party, impartial?

16 A. We chose not to meet with the Army when we knew they were  
17 investigating themselves, so yes, in answer to that. It  
18 would have been fairer, more equitable and a better  
19 representation of what had happened if it had been done  
20 with other people, I think, than the Army.

21 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Sure, sure. And you feel the same  
22 way about MSD's process too?

23 A. Yes, and I had mediation with them in 2000. I felt at the  
24 time that I had been heard, I'd been acknowledged, that it  
25 hadn't been my fault, things had happened that shouldn't  
26 have and got an apology from Steve Maharey and Mike Doolan.  
27 I thought it was over, but I asked that I be kept in touch  
28 with what changes they were making because it should never  
29 happen again and 20 years or 15 years later it's still  
30 happening. There's not been change.

31 So, whether it's too big, whether they need something  
32 like this more often so that people have a forum to speak  
33 out about what's been going on for them.

1 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Yes, yes. And this is another  
2 opportunity to get to those systemic issues that you really  
3 want to talk about?

4 A. Yes.

5 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** The vetting and the monitoring, yeah,  
6 kia ora.

7 A. Yeah. Until the Army acknowledged, as they have done now,  
8 thank you, that there was abuse and it shouldn't have  
9 happened, I don't think it could have gone any further. I  
10 think it was stuck there. But now that it's out in the  
11 open and acceptance has been made by the Army that things  
12 were done that shouldn't have been, I see that as a  
13 positive for change.

14 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Okay, that's good.

15 A. But I also think there should be an outside Agency  
16 involved. And I know this wasn't part of my brief, but may  
17 I talk about the case that I am aware of in Kapiti?

18 **MR OPIE:** If you wish, Jan.

19 A. Very briefly.

20 **CHAIR:** The only thing is if, Mr Opie, if I might ask  
21 Mr Opie, are you aware of this case?

22 **MR OPIE:** Well, I suppose Jan and I have talked about it on  
23 a number of occasions. On reflection, I guess, Jan, I  
24 think as we've talked, these are about your experiences?

25 A. Yes.

26 **MR OPIE:** So, perhaps, but the issue that you are talking  
27 about there is something that can be talked about  
28 subsequently and after this, if we need to.

29 A. Okay. Just that there is abuse still happening.

30 **CHAIR:** Yes.

31 A. And that's all I will say. If anyone wants to know about  
32 it, then I will talk. But I think they need to block up  
33 all the holes where it's able to happen and that there  
34 should be monitoring. I don't think the Army should  
35 monitor themselves. Even if they talk to people that have

1 been in care as well and ask what they think should happen,  
2 but that it has to be learnt from. Does that answer your  
3 question?

4 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Kia ora, it does, thank you very  
5 much. It's a great answer, thank you.

6 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Nothing from me, thank you so much.

7 **CHAIR:** I thought I had a question and then it's vanished  
8 out of my brain.

9 A. It will come back.

10 **CHAIR:** It will come back one day, but what I really wanted  
11 to do today though was just to acknowledge you. With such  
12 an awful story of deprivation, which is not just abuse but  
13 also the emotional neglect which I perceive as being almost  
14 more devastating, if you can start quantifying it, and with  
15 the longer term effects on you, which are really tragic.  
16 And so, we acknowledge that you suffered all of that but I  
17 really want to acknowledge the words that you said, that  
18 you think it's important to learn about injustice and that  
19 it's your responsibility to speak out. And so, I want to  
20 highlight that because a lesser person having suffered as  
21 you did might have just hidden away and done nothing but  
22 you managed to find the resources to not only speak for  
23 your own injustice, but many other people who have been in  
24 similar circumstances. I think it's very important that we  
25 publicly acknowledge that you found the resources, you  
26 found the resilience, fought bravely for so long and, as  
27 you said, your role you found was to keep everybody  
28 together so they could be heard. I know it's been a long  
29 and sometimes lonely road and I hope that you find that  
30 finally now we've got a Royal Commission looking into  
31 these, that other people can take over where you left off.

32 A. Yep, and that it not be forgotten.

33 **CHAIR:** Yes.

1 A. It can be pardoned and it can be put aside and new systems  
2 in place but I think that the way things happened should be  
3 still in mind when new systems are being put in place.

4 **CHAIR:** I think that's very important too. It's too easy  
5 to say, isn't it "it was all in the past"?

6 A. And "that's how things were done in those days", as one of  
7 the letters put it.

8 **CHAIR:** You have demonstrated that of course it lives with  
9 you on a daily basis?

10 A. Yes.

11 **CHAIR:** The past is the present for you, isn't it?

12 A. And my children.

13 **CHAIR:** And your children.

14 A. As I sort of lost because of the emotional component, which  
15 I lacked with them, I don't have the privilege of having my  
16 grandchildren around. And when I was aware that that was  
17 happening, I adopted a family of three who had a parent my  
18 father's age and they were my age when I was growing up, so  
19 I've had, I'm still in touch with them and I had about  
20 12 years of picnics and all sorts of fun things with them  
21 and just being there, helping with homework and from that,  
22 I got a sense of satisfaction and also of putting back in a  
23 way that I had with the Department taken a lot in terms of  
24 help and I think that when I'm in a position of doing that,  
25 it's good to do.

26 **CHAIR:** And that's another example of your resilience and  
27 attitude under your survival techniques. On behalf of the  
28 Commission, may I sincerely thank you for coming. I know  
29 you've done a private session. This isn't the first time  
30 you've told your story. I hope it might be the last, but  
31 thank you very much indeed for being brave and sitting  
32 there for as long as you have today and I hope you can go  
33 away now, have a rest and be looked after, so that you  
34 don't suffer too much from the trauma of having said all of  
35 this today.

1 A. Thank you for listening and I can hope from your faces that  
2 you will make sure a difference comes from this.

3 **CHAIR:** Thank you.

4 A. So, you go well.

5 **CHAIR:** Thank you, and you too. I think that's an  
6 appropriate moment to take the adjournment for the next  
7 witness. Thank you.

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9 **Hearing adjourned from 2.13 p.m. until 2.25 p.m.**

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