

Witness Name: Loretta Ryder

Statement No: WITN0267001

Exhibits: WITN0267002 – WITN0267018

Dated: 30/03/2021

ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE

WITNESS STATEMENT OF LORETTA RYDER

I, Loretta Ryder, will say as follows:

Introduction

1. My full name is Loretta Hinerangi Ryder. I was born at Middlemore hospital in Auckland on GRO-B 1968. I am now 53 years old.
2. My evidence is about the abuse I experienced in my family prior to entering and while in state care at GRO-B Home, Bollard Girls Home and Weymouth Girls School. It also covers complaints I made to school staff about abuse I was experiencing at home.

Whānau

3. I am one of eight kids to my parents although to be pono (truthful), I do not know how many siblings I have in total because my Dad had lots of kids.
4. Of the kids that my mother and father had together, I have an older sister, four younger brothers and two younger sisters.
5. My parents are both Māori.

6. My father's name was Ivan John Ryder. He was Tārara – Dalmatian and Māori. My father was a man of the cloth, he wore the collar for **GRO-B** Church.
7. My mother's name is **GRO-B-2** and she is Māori, Italian and Scottish. My mother went through the **GRO-B** herself as I believe she had been **GRO-B** by her family. There was a big age gap between my parents. My father was in his 50s and my mother was 19 when they got together.
8. My father was 52 when I was born.
9. I asked my father questions about his whānau when I was young but he didn't like to talk about them. Apparently my Koro was violent to my Nan and I remember my Dad telling us about some really bad violence that my Koro inflicted on her.
10. I remember we used to go up north some weekends and we had some connection with my father's whānau up in Kaitaia.
11. My mother's Māori name is **GRO-B-2**. Her whānau are from Rotorua, Whakatane, and **GRO-B** but we weren't connected with her whānau growing up.
12. If Mum was not getting on with someone, then we never saw them again. My Uncle **GRO-B-3**, who is my mother's only living brother, lives in **GRO-B**. I asked him about coming to visit them when we were kids and why the visits had stopped. Uncle **GRO-B-3** said it was because of my mother's ways. He said that my mother stopped us kids having a relationship with her siblings and with her mother, my nan.
13. My mother never had a good relationship with her own mother. When my mother was born, she had been promised to her aunty, my nanny **GRO-B-4**. My mother had this hate for her own mother and I did not understand what it was about.
14. I identify as being Māori but I don't really identify with my iwi. We were born in Auckland and we weren't brought up with Māori ways. We weren't allowed to speak te reo and we didn't have a marae in Auckland.
15. We went to tangi on marae up north when we were young. I used to feel like I belonged there but we didn't go up there very often.
16. My middle name is Hinerangi. I was told I was named after my **GRO-B** but also after Guide Sophia from Whakarewarewa.
17. The only person that calls me Hinerangi is my mother.

Family life before State Care

18. I don't remember any happy times with my mother. She would physically beat me and I was often bruised. I don't know why but she would often take her anger out on me so I would get lots of hidings.
19. My father worked a lot. My mother would physically abuse us when he was out at work. My father never physically abused us, he would not stand for that.
20. When I was around eight years old, my mother pretty much left our family as she had started a lesbian relationship. We were left at home and that was when my father started sexually abusing me.
21. When my mother came back home I told her what had happened with my father and she beat me to a pulp. She beat me until I was unconscious, when I came to I was sitting in a cold bath. She told me to shut up, not to speak of it to anyone and then threatened that she would kill me.
22. I took my mother's threats seriously because I knew how violent she could be. I was told that if anyone asked about the bruising that I was to say I had fallen out of a tree.

Telling school what happened

23. In standard three when I was nine years old, there was an incident at school. A friend of mine grabbed a ruler and whacked my arm to get my attention. I had bruises that I was hiding and when he hit me, I picked up my desk and threw it at him. I broke down and was sent to the Principal's office to get the strap.
24. I had to take off my top while I was in the office and the Principal saw the bruising. I was then sent to the medical room and don't recall much of what happened there. The Police were contacted by the school.
25. I got taken down to the Police station and told them what my mother had told me to say, which was that I was playing in the backyard and fell out of a tree. I feared for my life with my mother so I said what she told me to say.
26. The Police then said they were going to ring my mother. I then confided in a female cop and told her the truth. She made me feel like I was safe. I told her that I didn't want to go home because it was my mother that had given me a hiding.

27. The female cop didn't call my mum but someone else did. I had to stop crying and put on the calm mask that I had to wear during my childhood.
28. They photographed me, I had to strip right down.
29. When my mother arrived to pick me up, I knew that she was either going to kill me or beat me again. I was never to speak up again otherwise she would kill me. I didn't say anything.
30. She was clever. She would put me in an ice bath after the beatings to reduce the swelling. She would tell me that I was getting what I deserved and that nobody would believe me if I said something.
31. Sometimes when she beat me she would send me up north to GRO-B to my Nana's house so no one would see the bruises on my face and body.
32. I hated my mother with all my might but at the same time I just wanted my mother to love me. I wanted her to treat me the same way she treated my older sister, with love and affection. That didn't happen and she ended up leaving the family home with my sister.
33. When my mother left with my older sister, she said she would come back for me that night so I waited at the end of the driveway with my suitcase. I fell asleep waiting at the end of the driveway but my mother didn't come back. My father came to get me and carried me inside to his bed.

After my mother left

34. I liked everything about my father except for the sexual abuse. I hated him for that and it made me want to kill him. It was painful for me and I didn't want to be left there with my father.
35. I didn't see my mother for a while, As I was the eldest girl at home, I took on my mother's role in every way. I became a mother to the younger kids and I had to service my father's sexual needs, like I was his wife. After some time, my mother brought my older sister back and I ended up telling her what our father had done. My older sister told me that Dad had done something similar to her.
36. My mother ended up leaving my father. She was in various relationships, some with women. My mother got custody of the four girls and my father the four boys. In reality we all lived with my father and my mother just took the benefit money.

Whenever Social Welfare came around for an inspection we would go back to her house. We were her meal ticket.

37. I have now seen some of my file from the Department of Social Welfare. I know that there is a note that says Social Welfare visited on 22 December 1980 where the social worker recorded that she saw both me and my older sister at my mother's house and "all appeared to be well". [WITN0267002] To me, this shows my parents deception worked as the social workers never stuck around long enough to see what was really happening.
38. My father wouldn't beat us or let anyone beat us. He would make us do physical work like chopping wood as punishment.
39. The sexual abuse continued even though I was technically in the custody of my mother. I would spend my nights in fear. At night times, the boys would be in one room, the girls in another and the young ones up the front. My father would call out for us and I would push my older sister as I wanted her to protect me. She jumped out the window and left me. So the abuse carried on.
40. There were a few times when it happened while my mother was back at my father's house and while she was present. I remember her saying to him to use lots of vaseline and she stayed in the room while he raped me.
41. During intermediate I had to go home at lunchtime to service my father's sexual desires. Threats were made about my brothers missing out on things or that I would be punished if I didn't do it. I was not allowed to shower afterwards so I smelled when I returned to school. I was in choir and lots of other school activities. I remember some girls behind me in choir saying that I stunk.
42. I felt I had no choice but to continue so that my father wouldn't turn to my younger sisters. I wanted to protect them.
43. As a young girl, I didn't understand that my father's abuse was wrong. As I got older, I just shut up and put up with the hidings and the sexual abuse.
44. I tried to commit suicide on a number of occasions but I thought about my younger sisters and I didn't want them to get hurt.

GRO-B

Home

45. As far as I know, the reason I was put into state care is because my sister and I made allegations about my father sexually abusing us.

46. My older sister convinced me to tell someone about what my father had been doing. It was during intermediate, when I was form one and my older sister was form two.
47. I agreed and we spoke to a counsellor at school and then we were taken away. I can't remember whether it was from school or home. I can't remember if the Police were there.
48. We got taken to [GRO-B] which was a [GRO-B] home for girls in [GRO-B] I remember nuns; it was a huge house with lots of rooms and seemed like a monastery to me. I was admitted to [GRO-B] on a Police warrant on 15 October 1980 [WITN0267003]. I was sad that my sisters were left at home and I was worried about them being left with my father.
49. I shut down when I was taken there. I didn't trust anybody.
50. I looked out the window and saw my mother and I started panicking. I was freaking out wondering what she was doing here. My mother was with a Pākehā lady who I assumed was the social worker.
51. I tried to call out to my older sister but she had been taken somewhere else.
52. One of the nuns came in and told me to be quiet and wait until I was called. I started crying and said that I was scared because my mother was there. The nun said I had to go and talk about the allegations about what was happening.
53. At the time I needed to be with my sister to have the strength to tell the truth. My mother had previously threatened to end my life. I also felt pressure because of the knowledge that my family would be split apart.
54. I remember going with the nun into a room at [GRO-B] and there were two men in there. I ran out of the room because I was too scared to talk about life at home. I started crying for my sister.
55. Then my mother walked in. She told me I wasn't to say anything because certain things were going to happen to my siblings and my life would be "not good". I can't remember the exact threat but it was enough that I was terrified. She went out of the room and said "do you fucking understand Hinerangi?"
56. I heard my sister crying but I couldn't find where she was as we had been put in separate rooms. They wouldn't let me go to my older sister.

57. The staff asked me why I said one thing and then said something else. They then told me they were going to be doing an internal. I had no idea what that was.
58. I was taken into a room where there was a long bed like you would see at a doctor's surgery. None of the staff were wearing a doctor's coat or looked like doctors, so when they started to examine me I just thought someone else was touching me.
59. I didn't want them to do it and I remember I was crying for my sister.
60. Afterwards I was taken to a room with my sister and I told her what had happened. My sister told me that we couldn't tell them because we knew what would happen at home. My biggest motivator was surviving and also protecting my brothers and sisters from my parents. My older sister wanted to run away but I couldn't leave my siblings.
61. We stayed two nights at [GRO-B] and then got taken to the Children and Young Person's Court on 17 October 1980 [WITN0267003]. My father was represented by Kevin Ryan, who I believe was a top lawyer in Auckland at the time.
62. After we appeared on 17 October 1980, the case was adjourned and we were returned to the care of our mother. I did not want to go back to live with my mother as I knew she would beat me for having made this complaint.
63. I have found it very upsetting to see the way this incident was recorded in the file. It says that we appeared due to a Police complaint that we were beyond the control of our father due to being truant from school and occasionally sleeping away from home [WITN0267004]. There is also a report from a social worker that said "the children complained of the treatment they received at the hands of their father and wished to be allowed to live with their mother." The social worker report also said my father had previously appeared in the Children's Court on a similar complaint to mine in 1970, for two of his children from a previous marriage. [WITN0267004]
64. The social worker report said that [GRO-B-5] and I were "truanting from school and sleeping away from home on occasions... sniffing solvents and have refused to go home to their parent Mr [GRO-B-1]." The report also said that [GRO-B-5] and I "exhibited this behaviour in consequence of their treatment and the unsatisfactory conditions existing in their father's home and the desire to join their mother." [WITN0267004] The social worker said that us being moved to live with our mother had "achieved the desired effect" and recommended that we be admonished and sentenced to

supervision. The social worker also recommended the complaint against my father be dismissed. [WITN0267004]

65. The file from the final court hearing on 9 December 1980 records that I admitted the charge of "being not under proper care or control." [WITN0267004] I do not remember being asked about that or admitting anything. I was admonished and sentenced to 12 months' supervision. [WITN0267004]

66. I am angry now that I have seen the documents about this incident. Although we said we were being sexually abused, this was downplayed as a complaint about "unsatisfactory conditions" at my father's house and as though we made the complaint just to be moved to our mother's. I am so angry that they swept this under the carpet. Seeing it written down shows they knew and they could have done something to stop this. The fact that we made a complaint about being sexually abused and the result was we got in trouble for it makes me sick to my stomach.

Running Away

67. Things pretty much carried on as they had done after the court case. It was a matter of getting beaten by my mother or sexually abused by my father. That was my childhood.

68. Part of the sexual abuse was that I had to wear certain clothes, put make up on and look a certain way.

69. I started running away more and I would tell the Police what was happening at my mother's house and at my father's house but they would keep taking me back to both of them.

70. My father was a bookie and he would always say his best customers were the Police and the Police Detectives. Lots of the officers at the Avondale Police Station knew my father.

71. I wanted to get my brothers and sisters out of home and for us to all go and stay with my Aunty and Uncle in Mangere. They said that they would have us.

72. I had a friend from school called [GRO-B-6]. At times I would confide what was happening at home to her. I would sometimes run away from home to her place. She came around to my place after encouragement from my father and he sexually abused her. We were really close and would cry together about what happened.

73. I already knew it was going to happen and I felt like I was leading a lamb to slaughter. As I got older I realised how naïve I was about bringing GRO-B-6 to my house.
74. GRO-B-6 didn't tell her mother what had happened but we would sometimes go to her house after school. That was my safe place and GRO-B-6 kept me sane and listened to me.
75. I kept running away from home whenever. I remember one breaking point for me was one night asking if my older sister GRO-B-5 could go instead of me when my father called out. She said she couldn't and I hated her at the time. I just wanted her to be my older sister and protect me. I didn't want to be around her anymore after that night. I didn't confide in her anymore.
76. My older sister ended up in Rotorua somewhere with some of our mother's family. The rest of us stayed at home.
77. At my mother's house we had no food in the cupboards, nothing. When Social Welfare would come, a show was put on. Everything would be normal when they came around and there would be food in the cupboards.
78. This was in contrast to our father's house, where there were always full cupboards, our school uniforms were paid for, we had clothing and everything was done. Aside from the sexual abuse, my father actually provided for us.
79. By this stage, I was sniffing glue to try to numb myself every time I went into that room with my father. I would tell anybody that would listen what was happening, but I was told that I was a liar and that I would manipulate situations to work for me.
80. I used to run away to a community centre run in town. I had never seen the city before that and walking from Avondale to Queen Street was like going to New York or LA. Some school trips went into the city but we weren't really allowed to go on them.
81. I told the centre what was going on at home and the centre then contacted my father. The other kids at the centre warned me and I managed to hide in the roof there but they still found me in the end.
82. The kids at the community centre were haututū as, full of mischief.
83. I felt like I was stuck for the rest of my life with my family. The people at the community centre were kind to the street kids but they couldn't believe that a man

like my father would be doing what he was to his children. I had to go home with my father in his car and as soon as my sisters and nephews left then he abused me again.

Residences

Children and Young Persons Court: January – April 1983

84. One day I was picked up by Police but this time it was Auckland Central Police, not Avondale Police and they didn't know my Dad. They actually listened to me. Before that all I had ever been told was that I was lying and making it all up.
85. I appeared in the Children and Young Persons Court on 20 January 1982. The case record summary said that I left home and went to the Maori Community Centre and that I said I did not want to return home and that my father was forcing me to have sexual intercourse with him. **[WITN0267005; WITN0267006]**.
86. They took me to Bollard Girls' Home. My file records that I was admitted to Bollard on 20 January 1982, after appearing in the Auckland Children and Young Person's Court. **[WITN0267007; WITN0267008]** I ran away from Bollard soon after being taken there. I will speak about Bollard in more detail later in my statement.
87. As part of the court case, there were psychological reports. The reports have lots of errors however one report does say that I told the psychologist that my father had been sexually abusing me. **[WITN0267009]** I also told the psychologist about my father continuing to abuse me during his visits to me at Bollard however this is not recorded in the report. The report states that I told him that my father had visited me and that I "expressed neither positive nor negative feelings about these visits and appeared to have suppressed any reactions." **[WITN0267009]** I do not know why he said that given what I told him about my father's visits.
88. My social worker at the time also wrote two reports for court. In the first one, she said that I told Police that my father had been forcing me to have sexual intercourse and that this had been happening for sometime. The report goes on to state "when it was suggested that she go to her mother, she refused as she said that her mother was living in a lesbian relationship and that when her mother and her partner had fights they would take it out on her and her sisters." **[WITN0267006]**

89. I told them if they sent me to either parent I would run away.
90. On 8 April 1982 the final hearing was held in the Children and Young Person's Court . I have seen a report by my social worker at the time which recommended that I be made a ward of the state. It says in the file that I was adamant I would not return to my mother and that I was "anxious to return to my father." That is true because I was worried for my younger sisters and I wanted to protect them. The report said "in view of Loretta's allegations against her father, I consider such a placement unwise" but it also said "it would seem to some extent Loretta is manipulating the family's unfortunate circumstances to her own advantage."
[WITN0267010]
91. It makes me so angry to read that. All my childhood I was told I was a liar and that I was manipulating things when in reality I was trying to survive and also to protect my younger siblings.
92. All I wanted was to be together with my brothers and sisters and to be safe. I didn't understand that my whole family couldn't be picked up and taken away together. They never pulled in my father's whānau or questioned anything about him because he wore the collar.
93. I don't know why we weren't able to go to live with my Aunty in Mangere. She was our whānau and we could have gone there instead of into homes.
94. I have seen in my file it says that my mother's cousin in Mt Albert offered to care for me but my mother strongly objected to this. **[WITN0267011]**
95. The result of the court hearing on 8 April was that I was made a ward of the state.

Lloyd Avenue Family Home

96. Next, I was placed in the Lloyd Avenue Family Home in Mt Albert. Mr and Mrs GRO-B-7&8 managed the family home. By this time I was at Auckland Girls Grammar.
97. I was admitted to the Lloyd Avenue Family Home on 20 April 1982 but I was re-admitted to Bollard several times when I was in the care of the GRO-B-7&8's at the Lloyd Street Family Home. **[WITN0267007]**
98. Mrs GRO-B-7 was an Indian lady and she was awesome. She was kind, caring and compassionate. I was so happy to be there in the beginning. But Mr GRO-B-8 had drinking problems.

99. I raised my concerns about what he was making me do in the kitchen. He would make me clean the floor and tap me on the butt. Mrs [GRO-B-7] didn't listen to me and I saw an ugly side of her so I got out of there. I broke into their room and stole the money tin with my money in it, filled up a bag with food and took some clothing and took off, back to the streets. The cops eventually picked me up but Mrs [GRO-B-7] wouldn't take me back after that. I was never told what was happening.

Bollard Girls Home

100. After absconding from the Lloyd Avenue family home I was picked up by the police and taken back to Bollard. I had been back to Bollard a couple of times while at the family home already, but I was placed there permanently on 1 July 1982.

[WITN0267007]

101. I don't remember getting sent to secure when I first arrived at Bollard (on 20 January 1982) but I did get sent to secure if I was going back to Bollard after running away. It took me a while to get used to how things worked at Bollard.

102. When there were certain staff working, you knew you had to watch your walk and your talk. This happened more when the staff were Pākehā. I didn't know what racism was when I was growing up but at Bollard, the Pākehā girls got treated a lot better than the Māori girls did. I didn't like how people from different races would speak to each other.

103. There were a lot of Māori girls in Bollard and there were definitely more brown girls than there were white girls in there. Staff members spoke differently to us Māori girls compared to the Pākehā girls. The tone was different and they used nicknames like honey or love when talking to Pākehā girls but they didn't do that with us. Whenever there were activities, the white girls would always go off. There was a lot of separation.

104. I didn't understand what racism was but I learned about it at Bollard. The staff spoke differently to us, the way they spoke, their tone, what they said.

105. Growing up, I wasn't violent at home and I never hit my siblings but in Bollard I became violent because I had to defend myself. The other girls were violent so I was forced to fight back. They tried to initiate me when I arrived but I fought them off in the showers. I had heard stories about girls being violated using broomsticks

and I told them to tell the staff about it but they said they wouldn't because the staff were worse. The senior girls knew everything that went on.

Secure

106. I learnt pretty quickly in Bollard that if you spoke out you ended up down in the secure unit. The secure unit was a separate block from the dormitories. There was a form that had to be signed before they could take you there and you knew they were taking you down to the unit. Staff would not always follow procedure with us brown girls – sometimes we would be sent down to the secure unit without paperwork.
107. When we were sent down in secure there was no fair process for us to have our say. I often got sent there for protecting myself in self-defence or for speaking up. I would speak out and speak up for the Māori girls and get told to be silent and not to speak out because “anything that could happen in the secure unit”.
108. The altercations between the Māori and Pākehā girls were big but the punishment was always for the Māori girls. I would speak up about it because it wasn't right.
109. In the secure unit we had to eat our food in our cells, right next to the toilets. I hated eating right next to the toilet but I was forced to eat my food. The staff would push my head down to the plate. Being in the cell was not good. There was just a bed and a toilet and sometimes we only got a bucket for going to the toilet.
110. I used to always get told that I deserved everything I got from the staff. It was like they were trying to break my spirit and make me feel like I was scum of the earth.
111. In secure, I used to get angry and yell at the staff but then I would get hit and they'd say things like “we can hit you where you don't bruise” so I learnt really fast to calm the fuck down, to play their game in order to get the hell out of there.
112. If you didn't tow the line, you wouldn't get given food.
113. There was school at Bollard but I was ahead of what they were teaching. The processes at the school there were too slow. As a result I was disruptive. School was also the easiest place to abscond from because there were less staff so I would take off from there a lot. I found school boring at Bollard.

Neglect and Unsupervised Visits

114. My father was able to come and visit me in Bollard. He would come in collared up, bringing fruit and chocolates and my younger siblings. He was allowed to visit me unsupervised at Bollard.
115. I knew that my father would try to abuse me so I told the staff what was going to happen before the visit and I asked if someone could sit in the room with me. They were annoyed because they were understaffed and I remember one of them saying something along the lines of "Look Loretta, you little bitch, you always want everything. We're understaffed" and they more or less just pushed me into the visiting room where they closed the door.
116. The first time he visited, he did not fully rape me but sexually assaulted me with his hands. The boys were doing their colouring books facing the other way while he assaulted me.
117. The next time, and from then on, he raped me during visits.
118. I wasn't going to complain, scream or yell out. He was making threats to me and playing his usual games so I just did what I was expected to do.
119. He came to visit every time he felt he wanted his needs to be serviced. I believe he also had other young women at home for the same purpose.
120. My father continued to come to Bollard. He would also tell me that I had to go to him or he would abuse my younger sisters who were still at home. I would go to the softball park down the road from Bollard where I knew he had left money for a taxi to go home in the ticket booth. I would get changed and go home to be abused by him. Sometimes I didn't go to protect myself but I would always be thinking of my sisters. Because of the guilt and constant fear for my sisters, I went most of the time.
121. I tried telling staff at Bollard about this so that someone would come to the visit with me but they didn't believe me. There was one staff member who did listen. She was this gypsy looking woman, she wore velvet skirts and she had a good āhua. I told her about what was happening and she sat with me one time during a visit. But she wasn't always on when the bad stuff was happening and there was no one else to tell.
122. You learnt pretty quickly who to trust and who not to.

123. No social workers ever suggested that I could have contact or visits with my wider whānau. I could only have family leave to go to my father's.

124. I recently asked my brothers if they knew what was happening in the room at Bollard and one of them said he had an inkling but was too scared to turn around.

Abuse from Staff at Bollard

125. We had to have venereal disease checks at Bollard. I didn't want the test but they strapped me down while they did what they did. I had slept with one or two of the street boys before I went into Bollard. I got an STD and thought that it would be a way to show what was happening if I passed it to my father. I had a VD test which came back positive. When my father raped me the next time I told them to test him to prove that he was abusing me. They didn't do anything to him, and instead they sent me to the secure unit for speaking up.

126. Another time I was assaulted by a male staff member in the secure unit. I was told to undress as I was getting a medical done but he wasn't a doctor. I was lying there by myself and he molested me. I don't know whether there were any other staff members or other girls there at the time. Normally there was only one staff member in the secure unit except at lunch where additional staff members would bring food down to us.

127. He told me that if I told anyone that he would tell the girls that I gave sexual favours to him and it would be his word against mine. He asked me to give him a blow job and I said that I would bite his dick off.

128. I remember that he was Pākehā but I don't remember his name. I started to wonder whether this happened to everybody else or just to me because I spoke out.

129. **GRO-B-9** was one of the staff members at Bollard. She had a horrible outlook on the Māori girls, she would always pick on us and hit us with her torch on the night rounds. She was cruel, especially to me. She would often say that I was the leader and that all the other girls were following me. If I ever tried to respond they would say that I was lying. If I started to shut down they would just put me in the secure unit because they knew I was going to run away.

130. I ran away from Bollard a lot, I would say 12 or 13 times. I eventually stopped telling the girls I was going to run away in case they passed it on. It was better on

the street. I often ran away to Ōwairaka where my brothers were. My cousin and her partner lived in Mt Albert close to Ōwairaka. They knew what was happening but didn't know what my mother's role in all of it was. I knew my younger brothers were also running away and that Social Welfare was involved with them too. I would run to Ōwairaka and ask anyone I could if they were there and how they were going. If I didn't run to Ōwairaka I would run into town with my friends. We would sleep in the Aotea Square carpark in a boiler room down there. We would break into houses and take what we needed. I would try to stop the others from being destructive for no reason. Sometimes we would break into my mother's house and steal things from there. I would take my friends home for some kai.

131. I have done a lot of shoplifting and stealing in my life just to survive.

132. At Bollard I had to deal with the staff, the girls and with the visits from my father. I was happier on the street with the street kids because lots of them had been abused like me. We could all talk with each other and sleep marae styles and it was safe.

133. The last time I ran away **GRO-B-9** caught me. I had planned my escape for two weeks and was going to go to my cousin's place. I had to sleep on the second floor and I was going to go out the window using sheets tied together as a rope. I remember hearing her come in as I was going out the window. The other girls told her I was running away. She hit me over the head with her torch and said "you little fucking bitch, get your arse back in here!" I felt a trickle of blood down my face, saw it fall on the sheet and let go because I freaked out. **GRO-B-9** sounded exactly like my mother to me.

134. I got away and went to my cousin's place. They tried to look after me. But it was a Mongrel Mob house and unfortunately when the mobsters were there any young girls were there for the taking. That happened to me. I was abused there once and I never went back after that. One of the mobsters who abused me had a house over on Tutanekai Street in Grey Lynn near my Dad. I told him that I would tell my father and that he would shoot him. My father was protective of us in a sick way. He would not let us have boyfriends. Later, when he found out I was seeing my first son's father, he came with guns and machetes.

135. During my time at Bollard, no one listened to me about my physical or sexual abuse at home. My mother and father repeatedly made it look like we had a perfect

family to the outside world. I don't know why they thought I was saying the same things over and over again if they weren't true. In the end if you keep telling people the truth and they don't listen all you want to do is forget about it. Unfortunately for me, other people did worse than just ignore our complaints. When our extended family found out about it, I got abuse from them about what it would do to our family.

136. Eventually I was told that if I ran away another time then Bollard would not be the place for me. The staff just looked at me like I was trouble.

Weymouth Residential Centre

137. I was taken to Weymouth after running away again. I was told I was going there because of my repeated absconding. They also told me that Weymouth was going to be better for me because of the outdoor activities. My only regret is that I left my diary behind. I asked the social worker Mrs GRO-C-1 for it but never got it back. It had all the details of my life in it.

138. In my file there is a psychological report from October 1982 that said I came "from a very disturbed family background", that I was "deeply emotionally disturbed by experiences within" my family and that if I was to be placed at Weymouth, I would need "intensive professional support." **[WITN0267011]**

139. I understand that my social worker recommended that I be moved to Weymouth in October 1982 but I wasn't placed there until 8 February 1983. **[WITN0267012]** I do not know why there was such a delay. I stayed at Weymouth most of 1983. **[WITN0267007; WITN0267012; WITN0267013]**

140. I was excited about moving to Weymouth. I liked it because there were lots more outdoor activities. I had seen the horses, kayaks and camping area and had thought I wanted to go there. I was always a tomboy and loved the outdoors.

141. I was also excited because they were going to teach me family and life skills. I wanted to be shown what a family should teach. I also wanted to join the army and continue to learn how to use guns. I wanted to kill everyone that had hurt me, especially my father. We had learnt how to use guns as children.

142. Even when I was moved to Weymouth I remained worried about my sisters at home.

143. At Weymouth there were three main hostels. They were just called hostel one, hostel two and hostel three. The doors weren't locked which gave me a bit of a sense of freedom. There was also a big gym, pool and school.
144. The girls that took me around for my introductory tour were Māori. They tried to drown me in the pool and afterwards told me to say that I had just slipped into the pool. That was my introduction to Weymouth.
145. I was allocated a social worker called Mr Kennedy. He was South African. I couldn't believe that a male could be so kind. I had never come across it before except with the Police officer who had dropped me off at Bollard. I actually listened to him.
146. The first night I was there I was put into hostel one. I got beaten by the girls. The majority were Māori, and because I was fairer when I was younger, they thought I was Pākehā.
147. I told the staff that I had been beaten. They asked me who did it. I didn't have any obvious bruising because they were clever about how they beat us. I think that Mr Kennedy believed me. I was asked if I wanted to write a report about it but I declined because nobody ever believed me anyway.
148. When I first entered Weymouth I had to have a full medical. They checked my eyes and my teeth, even though I didn't want to go to the dentist. I was anaemic. Our father had never let us go to the doctor much during our childhood, he was the doctor in our lives.
149. Some things worked for the staff at Weymouth but didn't work for the girls. Once we turned a certain age we were allowed to have three cigarettes over a certain time period. The staff had their processes, we would have our cigarette once we had completed chores or finished meals. The staff would sit down and eat their meals with us. They would then take their plates up and go for a smoke, but would tell us we weren't allowed to have our cigarettes until the chores were completed.
150. I was labelled as a kingpin by the staff when I was at Weymouth.
151. I know there are records on my file of me absconding from Weymouth. I ran away many more times than what is recorded. I ran away from Weymouth anytime things went wrong (including once on a horse); running away became a characteristic of my life. I thought I would have to keep running my whole life.

152. When I got caught after running away on the horse I got put into the secure unit in hostel four. I had to stay down there for a while.
153. One time I ran away to Rotorua and I got arrested for car conversion in May 1983. There were a few court appearances in the Children and Young Person's Court before I got sentenced. I have seen in my file a letter from a social worker that talks about a work placement at Weymouth Intermediate school. **[WITN0267014]** There is also a report that the social worker claimed I wrote to give to the Judge. The language in the social worker's letter and the report that I supposedly wrote are very similar and it is clear that it was not written by me. **[WITN0267015]**
154. The final social worker report for the court hearing talks about the work placement and recommends that I am sentenced to come up if called upon for sentence and kept longer at Weymouth so that I can "advance the improvements already made." **[WITN0267016]**
155. Two days later, I was sentenced in court to come up if called upon for 12 months. **[WITN0267017]** To me, this shows the power the social workers had and that I was not really involved in deciding what was happening to me.
156. In hostel one we had a lot of freedom and got to do things like go out on weekend trips. I remember going shopping for clothes. Mr Kennedy explained that this is what should have happened previously while I had been under Social Welfare care. Prior to that I had never worn pyjamas because I had to be naked at home and then wasn't given any at Bollard.
157. Weymouth also had sports teams. We got to go and play basketball and other sports against other schools. This was the only thing that was like normal school. I felt like I got to do a lot of the things I had previously missed out on. My father had not let us leave the house or go on school trips. I had also never been allowed to do anything like that at Bollard.
158. I enjoyed Weymouth but I missed my siblings. I learnt to stick up for myself after I had turned 14 and experienced the life that I had. I had been banged around a bit by then and told my mother that if she ever touched me again that I would kill her. She didn't touch me again after that.
159. She never came to visit me at Weymouth. My mother is in denial about a lot of things, even now. Although I enjoyed it more than the other residences, there was

still no voice for kids at Weymouth. I think I was lucky because I was fair skinned. The racism at Weymouth was not as bad as Bollard but there was still a difference between how they treated Māori girls and Pākehā girls. Although I'm Māori, I was still treated better than some of the darker skinned girls.

160. I had to stay in hostel four for a while because I didn't want to be there so I would fight back. This extended my stay. Mr Kennedy would come in to see me and tell me what I needed to do to get back into hostel one. I had to do my time in there and do the correct things during the day. They kept a record of how we behaved, like we were animals in the zoo.

161. I nearly made it to hostel two, but what was written on our report forms was solely from the staff perspective. Our opinions and thoughts didn't feature. We were able to make written complaints but these clearly didn't go anywhere. Years later, when I got my paperwork from the Ministry of Social Development none of my complaints were on file. That was part of the reason I wanted my diary, as I had written down all my complaints in it.

162. When I was in hostel four, I told them about the abuse from my father. His visits to me at Weymouth were supervised. Ma Penny listened to me. She had to go out during one visit due to an altercation between the girls. She checked with me if I would be ok, I told her that I wouldn't be, and she made sure when she had to pop out that she left the door open and only turned her back for a moment. She was like a big sister to me, she really cared about me. Ma Warren was the same. She really tried to develop our skills, especially when it came to sports. We all felt like we could trust Ma Warren. She kept us uplifted but didn't give us too much sympathy. She gave me advice about how to get out of being a state ward. This was really different because at Bollard all I had heard was that I would be stuck there until I was 21.

163. While in hostel four, I didn't get on with one of the girls and one of the staff members. His name was Mr [GRO-B-10] and I hated him. The girl and I had had an altercation one day before breakfast. She was the sort of girl that got something if she wanted it. We got sent to our cells but we started fighting first. Mr [GRO-B-10] came down to pull us apart. He grabbed my breasts while he separated us and was very rough. I was trying to hit him but he had my arms over his head. I got dragged down to the secure unit and put into another cell where I was forced to get changed, if I didn't I was told I would have change in front of all the male staff. As soon as I sat

down on the bed in the cell it was like a placenta came out. I didn't realise at the time but now having had children I know what it is like.

164. I screamed for help but no one came. I woke up later strapped down to a bed, wearing only a top and no bottoms, with no sheet covering me. I think in hindsight I may have had a miscarriage in that secure unit but no one talked to me about it. They were talking about giving me a contraceptive injection. They then gave it to me while I was strapped down.
165. My file notes confirm that I was given the Depo Provera contraceptive injections at least three times while at Weymouth. This was when I was 15. **[WITN0267018]** They did not talk to me about the injection before giving it to me. Afterwards, Ma Penny told me that I was given the jab because of my sexual activity outside of Weymouth.
166. I desperately wanted to leave Weymouth after that.
167. Eventually I ran away for good. I got a job under a false name, got myself a flat and saved some money. This was the advice Ma Warren had given me to get out.
168. I have seen that on my file it confirms I remained at Weymouth until 25 November 1983. **[WITN0267007; WITN0267012; WITN0267013]**.
169. I don't remember many of the social workers that were involved with me. I know there was one woman called Mrs GRO-C-1 but I don't remember much of what happened with her. I have seen in my file there are notes about meetings where apparently a plan was formed and I agreed to it. That's bullshit because I was very outspoken and I would never have agreed to go to my mother's with what was happening there.
170. They kept saying I needed to have a relationship with my mother because it had broken down but no one listened to me about what was happening. I was often told I was lying and making things up so eventually I shut down and just went along with things. When they made me go home to my mother, I would go and then run away as soon as I could.
171. I had to learn to be manipulative so that I could get out of there.

Life after State Care

172. My file notes that I was discharged from care on 15 May 1984 because I was 16, in receipt of an unemployment benefit, and because I was on probation and therefore meant to be receiving oversight from the Probation Service.

[WITN0267013]

173. I had my first child at 17. His father was a King Cobra. I felt I could relate to the gang members because they had been in the homes too and had done all of the things we had done.

174. My father continued to abuse me until I was hapu with my first son. My sons' father and I threatened him with weapons, and my sons' father then caught him. He didn't interfere with me again after that.

175. My family were still separated. My mother had one of my younger sisters with her but the rest were scattered throughout state care. I think that the fact that some of mother's kids weren't my father's caused big problems in my family.

176. I subsequently bought my family down to Wellington to try to look after them.

My children

177. I have had eight kids with multiple partners.

178. I have drunk alcohol and used marijuana and at times I've sold drugs to look after my kids. I have gang affiliations as I ended up with the president of the Black Power juniors and that was my "in" into the gang and especially the wāhine in the gang.

179. I have parented my kids differently as I did not want to be physically abusive like my mother was to us. I never wanted to be a parent who hit my children and then cuddled them. For the most part, I have been able to remain violence free with my own kids. It is really important to me do be different to my mother.

180. I have tried hard to keep my children away from what I went through. I didn't want my children to smoke or drink but I educated them about marijuana and alcohol.

181. I also tried to stop my kids from going down the gang path. One of my sons spent time in prison and ended up patched to the Nomads. He got all tattooed up. I was very angry when I heard about it but he said "Mum, I've got nobody in here" so I also understand it.

182. My daughter has been raped and stabbed by a partner. I don't want him to be able to do that to anyone else again. We went around to their house and found our daughter chained up like she was a dog.

183. The father of my later children has maemae that is too deep to even speak about. He has also been through state care but he can't talk about it.

Offending

184. I have some offending history although I have not been in trouble for a long time and I have the clean slate now.

185. One offence that was linked to what happened to me as a child was when I assaulted a man in the late 1980s. I was told that children were being abused at a property on Holly Street in Auckland and that they were being given alcohol and solvents. I went around there and all I could smell was glue. I saw two boys in a bed there and I went crazy. I assaulted the man there with a knife. It was one of my dad's friends. I was arrested but did not make a statement. They discussed charging me with attempted murder. My lawyer advised me not to comment so I didn't speak about it.

186. I was eventually charged with aggravated wounding with intent to injure and kidnapping.

187. When I was taken to jail they performed another medical on me and found out that I was pregnant again. Police and prison staff were physically abusive trying to get a statement out of me. They said they would hit me in places where I wouldn't lose the baby as a result. They hit me with books but not on my abdomen. I still didn't make a statement.

188. The Judge reviewed my case and said that it was the most horrific case of abuse that he had ever come across. The kidnapping charge was dropped as part of a deal. We went into chambers to speak to the Judge and at the time I thought I was going to jail. I was sentenced to two years supervision and an additional year of community care. At that time I made a promise that I was never going back to jail.

Impacts

189. I have never had a healthy relationship with a man and I have struggled with authority my whole life. I've never been in love and I still feel sad about that to this day.
190. The whole loving part of myself got stripped away in those homes.
191. I feel I should have been a different person, without tattoos, without all my pain inked on me.
192. The experiences I had in the state institutions have stopped me and my children from enjoying a life that we should have had. I was so controlling with them because I didn't want the same things to happen to them.
193. I have adopted out three of my kids. This is because I do not trust the state to look after children safely. Rather than going through the state adoption process, I followed my own process so that I could make the decisions and feel that my children would be safe.
194. What happened to me has definitely gone on to impact my children and the rest of my whānau in different ways. It has been very hard for my siblings and I to reconcile due to our different experiences in our childhood but I am very close to some of my brothers now.

Sibling relationships

195. When we were young, my brothers always wanted to stay at home with my father. They didn't realise what it was like for the girls with my father. As an adult, I have learned that my brothers thought we were sleeping with our father for money. This is not true. My father would write cheques to my mother when she dropped us round to his place.
196. When we were young, my older sister was sniffing petrol and suicidal. She didn't share her real issues with me, what was really happening for her. I found that out later on, but we still aren't talking now. A while ago, she tried to get me to talk to the Ministry of Social Development but I refused at first because I thought she was just trying to get money. I didn't think about the fact she was hurting too. Her way of sleeping with our father was different to mine.
197. If we refused to sleep with our father then our father would punish our brothers, he would refuse to take our brothers to rugby and they'd be annoyed at us. All they

knew was that the door opened and then closed, not what went on inside. There has been a lot of healing required as a result because of the misunderstandings. My older sister wasn't seen as the tuakana, I was because I put my life on hold to protect my younger siblings.

198. I have worked to try and help my siblings throughout my life.

Getting Help / Counselling

199. The requirements to access ACC sensitive claims funding should be reduced. It is very hard to deal with their requirements. I have been diagnosed with PTSD and I went to about six sessions. I did not want to have the sessions dragged out because I did not feel like the counselling was giving me tools to deal with what happened. I walked out of my last session, feeling both angry and sad. The process is triggering every time.

200. I feel like ACC put me in a box. There are certain requirements that had to be met and I had to continually keep proving them. It felt like an uphill battle doing the paperwork.

201. I have continued to soldier on without the ACC counselling.

202. I also have a Rongoā Māori practitioner. This has helped me a lot more than the ACC counselling did.

Gang involvement

203. I am a part of Black Power but we call ourselves Be Proud Wāhine, not Black Power Wellington. Being proud wāhine is our kaupapa. Some good things have been instilled in the Wellington chapter. There is no methamphetamine and a strong focus on whānau values. I think their rules are good.

204. I used to get so angry when I saw children of gang members sitting in the car in the car park at the pub. I would try to speak to these wāhine.

205. I would fight to protect other men, women and vulnerable groups. I was determined that I wouldn't stop standing up for what I thought was right. I have stopped the rape of young women by Black Power members.

206. I don't want to be behind men or in front of men, I just want to be on equal footing with men.

Redress

Process with Ministry of Social Development

207. I think that there are so many issues around redress. I don't understand how someone's abuse can be mathematically calculated.

208. I am going through the process with the Ministry at the moment. From the beginning, there were no Māori people involved. I had to call up the contact centre and I wasn't that comfortable speaking to a Pākehā person. They asked very personal, intense questions over the phone and that was not ok for me. I started crying because I was on the phone while at the garage getting my car fixed and I was shamed.

209. I went to their building in town and the receptionist there gave me the run around. It made me suspicious that she didn't know about my appointment.

210. When I talk to someone, I want to see their face. I need to do that to know who I am dealing with and to be able to feel their āhua. I found the Ministry process very poor. You should only have to deal with one or two people and it should be face to face.

211. They said they had read my file but those files don't have anything from me, only things about me, written by other people. All throughout my file it talks about how I am a manipulative little liar so I assume that's the perspective they are coming from when they say they have read my file.

212. When my father went to jail for what he did I never got an apology or acknowledgement from anyone about all the times they said I was lying. I don't know whether the Police and the Ministry talked to each other but they must have known.

213. I don't trust the Ministry at all. When you ring up on the phone it says that they are recording the phone call for their training purposes but that makes me feel like I don't want to say anything on the call because I know they're recording it.

214. The Ministry sent me an email saying they had changed the policy about how they deal with private information but they didn't include a link to the new policy. They need to prove the things they are saying. When you go to WINZ and tell them that you've got a certain amount in your bank account, they require a receipt for proof. I think the Ministry of Social Development should be the same.
215. It can be hard to deal with the Ministry about redress because they are connected to WINZ, as it's all part of the Ministry of Social Development. I find going into WINZ to be a degrading process. It's all about the way they talk to you and treat you. It makes me not want to have anything to do with them. It always feels like an uphill battle to get anything from them.

Other Redress

216. Schools should be teaching Māori history, including about state abuse, so that all New Zealanders understand what happened to us. I have heard talk about the government creating a monument to survivors. I like the idea of having something to mark it so that people don't forget what happened. It should be placed at Parliament so all the Pākehā and politicians can see it and think about what happened.
217. I think any apology from the government has to come from Jacinda Ardern, from the top, not from anyone else.
218. Compensation is not the main driver for me, but at the same time if I am offered putea I am not going to say no because my whānau could use that money.
219. When the Ministry give out the money as compensation I think they believe it will be the answer, but I don't really want the money. I want a house for all of my kids on our land. The answer for me lies with the people.
220. For any redress, I need to deal with people face-to-face. This is because I don't trust the Ministry.
221. I also don't like the wording the Ministry uses when they say that I have a "claim" against them. To me, it is not a claim, it is what actually happened and I believe they should acknowledge that.

Looking forward

Complaints Process

222. The state needs to change the processes so that kids can complain about what is happening to them more easily. There has to be someone independent involved and it must be someone who is not involved in the running of the state institutions.
223. I felt that I was never heard by anyone. Even those who I thought believed me didn't.
224. If the state is having meetings about a child, there should be a place for the child to speak. They should be able to communicate in their own words. The story needs to be told through the child's eyes as well.
225. Kids need to be able to trust adults in order to speak out about abuse.
226. For those children who are in care now, the complaints they make should go to people who have experience within the system. I like the idea of having an Ombudsman or similar complaints process that has survivors on a panel. Having people involved who have experienced the system themselves means that children can deal with people who have lived it, rather than people who just have a qualification on a piece of paper.
227. I believe there also needs to be some options for restorative justice or other means of putting things right.

Criminal History – Clean Slate

228. Lots of survivors have criminal records and that holds us back from work and other opportunities.
229. A lot of the crimes we have committed, including mine, make sense in terms of what we went through. I spoke out and had issues with authority and you can see that in my record.
230. My whakaaro is that was then and this is now.
231. I worked hard to get clean and stop offending. It was hard because I was still trying to work with wāhine within the gang. However, I managed it and now have a clean slate. I think more people should have the opportunities the clean slate gives.

232. We had a survivors for survivors group and we have had one session at Kokiri marae. I would like to find a way for our group to go around the homes to help young people who are still in care.

Other changes

233. There need to be more safeguards in the hiring practices for staff working with children. The screening needs to be much better. I also think, with appropriate screening, they should offer jobs to survivors.

234. I have always wanted to work in care but couldn't because of my criminal record. Instead I have gone behind the scenes and worked with wāhine and children involved in gangs.

235. I don't think there should be institutions at all. We have so many islands, we have land, we have so many marae that are sitting unused. I believe there are so many other options that should be used, rather than just putting kids into institutions.

236. Using the Pākehā model by itself doesn't work. We should use our marae and our traditional Māori system as well.

237. Young people could learn how to hunt, to fish and to look after themselves. Our young people should learn our ways, not just the Pākehā ways. Being put into Pākehā institutions and classrooms doesn't work for our people.

238. Putting people in institutions or jails doesn't make sense, people just learn off each other.

239. When I am out with my kids in the ngahere I find they will open up and talk to me in a way they wouldn't if we were just at home. I now try to take my kids back to **GRO-B**, where my mother's land is. My brother is set up there and he is doing up a whare so that we all have somewhere to take our kids back to.

Conclusion

240. Looking back on my experiences in the homes, if there was just one person who believed my cries for help, that would have made such a big difference. Having someone who truly cares could change everything for one girl.

241. We need a system that is by Māori, for Māori, not a Pākehā system with a Māori name.
242. The Royal Commission has to work. If it fails it will destroy the mana of everyone that has been involved.

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: 30/03/2021