

**ABUSE IN CARE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
MARYLANDS SCHOOL**

Under The Inquiries Act 2013

In the matter of The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions

Royal Commission: Judge Coral Shaw (Chair)
Ali'imuamua Sandra Alofivae

Counsel: Ms Katherine Anderson, Mr Simon Mount QC, Ms Kerry Beaton QC, Ms Jane Glover, Ms Anne Toohey, Ms Kima Tuiali'i, Ms Julia Spelman, Mr Winston McCarthy, Ms Echo Haronga, Mr Michael Thomas and Ms Kathy Basire for the Royal Commission
Ms Rachael Schmidt-McCleave, Ms Julia White and Mr Max Clarke-Parker for the Crown
Ms Sonja Cooper, Ms Amanda Hill, Mr Sam Benton, Ms Alana Thomas and Mr Sam Wimsett as other counsel attending

Venue: Level 2
Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry
414 Khyber Pass Road
AUCKLAND

Date: 11 February 2022

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

1 [10.04 am]

2 [Karakia tīmatanga and waiata by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei]

3 **CHAIR:** Good morning, everybody. Welcome back to our last day of hearing for this week, and
4 good morning, Ms. Anderson.

5 **MS ANDERSON:** Good morning, Madam Chair. Our first witness is appearing by AVL, so I'll
6 hand over to the technicians who will bring Mr. McCarthy, who's leading Mr. Tasker's
7 evidence, into the hearing.

8 **CHAIR:** Good morning, Mr. McCarthy. Good to see you.

9 **MR McCarthy:** Mōrena.

10 **CHAIR:** Good morning to you. What do you like to be called, is it James?

11 **SURVIVOR:** James.

12 **CHAIR:** Welcome to you, welcome to the Commission, James. Thank you for making yourself
13 available.

14 Before we start, I'm just going to ask you about telling the truth, so I'll put the
15 statement to you and ask you to agree to this.

16 **JAMES EDWARD JOSEPH TASKER (Affirmed)**

17 **CHAIR:** I'd love to know about the aeroplane behind you but perhaps that will be explained later.

18 **SURVIVOR:** (Inaudible).

19 **MR McCARTHY:** A few aeroplanes will be landing and taking off, we're at the airport, so you
20 may hear them in the background.

21 **CHAIR:** Okay. For the people who are watching, James, although he's giving evidence orally,
22 does not want his face shown, so you won't see that, but we can see him. And behind him
23 there's a wonderful picture of a rather ancient looking aeroplane.

24 All right. Let's get to the business. So, I'll hand over to you, Mr McCarthy. Thank
25 you.

26 **QUESTIONING BY MR McCARTHY:** Tēnā kōrua e ngā rangatira o te pae. Ko Winston
27 McCarthy tēnei. Good morning, I'm here with James.

28 James, if I could just do a few reminders to begin with. We've got transcribers and
29 signers up in Auckland so if we can try and keep a deliberate pace, and your statement's
30 been read by the Commissioners, so we'll touch on aspects of your statement.

31 I thought to begin with you could just introduce yourself and tell us where you're
32 from.

33 **A.** James Edward Francis Tasker, I live in here in Palmerston.

34 **Q.** And when were you born?

1 A. GRO-C '68.

2 Q. What is your whakapapa?

3 A. Ngāti Whātua.

4 Q. In your evidence you talk about a learning condition that's affected your learning. Could
5 you tell the Commission about this?

6 A. I am totally dyslexic, I cannot read and write at all, and me – the teaching at the school was
7 absolutely shocking. There was – the Brothers did not control any of the teachers. We
8 had teachers come into school who did not have anything to do with the school, they were
9 only there to teach. The learning at school was absolutely shocking.

10 Q. We'll come to that.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. If we could just talk a little bit about your background.

13 **CHAIR:** Before we do, sorry to interrupt you. I'm just checking about whether or not we're
14 hearing this properly.

15 A. Is that better?

16 Q. That's much better.

17 A. That's better.

18 Q. Okay. So just to summarise where we're up to now, you've told us that you are Ngāti
19 Whātua, your Māori whakapapa is Ngāti Whātua, and that you went to the school and you
20 were talking – you were saying that the teaching at the school ... you were talking about
21 the education that you were receiving, so would you just like to say that again?

22 A. The education at the school was shocking. It was. It was terrible. They did not, they did
23 not – they didn't have certain education for certain kids, where it should have been a
24 different set-up, depending on the kids. They just had standard teachers there. But the
25 teachers were lovely. They had nothing to do with the school, except for doing the
26 teaching.

27 **QUESTIONING BY MR McCARTHY CONTINUED:** Did you want to keep going?

28 A. Yes, no.

29 Q. We'll get to the teaching. I just want us to talk a little bit about your background.

30 A. Rightio. I went to two boarding schools. I went to a place in Napier called Beck House –
31 it's a girl's school now. It was for kids who were not – they weren't allowed in other
32 schools. I went there when I was seven. That school was brilliant. It was absolutely
33 unreal, Beck House, the education. It was very good.

- 1 **Q.** Could I ask, just coming back a step.
- 2 **A.** Yeah.
- 3 **Q.** You talked about going to Beck House?
- 4 **A.** Yes.
- 5 **Q.** Before then, you talked in your statement about having ADHD.
- 6 **A.** To the eyeballs and I still am.
- 7 **Q.** When were you diagnosed?
- 8 **A.** Four.
- 9 **Q.** So, at the age of four you were diagnosed with ADHD?
- 10 **A.** Yes, and they also put me on Ritalin, but it is not the Ritalin you have now. My mother –
- 11 they put me on it, and I was on it for three months. My mother took me off it because it
- 12 turned me into a zombie.
- 13 **Q.** And then after your diagnosis went to a few state primary schools?
- 14 **A.** Yes, one after the other.
- 15 **Q.** And you were expelled from those?
- 16 **A.** Yes.
- 17 **Q.** Then went to Beck House.
- 18 **A.** Yes, that's right. I went to Beck House when I was seven, I had my seventh birthday at
- 19 Beck House, because I'd been expelled from every other primary school at that stage.
- 20 **Q.** Can I ask you what the learning environment was like at Beck House?
- 21 **A.** Brilliant, and it was, the teaching at Beck House was absolutely unreal, they had the right
- 22 staff and they – the individual kids were different, they had different teachers for different
- 23 kids, and my reading and writing was good when I was at Beck House. When I left there, it
- 24 was – yeah, downhill from there.
- 25 **Q.** Well, perhaps – you've already spoken a little bit about it, but how would you compare the
- 26 teaching environment, learning environment at Beck House compared to Marylands?
- 27 **A.** There's no – there's nothing – Beck House was unreal. The Brothers' school was
- 28 disgusting, and it was, it was shocking. If you didn't want to do anything they'd just put
- 29 you out the door or let you go into the rugby field or something. There was no – there was
- 30 no – there was discipline but there wasn't – they weren't helping any of the kids there. The
- 31 teaching was shocking.
- 32 **Q.** Thank you, James. And then you were at Beck House. How old were you when you left
- 33 Beck House?

1 A. Beck House, I left there when I was 12.

2 Q. And why did you leave?

3 A. Because the age. They had an age, a certain age, at Beck House, and I left there when I was
4 12.

5 Q. And then I understand you went back to one of your primary schools?

6 A. Yeah, Foxton.

7 Q. And eventually you made your way to Horowhenua College; is that correct?

8 A. For a very short period of time, yes.

9 Q. And then I understand at Horowhenua you were placed into a mainstream special class?

10 A. It was called WE and I was in a class with physically mental children, and that did not work
11 too well with me. I was at Horowhenua College for about three months until I got expelled.

12 Q. Could I ask, you had a good experience at Beck House?

13 A. Yes, totally.

14 Q. And then you went into the special needs class at Horowhenua?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. How would you compare those different learning environments?

17 A. There's absolutely nothing at the college, it was disgusting, we were put in at a wing on the
18 end of the school. I used to get my lunch money taken off me, my lunch off me and the
19 staff did nothing. So, I did – I took matters into my own hands and that's when I got
20 expelled.

21 Q. So, at this point there's no mainstream schools that are sort of catering to you?

22 A. No, none at all.

23 Q. And that's what led you to Marylands?

24 A. Yeah, you were classed as a nutter.

25 Q. I'm going to talk about Marylands now.

26 A. Yeah.

27 Q. Just the general structure.

28 A. Yeah.

29 Q. Okay. How old were you when you went to Marylands?

30 A. I'd been kicked out of college, so I must have been 13.

31 Q. Around 13?

32 A. Around 13, around 13.

33 Q. And just to assist the Commissioners –

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. – you were quite large for your size at 13?
- 3 A. Six-foot-one in form one. Six-foot-one and I was jumping then in high jump; it's got
4 nothing to do with this but ...
- 5 Q. Very impressive.
- 6 A. I was clearing then and I still can.
- 7 Q. What were your first impressions of Marylands?
- 8 A. My first impressions was my mother said, "You've done it this time, you're staying here."
9 I remember pulling up the drive with my mother and I met a physically handicapped kid
10 with nappies around his legs and he was sitting there playing with himself. That was my
11 introduction of the school, and my mother said, "You've done it this time, you're staying
12 here." Yeah. It's the only school I've never been expelled from.
- 13 Q. I understand that there were lay staff or day staff at the school.
- 14 A. Yes, that's right.
- 15 Q. What were they responsible for?
- 16 A. Making sure you had breakfast, the villas were kept clean. Some of the staff were really
17 good, there was a few weird staff, but that goes for the Brothers as well, so ...
- 18 Q. And what were the Brothers responsible for?
- 19 A. I wouldn't be sitting here today if – wouldn't be doing this.
- 20 Q. I guess in terms of the role of the school, were they involved in pastoral care or ...?
- 21 A. Yeah, they were meant to be there for care. They were meant to – they were meant to be
22 there looking after us, yeah.
- 23 Q. You talked in your statement about the accommodation.
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 Q. I was wondering if you could tell me a bit about the villas that you stayed in.
- 26 A. The villas where we were, I think there was 13 boys in each villa. We lived in dog boxes –
27 I called them dog boxes. The Brothers used to come around at night and tuck the boys in
28 and they did that with bells on.
- 29 Q. We'll come to that.
- 30 A. Yeah.
- 31 Q. So, did the Brothers, did they live in the villas?
- 32 A. Yes, they did. Every individual villa had a Brother living in the villas.
- 33 Q. And what was your room or what was your dormitory like?

- 1 A. You could go like that, that's your room, I could touch both sides of the wall. We had a
2 bed, a wardrobe and if you were lucky you could look out on to the land. That was it.
- 3 Q. I understand from your statement that there – you were supervised at certain age until you
4 moved to –
- 5 A. Yes. Yeah, it was full of people who were meeting – coming close to leaving the school
6 and it was meant to teach flatting and how to cook and all that, but I already knew all that.
- 7 Q. How many Brothers were assigned per villa?
- 8 A. There were – I think there were seven or eight villas, each individual villa had a Brother
9 living in the villa, and their rooms were right out the front of the toilet block where the
10 shower block was. They were right where they – yeah.
- 11 Q. Was there any supervision of the Brothers in terms – or was it just a sole charge for the
12 Brothers, or was there other staff in the villas with you?
- 13 A. There were other staff in there, but at night they had the run of the place, they could do
14 what they liked, and they did.
- 15 Q. Just the last question for this sort of topic that we're on.
- 16 A. Yes.
- 17 Q. What was the level of contact that you had with your family during this time?
- 18 A. I was one of the lucky ones. My mother used to ring me just about every single day. I was
19 about the only kid in the whole school who had proper parents.
- 20 Q. We're now going to move to the abuse that occurred –
- 21 A. Yeah, rightio.
- 22 Q. – at Marylands.
- 23 A. Mmm-hmm.
- 24 Q. In your statement you talk about witnessing sexual abuse –
- 25 A. Totally.
- 26 Q. – by the Brothers –
- 27 A. Yes.
- 28 Q. – on students.
- 29 A. Yeah.
- 30 Q. How frequently did that occur?
- 31 A. Every day, every night.
- 32 Q. And how common was abuse between the older boys and younger students?
- 33 A. Every day and every night, and the older boys were worse. But they'd been at that school

1 since they were five. We had kids at that school who were five years old. By the time they
2 were seven or eight they didn't know what the hell they were doing.

3 **Q.** Do you need a break?

4 **A.** No. Keep on going, keep on going. It was absolutely disgusting.

5 **Q.** In your evidence –

6 **A.** Yeah.

7 **Q.** – you recalled a specific incident that occurred where you saw an older student with some
8 younger students.

9 **A.** Yeah, three boys.

10 **Q.** Did you want to tell us about that, or do you want us to move on?

11 **A.** No, no. In the first two weeks of being at the boarding school I worked out what the hell
12 was going on. I may not be able to read but I'm not dumb. I went down to the back of the
13 playing field and one of the young – one of the older boys had three of the five-year-olds
14 down there with their pants down around their ankles and doing stuff they shouldn't have
15 been doing. That was the older boys. Then the Brothers, a totally different story.
16 Absolutely disgusting.

17 **Q.** Are you sure you don't need a break?

18 **A.** No, keep on going.

19 **Q.** Turning now to the abuse that you suffered.

20 **A.** Yeah. I mean yes.

21 **Q.** No, it's fine. I understand from your evidence that a Brother in your villa abused you.

22 **A.** Yeah, once, and he tried it again. The second time he did it I just about ripped his – just
23 about ripped his head off. It was absolutely disgusting. It was like going into the butchers
24 and choosing which meat you want to eat at night. They had full – they had full run of the
25 house. They could do what they liked when they liked, and I also got myself into trouble
26 with one of the Brothers, I put 39 stitches in his head. I took out two hand basins at school
27 with his head. I just about killed the prick.

28 **Q.** Perhaps we can start talking about that.

29 **A.** Yeah.

30 **Q.** So, you just noted an incident where you fought back.

31 **A.** Yeah, and I did that big time. No-one came near me after that. I felt sorry for the other
32 boys because they weren't – they weren't like me, and they'd been there a hell of a lot
33 longer than I had been.

1 I can't understand how anybody – I can't understand how anybody can put a five-
2 year-old kid into a situation like that. It's wrong and these – white-collared pricks' collars
3 need to be hung. It was absolutely disgusting. I used to sit there at night and listen to the
4 boys moaning and groaning because the Brothers were playing with them. I haven't done
5 anything about this, I've talked to nobody about any of this. And I tell you what, if they're
6 still alive, I hope they all drop fuck'n – dead, I mean – pardon me, I hope they drop dead,
7 the whole lot of them, because they – the laws here in New Zealand are disgusting. And
8 this needs to be – something needs to be done about this and the Catholic Church is a load
9 of rubbish.

10 **Q.** We'll get to that.

11 **A.** Yeah, right.

12 **Q.** I did have one question going back to – about that violent incident you had with the
13 Brother.

14 **A.** Yes.

15 **Q.** What did the school do in response?

16 **A.** They said they were going to ring the Police. Once again, I'm not dumb. I said to the
17 white-collared lovely priest, I said to him, "Ring the Police", I said, "I'll shut the school
18 down in seconds." At this stage I'd only been at the school for four months. They did
19 nothing. They didn't ring the Police. I should have been laid with charges of what I did to
20 this Brother. I absolutely wrecked him.

21 **Q.** Why do you think they didn't call the Police?

22 **A.** Because they didn't want to open a hornets' nest. It is absolutely disgusting what they did
23 to the kids there. And it was, it was shocking.

24 **Q.** So, in terms of a hornets' nest, they didn't want attention from the Police?

25 **A.** No, they didn't want attention from the Police. They rang my mother and they spoke to my
26 mother on the phone, and they – my mother spoke to me and she goes, "What have you
27 done?" I put 37 stitches in his head, this is not on record; they did absolutely nothing about
28 this. I should have been laid with charges because I just about killed him. I ripped a
29 towel – I took the towel – stainless steel towel rack off the wall, I ripped it out of the wall.
30 We had big bloody doors on the toilet blocks, with the reinforced steel through the
31 windows. The rack I ripped off was this long. I put it through the doors, and I twisted it so
32 no one could get in. It took nine staff to get into the toilet block. They had to break the
33 door down.

1 By the time they'd got in there, I'd absolutely annihilated him. He never touched
2 me again and we never saw him again, he got shipped back to their practice in Australia, sat
3 down for a year and then spread out through the schools again so he could do it all again.

4 **Q.** We've heard two separate incidents of abuse, one by the Brother in charge of the –

5 **A.** Yeah.

6 **Q.** – villa and then the one with the towel rail that you just described.

7 **A.** Yeah.

8 **Q.** Were there the any other incidents of attempted abuse?

9 **A.** The abuse was shocking, it was on a day-to-day basis.

10 **Q.** I mean in regard to you in particular.

11 **A.** Oh, no, no, no one touched me after that. Except for that one incident where the Brother
12 came into my room, and that didn't go down too well either. I used to sleep with weapons
13 under my bed and I used them too.

14 **Q.** Okay. Following on from these incidents, and you obviously responded in kind –

15 **A.** Yeah.

16 **Q.** – how were you treated afterwards?

17 **A.** Shocking. Absolutely disgusting. I did my own thing in the end and they – the staff didn't
18 come near me, the Brothers were terrified of me, and I made damn sure they were.

19 **Q.** I guess you were – we spoke earlier about you were quite large for your size?

20 **A.** Yes.

21 **Q.** I guess the other children, did you witness any incidences of them defending themselves?

22 **A.** Totally. We had one guy in our villa who used to sit there with **GRO-C** and, what do you
23 call it, selfed him.

24 **CHAIR:** Self harming.

25 **A.** Self-harm, yeah, self-harming, and he'd been there since he was five. He didn't know
26 what – he didn't know what he was meant to be doing, the poor bugger, and he didn't, it
27 was shocking. And I can't believe they had five-year-olds in that school. The Brothers had
28 open slather there, it was like going to the meat market and choosing which piece of meat
29 you're going to eat for tea every night. And it was, it was disgusting.

30 **QUESTIONING BY MR McCARTHY CONTINUED:** We're going to move on to another
31 topic now.

32 **A.** Yeah. I mean yes.

33 **Q.** It's fine, it's fine. You were talking earlier about your mother being called.

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Did you disclose the abuse to your mother?

3 A. Yes, my mum knew what was going on. But she also knew I could handle myself.

4 Q. And did she make a complaint to the school?

5 A. No, she didn't, because the school didn't do anything about any of the other complaints,
6 and – she did put a complaint in, but they obviously just brushed it under the carpet. They
7 did nothing.

8 Q. Did you tell anyone else at the school about what had happened to you?

9 A. One staff member, she was lovely, she would have been in her 20s, and she said "I can't" –
10 she couldn't do anything about it. All the staff were regulated, the Brothers had full control
11 over everything in that school, and that's including the school teachers as well.

12 Q. So, you told a staff member, your mother knew, and you didn't see – nothing changed?

13 A. No, nothing changed. It was shocking. And I can't believe how they call this religion,
14 because it ain't religion. They call themselves Catholics. But I've got a word for that, and
15 I'm not allowed to say it. And I'm not. But this is horribly wrong, and something seriously
16 needs to be done about these pricks.

17 Q. It's fine. We're going to move on to another topic. We're going to be talking about your
18 life after Marylands.

19 A. Rightio, yes.

20 Q. When did you leave Marylands? I understand there's a discrepancy between your age in the
21 statement and the age that you think you left. When do you think you left Marylands?

22 A. I wasn't 17 because at 17 I was in Australia, and I was, I was doing my own thing. I've
23 always worked, I'm very good at working. But I felt sorry for all the other people there
24 because they wouldn't have known what to do by the time, I left that school.

25 Q. And so, what did you do after leaving, did you go to work?

26 A. I did sandblasting on bridges, concrete work, landscaping. All the work I do is physical.

27 Q. When you look back at your life and you look at your time in Maryland's –

28 A. Yes.

29 Q. – what impact do you think your time at Marylands had on the rest of your life?

30 A. Shocking. I don't trust anyone, and I can get very nasty very quickly and I can. I learned at
31 school to fight and my God, I did it with bells on, because if you didn't, you ended up with
32 a lot of nasty things happening.

33 Q. In terms of – did it affect your use of alcohol?

1 A. Oh, I'm a huge drinker, massive, yeah, yeah. My temper is shocking. But that comes with
2 ADD, hyperactive or whatever they call it now. But yeah. I left there in – I've never been
3 the same since I left that school. I came to school different, I left school totally different. It
4 put a totally different outlook on my life. I trust no one and I have no time for idiots
5 whatsoever.

6 Q. Did you have any sort of ongoing psychological effects arising from your time at
7 Marylands?

8 A. I learned to switch off on that. This is the first time I've spoken about this to anyone. My
9 mother knew my partner, who I've got stepchildren too, she's the only other person who
10 knows all about this. I've spoken to no one. I've had no counselling and I won't have
11 counselling. I don't believe it. There's ways to switch off and I learned how to do that at
12 school very quickly because if you didn't, you'd end up like the rest of them in that school,
13 nuts.

14 Q. I guess that leads us to my next set of questions. So, it's time to discuss the abuse in terms
15 of your experience with the Police and then we'll get into it.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. So, I understand that you were interviewed by the Police.

18 A. That was 20 years ago.

19 Q. What led to your interaction with the Police?

20 A. Absolutely nothing. Zilch.

21 Q. I guess going back a step, did they call you or...?

22 A. They called me. I went into Palmerston North police station, and they showed me photos
23 of all the boys, the Brothers and everything, and I pointed out the ones what were – I'm not
24 allowed to say it. I showed them which ones were fiddling with the kids. Never heard back
25 from them ever again. I was meant to go to Christchurch to be a witness in court. They
26 never rang me, there was nothing done.

27 I think the Catholic Church had swept it under the table like they do with all the
28 other Brothers as well, because I never heard back from them. I went into the police station
29 four times to see what was going on. They knew nothing about it. And I saw photos that
30 I haven't seen in years. I pointed out which Brothers were the – I'm not allowed to say it.

31 I showed them all the photos of the Brothers who were fiddling with all the kids,
32 and there was absolutely – that was the last time I heard about it. That's the only time I've
33 talked about this.

1 **Q.** How long was that interview, do you remember?

2 **A.** I was at the police station for two hours, two whole hours, and they brought out photos that
3 had me in the photos, it had all the boys who I knew, and they had photos of the five-year-
4 old kids what used to go there too, and I pointed out every single one of the white-collared
5 pricks, yeah.

6 **Q.** How did that – you spoke before about how they didn't call you back. How did that make
7 you feel?

8 **A.** I was pissed off. I was hoping to get even with the bastards, because at that stage they
9 would have all been alive. They don't deserve to live. None of them do.

10 **Q.** And so – just going back a step, so that was around 2003?

11 **A.** Yes, it was, you are correct.

12 **Q.** And did you have any subsequent contact with the Police after that or any –

13 **A.** Not at all, they did not ring me, I never heard back from them. And they've got no record
14 of me going into the police station. My partner at the time knew nothing about this; she
15 certainly did by the end of the two hours of being in the police station.

16 **Q.** Moving to the – your engagement with the Catholic Church or the school, did you ever
17 engage with their redress processes at all in terms of seeking compensation?

18 **A.** No, I haven't. I've never done anything. I've never done anything about it, I just shut off
19 and got on with my life. I never spoke to anybody; I haven't told anybody. I just got on
20 with it.

21 **Q.** I guess you were reluctant to engage with the Church?

22 **A.** Oh, I'd like to engage with the Church all right but it's not the way I'm thinking. I'd like to
23 walk into there and burn the bloody thing to the ground.

24 **Q.** To wrap up, we're going to just quickly discuss what you think should change. I thought
25 we'd begin with looking at your education journey.

26 **A.** Yes.

27 **Q.** You've spoken this morning about not being able to read and write?

28 **A.** Yes.

29 **Q.** And in your statement, you said you would be able to read and write if there was proper
30 teaching.

31 **A.** Yes, and I would have done very well at school if I'd had someone pull me aside and do
32 things right. But they did not have the education at that school for any of the children,
33 because every single kid in that school was totally different. We were all there because we

1 were out of control, and some of the kids shouldn't have even been in there.

2 **Q.** So, what do you think needs to change in that sort of education area to cater for these
3 diverse needs?

4 **A.** The Catholic bastards need a rope hung around their necks.

5 **Q.** I guess in terms of the education.

6 **A.** All right, sorry. The education at the school was shocking. They needed to have the right
7 staff, the right teachers, teaching the people because it was horribly wrong. If I'd had
8 someone at school, I wouldn't be where I am now, and I wouldn't be doing labouring work
9 like I am; I would have gone somewhere.

10 **Q.** Okay. In terms of the treatment of the offenders, how do you think they've been treated?

11 **A.** You mean in the Church itself?

12 **Q.** The Brothers that you were involved in.

13 **A.** Well, the Brothers – the Catholics are the bloody worst. They put these pricks into schools
14 and put a white collar around their necks and they think they're God. But the thing here is,
15 they tell them they're not allowed to marry, they're not allowed to have children. This is
16 where this has gone horribly wrong. You've got no right to tell anybody that at all, and
17 they should be able to marry, and they should be able to have kids because this is why this
18 has happened. They put these bastards in these schools and it's like a meat market. They
19 just go one hole to another hole and it is absolutely disgusting.

20 The Catholic Church is the biggest load of shit I've ever heard in my life. This is
21 disgusting and this honestly needs to be fixed. Put me in a room with every single one of
22 these Brothers and I'll rip their bloody heads off and I'd thoroughly enjoy doing that and I'm
23 fully capable of doing it.

24 This is – it was just open slather at school. As I said before, it's like going into
25 the butcher's shop and choosing which meat you want to eat tonight. It is absolutely
26 disgusting. The Catholic Church has got a lot to answer for. It is absolutely shocking what
27 they did, and they call themselves bloody religious. I've got a cure for this but
28 unfortunately it will put me in a lot of trouble. But I'd love to be in a room with them
29 because we wouldn't have to worry about going through all this. I'd fix it.

30 **CHAIR:** Yeah, thank you, James. I think you've made your point very clearly, and obviously
31 you're very angry and justifiably so.

32 Mr McCarthy, do you have any other questions that you want to ask?

33 **QUESTIONING BY MR McCARTHY CONTINUED:** The final question I just had is in terms

1 of compensation.

2 A. Compensation, I'd love some compensation out of this because this has stuffed me over big-
3 time. I don't trust people, and I don't – I've got no children of my own – I can't say that.
4 I've got no children of my own, but I've got friends who I used to buy – take lunch
5 (inaudible) and all that, but what they did at that school was disgusting and I would like
6 compensation. I would like compensation out of this, yeah.

7 **MR McCARTHY:** Those are my questions, Madam Chair.

8 A. Yeah.

9 **CHAIR** All right. James, do you mind answering a couple of questions from me?

10 A. Not at all.

11 **Q.** Before I ask them, I just want to thank you for sharing with us something that you have not
12 publicly shared before and I want to say that that is so appreciated, and I know that it's a
13 difficult thing, but know that you have been heard.

14 A couple of things. First of all, I was interested in your experience at Beck House.

15 A. Yes.

16 **Q.** How long were you there, James?

17 A. I went there when I was seven, I left when I was 12.

18 **Q.** Right. So, you were there about five years. That was a good, long period of time, wasn't
19 it?

20 A. It was and it was a very good school.

21 **Q.** Yes, we've heard that, and that's why I'm interested. You've described very graphically
22 how angry you became and I just wondered, at Beck House were you as angry or were you
23 an angry kid at Beck House?

24 A. No, there was nothing to get angry about.

25 **Q.** Is that right?

26 A. There wasn't. Yes, big-time.

27 **Q.** You've talked to us graphically about the violence that you felt you had to show later on.

28 A. Yes.

29 **Q.** Were you violent at Beck House?

30 A. No, I wasn't. I was out of control, but I wasn't violent.

31 **Q.** Yeah, yeah.

32 A. Yeah, that's why I was at the school.

33 **Q.** Yes. So, when you were out of control at Beck House, what did the teachers and the people

1 there – how did they manage you there?

2 A. They used to have a shed what's called the timeout room. They used to put you in there and
3 you used to just sit there and calm down and they'd let you out. There was none of the stuff
4 like in Christchurch, there was nothing like it at all. We were busy at Beck House, they had
5 things on 24/7.

6 **Q.** Right?

7 A. Sometimes I wouldn't even go home for the school holidays, because there was more going
8 on at school than there was at home.

9 **Q.** Right. So, they kept you busy, doing things –

10 A. Yes.

11 **Q.** – doing things that you liked doing, is that right?

12 A. Yes, that's right.

13 **Q.** And they educated you?

14 A. They did, the education at the school was brilliant.

15 **Q.** Great.

16 A. It was really good.

17 **Q.** Yeah. And did you make friends there?

18 A. Totally, I had heaps of friends there, and outside of the school as well.

19 **Q.** Yeah, okay. So, life was good for you during that time?

20 A. No complaints there, it was a really neat school. They were brilliant. Because they catered
21 for different kids, they had the right staff, they – they put you aside if you were different,
22 they'd work out ways of getting around things and all that.

23 **Q.** Yes, that's something that you've made very plain, that children like you needed individual
24 treatment; you just couldn't all be treated the same way, is that right, is that what you're
25 saying?

26 A. That's right, yes.

27 **Q.** Yeah, good. Now – and I don't want to open up the whole of the Marylands thing again,
28 but it seems to me, from listening carefully to what you've said, that apart from the awful
29 abuse you suffered, the effect of seeing little boys, five-year-olds, being abused made a
30 terrible impression on you. Would that be right?

31 A. Totally, yes. Totally, yeah. Shocking. Disgusting. I saw stuff at that school that I never
32 want to see again. And if I caught an adult doing that to their kid there'd be trouble because
33 I'd be done for murder. Yeah.

1 Q. What I'm trying to get at here is that you suffered as an individual yourself, but you also
2 suffered from seeing what was being done to these other little kids, is that right?

3 A. Yes, that is right.

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. And the last question I want to ask you is, this is a school that was, as you say, run and
7 controlled by the Brothers.

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Did you attend the Catholic Church there?

10 A. They gave up on that first time I – we used to have – we used to have to go to the church
11 morning, lunchtime, after school. The last time I went in there I picked up the *Bible* and
12 burnt it in front of them in the church. That was the last time I was allowed in the church.
13 They never – they never put me into the church ever again. I made sure of it.

14 Q. So how often – so you say that during your time you went on a daily basis three times a
15 day to the church. There was a chapel there, wasn't there, on the grounds?

16 A. And a beautiful chapel, it was absolutely beautiful, and it was. And they – it was absolutely
17 massive, but they gave up trying to get me to church because I just (inaudible).

18 Q. Okay. So, did all the other boys go to the chapel each day?

19 A. They certainly did. Altar boys. Alter all right, here have a piece of bread and drink the
20 wine. There was more than that going on, I can tell you that right now.

21 Q. Yeah, we've heard that from other people too. Look, James, thank you very much. Those
22 are the only questions I've got, but my colleague here, Sandra Alofivae, might have
23 something she wants to ask you as well, so thanks very much.

24 A. Rightio.

25 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Tēnā koe, James, talofa lava. Just staying with the theme of
26 education, so Beck School was also – it was a boarding school, wasn't it, very similar to
27 Marylands?

28 A. Yes, it was. Yes, it was.

29 Q. And you wanted to stay there, you were saying, in the holidays as opposed to wanting to go
30 home?

31 A. I never – sometimes I'd stay, but I could do what I wanted to because all the kids there were
32 under State and half of them didn't even have parents. I was one of the lucky ones; I had
33 parents.

1 **Q.** And were you able to stay in touch with your mum when you were at Beck School as well?

2 **A.** My mother's always rung me every day. My mother passed away six months ago.

3 **Q.** Oh.

4 **A.** She's dead.

5 **Q.** Our condolences to you. Thank you for being here today in spite of your own personal
6 circumstances.

7 So, at Beck School, I'm really interested because there's a clear difference in the
8 schools and I just want to ask you around things like, you know, doctors, oral hygiene.

9 When you were at Marylands, was there a doctor on site, were you familiar with that?

10 **A.** No, no, not at all. There was no doctor on site, nothing, zilch. We had first aid kits and
11 that was it.

12 **Q.** Nurses?

13 **A.** No.

14 **Q.** And what about oral hygiene, like if you had to go to the dentist, often in state schools
15 there's an annual check-up; do you remember doing that?

16 **A.** No, not at all. But at Beck House I had all my teeth – I had braces on at the age of seven
17 because all my – they did all that at Beck House. I never went to the dentist; I didn't see a
18 doctor at the school in Christchurch. No, there was no dentist, no nurses or doctors on site,
19 nothing.

20 **Q.** And so, what about the food? What was the food like at Marylands for you?

21 **A.** Crap. It was – no, the food was all right, the food was all right, but just boarding food. It
22 wasn't anything fantastic.

23 **Q.** And what about when you were at Beck House?

24 **A.** Oh, we – they treated us like kings, we had roasts, we had meat, we had vegetables. The
25 food at the Christchurch school was shocking, and it was, it wasn't good at all.

26 **Q.** Can you just remember –

27 **A.** It was food.

28 **Q.** – what some of those dishes were, was it like just plain soup or ...?

29 **A.** Every Friday we'd have fish, because it was their so-called religion not to eat meat on a
30 Friday. Well, if you like eating cardboard go for it. I wouldn't eat it and I wouldn't – the
31 fish was – you could pick up the fish and snap it. I wouldn't eat it.

32 **Q.** And so, I'm really interested there – so you spoke to your mother just about every day, so
33 you knew you were allowed phone calls, is that right?

1 A. Yes, yeah, I was allowed phone calls, but a lot of other kids – the other kids there didn't
2 have parents, so they had no one, no-one to ring. I think there was five of us at school that
3 had parents and out of those five kids we knew where we were going for the school
4 holidays because all the other kids were under the State, they got billeted out in the first two
5 weeks of the school holidays. Most of them came back to school because the people
6 couldn't handle them. But that's because of what was happening to them at school; it wasn't
7 their fault.

8 Q. And I read in your evidence as well that actually, you spent time in the laundry, working.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Do you want to elaborate on what your experiences were in the laundry?

11 A. I quite enjoyed it because they'd leave me to it. I'd do all the washing, put all the clothes in
12 the dryers and all that. I quite enjoyed it because I was busy, and I wasn't in the villas,
13 yeah.

14 Q. And so, was it just the laundry, was it just the clothes and the sheets from the school itself?

15 A. Yes. I used to work in the kitchen as well. I used to help do all the cooking in the kitchen.
16 We had a Māori lady who worked at the kitchen there, she was lovely. She was neat.

17 Q. And then I see also you were quite entrepreneurial at school; you were making some
18 furniture and being able to sell it to the Brothers?

19 A. Well, I certainly was. Cane furniture, it wasn't the Brothers, it was the staff. Cane furniture
20 I used to make. I was making a killing.

21 Q. Some very useful skills were learned there. Look, those are all the questions from me,
22 James, but can I just formally thank you on behalf of the Inquiry, on behalf of our Chair.
23 Can I acknowledge your Ngāti Whātua roots. We are here actually on your land in
24 Auckland, Tamaki Makaurau.

25 A. That's right.

26 Q. Your people actually provide the covering for us here at the Commission, of which we're
27 very, very grateful. So, it's under their spiritual guidance and leadership, the wairua,
28 they've actually blessed our whare here.

29 I also stand with our Chair in terms of acknowledging that this is the first time you
30 have publicly spoken about things that you saw and heard, that have impacted on your life
31 and are going to be with you for a very, very long time yet. So, in many respects the anger
32 that you have voiced today and that we've heard in your voice is quite justified for the
33 things that you've experienced.

34 I just want to reassure you that in coming forward and formally placing your

1 evidence before the Inquiry, it's going to be of great value to us and we're using it to put
2 alongside all of the other courageous witnesses that are coming forward here, both
3 personally, and who have provided written statements and other ways that we're collecting
4 it, to in actual fact help us be able to understand and formulate recommendations to our
5 current Government that will make a difference to young people in care today.

6 So, thank you very much for your contribution to our work, which is inevitably for
7 the nation, for children that are future going to be in care. Thank you.

8 A. Do you know how many of these arseholes are still alive?

9 Q. Of the Brothers at St John of God?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Not personally. No, I don't. I'm sure it's a figure we could probably get but I don't know it
12 right now to be able to tell you.

13 A. Rightio, thank you.

14 **CHAIR:** Thank you, James, and thank you, Mr. McCarthy.

15 **MR McCARTHY:** Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

16 A. Thank you.

17 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Thank you.

18 **CHAIR:** We're finished rather early.

19 **MS ANDERSON:** Yes, Madam Chair, we are slightly ahead of schedule. Our next witness has
20 arrived but is just settling in. I propose we take an adjournment until 11.15.

21 **CHAIR:** We'll take a break. Yes, that's very good.

22