

**Witness Name:** Stephen Paul Shaw  
**Statement No.:** WITN0884001  
**Exhibits:** WITN0884002 - WITN0884005  
**Dated:** 28/02/2022

## ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE

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### WITNESS STATEMENT OF STEPHEN PAUL SHAW

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I, Stephen Paul Shaw, states as follows: -

#### Introduction

1. My full name is Stephen Paul Shaw. I was born on the [GRO-C] 1954 in Wellington.
2. I currently reside at [GRO-C]
3. I am making this statement in relation to my time in state care between 1955 and 1972, and the effects that this has had on my life.

#### Background

4. My parents were living in Miramar when I was born. I had [GRO-B] siblings, [GRO-B] and [GRO-B-1] [GRO-B] was taken by our grandparents to live with them early on.
5. I also had three younger sisters, [GRO-B] [GRO-B] [GRO-B] and one younger brother, [GRO-B] [GRO-B] and [GRO-B] were the only children who didn't have anything to do with Social Welfare.
6. My father was very violent. He had mental health issues and epilepsy. My mother told me that he cut my throat with a razor when I was a baby. I still have the scar today.

7. He also bashed [GRO-B-1] head against a brick wall when she was four months old. She ended up brain damaged. This eventually caused her to be sent to mental health institutions later in life.
8. My father was never charged with injuring either of us. My mother was too scared to ever speak up. She lived a life of fear.
9. In my first year after being born, my family moved to Woodville, and then Napier.

### Pathway into care

10. My father went through many jobs. In Napier, he was working for a farmer called [GRO-B-2]. They had a disagreement and he threw [GRO-B-2] in a river. He got the sack and had nowhere else to really go.
11. As a result, our family got kicked out of where we were living. My records say that I was very malnourished at the time. My grandmother came in and took [GRO-B]. She was very anti-our father.
12. [GRO-B-1] and I were formally taken into care instead in May 1955 [**Refer WITN0884002 – Order Committing Child to Care**]. I was 16 months old. There was an order made in the Napier District Court putting us into state custody together. We stayed together until she was about seven years old, but then she was shifted into mental institutions. When we went into care, Child Welfare stated it was “unlikely” that we would be returned to our parents for “some considerable time”. [**Refer WITN0884003 – Letter from Supt. Peek dated 10/9/56 to State Advances Corp**]

## Placements

13. Initially we were placed in a foster home somewhere in Napier, but we did not stay there long before going to Dannevirke. My records show that we went through a few foster placements in Napier before leaving but I do not recall anything about those.

GRO-B

### **Foster Home, Dannevirke**

14. The foster parents here were called the GRO-B. I called them Mum and Dad. They were a very strict Catholic family and sent me to a Catholic school. I arrived when I was nearly two years old and spent about three years here.
15. It was a small two-bedroom house at GRO-B. The parents had one of the rooms, the girls had another room. I cannot remember ever sleeping in a bed. I slept on a couch in the lounge for the whole time.
16. There were two other foster children there. One of them was called GRO-B. The other one was of Greek origin. They had too many foster kids for the amount of space they had in their home. That was why I did not have a proper bed.

### *Sexual and physical abuse*

17. I was sexually abused here by the Greek foster child, who was 13. She would take me into the toilet outside in the garage and make me touch her. I was only 3.
18. I was also beaten up quite regularly by both the GRO-B. I remember being strapped several times. The beatings would be done behind closed doors.
19. My grandmother and mother came to visit me here. They saw me getting beaten by the GRO-B because I would not sing for them. They also made a

complaint to the Minister of Social Welfare about our placement here. **[Refer WITN0884004 – Letter from Grandmother dated 20/12/57]**

20. I do not even recall them coming. I did not realise I had real parents and siblings till I was about 10 years old. I think that the [GRO-B] wanted to adopt me, but my mother refused.

#### *Psychological abuse*

21. The [GRO-B] would yell and scream at all us kids. I was also locked in my room quite regularly. It was sometimes up to a day.
22. I was regularly called a liar by the [GRO-B]. I once found a cast iron toy on the street and took it home with me. I was blamed for stealing it and got a beating.

#### *Neglect*

23. I can't ever remember going hungry. I never had a bath, I just used to wash in the big concrete tub in the washhouse out back.
24. I don't ever remember getting any birthday or Christmas presents in this place. I don't think they even celebrated them. I can't remember any hugs, or kisses, or affection.
25. I had some bad injuries while I was here. At one point, I cut the end of my finger off on a tin can. I remember my finger hanging there, so I pulled it out and screamed inside. They just put a cellotape around it. There was no proper medical treatment.
26. On another occasion, I tripped over on my way to the first day of school. I fell in the gutter and I smashed my head open, and a piece of bone fell out. I had it my hand and went home, and they just slotted it in, put some cellotape across it and sent me back to school.

27. When I was about three years old, our house caught fire in the middle of the night. I remember being plonked in the front lawn and all these people and firemen rushing around me. Nobody was concerned for this little 3-year-old boy just sitting and watching the flames.
28. I felt insignificant, and I clearly remember realising I would have to look after myself in life, because nobody was looking out for me. That was quite a harsh reality to hit me at that age. I remember that as clear as a bell.

*Leaving the* GRO-B

29. I always remember the last day I had at the GRO-B. They told us, "Steve and GRO-B-1, you're going away going away on holiday". I had a little blue friction toy van. And I said, "Dad, could you paint this for me when I come back?" And he said, "Yeah" and I never saw them again.

### **Miramar Receiving Home, Wellington**

30. We got put on a bus and sent to Wellington. I remember we stopped off at St Margaret's or somewhere like that in Palmerston North on the way through. I was sick the whole bus ride. I don't remember any adult company on the bus.
31. I ended up at Miramar Receiving Home. I was here for a few weeks.

### *Seclusion*

32. I remember cutting my leg on a ride-on tin train. When I went to show the matron, I said the word "bloody" to describe it. She punished me for saying that word by putting me in a cell.
33. I clearly recall spending at least six days in there. To me, it felt like jail for six days. I was locked in there the whole time.

34. I had a bucket to pee in, a mattress, blanket, and pillow. I was only fed bread and water. There was no exercise or things to do while in there.

**GRO-B-3 GRO-B-4, Foster Home, Porirua**

35. I was moved to the GRO-B-3 GRO-B-4 family in Porirua. The foster parents were called GRO-B-3 GRO-B-4. They lived on GRO-B, Porirua. I was about five when I moved here.

36. They had three kids, two boys and a girl. One of the boys was called GRO-B. I had my own bed in the boys' room.

37. I was with the GRO-B-3 GRO-B-4 in Porirua for about 18 months. GRO-B<sub>3</sub> was quite a mild lady, but GRO-B-4 was quite harsh, he was in the GRO-B.

38. I went to the Holy Family School in Porirua. I thought I was doing well at school, but in my reports, they called me a special needs child. That made me so angry because I wasn't. I did well at school; it was a place where I could excel because I wasn't scared.

39. I was always fed and clothed. I do have some good memories of driving along the motorway when it opened and looking at televisions in Cannons Creek. We would go for walks over to the Hutt Valley as well.

*Physical abuse*

40. I would get beaten up with straps, wooden spoons, and things like that. It was by both of them. I started to lie because I was getting beaten for telling the truth. It was like a defence. If I lied, I didn't get beaten up.

41. They used to have terraces at the back of their house. I can remember being beaten badly one time because I was sick while I was on the swing. I think this might have even given me a broken jaw.

42. Later in life, I had a CAT scan after an accident. The doctor told me that I had five broken face bones from my past, and that my nose had been broken on several occasions. They could tell this from the scarring. The only broken nose I can remember is when I hit my nose on a wheelbarrow.

*Psychological abuse*

43. I also suffered a lot of psychological abuse. One time, on New Year's Day, my sister [GRO-B-1] lied and told them I had looked at my birthday present while they had been away. I knew it wasn't my birthday and I didn't even know what it was, so how could I have looked?

44. As punishment, they made me stand in a corner for 22 days. It was soul-destroying. I would get up, have a bit of breakfast, then stand in the corner with my hands behind my back. I would only have little breaks for meal times, then get sent back to my room after dinner. I was not allowed to speak or turn around.

45. This only ended the day after my birthday, on the 22 January. I didn't have a proper birthday that year. I was really emotionally scarred by this.

*Leaving the* [GRO-B-3  
GRO-B-4]

46. I don't remember much about leaving the [GRO-B-3  
GRO-B-4] when they were in Porirua. I think [GRO-B-4] was transferred to [GRO-B]. They didn't really want to take me, but they must have taken [GRO-B-1] because I do not remember her being with me from this point onwards.

### Ashhurst foster home

47. I spent some time in a home in Ashhurst, for a short holiday period I think. It was quite a reasonably happy time there.
48. I went from here back to the St Margaret's Home in Palmerston North. Then I caught a bus to Wellington and was sent down to Christchurch on the ferry.

### Ferry Road receiving home, Christchurch

49. I was put here when I first arrived in Christchurch. I have no real recollection of how long I was there. Nothing bad happened.

### GRO-B-5, Foster Home, Christchurch

50. Then I ended up with the GRO-B-5 in Christchurch. They lived at GRO-B GRO-B. I was about eight years old when I arrived. I was here for a year or two.
51. I knew nothing about where I was going before I arrived. I don't remember who took me there, or anywhere for that matter.
52. They didn't have any children of their own. There were two other foster girls there. I remember their birth father would come and pick them up occasionally.
53. The foster mother was related to the GRO-B-3 GRO-B-4. She was GRO-B-3 sister. I think the foster father's name was GRO-B, but I'm not sure.
54. I went to a school near the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament on Barbadoes Street. I was fed and clothed okay while I was here. I do not remember ever having any possessions of my own, apart from clothes. I never had any toys or books.

55. While I was here, I remember playing outside in the playhouse on a Sunday afternoon, and hearing the crowd at Lancaster Park roar when Don Clarke hit the 65-yard penalty for the All Blacks.

#### *Sexual abuse*

56. The sexual abuse for me started at this house. When the foster mother left the house, the foster father would make me perform oral sex on him. He would then sodomise me. It was a constant thing the whole time I was there.
57. There was never anyone I could tell. I never saw anybody to tell. I look back now and realise that no one cared while I was in these homes. DSW only cared that I was in a home, not anything else.

#### *Physical abuse*

58. I was a petrified kid there. I hated being in the room by myself. I woke up many times with nightmares and would run down to the foster parents' room early in the morning. They would give me a hiding for waking them up.
59. I used to get whacked all the time, the girls too. We all got caned. It was just for being naughty, just being a kid.

#### *Neglect*

60. I used to be so thirsty in this place that I would drink the dirty bath water, after the other kids had all washed.
61. It was here that they realised my left eye was lazy and had not been trained enough. This had to be caught by the time you're three, otherwise it's too late to train it. This is something that should never have happened, but DSW and my caregivers failed me on this. Now I have really poor vision in that eye.

Leaving the [GRO-B-5]

62. I think the [GRO-B-5] marriage broke up. I remember coming home from school one day and being told "You're not living here anymore." A lady from DSW told me I was going to live with the [GRO-B-3  
GRO-B-4] again. That was the first time I had been told where I was going next.
63. I understand that I was sent to the [GRO-B] after I left the [GRO-B-3  
GRO-B-4] but I have no recollection of this.

[GRO-B-3 GRO-B-4] **foster home, Christchurch**

64. The [GRO-B-3  
GRO-B-4] were living at [GRO-B]. I continued at the same Catholic school that I had been going to at the [GRO-B-5].
65. The treatment was pretty much the same as it had been in Porirua. I remember one time, [GRO-B-4] hitting me with a two-by-four as punishment.

*Sexual abuse of* [GRO-B-1]

66. I also saw my sister [GRO-B-1] get sexually abused by a bus driver while we were at the [GRO-B-3  
GRO-B-4]. I remember we were both on a bus for some reason. She was crying her eyes out and was right at the back of the bus. The old man told me to bugger off and kept abusing her. I know more happened to her after that in institutions.
67. I do not know why I left the [GRO-B-3  
GRO-B-4] for the second time. It was at this time that [GRO-B-1] was first put into a mental institution. She went through hell afterwards. She got shock treatment, and went through Lake Alice, Kimberley, and Paeroa Hospital.

GRO-B-6  
GRO-B-7, foster home, Christchurch

68. The GRO-B-6  
GRO-B-7 were also related to the GRO-B-3  
GRO-B-4 and GRO-B-5. They were living in Papanui. GRO-B-6, the foster mother, was another of GRO-B-3 sisters. GRO-B-6 was really lovely to me.
69. I think the foster father was called GRO-B-7. He worked as a GRO-B. GRO-B. He used to go away on trips. Him and GRO-B-6 slept in different rooms.
70. They had three kids; GRO-B, GRO-B and GRO-B. GRO-B was my age, and the others were quite a bit older.
71. I remember having a lot of fun with GRO-B because we were the same age. I also recall having Christmases and getting presents. I never really got hidings. Apart from the sexual abuse, I was treated quite well.

#### *Sexual abuse*

72. The foster father sexually abused me. It was a regular thing on a Tuesday night, whenever GRO-B-6 was away at the women's club. If he was home, he would bathe me, then sodomise me.
73. Every Tuesday at school, I would shut up like a book because of it. Nobody ever noticed these symptoms. This abuse lasted for about a year, before it suddenly stopped.

#### *Psychological abuse*

74. I do remember a lot of bad things said by the foster family. They also didn't let me go to the bathroom after I had gone to bed, so I would have to get up and pee on the floor.
75. I once overheard GRO-B (one of the other foster kids) and my foster parents talking in the kitchen. They were saying, "if we did not have that boy, we would

not be able to afford our TV set." I felt quite hurt after that, because I realised what was going on.

### *Schooling*

76. I went to GRO-B It's the only real place that I remember at being at school. I was an altar boy there. I remember getting caned by the nuns one time for leaving a love letter for a girl who was my crush.
77. I would get caned badly by the rector because DSW had stopped paying my school fees. Instead of sorting it out with them, the school took it out on me.
78. But my time at GRO-B was good. I would play rugby and I was in the cadets.
79. In my reports, they were still saying I was a special needs child and needed to go to a special school. But I was the best in my class, because I had nothing else to do. I had no friends, so I concentrated on my schoolwork.

### *Social worker visits*

80. During this time, Mr Simmich became my social worker. He was good to me and would buy me sports equipment if I needed it. He made me sit with my foster mother and talk about things. He'd visit me once a month.
81. It was the first time I knew someone actually cared how I was going. Until then, no one was asking, ""How are you? How's it going? Is there anything that you're not happy with?" I felt more human.
82. In hindsight, I wish I had stayed at this house. I was doing reasonably well at school, and the sexual abuse had stopped.

## Visits to my family

83. During my time at the [GRO-B-6; GRO-B-7] I was taken back to meet my family. When I was moved to Christchurch, the state actually axed my ability to associate with my parents. They only flew me home a few times after I was 10. The rest of the time, I had no contact or communication whatsoever.
84. I had my first visit to home when I was about 10 years old. That is when I first realised I had parents and siblings of my own. My father wasn't violent to me on these visits either, because he knew he only had to look after me for a short time.
85. After the visit I came back to the foster home, I cried for days. I tried to [take my own life]. I got a good hiding for that. I only did it because I wanted to be back home.
86. I had about three visits to my family during this time. They were usually good times. [GRO-B] would take me out with him on his paper run.
87. There was only one violent incident. [GRO-B] played soccer and forgot to take [GRO-B] boots off before coming inside the house. My father got angry and picked [GRO-B] up, this 14-year-old kid, and threw [GRO-B] from one end of the hall to the other.
88. I was with the [GRO-B] for about three years. Then one day, Mr Simmich told me I was going back home to my family for good. I don't remember how I reacted, but I think I would've been just excited to see them more.

## Returning to my family

89. My parents were living in Palmerston North now. It was my mother who fought for me to come home. According to my files, her and my nana had been fighting

to get me home for years. They had also complained when I got moved from close proximity to them down to Christchurch.

90. Despite my mother's complaints, DSW had still deliberately separated me far from my family. By sending me to Christchurch, they made it harder for me to stay connected with my family. This would make it even harder for when I did eventually return to them.
91. I was 14 when I returned home. Social Welfare had been involved with my family since my birth and knew what my father was like **[Refer WITN0884005 – Family History documented by Child Welfare Officer dated circa 2/6/67]**. The whole time in care, social welfare did not want me to go home. But once they let me, they didn't do anything to look after me.
92. Social Welfare spoke so poorly of my family. They had no idea what was really going on. My mother was never going to tell them what was really going on at home with my father, but they still never checked in. They never asked my mother how she was coping emotionally.

*Abuse from my father*

93. The violence from my father was constant. The reason he hated me so much was apparently because I looked like my grandfather, and my father hated him.
94. The first day I actually arrived home, it was just prior to Christmas and I'd put my pants on the floor. The next day, because I had left my pants on the floor, my father locked me in the wardrobe for the rest of the day. I didn't have anything to eat or anything for a whole day because that was my punishment for leaving my pants on the ground.

95. My father would return home from the pub drunk and make [GRO-B] get up at midnight. He would strip [GRO-B] naked, beat the shit out of [GRO-B] and then send [GRO-B] back to bed.
96. My mother was very downtrodden and beaten up on a regular basis by him. There were many times I had to pull my father off her, when he had a pillow or knife at her neck. She had no support system or money, so she could not leave.
97. He would also sexually abuse [GRO-B]. He would fondle me and the [GRO-B] even [GRO-B-1] when she came home on holidays. [GRO-B] and [GRO-B] did not get the same treatment, but [GRO-B] was still scared because our father thought we were both having an affair with our mother for some reason.
98. He would hate when we were around our mother. One time, he found us laughing together, and he smashed me so badly that I had to get six teeth removed.

#### *Steel brush incident*

99. Another time, I had returned from my paper run and milk run in the morning. My mother said something funny to me in the kitchen, and I was laughing. My father heard us laughing and came in.
100. He didn't like it, so he grabbed me, shoved me in the bathroom, and went and got a steel wire scrubbing brush from the wash house. He scrubbed me from head to foot with it as a punishment. I was bleeding, my shirt was stuck to my pants, my legs had scars in them and there were open wounds and everything.
101. I got dressed and went to my work shift at the local bike shop. The guy in the bike shop didn't say anything. I went to school after that, and no one there said anything either.

102. [GRO-B] was my new social worker. She was a bitch. After school, I went to her to complain about what my father had done to me. I said, "I want to be taken away from home" and showed her my wounds. In response, she said, "You probably deserved it".
103. I never sat in on any conversations with [GRO-B] and my parents when she visited. I don't think they got any money from her to clothe me, because I was at home. I never saw her once apart from the time I went to her. She was meant to be in charge of me.

### *Supporting my family*

104. I was at Marist Brothers School in Palmerston North for a year, before I left at 14. That is when my working career started. I was working multiple jobs while at school too, to help feed my family, because my father was not working. I did a paper run, a milk run, worked in a bike shop, and worked at night time in a picture theatre.
105. The second week I was at home, I was begging at the Salvation Army and St Vincent's for food. I was doing it because I felt threatened to do so, and that something bad would happen if I didn't. I also had to beg for tobacco for my father.
106. We were hungry all the time. There was no support from my father, and my mother was only getting the equivalent of the family benefit.
107. Between the ages of 14 and 18 I probably had 30 odd jobs. I spent an average of six weeks in a job because they were so easy to find. You just walked down the road and into another one.
108. I once biked 96 kilometres in order to get \$7 for my family. I was camping with my mates at Tangimoana. My parents got a hold of me and asked me to come

home, so I biked back to Palmerston North. They asked me to go back out and ask my friends for money, so I biked back out, collected it, and took it back in. Then I biked all the way back out to my mates.

109. My father was eventually sentenced to Porirua Hospital for sexually abusing [GRO-B] [GRO-B]. While he was in there, I decided I wanted to join the Navy. My mother agreed to it, but my father disagreed, and so I wasn't allowed. I still don't know why they listened to him, serving a sentence, over my mother.
110. While he was in Porirua, my grandmother died. We moved to Auckland for a wee while, about three months, to look after my grandfather. I was still a state ward at the time.
111. While I was here, I stayed with a foster family called the [GRO-B] because we had too many people at my grandfathers. They were good, but they could not keep me, so I had to return to my family in Palmerston North afterwards.
112. I ran away from home between 16 – 18. I was still a state ward at the time. I had left to go farming, but the state didn't even bother looking for me. They didn't care whether I was dead or alive.
113. When my father was released, the sexual abuse stopped happening. He only stopped hitting me later on, when I was 19 and had left care. He tried to give me another beating because of his weird jealousy with my mother. This time, I hit him back and split his ear. He never hit me again afterwards.

### **Life after care**

114. I was discharged from care on 8 August 1972. I graduated from being a state ward to a criminal, and got sentenced to Detention Centre at Waikeria when I was 18. Child Welfare just decided to drop me off their books [Refer

**WITN0884006 – Recommendation for Discharge dated 12/7/72].** I think all I got was a letter from them.

115. If I had not gotten into trouble, I would've been in the state care system until I was 21.
116. I had been talked into getting into a stolen car and doing a lot of burglaries around Auckland and Gisborne. It was a rebellion against everybody controlling me probably. I regret doing it.
117. Waikeria was a good learning curve. It was okay. While I was there, I had an IQ test. The prison psychologist told me he had never seen a young person with such a high IQ, and that I could do anything I wanted to. I had the intelligence, but not the emotional willpower to do it.
118. After Waikeria, I did not get into trouble like that again. I went on and completed a degree and a diploma. I continued to work in lots of different areas, such as an engineer, a builder, a butcher, a baker, and a cook. I also had a family with one of my partners.
119. I also worked as a teacher. While I was teaching at GRO-B, I helped one of my students report that she was being molested by her uncle. She was 13 years old, and a state ward.
120. I could see what was going on and was able to build her confidence until she felt comfortable telling me. I reported it to my superiors at the school. I think it was resolved internally.

## Impacts

### *Struggles maintaining jobs and relationships*

121. I've had over 500 jobs in my life. As soon as I learn something, I get bored and just leave. I've constructed really successful businesses but have walked away from them as soon as I make it to the top.
122. When I have owned houses, designed exactly how I've wanted, again I've just walked out and left it with my partner at the time. I've had boats and other things like normal men my age should have, but I've just chucked it away. I can only blame myself for it, but I can see how it has happened.
123. I've also had five marriages. I have been in and out of a relationship with GRO-B GRO-B who I've known for 14 years. I've walked out several times for other women, and really hurt her. It has taken me a long time to stop that behaviour.
124. I also think I have used other people to try and find love, but I didn't really know what love was or what I was looking for.
125. I think the inability to keep a job or relationship goes right back to the trauma. I'm just waiting for the rejection that might not even happen. I'd rather walk away than lose it or be told I don't deserve it. It's self-sabotage.

### *Physical and mental impacts*

126. I've had abscesses in my ear. I have lived with no teeth for about 50 years now. I never had standard dental check-ups while in care, and only went to the doctors for broken bones a couple of times.

127. I've also been diagnosed with PTSD. I get easily triggered if somebody comes up to me, or if I hear a loud noise. It can just set me off. I've very sensitive to violence. If anybody hurt a kid in front of me, I'd nearly kill them.
128. I have the poor vision in my left eye that I have previously mentioned. It was not picked up until it was too late to do anything with it.

*Failure of the state*

129. I feel disembowelled by the state. Where were they in my life? Did they care about me? I never had any real support from them until Mr Simmich got involved when I was 13. That is why I find it hard to figure out what real love and nurture is, because I never had it in my entire life; even at home.
130. In life you need nurturing. It is a huge thing. If you're not nurtured, you just lose your way like I have. There's thousands of other kids like me that are the same.
131. There is no real record of my childhood. The state took that from me. The only photo I have of me as a child is from when I was with the GRO-B It was at my first communion. I never had any other baby photos, or photos of me growing up.
132. I grew up fearful, because I was always wondering when the next hiding was coming. I cried a million tears when I was young. Even though bad things were happening to me, you tried to think you belonged to the place you were at. But next thing you know, you're getting moved again.
133. You have to start all the formational crap all over again. But then once again it gets destroyed, and you have to restart. It does impact on you.

*Sexual abuse impact*

134. For a time, I thought the sexual abuse was just a form of love. I only realised it was wrong when my father did it to GRO-B. I never told anyone about my sexual abuse until I was about 40.
135. By keeping it inside all the time, I was actually feeling guilty that this actually happened, and it was my fault it happened. It makes a huge difference in your life. But now I realise I'm the victim, not the perpetrator.
136. At 15, I made a promise to myself that I would never hurt anybody the way I had been hurt. If I ever did what my father did to me, I swore to take my own life. I broke the chains of abuse by myself.

*Interpersonal impacts*

137. I find it hard to trust anybody. I have to get really close to someone before I feel I can start trusting them. That's why I haven't had many close friends growing up. I also struggled to trust women, and only started having relationships in my 20s.
138. My relationship with my children has also been impacted. Being a father has not been my forte. My daughter is only just starting to talk to me again. I'm very close with one of my sons now, and my other son has his own things going on.
139. I love my kids immensely though. They are all very bright people. When my marriage broke up with their mother, she turned them against me, so I've had to fight for years to win them back.

**Redress**

140. I've got my Social Welfare records. There are a lot of blacked out areas. They are so derogatory about my family, especially about my mother which really hurts. She suffered so much, mentally, emotionally, physically.

**ACC**

141. I have done a sensitive claim with ACC. I'm receiving counselling through them, and I also get a lump payment of \$8000 every five years for my PTSD.

142. Getting the right counsellor was a battle. I had one counsellor tell me I could've been a rapist and it would not have surprised him. I walked out on him.

***Confidential Listening Assistance Service (CLAS)***

143. I went through a process with the CLAS. It took me about 2 years from start to finish, and I didn't have any frustrations with the process. I started by seeing Judge Henwood, who was very nice. She helped me to bring a claim with MSD.

144. I settled in around 2016. They offered me \$50,000. I should have fought for more, I deserved more. How they got to that figure I will never know, but I would like an explanation.

145. I hated the stupid generic apology that was mass produced and sent to everyone. Only the names were different. It was completely impersonal.

146. I ripped my letter up. I still want a personalised written apology from the minister responsible for what the government did to me.

***Personal claim***

147. I was going to sue the government. I went to a lawyer and told him I wanted to take Child Welfare to court.

148. However, he declined my case saying that there was not enough concrete evidence. I thought that was ridiculous. The foster parents are obviously not going to record in writing the times they abused somebody. The people that had abused me were also mostly dead.

### **Looking to the future**

149. These people need to be really well vetted. It can't just be through police records. You have to go to their family and get feedback from relatives about how they are. We are still reading about cases where this abuse is happening. You cannot just give away kids like that.

150. If you're going to be in a foster home, you need to be there for a long period of time to get stability and get stability in your own mind.

151. Kids need to have private 1-on-1's with the social workers. The caregivers cannot be in the same room. If they are, the kid is not going to say anything that might get them in trouble.

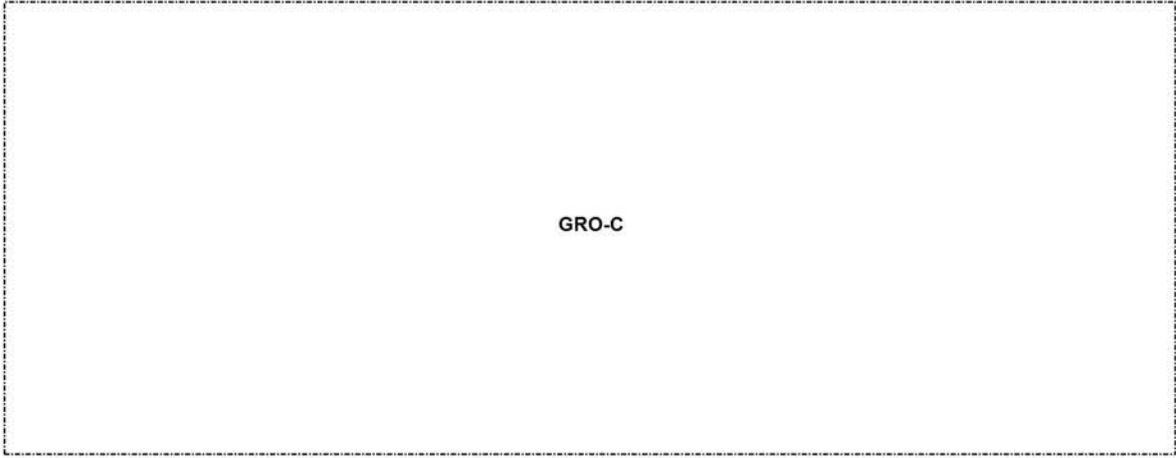
152. The people who are coming out of university and going into social work do not have the appropriate lived experience. They don't understand how it is, because it hasn't happened to them. It's like trying to console someone who has lost a child, when you haven't had the same loss.

153. The people that run it now, they have to be accountable for what happened. Nobody has become accountable.

154. This kind of life cannot carry on. These kids are our future. We need them to be able to live normal lives.

155. My story is not an isolated incident. I know that many other children were treated in the same way by the state, and went through similar pathways

because of how social welfare failed them. The state cannot treat these as one-offs.



GRO-C

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