

Name: John Collins

DOB: 13/04/1975

Name of Care Home:

Redbrae House, Maybole - 1 year, Carmichael House - 1 year

Reason for going into care: Lack of parental control

Age in care: 8- 11 years of age (1983-1986)

Personal Statement

Redbrae children's home

At the age of 8, I was taken to the Redbrae children's home in Maybole due to being out of parental control. I spent a year there. During my time there, I endured physical abuse at the hands of a man named Robin Dalrymple. He was cruel, hitting me on my bare backside with a piece of wood or a slipper. If I had bruises, I was kept home from school, which happened almost daily. He threatened me, saying that if I spoke out, I wouldn't be allowed to see my mum on weekends.

He would lock me in a cupboard in the attic for hours, leaving me terrified. Sometimes, I was forced to sleep there, and I would scratch the wall to keep track of how many nights I spent in that cupboard. If I wasn't locked in the attic, I was confined to my room without dinner, which led to me skipping meals regularly and feeling constantly hungry. When I needed to use the toilet while locked up, I was given a bucket.

As a form of punishment, I was subjected to cold showers. If I cried, Robin would spray me with cold water. I had no privacy while showering, as I had to do it with other kids under Robin's watchful eye. Occasionally, he would throw buckets of cold water at me. I became so frightened that I hardly spoke at all after a while. I was allowed to see my mum once every two weeks, but that was at Robin's discretion. He constantly threatened me, saying I might never see her again.

At night, Robin would enter the dormitory and pull me from my bed, making absurd accusations like skipping the queue to use the games console. He would then force me to bend over the desk and hit me with a slipper or a piece of wood, warning that if I cried, I would be sent to my room after school. Robin used to make me wash the dishes, and after I finished, he would take them out of the drawer and tell me to do it again. This happened several times.

At times, Robin would put soap in my mouth and make me bite it. I can still recall the taste. I began wetting the bed, and I believe it was out of fear. Whenever this occurred, Robin would beat me, which made me afraid to sleep. I was terrified at Redbrae; Robin made my life miserable. I was too scared to tell anyone for fear of never seeing my mum again.

Carmichael House

At the age of 10, I was sent to Carmichael House, where I spent a year. There was a man named Simon Ridge who ran the place. My experience there mirrored what I went through in Redbrae. They had a points system, and I needed a certain number of points each week to go home and see my mum. If I didn't earn enough points, I would be beaten. I was hit with a wet towel, and although I had bruises, my mum was told I couldn't go home because I didn't have enough points. The facility had a turret, and I was sent there if I was deemed bad. I would be locked in

for hours. All I remember is it being dark and smelling of old mattresses. Sometimes, I had to spend the night there. I was terrified because I was young and worried it might be haunted.

Simon was much like Robin; he would call me into the office, often for no reason. He told me I would spend a week in my room without seeing my mum. Sometimes, he would hit me and leave bruises. When I returned to school, they thought I had been sick, as that's what Simon told them, but the truth was I was bruised.

My experiences in these places had a terrible impact on me. I tried to suppress the memories for years. I feel anger when I think about how I was treated by adults who were supposed to care for me. I was abused, beaten, and threatened daily. The threats of not seeing my mum frightened me. I lived in fear every day, which led to my bedwetting problem that persisted until I was 16. This stopped me staying over with friends as I was scared I would wet the bed. I struggled to sleep when I left care due to this.