

Statement Addendum

Client Name: Tonie Cullen
Date of Birth: 11/12/1991
Care Setting: Foster Care Glasgow Council
Dates: 2002-2006
Persons Involved: William Wilson / Mary Wilson

Full Statement

I was placed in and out of care from a very young age. My memories from early childhood are vague and fragmented, but I clearly remember instability, fear, and not feeling safe. When I was around eight years old, my mother died. Her death devastated me. I was still a child and did not understand how to process such a huge loss. Instead of being comforted and protected, my life became even more traumatic.

After my mum died, I was sexually abused and physically beaten in my father's home. I was living in fear and confusion. There was no protection for me, no guidance, and no one I could trust. I felt completely powerless.

When I was 11 years old, I was removed from my father's care and placed into foster care with Mr William (Billy) Wilson and Mrs Mary Wilson (maiden name Mishlick). They lived in the Seagate area of Irvine, and their home was in Castle Place. I remained in their care until I turned 16 years old.

Being placed there was one of the worst periods of my life. I had already been abused at home, and instead of receiving care, understanding, or support, I felt like I was simply dumped there without explanation. No one helped me process what had happened to me. No one explained what was going on. I was a traumatised child placed into a house where I felt unwanted from the beginning.

From early on, I was secluded and isolated. I was frequently sent to my bedroom and kept there away from the rest of the family. I was not included in normal family life. I could hear them downstairs laughing, enjoying themselves, especially on summer days, while I was locked in my room. There was no playtime, no free time, no sense of belonging. I was given chores and then sent straight back to my room. It felt like a punishment just existing there.

While living there, I met another girl, Chloe Muir, who was younger than me. We became very close. We were like sisters. We protected each other because we both experienced the same seclusion and exclusion. We were kept separate from the rest of the household and treated differently from the Wilsons' biological children.

Mr and Mrs Wilson had twin sons, Craig Wilson and Darren Wilson. They made it clear that we were not their real family. We were constantly reminded that we did not belong. They would not include us in activities and would laugh at us. We were singled out and treated as outsiders. Mr and Mrs Wilson witnessed this behaviour and allowed it to continue. Looking back now, I question whether they encouraged that treatment towards us.

Food was used as control. Many times, Chloe and I were sent to bed hungry. We were not given proper meals. Some days we were denied food completely. Other times, we were made to eat leftovers with no choice. We were children and we were starving. We had no control and no voice.

We were often locked in our bedroom away from the rest of the family. It felt like imprisonment. Even during holidays, birthdays, and Christmas, we were not treated as part of the family. We were made to sit separately and watch them open presents, celebrate, and act like a happy family while we were excluded. As a child, that emotional rejection cut deeply. I felt unwanted, invisible, and worthless.

There was also neglect in basic care. I did not have proper clothing. I wore the same

ill-fitting clothes repeatedly, including underwear. I was not properly taught hygiene. When I once asked Mrs Wilson for help regarding hygiene, she made me feel stupid and ashamed. After that, she began calling me "a bitch." Mr Wilson called me "a slut." I was subjected to vile and degrading names daily. The name-calling was constant. I was mocked, tormented, and humiliated.

If I tried to stand up for myself or asked them to stop, Mr Wilson would restrain me physically. The restraints were painful and left me in physical pain for days afterwards. I was frightened of him. I learned quickly that speaking up led to punishment. So I stopped speaking. I stayed in my room to avoid confrontation.

They would threaten me regularly. They would tell me that if I did not stay in my room and keep quiet, I would be sent back home to be abused again, or placed with another family who would treat me even worse. As a child who had already experienced abuse, those threats terrified me. I felt blackmailed and constantly frightened. I believed them. I felt trapped.

There was no emotional support. No affection. No reassurance. No sense of safety. I was already traumatised from sexual and physical abuse before entering foster care, and instead of being helped to heal, I was further neglected, emotionally abused, isolated, starved, humiliated, and physically restrained.

The cumulative impact of this abuse has affected me throughout my life.

I have struggled severely with my mental health. I suffer from anxiety and symptoms consistent with post-traumatic stress. I experience intrusive memories, emotional triggers, and difficulty trusting people. I have always felt different, damaged, and unworthy. I struggle with feelings of rejection and abandonment. I find it difficult to form healthy attachments because I learned from a young age that adults who were meant to protect me could not be trusted.

I often feel hyper-vigilant and on edge. Raised voices or conflict can trigger intense anxiety. I have experienced low self-esteem for most of my life due to being called degrading names such as “bitch” and “slut” when I was just a child. Those words stayed with me. They shaped how I saw myself.

The isolation I experienced has made me withdrawn at times. I struggle socially and often feel like an outsider, even now. I carry deep feelings of shame that began in that household. I have never fully felt safe or secure.

Being abused at home after my mother’s death and then experiencing further abuse and neglect in foster care has left lasting psychological scars. Instead of being protected, I was retraumatized in a system that was meant to safeguard me.

I was a vulnerable child who needed safety, care, and understanding. Instead, I experienced seclusion, hunger, humiliation, threats, restraint, and emotional cruelty. These experiences have had a lifelong impact on my mental health and wellbeing, and I have never been the same since.