

Witness Name : Barrie John Ford

Statement No : First

Exhibits: BJF/1

Dated :

THE INDEPENDENT JERSEY CARE INQUIRY

Witness Statement of Barrie John Ford

I, Barrie John Ford, will say as follows:-

1. My name is Barrie John Ford. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1950. I have one sibling called [REDACTED] who is now deceased. I have lived in Jersey for over 50 years.
2. I was in the care of the States of Jersey Children's Department from 1957 to 1967. From 1957 to 1960 I resided at the Home for Boys. From 1960 to 1967 I resided at Boarding Schools in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] in the UK. I make this statement to the Inquiry in order to give an account of my experiences of the child care system in Jersey.

Background

3. My parents divorced when I was young which resulted in my Mum having to work. My Mum was unable to look after me or [REDACTED] because of her employment. In 1957 my Mum took me and [REDACTED] down to the town hall and we were sent to the Home for Boys. I was around seven years old at the time. My Mum subsequently remarried a man called [REDACTED] I have a half [REDACTED] called [REDACTED] [REDACTED] lived with my Mum and [REDACTED]

Home for Boys

4. When I arrived at the Home for Boys I was shown around by a member of staff called [REDACTED]. It was a big place and I remember being very impressed.
5. The Home for Boys was split into 3 age groups, namely juniors, intermediates and seniors. The juniors were very young, the seniors were aged 12 and above and the intermediates were aged somewhere in between.
6. I slept in a dormitory with around 11 other boys who were all around my age.
7. The Home for Boys had a small School within the home and it also had links to St Martin's School. I would estimate that there were around 70 to 80 boys in the Home for Boys while I was there. Around 30 to 40 children attended the School within the home and the remainder went to St Martin's School.

Staff

8. There were approximately ten staff at the Home for Boys made up of five couples, I remember some of their names, namely; ^{491, 225} [REDACTED] Mr [REDACTED] Mallinson, and [REDACTED]. There were two house parents per age group. The Superintendent at the Home for Boys changed to Mr Tilbrook while I was there. I think this was around 1959 when the girls were admitted to the Home for Boys and the home became known as Haut De Le Garenne.
9. The staff were generally very friendly, they would make time to have a chat with you which was nice of them. If you had a personal problem you could go to the staff and they would help you if they could. Out of all of the staff I think the [REDACTED] were the nicest, I always felt very comfortable talking to them.
10. The staff could be quite strict at times but they were fair. All of the boys knew what the rules were and what would happen if we broke them.

Discipline

11. There was occasionally the requirement for staff to cane one of the boys or give them a clip around the ear if they had been naughty however this was very occasional. This sort of discipline only really happened if a boy was doing something he knew he should not be doing, for example, using bad language or not cleaning his shoes properly.
12. If a boy wet the bed two nights in a row he would have to sleep on the wet sheets as a result. I am not sure if this was intended to be a punishment or whether it was done to try to encourage the boy not to wet the bed.

A typical day at the Home for Boys

13. An average day at the Home for Boys would involve being woken up at 7:30 am and going down for breakfast at 8:00 am which was in the dining room. All the boys would all eat together. After breakfast those who were being schooled within the Home would stay behind while the others would get the bus to St Martin's School. Some of the seniors would walk from the Home to St Martin's School, it was around a 2½ mile walk and it would take them about 30 minutes. A coach picked the boys at St Martin's School up at lunchtime and took them back to the Home for lunch so everybody had lunch together, then it was back to School for the afternoon. School finished at 4:00 pm and we were allowed free time to play until 5:00 pm. At 5:00 pm we would have dinner and then we would be allowed to play until it was time for bed. Bedtime varied depending on what group you were in however the juniors were in bed by 7:30 pm, the intermediates by 8:00 pm and the seniors by 8:30 pm or 9:00 pm.
14. On a Saturday we would have certain tasks that we would have to do, for example, we had to sweep up the yard or something similar. Some boys had pets such as rabbits or pigeons and they would go and tend to them on a Saturday afternoon. We would often go for long walks on a Saturday

afternoon led by members of staff, sometimes in the summer we would go swimming or to the beach. There was always something to do.

15. We had a film night every Saturday where everyone would congregate to watch a feature film. Pocket money was also distributed on a Saturday night by [REDACTED]. I think our pocket money was around 10p a week. There was a tuck shop just down the road from the Home for Boys and we would go down in groups of 8 or 9 and spend our pocket money at the tuck shop.
16. We would all go to Church on a Sunday.
17. Once we were older we were allowed to visit our parents at the weekend. I recall going to visit my grandparents every second weekend.

Events

18. We always celebrated big events at the Home for Boys. Every year the bands involved at the Battle of the Flowers came to the Home for Boys to play for us which was great.
19. On Bonfire Night we would make a big bonfire and there would be fireworks. We were also given a toffee apple as a treat.
20. At Christmas we had a Christmas tree in the dining room and every child was given a present from Father Christmas.
21. Towards the end of the year we were allowed to dress up in fancy dress costumes for a day, we did not put on a show but the costumes were judged and those who won got a small prize. I attach as my **Exhibit BJF1** a picture which shows approximately 13 boys dressed up in the Home for Boys. I am [REDACTED] in this picture and would have been around eight or nine years old when the picture was taken. I think the picture is dated approximately 1958.

Education

22. While I was at the Home for Boys there were concerns about my education, my grades had started to slip and I was not performing to a standard that I should have been. When I was around 10 I was asked if I would like to go to Boarding School as it would help to improve my education and get my results back on track. I spoke to my Dad about going to Boarding School and we both thought it would be a good opportunity for me so I agreed to go. I was a little nervous about going to Boarding School at first as it was in [REDACTED] however once I got there I soon settled in.

Experience at Home for Boys

23. I would describe my experience at the Home for Boys as being very good. There were lots of different things to do such as going to the beach or going for a walk or going sailing. We had three good meals every day and the food was excellent. We went camping every other summer for around three weeks which was always a nice holiday.
24. I recall Mrs Fulton and Mrs Hall from Jersey's Children's Services would come to the Home to see me every few months to check how I was doing. I never had any complaints.
25. I made friends while I was staying at the Home for Boys. I recall meeting [REDACTED] there and we have been friends for 58 years now.

Boarding School in Torquay

26. Shortly after I was asked if I would like to go to Boarding School, I moved to [REDACTED] where I attended [REDACTED] Boarding School for 3 years. There were around 120 boys at the School, they ranged from juniors through to seniors. I think the eldest in the School was aged 16.
27. [REDACTED] Boarding School supported boys who were in care and focused on their education. There were a lot different nationalities at the School for example South African, Canadian and American.

28. The School had a Chapel and we had assemblies in the Chapel every day. We also attended Church on a Sunday. The routine was very similar to what I had experienced in the Home for Boys so I soon got used to it.
29. I shared a bedroom with eight other boys who were around the same age as me for the first year. After I proved that I could behave myself I was given a room to share with just one other boy, which I preferred. I was given lots of opportunities while at [REDACTED] Boarding School which I otherwise would not have had.
30. We also went on trips to different parts of [REDACTED] and sometimes further afield. I was a big football fan and while I was at [REDACTED] School, I was able to watch [REDACTED] play football almost every week which I very much enjoyed.

Staff

31. The staff at the School were very reasonable, I have no complaints about them.

Discipline

32. There was discipline in the School but it was no more strict than the Home for Boys had been. If someone had misbehaved they might have to miss a day trip for example. I was always well-behaved so there was never a reason for me to be disciplined. I think a couple of boys tried to run away at one point however they were brought back to the School. They were not caned for running away but they were watched more vigilantly by staff.
33. Mrs Hall from the Jersey Child Care Office came to visit me after a couple of years just to check I was OK, I recall she took me out for lunch but I cannot recall any further detail about her visit. I had no complaints about life at [REDACTED] Boarding School, I enjoyed it.

Boarding School in [REDACTED]

34. After 3 years I left [REDACTED] Boarding School in [REDACTED] to go to Boarding School in [REDACTED]. The main benefit about the Boarding School in [REDACTED] was that it provided vocational training. I chose to specialise in [REDACTED].
35. The [REDACTED] Boarding School had a similar routine to the Home for Boys and [REDACTED] Boarding School, we still watched a film on a Saturday night and went for long walks.
36. Around once a month we would be taken for a day out to places such as [REDACTED] or around [REDACTED]. The day trips were great.

Discipline

37. The Boarding School in [REDACTED] was not particularly strict however if a boy misbehaved he would be disciplined by a member of staff. I remember one time one of the boys stole the keys to the School coach and we were all made to sit in the dining room with our hands in the air until the boy confessed to doing it. It was four or five hours before the boy confessed. Similarly, if a boy spoke out of turn he would be made to stand facing the wall for anything up to 3 hours.
38. I left the Boarding School in [REDACTED] in 1967. I ended up doing quite well in my studies and finished fourth top in the School.
39. Although both Schools were strict, I very much enjoyed my time at both of them. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to attend Boarding School as I feel that I would not have done so well if I had stayed at the Home.

Employment

40. After I left Boarding School I returned to Jersey and worked in a [REDACTED] as a [REDACTED]. I did not complete the training for reasons I would prefer not to discuss.
41. In 1970 I became a [REDACTED] in a [REDACTED] and I stayed there for five years. I was interested in [REDACTED] and left my job as a [REDACTED] to become a [REDACTED] for

██████████ and then ██████████ I specialised in ██████████
██████████

42. I no longer work as a ██████████ due to my health.

Assistance with investigations

43. In the 1990s I gave a statement to the Police in England about my time at ██████████ Boarding School. The reason I did this was because there was an investigation going on about the Schools in ██████████ and the Police asked me for my assistance. I told the Police I had a good experience at the School and had no cause for complaint.

44. In 2008 I was interviewed by the States of Jersey Police about my experience at the Home for Boys. I confirmed that I had not suffered or witnessed any type of abuse.

45. I was interviewed by a ██████████ in ██████████ 2014 about my experience at the Home for Boys. I went back to the Home for Boys with the interviewer. I was asked a few questions about my time there and I told them that I did not experienced any abuse. I explained that there was the odd clip around the ear however nothing serious and always with a good reason. I have not spoken to anyone else about my experience at the Home for Boys or the Boarding Schools.

Experience of others

46. ██████████ also stayed at the Home for Boys. Unlike me, he stayed there the whole time. He left the Home for Boys when he was 16 years old. I am not aware that he suffered any abuse. He passed away around 18 months ago.

47. The only person I know who has claimed to be abused at the Home for Boys, or Haut de le Garenne as it became known, is ██████████ 130. I do not know ██████████ 130 personally, I simply heard her story through my friend ██████████ 130 ██████████

which I would recommend you read, it is called [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. 130 states [REDACTED] that when she was at Haut De Le
Garenne if a girl wet the bed she was made to lie down in nettles as
punishment. However I did not experience anything like this. 130 lives in
the mainland and is 79 years old so I do not think she would participate in the
Inquiry.

I confirm that I am willing to give oral evidence to this Inquiry if required to do so.

Statement of Truth

I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed ... [REDACTED]

Barrie John Ford

Dated