

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

CCM
[REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name at birth was [REDACTED] My married name is [REDACTED] My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1968. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into boarding school

2. I was born in Edinburgh and I lived with my family in Morningside. I have a brother, [REDACTED] whose mother died and who is seven years my elder. I also had an older adoptive brother, [REDACTED] who is five years older than me. My father re-married, then I was born. I also have a brother, [REDACTED] who is eighteen months younger than me.
3. My parents' names were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. My father was a lecturer in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] at Heriot Watt University. Life at home was very scary. I remember waiting for the door to open and dad to come home. There was a sense of anxiety. There was no telling what would happen when the door would open, whether dad would be furious and who would get it. It was almost always [REDACTED] but we all got it.
4. [REDACTED] was beaten by my father most days. He was quite a difficult child. It had taken quite a long time for him to be adopted. He was born prematurely and had meningitis as a new born baby, so he was very vulnerable. The nuns at the orphanage told anybody who came round to look for children that he was very sickly to put them off. It was like a dog pound. He wasn't adopted until he was eighteen months old. Dad would often threaten to send him back to the home.

5. Before leaving for prep school, I attended South Morningside Primary School. We moved to South Queensferry when I was six and I attended the local primary school there. I enjoyed school. I was able to keep up. I never disclosed what was happening at home to anybody at school. I think we thought it was normal.

6. When we were young, my father would go to a children's home in Edinburgh and take [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] out. He just went along and asked if he could take a child for the weekend. They were about the same age as me and I was 5 or 6. They'd been put into care because their mother wasn't coping and their father was a violent alcoholic. They were having a diabolical time. I think their younger siblings were elsewhere in the system. I found it scary when they came to stay because of the chaos and the fact that things seemed to be falling apart for them. I found it so sad that their lives were demolished already by the age of five. I was too young to articulate it, but it was terrifying because they never wanted to go back to the home. My parents continued to have a relationship with the [REDACTED] family whilst they were still alive.

7. My father had been sexually abused by a cousin when he was a boy. His father was admitted to a lunatic asylum and his mother was left with eight children. There was always a threat that they might be taken into care. He knew what went on in children's homes. He had a strong belief that people should not end up in that kind of environment because it was dangerous. When he went to collect [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] he saw himself as rescuing them. My brother [REDACTED] and I have a huge difficulty with the use of violence by our father. However, when it came to sexual abuse he was absolutely brilliant at recognising that abuse went on and he didn't want it to happen to anybody else. Maybe that's why he was so angry. I think he viewed adopting [REDACTED] as part of this mission, which was ironic as I don't think [REDACTED] would have felt like he was rescued.

8. My father was a boxer when he was in the army. When [REDACTED] was 16 or 17, he struck [REDACTED] and knocked him to the ground. However, because [REDACTED] fought back, the dynamic changed a little. He understood that he was overstepping marks and

that his children were willing to take risks. The physical violence decreased in frequency at that point.

9. My mum was from a very wealthy family in Perthshire. She considered herself to have married down. My parents' relationship wasn't good. I attended a local school so I had a Scottish accent with a very fast delivery. I think my mum felt alienated by it. I think that was part of the reason she sent me away to school, to iron out my poverty.
10. When I was eleven, my father took a job in Saudi Arabia. I think he wanted to escape from my mother. His new employers paid for the school fees, which was the only way my parents could afford to send us away. [REDACTED] was able to continue on at his high school. My brother, [REDACTED], went to [REDACTED]. Recently, I met somebody in Pitlochry who said that the only way to survive [REDACTED] was to make himself sexually available to older boys. It just seemed like a crazy place.
11. The threat of ending up in a children's home is realised when you're sent away to these boarding schools. I was so scared at the prospect of ending up in these children's homes. [REDACTED] was too. My dad used that as a threat, and yet he did it.
12. My brother, [REDACTED], was nine. He went into Aberlour Preparatory School with me. My mother had been to boarding school herself and there wasn't any discussion about it. I'd read 'Mallory Towers'. I thought there would be matrons and midnight feasts and it would all be fine. However, because of my experience of [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], the anxiety of being put out of the house felt very unexciting. I remember a constant feeling of fear and terror.
13. We didn't visit the school before we started there. We had no involvement in the process or the decision. My mother had attended an interview with the headmaster, Sir Toby Coghill. I think my mother was excited about the prospect of being a fellow parent of the Queen's. She apparently told Sir Toby that her children were very shy. He told her, "That won't last long here, [REDACTED]" My mother felt that was very reassuring.

Aberlour House Preparatory School, Aberlour, Moray

14. Aberlour was within a stately home. It looked great on the outside but was absolutely disgusting inside. It was damp and squalid. There were about 120 children at the school, but many more boys than girls. I think there were thirty to forty girls. The children aged from five to thirteen.
15. I think Sir Toby Coghill was in his forties. The headmaster lived with his wife, Lady Gay, in a house to the rear of the school. The matrons also resided at the school. The girls' area was better looked after than the boys' area. Our matron was a very sweet and timid woman called Mrs Morrison. The other teachers and staff came in daily.
16. In addition to the dormitories, there was a dining hall within Aberlour House. Classes were held in stables behind the main building.

Routine at Aberlour*First Day*

17. My parents took us to Aberlour by car in September 1979. I had never got further north than Edinburgh and South Queensferry before. It was a long drive. The dual carriageway stopped after Pitlochry and then it seemed to take ages. My parents didn't stay for any length of time. That wasn't encouraged. I think my mother would have thought it unseemly to display public emotion. My father wrote to me afterwards to say that she had cried and cried all the way back to Edinburgh. In a sense, that was strange to me and I don't know whether that was more about her own experiences.
18. I felt terrified. It felt like an army training camp. There were all these rules and regulations and it was very difficult to comprehend the sense of them. There was also the feeling that I didn't fit in and I wasn't good enough. And I didn't fit in. I had

the wrong accent and my parents were not rich. There was a sense that everybody understood the system, but I didn't.

19. On the first day, each child was given a guide. My guide was unwell so she hadn't returned to school. I think she had had to have an operation. She didn't come back to school for a couple of months. I didn't have a guide and I don't think anything was done to replace her. I remember some of the older girls being very sweet and trying to help me. They were aware of how lonely it could be.

Mornings and bedtime

20. We slept in bunk beds in big dormitories. There were about twelve of us to a dormitory. There was also a two man bedroom downstairs. [REDACTED], whose father [REDACTED] arrived at school at the age of five. She slept in that small room with her elder sister. It just seemed so awful to me, even at that age, that she was so small.
21. We were woken by an electric bell at around seven o'clock. Everybody had to go on a morning run. It wasn't a long run, but it was brutal to have to be up and to have the fear of getting down there in time. They were very strict and you'd have been given a telling off if you weren't in time, but I think the fear was more that you wouldn't fit in or get it right. You had to get dressed as quickly as possible and be down there in five minutes. It was very strict in terms of what you were allowed to wear. The boys wore shorts and plimsolls and the girls wore a cardigan and our culottes. No underwear was allowed. I was desperate to fit in so I never wanted to be last down for the morning run. I think I was frightened a lot. I just wanted to survive it without anybody noticing me.
22. After the run, we had breakfast. Then there was an assembly when our hands would be checked, our shoes had to be clean and our uniform had to be right. Then we had classes.

23. We had our own bed sheets. We had to change the bed. I wasn't prepared for that and I wasn't very good at it. I couldn't get the duvet into the bed sheet. It was hugely shaming.
24. At bedtime, the electric bell rang again. A male teacher would come and tuck us in. Some people found that quite uncomfortable. I found it nice, because somebody was taking the time to tuck me in. It was a bit odd. There was a period of lying in bed and then whoever was on duty would come and switch off the lights. I think it was about nine o'clock.
25. One of my friends used to wet the bed regularly. We never used to talk about it but it smelt. Mrs Morrison was very good at dealing with it. There was a lot of shame about that.

Washing

26. The boys would have to try and wash themselves in sinks, naked. The boys' matron, Mrs McLeod, was very scary. She would stand over them. Their washing area was very industrial with shower heads coming out of the ceiling. The girls had three cubicles. We would queue up and Mrs Morrison would push us in. She managed it very well.

Food

27. Cooks obviously found Lady Gay awful to work for so they kept leaving. She had to do a lot of the cooking herself. There was a battered, food-stained list on the fridge, listing how much fresh food we should get. Really, she didn't care or manage that. The food was appalling. We were given allocated seats by Coghill. We would move around the table daily. Depending on where you sat, you may have to serve everybody else. There were usually two girls on a table and the rest were boys.
28. We had porridge three times a week for breakfast. I think Lady Gay made more of an effort at lunch time because her husband would be eating it, together with all of the

teachers. In the evening, only the matrons would be there with us. Lady Gay liked to heat up the contents of a tin of tomatoes. That was often all we got. Sometimes, she would give us instant mashed potato with grated cheese on top. I remember being hungry a lot of the time.

29. You had to finish all of your food or you would be punished. One day, my friend, [REDACTED], wouldn't eat her liver. Sir Toby Coghill was at our table, so she was found out. She was trying to scoop the liver onto her lap. She had to sit in the dining hall all afternoon until she had eaten it. It was awful.

Uniform

30. We wore navy blue culottes. They were quite uncomfortable because they would rub. To limit the amount of washing, we were only allowed clean underwear every four days. I was the youngest in the year because my birthday was in [REDACTED]. When we reached the age of twelve, some of the older girls found that very distressing and I remember them washing their underwear in sinks.

School

31. Lessons were in a stable block at the back of the house. There were very small classes, divided by year. I think there were about ten teachers. I struggled with French and Latin as I had never studied them before. They were an anathema to me. The teaching was probably better than at Gordonstoun because there was an attempt to educate us. We had to pass a common entrance exam to get into the senior school and they did try to educate us for that. I failed that. I think it was partly because I was spending so much energy on just surviving.
32. In the morning, there was piece. We would be given orange squash and a biscuit. The school was near Walkers biscuit factory. They would give us things they couldn't sell and that was a special treat once a week. During that time, a teacher would read out who had letters. It was so public. My friend [REDACTED] got a letter every day. I was very jealous. We had to write a letter home every Monday morning. That was always

the first lesson of the week. I don't know whether the letters were screened. I felt as a child that they were screened, because I lied through my teeth in every letter and said that I was having a nice time. I think the fact we wrote the letters at a desk, with a teacher in close proximity, and not during recreational time added to the sense that you had to write the correct story.

Sport

33. There were a couple of lessons after lunch and then there was sport. There was a huge focus on sport. There were horses, so those girls with that background and that money would go off horse riding. My mother really wanted me to be one of those girls so I would have to go down, every Tuesday and Thursday, and try to get a horse into a halter neck. I had never been near a horse before and they could smell me a mile off. It was awful.
34. I think you were allowed to choose which sport to do. There were also regular long cross-country runs. We were forced to participate. The terrain was very difficult, through streams, uphill and on your knees in the mud. I absolutely hated them and being shouted at, CCM I think I would rebel, pathetically, at times and just start walking. That would incite rage.
35. Aberlour was far more difficult as a regime than Gordonstoun turned out to be. Often, at weekends, we were put out into the Cairngorm hills with a teacher, a tent and a rucksack. We had to survive for 2 or 3 days. My brother went up to Cape Wrath and had to forage for food for five days, hunting birds and things. My brother remembers those kind of expeditions as a good time, but I really struggled. I remember being small with these huge rucksacks. It was freezing and the equipment wasn't great. It was supposed to be character building.

Leisure time

36. I don't think there was any leisure time because it was too dangerous. Children could be cruel to one another so we weren't allowed any leisure time. There was a ranking

system. Sometimes, at the weekend, those at the top of the rank would be allowed in the television room. There was a lot of music and a very nice music teacher who took a choir. Leisure was practising your instrument, going to choir practice or Scottish country dancing. There were also projects where you could learn how to make a rug and things like that. It was always structured and organised.

37. The science master was a very nice man. He would be on duty on Saturday afternoons. He would organise strange things for us to do to kill the time. On one occasion, we had to do a three- legged race, blindfolded, over three miles. It was such a relief not to have too much free time to reflect upon how horrible it all was.
38. There was a huge ration on sweets. On Saturday afternoon, we were allowed to go into Aberlour. People would gorge on sweets if they had any money. We had to force them in before we got to the school gates.
39. There was a library, but I don't remember it having any books that I would have wanted to read. I read a lot. I think I brought books from home and borrowed them from other children.
40. I found Sundays to be very painful. They were empty. There was very little to do. If you were a Catholic, you got to go into the village for Mass and that would use up the morning. In the summer, you could go for a picnic and organise for sandwiches to be made. During the winter, there was a bus that would take people skiing or skating. I would go skating. I was useless at it, but at least it was a day away. The trips would cost, so children who didn't have money wouldn't get to go. In the evening, there was an assembly and sometimes the local minister would come along.

Personal possessions

41. We must have arrived with a small amount of money, but we didn't get any pocket money. I brought a lot of cuddly toys. By the end of my time at Aberlour, I was barely able to get into my bed. I littered my world with things that were softer.

Holidays

42. In the school holidays, we went back to Saudi Arabia. According to the diary I kept at the time, I was sent a visa application to complete myself at the age of twelve. I remember letters from dad with directions in relation to travel plans. A taxi would arrive at the school in the early hours of the morning to collect me and [REDACTED]. We'd be flushed out of the house and into the cab for Aberdeen Airport. We had to transfer at Heathrow and fly to Saudi Arabia. The first time I did that I was eleven, travelling with my nine year old brother. I found getting to Saudi Arabia incredibly stressful. Occasionally, flights would be cheaper if we travelled via Amsterdam. We'd have to stay in a hotel. I didn't know how to manage all of that and I found it very stressful. I'm still a terrible traveller because I don't trust myself.
43. In the summer holidays, we would go to South Queensferry, which was a relief.

Birthdays and Christmas

44. I remember the birthday baths.

Siblings

45. I had been very close to my younger brother. After we started school, it was very hard to reach my brother or be near him. He was in the same building but we were very much apart. Contact with him wasn't encouraged. I think that's my biggest regret. He doesn't want to talk about school. I think it would be very painful to go there at the age of nine.

Visits/Inspections

46. We were allowed one or two phone calls home per term. Even those two were heavily rationed and you had to negotiate with Coghill, so it was much better not to call home at all. We were allowed two weekends at home per term. [REDACTED]'s parents would arrive to take her out. She would be taken out on Saturday afternoon and had

to be back for church on Sunday evening. Some children went out regularly, but my parents were abroad. I would desperately suck up to other people to try and get out. It didn't happen often, but sometimes people were kind.

47. My grandmother visited a couple of times. She'd read a lot of Enid Blyton and she thought it was all magical. My mother came to visit a couple of times.
48. I never told my parents what things were really like, either during visits or in letters home. I suppose I understood that the story needed to be correct. I would never have told them how unhappy I was.
49. There were no external inspections. The school was left to its own devices.

Healthcare

50. I don't think there was a nurse. The matrons would pick things up if anybody was ill. There was a sick room.

Running away

51. I remember a boy called [REDACTED]. He often tried to run away. Another boy I know from school said he and his friends could tell when [REDACTED] was going to do a runner. They'd had a debate in the dormitory about whether to go after him or leave him. It was about the third time he'd tried to escape. They followed him to protect him and make sure he came back. They reached him at the school gates. Coghill arrived in his car at the same time and asked what they were doing. Coghill said, "Let him run. Get back to bed. Let him run." He let him run and then he caught up with him.
52. [REDACTED] ran away. Coghill caught her. He humiliated her. She had to phone her parents from his office. It was extremely difficult because she couldn't be honest. I wasn't there, but I know she felt humiliated.

Abuse at Aberlour

53. I remember the birthday baths. The child would be stripped and taken to the bath and thrown in. Thank God my birthday was in [REDACTED]. It was mainly by other children, but Sir Toby would come up and do that to some of the girls. He would take a limb or two ankles. It was usually the older girls. We talked about how it was strange that he would come up and assist with certain girls. I found him quite scary. You had to do readings in assembly. I only had to do it once. I found it so difficult to read in front of everybody. He was jabbing in my back, "CCM [REDACTED] slow down."
54. In addition to birthday baths, naked swimming was also encouraged on birthdays. There was a cheap swimming pool that sat on the tarmac. I remember swimming but I don't know whether I was clothed or not. I think it happened quite a lot but I don't know who supervised it. I wrote in my diary that I swam naked on one occasion for a birthday celebration.
55. On the last day of my first term, just before the Christmas holidays, Sir Toby announced in assembly that the girls were going to go swimming. He told us we weren't to wear our swimming costumes because they would get wet. Aged eleven, that seemed to me to be an incredible statement. I'd only just started at the school and I was able to see that there was something terribly strange about that and clearly wrong. Later on, I became so much a part of the machine that I found it very difficult to see that things were wrong. My friend, [REDACTED] recalls finding me in the library in a panic. I knew there was something wrong but I didn't know how to articulate it because I was too immature. [REDACTED] said she was going to try and get out of it too. She went to Sir Toby and told him that we both had our periods so we didn't have to do it. I don't know what happened to the others after that.
56. [REDACTED] was [REDACTED] in his last year. He was demoted for peeing over the shower room. It was so out of character because, like me, he just didn't want to attract any attention. I always wondered why he did that.

57. I remember an [REDACTED] teacher called [REDACTED]^{CFP} [REDACTED]. He was there the first year I was there, for two terms. Then he just went missing and didn't return. That's what tended to happen. Subsequently, I discovered that he had been grooming young boys. I think the school made promises to parents that this teacher would not move on to another school, but I have the sense that this promise wasn't kept. I think people did just move on and there was no alert. It does give the impression that if abuse was disclosed, Sir Toby did do something about it.

Leaving Aberlour

58. I went home to South Queensferry for the summer of 1981. My parents were clearly not getting on, but it was a relief to be at home. [REDACTED] was away at [REDACTED] so we weren't seeing him being beaten all of the time. My dad would come back to Scotland for the summer. He was much happier with life in Saudi Arabia. There were lots of bored women for him to sleep with and he was at the beach every day, so his mood was better.
59. We had to go to Aitken and Niven to get our school uniform. It was very stressful. It was terribly expensive and I remember my mother would try to take short-cuts to save money and I would worry that everybody would see the shortcuts.
60. When I was still at Aberlour, we had to go for an interview at Gordonstoun. One of my friends wet herself when she was sitting on the chair in the interview. Everybody in the room just carried on as if nothing had happened. Other than the interview, we were given no preparation for the transition. I remember being quite excited about leaving Aberlour. I thought Gordonstoun would be less raw and not as dark and difficult.

Gordonstoun School, Duffus, Elgin

61. I arrived at Gordonstoun in September 1981. I had never been there, other than for the interview. It was about three quarters of an hour's drive from Aberlour. We had to do a common entrance exam, but Gordonstoun was a joke because it was just a holding pen, until people became adults. They would take anybody who had been expelled from other schools. They struggled to recruit because character building just doesn't attract as much as getting pupils into University at Oxford or Cambridge. And they were never much good at getting anybody into Oxbridge. In retrospect, there were quite a lot of damaged children there, children who had been expelled or parents who didn't mind what happened because there was enough money.
62. Where I lived at Gordonstoun it was made up of old Nissen huts, donated by the Royal Air Force. The Nissen huts contained dormitories and study rooms. There were about three hundred and fifty students. About two thirds of the pupils were boys. The refectory was three quarters of a mile walk from the dormitories.

Routine at Gordonstoun*First day*

63. There was a third form dormitory. I remember being issued with bedding. At least by that time, I had worked out how to make a bed. There were two six formers in the dormitory to help us. The seniors were very much in charge and the proximity of the adults had moved off quite considerably.

Mornings and bedtime

64. We were in single beds with drawers underneath. There were group dormitories and group studies, unless you were in your O-level or A-level year, then you were given a single study. There were two girls houses.

65. In the morning, a junior girl would come round to wake us up with a hand-held bell. It was much softer than Aberlour because we were governing ourselves. In the girls' house, that worked. We had to go on a morning run, but as we got older it seemed more lackadaisical. We'd roam out with our duvet round our shoulders, give somebody the finger and get back in. All of that made things seem less terrifying.
66. After the morning run, we went for breakfast in the refectory. We then had to go to chapel. We had to sing a hymn and there would be a reading and any announcements. If somebody was expelled, it would be announced there. You would be expelled if you were caught drinking twice, smoking three times or having sex once. Sex was a capital offence. Drug abuse also resulted in immediate expulsion. Some people just went and if there was nothing to be learned, there was no announcement.
67. At bedtime, there was lights out and one adult would be on duty to check the lights had gone out. Lights- out was at 9.30 or 10. Girls were supervised by one adult, who was very unavailable. However, it sounded horrendous in the boys' dormitories.

Laundry

68. Boys had their clothes washed for them. The girls had to do their own laundry. We had to get a disc to put into the washing machine. For the first term, I was in dirty clothes. I didn't know how to do it. I was too frightened to ask. I think I washed my underwear in the sink, but I must've stank. I was so embarrassed and ashamed. Eventually, a senior girl in my study showed me how to use it.

Food

69. We went to the refectory.. The food was much better than at Aberlour. We were allowed to sit where we liked. It tended to divide into boys and girls, but the people in relationships would sit together.

Personal possessions

70. We were given a stipulated amount of pocket money. There was a tuck shop as well. I would really go to town buying Mars Bars. Money would go missing all the time. Theft was rife. There would be massive house searches for stolen items. I would panic that the £5 would be found on me. There was a lot of anxiety in the early years about these house searches.

School/Expeditions

71. There were a few Nissen huts and purpose- built maths, art and science blocks. The teaching was very poor. I always felt that girls were there to find a man in the same wage bracket as their fathers. We had to learn how to sew..
72. I loved art, but my mother decided it wasn't an academic subject so I wasn't allowed to take it for O-level. I spent a lot of time in the art block. The art teacher was very sweet and very patient with me because I made the same things over and over again.
73. The girl who helped me with the naked swim at Aberlour managed to get into Cambridge University. That was incredible, because she had to pull that off herself. The majority of the girls in my year still struggle to realise our potential. Some classes were ridiculous. There was no discipline. The teacher would be at the front, talking about himself, and the back of the class would be doing its own thing.
74. We had to join a service. There was a voluntary fire service. There was also a coast-guard, but girls weren't allowed to do that because they couldn't be trusted in the coastguard hut. I think the only thing the coastguard service managed to do was strangle a sheep trying to rescue it. I chose community service. I would go round to old people's homes. I also helped with an evening group for teenagers with learning difficulties. They would play pool or dominos and chat. I would be paired up with a boy.

75. The boys who chose community service were very sweet. They liked to talk about themselves. We spent a lot of time smoking rather than helping the people we were there to help. It was time of freedom and of good relationships, but those boys would ignore me when we returned to the school setting. One of those boys told me it was the only time he felt safe, when he was with me at community service, but he wouldn't acknowledge me for the remainder of the week.
76. After school, we had to do two hours of prep in the evenings, from seven till nine. We would be put in a study with four or five others. That was a time for me to try be disruptive and entertain everybody to curry favour.

Sport

77. There was a lot of emphasis on sport. We had to do expeditions in the summer term. We had to do seamanship. We had to cycle against the driving wind and rain and then learn how to row. There were cruises. Twice in the course of my five years at Gordonstoun, I was put on a boat on the West Coast. There were bunks within the shell of the boat. We'd be there for a week. Every morning, we had to get up and jump into the sea. If you got somebody in front of you who couldn't get onto the rope ladder, you'd be stuck in the water. I was always trying to be first off the boat so I could be first to get back up the rope ladder and avoid these dreadful situations. It was all supposed to be character building.
78. We were taken to the West Coast when I was sixteen or seventeen. We were dropped off with tents in the middle of nowhere. We were given three days and a map to get to the other side of the pass. A bus was going to pick us up. I remember hearing the boys clanking past with bottles. They didn't have tents, just alcohol. I was moaning the entire way. I fell in a bog and lost my twenty cigarettes. There was a teacher roaming around, but we only saw him once.

Leisure time

79. At the weekend, we could go to the cliffs near Lossiemouth. I spent most of my time plotting where I could get my next cigarette. I started smoking when I was fourteen. I was quite ritualistic about it. I would go into town on the bus to get cigarettes and I also did duty free when I was travelling. All I remember of the weekends is smoking.
80. There were parties in houses, but you had to get an invitation. The invitations were handed out publicly during dinner time. I never got an invitation. We would order taxis and the taxis would bring alcohol in. I got caught smoking once and drinking once. I didn't have enough money to drink very often. People would drink out in the woods.
81. On Saturday afternoon, there was rugby. I spent a lot of time watching rugby, just for something to do. We spent a lot of time trying to chew up the time, but it did feel like chewing. There was a community of sharing clothes. On a Saturday afternoon, there would be a mountain of clothes and everybody would try and find the perfect outfit. There was one full length mirror. That could take a whole afternoon. Some people were very rich and had amazing wardrobes. All I had to offer was a pair of Converse trainers. I was always pleading to try and borrow something nice to wear, as if that would miraculously change my love environment. I became the funny person who could crack jokes. I also became a good listener. I realised people like to talk about themselves. Boys wouldn't go out with me but they would bore me for hours. It did feel like I was surviving better and I did make some friends.
82. We could take the bus into Elgin on a Saturday afternoon and go shopping. I also went to the cinema on one occasion. In the first two years, I didn't have a group of friends that would make such trips enjoyable so I didn't continue to do that as I got older.
83. On Sundays, we had to go to the chapel in the morning. Sundays were less difficult than at Aberlour. I read a lot at Gordonstoun. There was a nice library. It didn't have many good books, but it was a nice place to sit.

Holidays

84. I would blag cigarettes from grown men on flights to Saudi Arabia. I would be up the back of the plane, smoking with them. [REDACTED] would be watching whatever boring film was on. Sometimes I ended up in a bit of trouble. I would chat-up the men on the plane who in Saudi found it difficult to get laid or drunk. For these men it was the last hours before going into a kind of prison. That crew going out couldn't get laid, they couldn't get drunk. When I look back, they were a dangerous group for me to be fraternising with but nobody was counselling me against it.
85. I would arrive in Saudi Arabia with a whole lot of plastic bags like a homeless person. [REDACTED] would have to get us from one flight to another because I was often drunk. The men on the flights would buy me drinks. On one occasion, in Amsterdam, I nearly went with a man from the flight. I told [REDACTED] I'd see him next term. The look on [REDACTED] face was too awful so I didn't follow through on that.

Siblings

86. [REDACTED] arrived when I was in the fifth form. His house was across from mine, also in a Nissen hut. By the time he arrived, he looked terrible. His whole body looked broken. I feel terrible that I wasn't able to ask him if he was okay or reach out. I was the sort of child who had no credibility for him. I couldn't do anything for him. I was surviving, but I wasn't stitched in anywhere. The boys really didn't like me so I felt as if I couldn't help his credentials at all. I blame myself because I didn't help him.

Visits/Inspections

87. My father came to visit at Gordonstoun. He shouted at the housemistress because my bike was broken. I think after her reaction he felt humiliated and he never came to visit me again.

88. My mother visited because the Queen was visiting. She was very Christian so she also came up when I was being confirmed. My parents were still living in Saudi Arabia, so I would try and blag my way out for weekends with other pupils. That happened increasingly the older I got.

Healthcare

89. There was a matron in the sanatorium. If you were ill, you would sleep in the sanatorium. You had to be dying to get into the sanatorium, but I always wanted to get there. I think it was because the matron was so nice.
90. I was over-eating, so my mother made the matron weigh me. That happened a couple of times as my mother had stipulated that this was necessary. Girls would come with me because I probably made a joke about it. They were laughing and laughing about how much I weighed. The matron was embarrassed about having to do it. It was horrendous for me as well.

Discipline

91. If you were caught smoking, you got a half hour chart so every half hour you had to find a member of staff and get them to sign off. You were also house gated so you weren't allowed to leave the house apart from classes, sport and meals.
92. I was part of a food fight when I was in fifth form. It was the last morning so we were having boiled eggs and yoghurt. [REDACTED] loaded his pockets with boiled eggs and lobbed one into the crowd. I went mad and chucked everything. A lot of girls were involved, but none of them owned up. Mavor, the headmaster, came out and he was furious. He asked for everybody involved in the food fight to stay behind. It was a matter of respect, you always owned up. I looked around and all the girls' pews were empty. So I left as well, but it was decided by the student body that I would be the female representative. I joined the punishment that afternoon, which was a two hour running detail. Every time they boys lapped me, they would shout,

CCM [REDACTED] If there was a group event, you would get this running detail, like in the army.

Abuse at Gordonstoun

Bullying/Abuse by other pupils

93. There were no adults in the dorms. There would be somebody on duty, but he or she would just monitor prep or come round and check that the lights were off. There wasn't so much active bullying amongst the girls. I took myself out rather than allow them to push me out. There were a lot of girls who were ignored, 24 hours a day.
94. I was spat upon and assaulted by the boys, especially in the first few years. I remember being shouted at because of the way I looked in the swimming pool, because I was heavy. I was being baited all the time, like a bear. It was often older boys, but the boys in my year were cruel as well. They were having such a desperate time themselves, so I expect it felt great to be able to let off some steam on me. I didn't count it as bullying and it didn't govern everything for me because I didn't have to live with them.
95. For the boys, I felt the regime of self-governance was catastrophic. The boys were cruel. They had a Jew hunt and chanted, "Where's the Jew, where's the Jew, where's the Jew." Then they would find the Jew, put him in a basket and cold shower him through the basket.
96. I remember going to [REDACTED]'s house. I saw all the juniors hanging from boiling pipes. The plumbing was high up. A senior was sitting with an aerosol can and a lighter and burning them. They were trying to see who could hang on the longest.
97. There were a lot of shooting incidents. In my first term, an older boy shot [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who was in my year. He had put his bin in the wrong place and the senior boy had tripped over it. He was shot six times at close range. Matron had to pick the pellets out. He was only rusticated for a couple of weeks. I found that very scary. It

just seems insane that a child could be shot until the pellets embedded, but nothing happened.

98. I think these things were happening all the time, so I don't always remember them. They became normal. However, one incident was so extreme that it stuck in my mind. One child had his nipple ripped off by a pair of pliers and was forced to drink a litre of concentrated orange juice. He was a new sixth form entrant and had got there on a scholarship and somehow that was worse than anything. It was scary to not have a title or money. The people there on scholarships were utterly demolished. The boys responsible were expelled in that case.
99. We were left to govern ourselves. I think it was a way of the school managing itself without having to spend money on salaries. It was almost as if this form of discipline amongst pupils was encouraged. You would never dream of telling on anybody else. That would be the worst crime. In the case of the boy whose nipple was ripped off, a house master noticed the wound and asked him what had happened. He would never have told anybody otherwise.
100. When I was fifteen or sixteen, I remember going for a cigarette with a boy and ending up giving him a blowjob. I don't think I wanted that. The boy was about the same age as me so I shouldn't have been scared of him. I just remember thinking it was the right thing to do.

Treatment of girls

101. A lot of children from Aberlour went up to Gordonstoun. I thought I might be able to rely on those people, but there was huge kind of power struggle. I didn't want any power, I just wanted to get through it. I would find that people didn't want to sit next to me.. People would avoid sitting next to me in the refectory. One girl was teased for having a fishy fanny. She came up to me in the shower room and said, CCM I trust you, do I have a fishy fanny?" And I said, "No."

102. It was very difficult as a girl. There was a lot of shame around our gender and around sex. The fishy fanny was indicative of everything. During my second or third term, one of the girls I was with at Aberlour, already had a boyfriend who was two years older than her. She came in with sperm on her hands and said, CCM this is what it smells like and this is how you do it." I remember feeling like I never wanted to do things like that and being really frightened.
103. You did survive better if you had a boyfriend. You had somebody to look after you. I never had a boyfriend. All the boys would shout out to me, CCM That was my nickname.
104. I remember going into a maths class. There was a drawing on the blackboard of me with spread legs and a huge forest of red pubic hair. They were completely fixated with the fact that my pubes were a different colour than anybody else's. The teacher must have noticed because I wasn't able to take it down myself, but I can't remember any action being taken. My chair was chalked in red. Some of the older girls were really kind, but I always had the sense that the boys would take off my skirt or try to strip me and overwhelm me. There were no boundaries and it was really scary because it felt like anything could happen. It suited the adult staff not to intervene.

Abuse by staff

105. Boys were beaten a lot. It was done by the headmaster, Michael Mavor, in his office. There was shame attached to it so nobody talked to the girls about it. Maybe the boys talked about it amongst themselves. It didn't take place in public areas so I didn't see it.
106. After the second time I went on the cruise in the Western Isles, the captain disappeared. I don't know why he disappeared, but I get the sense that we were not safe. I remember there was a lot of chatter afterwards that something bad must've happened. All of us understood that if teachers went missing, it would be on account of rescuing the school's reputation and getting rid of the problem.

107. When I was fourteen or fifteen, I had terrible stomach aches. I went to the doctor about them. It took me quite a long time to go. The doctor came from outwith the school. He gave me two rectal examinations. I don't think I would have thought much about it, but my music teacher asked me why I wasn't practising my instrument. I said I had stomach aches and she asked if I had been to the sanatorium. She asked me what had happened there. I told her I got a rectal examination and she said, "I'm doing a rectal audit because he seems to be doing that rather a lot." She went off and wrote it down. She must've been keeping a record of it. I was told my symptoms were psychosomatic.
108. By sixth form, I was begging my parents to leave. I hardly ever spoke to them on the phone because it was so expensive to call Saudi Arabia, but I begged and begged and begged. I was very depressed. I was finding it very difficult to function. My parents contacted the headmaster and delegated this situation to him. He said he wanted to speak to me. Even though he had made the appointment, the first two times I went he was unavailable. Finally, on the third occasion, he was there. I thought it was a meeting about me leaving, but he just humiliated me. He asked if I understood what a difficulty I was causing my parents and that I ought to be better and think about others.
109. That day, I decided I needed to kill myself. As I was on my way to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I bumped into a very sweet local man who gave me whisky and cigarettes and packed me back off to school.

Leaving Gordonstoun

110. After asking to leave, I was at school for another eighteen months. I had to stay and finish my A-levels. I completely bummed my exams. My father went through the clearing list himself and booked me onto a librarianship course in London. I left school when I was seventeen.

Reporting of abuse at Aberlour and Gordonstoun

111. The whole regime demanded silence and demanded that we were seen to be having a good time. Once I got to Gordonstoun, I was able to tell my mother about Aberlour and the birthday baths. But she either wouldn't believe it or she didn't want to hear it. I brought it up again with my mum when I was an adult and I became a mother myself. Again, my mother didn't want hear it. I suppose that's why I was so anxious about coming forward to the Inquiry.
112. I never spoke to my father about what happened. Maybe that was a mistake because maybe he'd have done something about it. He just felt too scary and you couldn't predict how he was going to react.
113. I didn't speak about what was happening at Gordonstoun to anybody other than my mother. Because I tried to tell her about Sir Toby and was pushed back, I lost courage. Not being believed felt even worse than the event itself.
114. A few years ago, there was an article in the Guardian newspaper by Alex Renton about the rape of a girl at Aberlour and the assault of a boy by a male member of staff. That prompted me to go to the police. I reported Sir Toby Coghill to the police in Elgin. The police officer was wonderful. He was very reassuring and supportive. He reassured me that Coghill was dead.
115. I tried to verify some of these memories in a Facebook discussion group, separate to the main Gordonstoun discussion group. It was the first time I'd spoken about them since attempting to speak to my mother. People come on and try to clamp down on the story. I asked if anybody remembered Sir Toby's birthday baths. I'm terrified I'll say something that's untrue so I wanted verification. For three days, I was slated and accused of lying because my birthday is in [REDACTED]. It was the most demoralising experience, being called a liar and an exaggerator. After three days, the friend who had helped me get out of the naked swim came on to the group and confirmed that Sir Toby did come and help with birthday baths but that she felt there was nothing

untoward about that. I think the most scary thing is to be disbelieved and to not be able to trust yourself.

116. I became obsessed with this Facebook group after they denounced me. I didn't dare mention the rectal examinations. I would check all the time, hoping my experience would be validated. One night, there was the most amazing message, "Did anybody else have rectal examinations under spurious grounds?" I was as high as a kite, it was ridiculous. The child who sent the message was six years younger than me. The idea that the doctor could carry on doing these examinations was awful. I don't know whether the music teacher took any action. Maybe the teacher did report it and the school didn't listen to her. There should be mandatory reporting because it's awful to think it was allowed to carry on.
117. I wouldn't feel safe making a complaint to the school. The institution and its name is so important to them and everything will be sacrificed to preserve that. They shut down the generalised discussion and set up the Gordonstoun support group. You had to ask for permission to join it.
118. In June 2017, there was an article about Gordonstoun in the Times newspaper. In the article, the school stated that they really wanted to hear everybody's stories and support everybody and that they'd talked to everybody. I then asked to join the support group and asked if anybody else had been contacted by the school. There were people in the group who had been raped and experienced much worse abuse than myself. I found that nobody had been contacted, even though Gordonstoun was aware of these people.
119. Somebody I was at school with is a member of that support group. She was at Aberlour with me as well and was quite a bully. She used to be on the board of governors and her children attend the school. She is following me on Facebook and jumping in on comments I make. She is reporting back to the head teacher from the discussion group. It's made me feel like I can't be safe in this support group and I can't be safe at home.

120. As a result, the current head teacher at Gordonstoun contacted me directly to see me off. She emailed me about eight weeks ago and I didn't know how to respond. I was angry. My husband told me it wouldn't be the right way to move forward. I had written that if people didn't feel that the school had been interested in their experiences then they might feel safer contacting the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry. I suggested it might be a better route if people had things that they needed to discuss and they wanted to be listened to. I think that was what precipitated the email. The email was apologetic in its tone, but it felt scary. Rather than asking me to get in touch and offering support, it felt more like I was a problem and they'd like me to go away. I think other former pupils feel unsafe on that forum as well so they'd send me direct messages.

Records

121. In relation to the rectal examinations, I was so worried that I was making it up. I requested my medical records a few months ago. I told the receptionist at my GP surgery that it was going to be about something distressing. She told me that the doctor would give me my records. When I got there, the doctor was too busy to give me them. He just said, "Oh, your medical records are just that you were overweight." I couldn't believe he'd just dropped that in. They left my medical records at reception. I should have waited, but I read them there and then. There was no record of the rectal examinations at all. The only other thing in my records was that I had a skull laceration. I was roaring at the receptionist that I couldn't believe it. They stuffed me into a room and just left me there. It was too overwhelming.
122. There was nothing in the records I initially saw about my being overweight. I insisted upon seeing the doctor and seeing all of my records notes, because he must have seen somewhere else that I was overweight. They then allowed me to see everything. There were a couple of entries from the school nurse, saying that I had a stomach ache. There was a letter from my mother, saying that I was being bullied because of my weight and that she wanted me to be weighed. She also mentioned

the stomach aches and asked what was being done about that. There was nothing else.

Life after leaving school

123. I went straight from school to start my librarianship course in Ealing. My parents were desperate to get me onto the next stage. My father had chosen the course. I didn't have any accommodation. My brother, [REDACTED] enlisted for the Royal Air Force as soon as he was old enough. He was staying in RAF accommodation in West London so I stayed with him for a time.
124. I then found a house that was quite chaotic and moved in there. My flatmate would have her boyfriend over and have sex in the same room as me. That was all quite normal. I was so relieved to be out of school and so vulnerable that I just accepted such things. I didn't question anything or have any self-respect about my own space. I would wake up every morning in this really dirty room and just be so relieved not to be in school. The other girls in the house were appalled by what I ate. I wasn't able to cook for myself or look after myself. The other girls had come from home rather than boarding school. They taught me how to cook pasta. I would eat the same thing all the time. I had no preparation for living independently, but I was very independent in some ways.
125. I failed all of my exams at college and was thrown out after the first year. I was in a relationship with somebody who made me sleep on the floor. It was my first sexual relationship. I accepted all of that. He would smoke cannabis all the time, so I was high all of that year.
126. When I failed my exams, my father cut me off. My parents also contacted the education board so I had to repay my grant, which was tough. I had to go and get a job. I commuted into the City and made cups of coffee. Then I got a job as a girl-Friday in a design firm. I paid for my own typing course at Tottenham Court Road to try and improve my situation. I was promoted to secretary.

127. That year, I was raped by a stranger in a pub on the Euston Road. He was a bouncer and he asked if I wanted to come upstairs and see the view. He tipped me onto the single bed in his room. I didn't see the view. He put my dress over my head. I wouldn't have called it rape then. I blamed myself. I think I came downstairs afterwards and told the group I'd had sex with the bouncer. Now, looking back on it as an adult, I realise that it was non-consensual.
128. I was also raped by somebody at work. He was an architectural technician in the design firm. I got very drunk at the Christmas party so I wasn't really able to function. A friend, who I still have, put me in a taxi with this guy and he was instructed to take me home. But he didn't, he took me back to his and he raped me there. It wasn't like the rapes is what you think about. It wasn't very violent or anything like that, but it was scary and horrible and I didn't know where I was. I'd been extremely drunk. I lay awake all night afterwards, worrying about how I was going to get home. Then I had to work with him. I probably explained it to myself that it was my fault for being drunk or wearing the wrong dress. Now, I can see that it was wrong.
129. My parents helped me get into my own flat in Camden. I would have sex with anybody who wanted to have sex with me. I think I had a reputation in the bar I used to frequent. After going there, I'd be sitting on the top deck of the 134 bus. Somebody would appear. Sometimes I wouldn't know them, sometimes I would. They'd obviously been told to get on the bus with me and I would take them home.
130. After I was raped by the architectural technician, I wanted to get another job. I managed to get another job in an architectural firm in [REDACTED]. The one thing I was getting right was work because I had to pay to live and to eat. Other than that, I was very chaotic and getting drunk a lot.
131. Once you've contemplated committing suicide, I don't think it leaves you. I became a Samaritan when I was twenty. Because I was a young voice, I didn't initially realise that men would just masturbate on the phone to me. I would do one regular slot a week after work. I did one overnight session a month. The overnight sessions were

much better because you got people who really were struggling. Even then, there would be some terrible calls. I remember on one occasion, a woman calling and I really believed her but she was just doing it so her partner could masturbate in the background. I remember feeling like such a tool. You weren't allowed to terminate the call.

132. I met my husband within a week of finishing my first round of counselling. He wouldn't sleep with me for three months and that did it. I couldn't believe it. That's what worked; he was treating me like a person. We have two children, aged 18 and 15.
133. I still work as a secretary. I have no professional confidence. I did go back to university to study English literature. I graduated with a first class honours degree. I then graduated from my Masters with distinction. I've just had a book published, which I can't believe. I find it very stressful to speak in public, but writing is fine. I just spoke at a book festival. I think I was manic, but I could tell the audience were forgiving of me because I give off a stink of vulnerability.

Impact

134. My home life wasn't great. My experiences at home will have impacted upon my time at school and made me vulnerable. My father and my brothers had no respect for women. That would have played into my lack of sexual self-respect considerably. However, I do think school tore down what remnants remained. I feel filled with shame all the time.
135. I think school has had an enormous impact on me. School and my home life created a vulnerability in me which was clear. Men would take advantage of that. I wasn't good at avoiding sexually transmitted diseases.
136. I think my time at school was problematic for my relationship with my brother, [REDACTED] I blame myself for not being able to help him whilst we were there. We feel

differently about our experiences at school and he's come to accept that. We had a really good relationship when we were younger and I feel sad that didn't withstand school. [REDACTED] is without boundaries. He feels quite unsafe around my children. I don't know how much of that is about [REDACTED] and how much of is about his experiences at home.

137. I read Alex Renton's book, "The Stiff Upper Lip". I found that incredibly difficult. I had lots of intrusive thoughts when I read it.
138. I don't have any confidence in myself professionally. I didn't do my degree until I was thirty. I had the capacity to do well academically, but it wasn't part of my school experience. The adults I know now who went to Gordonstoun find it very difficult to hold down a job, very difficult to hold down a relationship.
139. When I was 25, one of the other older volunteers at the Samaritans saw what a state I was in. He offered to pay for counselling for me and organised it for me. That was the start of change for me. I have to speak to somebody regularly. I've ratcheted up an enormous bill in therapy just to stay in a relationship. Otherwise, I know I would just bum out of it when things got tough. That has enabled me to be married and to be happily married. I told the counsellor about my experiences at school. It was a huge relief. I restarted therapy after all the discussions on Facebook. I don't consider myself as a depressed person, but I have a lot of anxiety and I don't sleep much.
140. My current counsellor tried to point out that when Sir Toby Coghill is bathing us naked, his shame is in the room. When the doctor is smearing KY jelly on his hands, there is shame in the room. The only way I was surviving was empathy. The only way I could deal with my father was empathy, trying to predict how he was going to be. I was a sponge, trying to predict how other people were feeling. Empathy and awareness of what others were feeling meant that I had to eat up a lot of shame.
141. I don't trust myself as a parent. I don't feel I know what I'm doing. If I wasn't speaking to somebody in a professional capacity, I would have chucked the whole thing in: my life, my marriage and my parenting. It often feels like I can't cope and I would like to just bust out.

142. In the lab where I work, they're doing experiments on mice. They stress the mice out and they see whether the stress is inherited down through the generations. They can see that the depression the adult mouse shows is exhibited in the child, even if they haven't been stressed out. I asked the scientist how you know if the mouse is depressed. She said they give up. They put them in water and they prefer to die. At that moment, I thought, "That's me." I wouldn't be bothered either; why would I carry on swimming? I suppose that's the impact. I try my best not to be a maniac and to be as supportive of my children as I can. I don't know how much of all this trash is in me and what I've passed on.

Hopes for the Inquiry

143. I feel for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], who would never be able to afford the kind of counselling and therapy I've been able to obtain. I've had to reduce my time at therapy because I can't afford it every week. But for those people who have never been able to do it, I hope counselling could be provided. It's helped me to function. It would support people to be able to stay in relationships and be able to parent.
144. When adults have no boundaries they enable and facilitate abuse between children and also from other adults. If an institution hasn't taken responsibility for boundaries, they should take economic responsibility for the consequences. Schools like Gordonstoun should contribute to a central fund for the benefit of all those who have been abused and not felt safe in a cared for environment.
145. I feel that when places like Gordonstoun privilege their reputation over the individual, over the child, it's very dangerous and it needs to stop.

Other information

146. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed... 

Dated... 14 December 2017