

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

**John FINDLAY**

Support person present: <sup>PLQ</sup> [REDACTED] (mother)

1. My name is John Andrew Pierce Findlay. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1977. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

**Life before going to Aberlour**

2. [REDACTED]  
My mum, <sup>PLQ</sup> [REDACTED] was married previously. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] My dad, [REDACTED] was also married previously. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] After my parents married I turned up. My mum is still alive, however, my dad died in [REDACTED] 2016.
3. I initially went to a pre-school called Sheridan House in Sussex. At that time dad worked for a paper company called [REDACTED]. He then got a new job with a company called [REDACTED]. That job was based in Aberdeen. It all meant that the family had to relocate. It was decided that we would relocate to where my dad grew up near Elgin.
4. My dad had gone to both Aberlour and Gordonstoun. He absolutely loved both establishments and knew that they had given him a good rounded education.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

5. I think my dad was keen for me to enjoy the same possibilities as he had [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] It was decided that I would go to Aberlour during a period of time when my parents were re-locating to the family home and renovations were taking place. The family home was called [REDACTED]

6. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

*Interview for Aberlour*

7. I remember going to my interview for Aberlour. My mum and dad took me. The day of the interview was an exceptionally beautiful winter's day in either March or April. There was snow everywhere. Toby Coghill, the headmaster at the time, had given all the children the day off school because of the snow. I remember seeing the children playing in the snow and thinking how brilliant it looked. Toby had seen that it was a beautiful day with snow outside. He had realised that the kids weren't going to be learning in whatever class they were in. They would just be looking outside the windows. The interview itself was literally just a conversation with Toby. I think I started at Aberlour about a month or two after the interview. It wasn't an overly long time before I started.

**Aberlour House, Aberlour, Moray**

8. Aberlour House is in the village of Aberlour. The house itself is right next to the Walkers shortbread factory. I believe that when the school was full there were about 120 boys and girls in the school. I don't know what the exact ratio was between the two genders. You got to mix in with the girls the whole time you were there. The only boundaries were that we weren't allowed in each other's dorms.

9. There were six forms, or years, in Aberlour running from first form through to sixth form. The first, second and third forms were the junior forms. The fourth, fifth and sixth forms were the senior forms.
10. Gordonstoun were the owners of Aberlour House. Aberlour House was the prep and junior school for Gordonstoun. It was the same school flag, same founder and same school song. To me, if you are under the same flag and sing the same anthem then you are the same country.

#### *Time spent at Aberlour*

11. I went to Aberlour in 1985 when I was seven. I basically went after the Easter holidays. I was a boarder for my first term at the school. It was unusual because I began at Aberlour at the beginning of the summer term. The summer term is the last term of the academic year. I went a term earlier than children normally would. After my first term it was deemed that I was too young for the school. I got held back a year. It was at that point I became a day pupil. I was a day pupil until I was around about ten.
12. When I was ten I asked my parents whether I could go back to being a boarder. I asked that even though my family home was only fifteen minutes down the road. You missed out things as a day pupil. The children who were boarding did things when you weren't there. You almost became aloof to your peers who were boarding. I ended up boarding for my last full three years at Aberlour. That was between 1987 and 1990. I left when I was thirteen.

#### *Layout of Aberlour*

13. It is a big grey granite building. It looks like a stately home. The hall past the entrance had a black and white chequered floor. There was a staircase with a balcony around the entrance hall. At the front of the house on the right hand side

was the staffroom and headmaster's study. To the left was another hall with a wooden floor. Next to that was a common room and the junior dining room.

14. Aberlour sat in its own grounds. Outside of the front to the left was a stable block where pupils could keep their horses or have riding lessons if they wanted. There was a football field to the near left. There was a cricket pitch right in front of the school. To the right was the main rugby pitch and athletics track. Behind the school was an obstacle course and four tennis courts. There was also a hockey pitch. It was a big school. There was an awful lot of space.

*Headmasters, deputy headmasters and teachers*

15. Toby Coghill was the headmaster when I joined Aberlour. I think he left two years before I left. I believe Toby Coghill has passed away now. Brian Head took over from Toby Coghill after he left. He in turn left in my final year at Aberlour. David Hansen then took over from Brian Head as headmaster. David Hansen had previously been the deputy headmaster. He also taught maths. During his time at Aberlour he had a room upstairs in the main building.
16. Below the deputy headmaster there were the teachers. I don't think there was a hierarchal structure amongst the teachers. There were teachers who were part of the junior and the senior school. I remember in my senior forms I had a French language teacher called Mr English and an English teacher was called Mr French. Richard Wood was the geography teacher. He had been there that long. Phillip Duffy was the music teacher. He lived with his wife in a flat in the main building.
17. In later years <sup>CFH</sup> [REDACTED] was the English teacher. He was in his forties or fifties. He was another one of the masters who lived upstairs in the building. Mr Foster was the art teacher. <sup>YXP</sup> [REDACTED] also worked at the school. She was into homeopathy. She ultimately took over from [REDACTED] as [REDACTED] teacher after he left. Mr and Mrs <sup>YXP-SPG</sup> [REDACTED] moved into the [REDACTED] flat after they moved out.

18. There were normally two student teachers each year who came from Australia or New Zealand. I guess they were probably on gap years. They would stay for a year and be involved in whatever they may be good at. One of them was called Jonathon Howell. He was in the Australian under 18 cricket team so he taught us cricket.

*Other staff*

19. There were people who worked in the kitchens. They had their own separate accommodation. The chef was called Mr Ling. There were cleaners. However, we did a lot of the housework ourselves.
20. Lady Gaye Coghill was the headmaster's wife. She was an Irish baronet. I believe she's passed away now. Her only role was a matron. After the Coghills left, someone called Alison took over as matron. Alison was a lovely individual. I think someone called Bridgette took over from Alison. I think she was from New Zealand.

*Pastoral care*

21. I know that pastoral care is now very instilled into institutions. I don't remember anything surrounding pastoral care during my time at Aberlour. I don't remember there being any kind of supportive structure that had been put in place. I don't remember there being anybody to go to if I was ever upset or distressed. There was no one to go to if I felt down or I was struggling in a subject.

*Flights*

22. We didn't have 'houses' at Aberlour. There were what was called 'flights'. We were split up into three groups called Aigan, Rinnes and Comvall. They were named after the Munros that were near Aberlour. The flights were more there so that children could compete against one another in the school.

*Ranks and officers*

23. Structurally it was a very military organisation. The children had different ranks throughout the school. I started as a Junior Ranker. It was a merit based system. The more you did that was good the better the chance you had of being promoted. You basically had to be a good boy to move up through the rank structure. It was also slightly dictated by your age. The teachers decided whether you got promoted through the ranks.
24. There were officers. They were essentially prefects. I was an officer. The officers didn't have a role in disciplining children. They didn't hand out punishments. However, you required respect from your juniors if you were an officer. If you told someone to do something then they did it without asking questions.
25. We had 'officer meetings' once a week with the headmaster. We took it in turns to write up the minutes of the meetings. I remember doing that. It was very much a privilege to do that. I honestly don't remember what was discussed in those meetings or written down in the minutes. I think it was just general things that were discussed about the school.

**Routine at Aberlour***First day and early memories of Aberlour*

26. I don't really remember my first day. I don't remember arriving. I don't remember who showed me around the school when I arrived. I do know from experience later on in Aberlour that every new pupil is given what is called a 'guide' for their first two weeks. Your guide is a pupil who is slightly older than you. It's the guide's responsibility to make sure that the new pupil gets to their classes and that they learn the routine of the school.

27. I can remember absolutely loving it during my first term. It was all a new adventure for me. I only felt homesick on one occasion. My mum and dad were staying in Speyside for the weekend. They were staying at a place called Minmore House. I remember going there to stay with them on one of the designated weekends we were allowed to go home. When mum and dad returned me to Aberlour I broke down. It was the first time it had hit me that I had to say goodbye to my parents. That was the only time at Aberlour where I thought to myself that I really missed my parents.

*Daily routine*

28. I think you were woken up by a bell at about 7:00 am. It was mainly the dormitory captain's responsibility to get everyone up. Teachers patrolled to make sure that we were actually doing what we were supposed to be doing. You then had a morning run. You had to line up on the front staircase of Aberlour House before running around the block. The boys ran in their shorts and plimsolls. We didn't wear a top. After your run you brushed your teeth and hair and got dressed into your uniform. There was then a gong which indicated it was breakfast time. After you had breakfast in your respective dining halls you had what was called housework. There was then assembly. It was a standard school assembly with announcements, singing, prayers or whatever. There were then classes. There was a break in the middle of those classes. You then went back to your respective dining halls for lunch. There was then a rest period of about thirty minutes. In the winter you had sports after the rest period followed by two more classes. In the summer it was the other way round. You would have two classes followed by sport. You would have a shower after sports. Then you had your dinner followed by prep. You then had some leisure time. I can't remember how long that lasted. After that it was bedtime. I think there was a difference between the junior and senior forms as to what time they went to bed. I don't remember the exact times surrounding all of that.
29. On Saturday mornings you had classes until lunchtime. Saturday afternoon was sports. That normally consisted of a match or meet against another school. It could be either rugby, cricket, hockey or athletics. The form of sport depended on which

term you were in. After sports you were allowed in groups of three people to walk into the village to go to the shop. On Sundays there was a service in the sports hall. They also did dorm inspections on Sunday mornings.

### *Sleeping arrangements*

30. We all slept in dorms. There were separate girls and boys dormitories. The girl and boy dormitories were in separate areas of the top floor of the main house of Aberlour House. There were about seven male dormitories. I think there were about five girl dormitories, however, I'm not sure.
31. The number of boys in each dorm varied depending on what year you were in. Later on there could be as many as fourteen boys in each dorm. You were normally with the year group you were in in your dorms. That was the arrangement up until your last two years. When you got into your final two years the dorms were made up of a mixture of both those years. The school put together boys who got on well with one another. They did that well. You were always kind of with your friends.
32. When I first went to Aberlour I was in a dormitory called Cawdor. The dorm was right next to the matron's room and near to the shower rooms. In my last year at Aberlour my dormitory was on the first floor above the staff room. I can remember every bunk bed in that room. There were seven bunk beds in the dormitory. My bunk was the first one horizontal to the door. I had the top bunk. My bed was pretty much 'straight there' when you walked into the room.
33. In each dorm there was always a boy who was the dormitory captain and a boy who was second in command. I was dormitory captain in my last year. The dormitory captain was in charge of the dorm. If someone didn't make their bed, or whatever other responsibility, it came back to the dormitory captain that the dorm had let them down. It was the captain of the dormitory's responsibility to make sure that each individual's bed was made properly and that each boy's clothes were neatly folded up and put away in the right place. There were dormitory inspections undertaken on



Sundays to check that all this was being done. Your dorm would be marked out of ten after that inspection.

34. There were teachers around during the night. There was always someone on the property. They would do patrols to check that we weren't misbehaving. They would come into the dorms to check. You knew what teacher was coming because you could tell who it was walking down the corridor. All the teachers had different stride lengths and weights. You also knew what kind of shoes they wore. You could tell from the sound of their walking who was coming. It was male masters who patrolled the male dormitories. It was supposed to be only female masters who patrolled the female dormitories but I know that that was not always the case.

*Washing / bathing*

35. The shower room was a room with multiple shower heads. There weren't any curtains for privacy. You weren't allowed a shower in the morning. The only way you could get a shower in the morning is if you chose to do 'the long run'. The long run was about a couple of miles. I used to do that because I liked a nice hot shower in the morning. The showers were often cold if you had them later on in the day after sports. Matron was always there supervising us when we were showering. CFH  
CFH also made himself very familiar with supervising shower time.

*Mealtimes / food*

36. There were two dining halls in the school, a junior one and a senior one. The first three years had their meals in the junior dining hall and the last three years had their meals in the senior dining hall.
37. You got designated a place at each table in your dining hall. There were eight boys sitting at each table. One of the boys would be designated the table leader. You rotated where you sat on every given day. There was one particular spot on each table that was reserved for 'the waiter'. If you were sitting in that spot it was your turn to get the food and put it on the table for everybody else. One of your table

leaders would say grace before every meal. You couldn't start eating until you said grace. You all stood up for grace.

38. Breakfast ranged from cornflakes through to porridge. It changed depending on the day. You got what you were given. When you became a sixth former and an officer you were allowed to make your own toast. Lunch was a two course meal. There wasn't a choice. You got what you were given. All the food was fairly good. I didn't mind it. I can remember going to other schools when we were playing an away match. I remember the food at Aberlour was a bit better than at the other places we were visiting.
39. The staff were generally there when we ate our meals. The vast majority of the staff would be there eating at the same time as us. There was normally a staff member at the head of the table.
40. I hate porridge. I hate it to this day. You had to eat it though. On one occasion, on a Wednesday, Lady Coghill forced me to sit and eat the porridge. She told me that I wouldn't be allowed to go skiing until I had finished it. On that particular day I told her I would be sick. I then ate the porridge and was sick on her deliberately. She then blamed me for being sick on her. I don't remember whether there was any punishment for doing that. I don't think she liked me very much. I eventually got to go skiing.

*Clothing / uniform*

41. My uniform was bought by my parents from a shop called Aitken and Niven. They were based in Edinburgh and sold all the school's uniforms. The uniform was black shoes, grey knee length socks with garters, knee length blue corduroy shorts, grey shirts, blue tie and a dark blue V-neck jumper. There was a 'going out uniform' which comprised of a duffle coat.

*School*

42. I found my schooling at Aberlour thoroughly enjoyable. Classes were based upon your age group. The lower forms were taught in classrooms off of the courtyard. Those classrooms were in the old stable block. You were taught all your lessons in the same room with the same teacher when you were in the lower forms. The last three years you were taught in different rooms different subjects. Those rooms were in a newly built block that connected the stable block to the main house.
43. Prep was essentially homework. Junior prep was done before supper. Senior prep was all done in the dining room. When and where you did prep all changed depending on what year you were in. You were left to get on with your prep. It wasn't supervised.

*Religious instruction*

44. There was a Sunday service in the sports hall. I cannot remember receiving any religious education as a lesson at Aberlour.

*Chores*

45. There was something called housework. That was done every morning. You were told where you had to clean. You then did that job in groups. We worked in teams. The duties were allocated by the teachers. You might have to sweep the floors in a particular part of the building or clean the blackboards or something like that.

*Leisure time*

46. Leisure time consisted of reading books, watching TV or playing ping pong. I have to say that it was unusual that we got to watch TV. That was kind of a privilege. I think if you wanted to you could play tennis. I remember I loved the high jump. If I was given permission by the teachers I was allowed to go and get the mats and poles out and practice in the sports hall. There was a swimming pool there. You

were allowed to go swimming if there was a teacher to supervise. I played all the sports. I was the captain of the cricket team, the rugby team, athletics team and the skiing team. I hated hockey. I was in the team but I didn't like it.

47. There were extracurricular clubs. There was a photography club and a model building club. There were various little things that you could do. In the summers you went to those clubs after you had your school meal. I joined the photography club. I did that for about a term or something like that. I think I did that in my penultimate year.

*Pocket money*

48. The amount of pocket money you got depended on what year you were in. It also depended on what rank you were. There were different amounts of pocket money attributed to particular ranks. You started off with 20p a week.

*Leave out weekends*

49. There were designated weekends where you were allowed to go home. They were called 'leave out weekends'. There were roughly about three leave out weekends a term. It didn't matter how close your parents lived. They couldn't just take you out for the weekend if it wasn't a leave out weekend.

*Trips*

50. On Saturday afternoons, after sports, you were allowed to go into Aberlour village in groups of a minimum of three to spend your pocket money. You weren't supervised on these trips. It was a minimum of groups of three so that if something happened one person could stay with the pupil and look after them and the other person could go and get help. Pretty much the whole school went down into the village on Saturdays.

51. I don't really remember a lot of trips in terms of field trips. We did have the occasional one but it wasn't that regular. There were expeditions though. They were nicknamed 'expeds'. Every form had a different exped. You were required to do them. They happened at different times of the year depending on what year you were in. The younger kids went in the summer and the older kids went in the winter. I think that was because of the weather. There were various things we did. I remember a cycling exped and a walk around Cape Wrath. There was usually camping on expeds. You had to carry your tent. The tent equipment was split between the people who would be sleeping in that tent that night.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

52. You went home for Christmas. You were home for about a month. If it was your birthday in the school then you were allowed to have a birthday party. That would be held on a Saturday. You were given a cake and were allowed to invite just enough people to sit around one table in the dining room. My birthday never occurred at the school because it was just after [REDACTED]. I was always home when it was my birthday.

*Telephone calls and letters home*

53. There was a phone box downstairs in the main house. You could get given phone cards and the school billed your parents for what you got given. There were only certain times when you were allowed to use the phone. There was only one phone in the whole school. Sometimes you were behind a queue of people and only had half an hour of free time to make your call. If you didn't get to the front of the queue in that half hour you couldn't phone home.
54. I can remember one occasion where I phoned my mum and dad in floods of tears. I do remember that the phone call occurred later on but I don't remember exactly when. I begged my parents to take me out of the school. For the life of me I can't remember why I was so upset.

55. We did have letter writing once a week. We had to write letters home. I think we only had that at the beginning. I don't remember that happening later on.

*Visits / inspections*

56. I had regular contact with my parents. [REDACTED] was fifteen minutes down the road. My mum used to teach tennis at the school. My dad used to teach cricket at the school. If I was in a rugby match or at an athletics meet my parents would more often than not attend whether or not it was at Aberlour or elsewhere. They were exceptionally supportive in terms of cheering me on from the side lines.
57. I don't remember there being any outside inspectors coming in for inspections. The only formal people who came into the school were the governors who came in for the governor meetings for Aberlour. There was a significant overlap between the Aberlour Governors and the Gordonstoun governors.

*Healthcare*

58. If you had any medical issues you could go and see the matron. It was a standing joke that, no matter what was wrong with you, you got an aspirin then E45 was rubbed on you.

*Running away*

59. A friend of mine's parents were getting divorced. He was upset and I wanted to protect him. I said to him that I would take him to my home and my mum would know what to do. We ran from Aberlour House down the Speyside way. It was about fifteen miles. Just before we got to [REDACTED] we were caught. Staff had been looking for us. Toby Coghill had phoned my parents up before we had got home. I'm sure I was probably punished for running away but I can't remember what that punishment consisted of. I don't think I got away with it. I probably had a demotion in rank and was made to do chores for a weekend.

*Bed-wetting*

60. Some kids did wet the bed. I don't remember personally doing that. Kids would be massively teased by their peers if that happened. The teasing probably made everything worse. I can't remember how the staff dealt with the bed-wetting. To my knowledge there wasn't any punishment for wetting the bed.

**Discipline and punishment**

61. There was a system called 'failures'. One failure could be given for running in the corridor, not doing your homework or being cheeky. If you did something really bad you could be given three failures in one go. All the failures were marked on a board in one of the halls. It was administered by the teachers.
62. If you got three failures in a week you had to do chores for the entire weekend. You would have to do something like raking leaves. You weren't allowed to go and represent the school in sports if you got three failures in a week. You weren't even allowed to go out with your parents. I remember instances where there were parents who had flown in to collect their kid being told that their kid was not allowed out because they had three failures.
63. One of the other punishments at school was standing in the hall. I spent a long time standing in that hall. There was a grandfather clock that used to tick loudly. The tick from that grandfather clock echoed around that hall. To this day I hate ticking noises.
64. If you got six failures in one week you got caned. The headmaster did that. He would do that in the headmaster's study. It was a case of hands on the desk, your butt sticking out and literally six of the best. It was done with your shorts on. I got caned a lot. I certainly was one of the boys who got caned more than others. I wasn't the only one who got caned. It did happen to other boys. I wasn't singled out and caned for the sake of it.

65. Toby Coghill was the only man who ever caned me. I believe that he would phone up my parents, say what I had done and ask their permission. I remember on more than one occasion getting given seven strokes because my dad had said "yeah, give him one from me." Normally I deserved it so it was fine. It was completely clear as to why it was being done. I don't think I was ever caned without it being merited. I had been a naughty little boy on each occasion. I can't complain about it
66. The main things that you would get caned for were incidents where you had endangered someone else. I remember one of the last times I got caned was for something like that. There was a TV up at a height in one of the classrooms. One of the kids was standing up on a chair to reach the TV to change the channel. I pushed the chair out of the way. In hindsight, I realise that the boy could have broken a leg.
67. I once got caned twice in one day. I was with a friend of mine called [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I lent him my skateboard. He fell off of it going over one of the speed bumps in the drive. He cut his eye. I was caned for that. After [REDACTED] came back from hospital we had a pillow fight that night in our dormitory. I split the stitches in [REDACTED] eye with my pillow. I got caned again for doing that.

### **Abuse at Aberlour**

*Abuse by* <sup>CFH</sup> [REDACTED]

68. <sup>CFH</sup> [REDACTED] came to the school as an English teacher. I believe he started two years before I left. He had a room in the main building in the area of the boy's dormitories. He wasn't involved in any sports coaching or anything like that. He started a photography club. I don't remember there being a photography club until he started with the school. He was vaguely involved in teaching drama. He wrote one of the school pantomimes which I was in. Other than that I don't remember him having any other roles in the school.



69. To call <sup>CFH</sup> a cretin is to give him too high a status. He would frequent himself in the boys changing rooms and shower rooms. He'd often have his camera with him sitting on his disgusting pot belly. He would sit there with his arms resting on his belly with the camera just below. At the time I thought it was just another teacher supervising shower time. Whether or not he was sitting there going "click, click, click" with his camera I do not know.
70. <sup>CFH</sup> had no reason to be in the changing rooms or the shower room. He was, however, a master. If he wanted to supervise then he could do that. It was very rare that other teachers came in and supervised the changing room. It was habitually the matron who was there.
71. When I was twelve, and in my final autumn term of my final year at Aberlour, I had an away rugby match at, I think, Lathallan School. I forgot my boots. I was responsible for packing my bag and making sure I had all my sports kit. I clearly had forgotten to pack my boots. I was captain of rugby, played fly half and also was the place kicker so it was important for me to play. I ended up wearing the substitute's boots. They were the only pair of boots available. His feet were smaller than mine. At that time I was a big kid. The result of playing whilst wearing boots that were too small for me was that when I took my boots and socks off at the end of the game both of my feet were deep red in colour. My big toenails had been pushed back into my big toes.
72. When we got back to the school I got taken to the matron. I then got taken to the local doctor in Aberlour village. I remember the doctor giving me injections of local anaesthetic either side of the bone that ran down by big toes. He injected me just before my nails. I remember that hurting like hell. It was a really uncomfortable needle. I then had both the nails on my big toes pulled out because they were knackered from the boots.
73. I went to bed that Saturday night at around about eight or nine o'clock. I remember that the local anaesthetic started to wear off. I had a reversible duvet that wasn't particularly heavy. It was white with blue triangles on one side and yellow and red

triangles on the other side. I remember the weight of that duvet coming down on my toes as I was lying on my back. The weight of the duvet was causing me pain and stopping me from getting to sleep.

74. I initially went to see whether David Hansen was in his room. That was probably at about ten o'clock at night. I wanted to tell him that my feet were sore and ask him whether he could help. I knocked on his door. He wasn't in. He had obviously gone back to his wife in Dufftown. My next port of call was <sup>CFH</sup> [REDACTED] room. I knocked on his door and he answered. I explained to him what was going on. I told him that my feet were sore and that I couldn't sleep. I think I asked him whether I could have some painkillers. I remember him stating that he was going to give me some painkillers but this was very much something that would have to be "between us". He told me that I was not allowed to tell anyone else because he shouldn't be giving me these painkillers. I can't remember what the painkillers looked like that he gave me but there were two tablets.
75. I then went back to my dormitory. The next thing I remember is lying in my bed and seeing the light coming in from under the door. I guess that was about an hour after I had returned back to the dormitory. I remember hearing <sup>CFH</sup> [REDACTED] walking up to the door. It was his footsteps on the parquet wooden floor coming down the hall. I remember hearing him hesitating when he got to the door. It felt like minutes but he must have only hesitated for seconds. I then went to sit up as if to say "hi Sir." I couldn't sit up though. I couldn't move at all. I was completely and utterly paralysed. However, I was perfectly conscious.
76. <sup>CFH</sup> [REDACTED] then walked into the room. At that point I was starting to freak out. I couldn't sit up or move. I thought that he was just coming over to my bed to see whether I was ok. He then walked over to the far side of my bed. That was the side that was away from the door. That felt unusual. There was absolutely no reason why he would need to walk to that side of the bed to see whether I was ok. My bed was right by the door and he could have walked straight up to my bed from the door to ask if I was alright.

77. The next thing I remember is that he put his hand on top of my duvet and sort of patted me. I thought he was just reassuring me and making sure that I was ok. He then put his right hand underneath my duvet and pulled down my boxer shorts. He then masturbated me for a period of time. I don't know how long he did that for. It was probably minutes but it felt like hours. It was definitely not just a brief fondle. He then put his head underneath the duvet. I remember furiously fighting to move so that I could knee him in the face. I wanted him to get the fuck away from me. I just couldn't move. A light then came on from underneath the duvet. He had a torch. I could see the light shining through the duvet. I thought he was about to perform oral sex on me. However, that did not happen. I then heard the "click, wind, click, wind, click wind" of his camera. I knew perfectly well what he was doing. He had a torch in his mouth and he was taking pictures of me with his head under my duvet. It felt like all of that was going on for years but it probably only went on for a few minutes. It certainly wasn't seconds. He then left.
78. After he left I still couldn't move. I was trying to do anything I possibly could. I just physically couldn't do anything. I found it upsetting that I hadn't been able to stand up for myself. When, at last, I was able to move I woke up my friend [REDACTED]. He was my second in command in the dormitory. There were other boys in the dormitory but he is the only one I remember as being there. We both then went down to [CFH] room together. I honestly don't know what time we went to [CFH] room but it was still night time.
79. When we went to [CFH]'s room he was not asleep. I confronted [CFH] together with [REDACTED]. I demanded all of the photographic films that [CFH] had in his room. I knew that there would be a film which contained pictures of my penis. I'm not sure how the hell I thought of doing that then but I was essentially trying to gather evidence. [CFH] initially did give me the films. I remember getting him to take his films out of several of his cameras. I took every single film. We then talked with [CFH].
80. At one point [REDACTED] went back to the dormitory because he was falling asleep. After [REDACTED] left I continued to speak with [CFH] in his room for I think about an hour. It

was a prolonged period of time. [CFH] eventually talked me out of the fact that anything had actually happened. He convinced me that I had imagined the whole thing. He said that it must have all come about because of the painkillers. He reminded me that the painkillers were secret and I wasn't to tell anybody about them. He then convinced me to hand back the films he had handed to me. Ultimately, I just went back to my dormitory.

81. The way the conversation had been left was that he had kind of done me a favour, at my request, giving me strong painkillers. He left me feeling as if it was all my fault. I was made to feel as if he had been a solid decent chap in giving the painkillers. I was made to feel that if I was to say or do anything further then I would be letting him down. I remember being very confused. I knew perfectly well what had happened. However, [CFH] had put sufficient doubt in my mind.

82. I don't think what happened is a normal thing for a twelve year old child to imagine. Furthermore, I don't think I could have imagined it given the absolute level of detail I recall. I did see [CFH] the following day. Nothing was said. It was as if nothing had happened.

[redacted] abuse by [CFH]

83. I never witnessed anyone else being abused at Aberlour. However, I believe that [CFH] abused another individual called [redacted]. He was a boy who left Aberlour and didn't go to Gordonstoun. He has been in touch with me within the last five years. He got in touch with me because he recognised my name and face in an article that was written about my abuse by Alex Renton in the Observer Magazine. When [redacted] got in touch with me he told me that he had also been abused when he was twelve by [CFH]. He said that he had been abused in the same term that I had been abused.

84. [redacted] said that [CFH] had given him alcohol in his bedroom. He said that Derek Jones asked him whether he knew how to masturbate. He said

that <sup>CFH</sup> then gave him a lesson about how to masturbate before performing oral sex on him. That's about as much as  has told me.

85.  said that he reported what had happened to him to his parents two years after he left Aberlour. That was then reported to the police in Fife. He said that nothing happened with his complaint to Fife Police.

<sup>BLL</sup>'s (maiden name <sup>BLL</sup>) *abuse by an unknown teacher*

86. <sup>BLL</sup> is a friend of mine who also attended Aberlour and Gordonstoun. She was known as <sup>BLL</sup> when she was at Aberlour and Gordonstoun. She was several years above me at school. I didn't mix with her at all when I was at either of the schools. The years didn't really mix. She apparently remembers me but I don't remember her. I became friends with her in later life through Facebook. I am still in contact with her to this day. It was during my contact with her directly that I learnt that she was abused.

87. Expeditions were a normal part of school life at Aberlour. You had to go camping in the highlands of Scotland. It's a very outward bound childhood education. During one of these expeditions in her last year at Aberlour she was raped by a male teacher. She would have been a twelve year old girl at that point of time. I can't remember what the teacher's name was but <sup>BLL</sup> has told me in the past.

88. <sup>BLL</sup> did make a complaint to the police. The complaint was made many years ago. I couldn't say precisely when. There was a corroborating witness and therefore an attempt at a prosecution was going to go ahead. The corroborating witness had been in, if you could call it that, a consensual sexual relationship with the teacher whilst she was a minor at the school. At the last minute the corroborating witness turned around and refused to give evidence. Because of that the case did not go ahead. I don't know when the trial was due to go ahead.

**Reporting of abuse whilst at Aberlour***To my parents*

89. About two or three weeks after the incident I was getting picked up by my mother. A news article came on the radio in the car. In the article there was a news piece about a girl who had been abused. After hearing the piece I said to my mother "I know just how she feels." My mother then said "what on earth do you mean?" I then told my mum what had happened. After we got home my mother called my father and told him what I had told her.

*Reporting of abuse to the school by my father*

90. My dad left work in Aberdeen the day I told my mother. He drove up to Aberlour House. I believe he then had a meeting with David Hansen. He was acting headmaster at that time.

*To the police*

91. I believe we contacted the police the same day that I told my mum what had happened. I was then interviewed by the police at [REDACTED] It was a uniformed female police officer who had come from the police station in Elgin. I don't remember her name. She was with another female officer who I don't remember the name of. I can't remember whether my mum or dad were present when I was being interviewed. They could have been though.
92. I told the police everything that I have said concerning the incident in this statement. In fact, my recollection then was probably better than it is now so it may be more detailed. I don't know what ultimately happened with the police. They took a statement and left. I believe there was an agreement made between my parents and the school that charges would not be pursued on the understanding that <sup>CFH</sup> [REDACTED] would never be allowed to teach again. That is what my father told me.

*Immediate aftermath of reporting abuse*

93. I ended up going home for a weekend that wasn't a leave out weekend. When I went back to the school after that weekend [CFH] was no longer there. I believe he was fired from the school. When I went back it was as if nothing had happened. I wasn't spoken to by the headmaster or any of the teachers. I went straight back to the same bed with the same duvet cover.
94. After [CFH] left Mrs [YXP] I recall that during my first class with her the day after I had got back she called me a liar in front of everyone. She basically said in front of everybody in the class that I had made it up. She said that I had got a perfectly innocent lovely man kicked out of his job. She did that very deliberately to belittle me.

**The remainder of my time at Aberlour and leaving Aberlour**

95. I ended up carrying on at Aberlour. I continued with school. I did very well in my common entrance exams for Gordonstoun. I think I averaged above 90% in all of my exams. I got the headmaster's commendation. I remember being called into David Hansen's office and being given a pat on the back. He congratulated me. That was unusual for me because normally I was in the headmaster's office for misbehaving. I continued as the cricket and athletics captain in the summer. It was expected that I would be going on to Gordonstoun. Aberlour was the feeder school for Gordonstoun. I ended up going there when I was thirteen.

**Gordonstoun School, Elgin, Moray**

96. Gordonstoun is approximately a half hour drive from Aberlour House. I boarded the whole way through at Gordonstoun with the exception of a period in my last year. I had a girl in my room who I was consoling because she had just broken up with her boyfriend. My housemaster took exception with that and told me I would be in

trouble. I was then rusticated, or suspended, for a period of two weeks. That was in the autumn term of my final year. The school then decided that they didn't want me around because I might cause trouble. I then became a day pupil. I was driving by that time so I then drove to and from the family home to school.

97. I wouldn't describe my experience at Gordonstoun as normal because my time at the school had been tainted by what had happened at Aberlour. However, there was nothing untoward done to me at Gordonstoun itself. I suffered no abuse whatsoever at Gordonstoun in any way, shape or form. Gordonstoun was great. The only downside was my own behaviour.

### **Abuse at Gordonstoun School**

#### *Abuse by Andrew Keir*

98. I'm in touch with several other individuals from Gordonstoun and Aberlour who are victims of abuse at both schools. I talk to them on a very regular basis through a Facebook group. We all support one another. It is the closest of support networks. Members of the group include [REDACTED], FFG [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They have told me that they were abused at Gordonstoun by a teacher called Andrew Keir.

#### *Other individuals who have reported abuse to me*

99. There are a few other people that have, in the past, got in touch with me. They've asked me who they should speak to. They haven't gone into the detail. My advice is always that the first port of call should be reporting it to the police. I also pass them on my lawyer's details.
100. I can provide friendly support from the perspective of someone who has been abused. However, I recognise from a legal point of view that the best thing you can



possibly do is speak to the police then a lawyer. I don't know how many of the people who have contacted me have gone on to speak to the police or lawyers.

### **Reporting of abuse at Gordonstoun School**

#### *Talking about my own abuse at Aberlour in Gordonstoun*

101. In terms of pastoral care, there were people that I could have spoken to at Gordonstoun if I had wanted to. There were housemasters, assistant housemasters and tutors. From my own perspective I could have spoken to any of the masters who were involved in coaching me in any of the sports I was involved with. I very freely could have had a conversation with them if I had ever felt bad. However, I never did feel bad. I felt it had all been done and dealt with. I thought that CFH would never teach again. Nothing was ever said by any of the teachers in Gordonstoun about what had happened in Aberlour. It wasn't mentioned by my peers. I don't remember speaking to anyone outside of Gordonstoun about what had happened whilst I was there. I viewed what had happened as a chink in my armour that I didn't want to share with anyone.

### **Life after being at Gordonstoun School**

102. I left Gordonstoun after my A-Levels. I had pretty much been a day pupil for the last year. I was eighteen when I left. After I left Gordonstoun I went to Austria and became a ski instructor. After that I went to college and did an HNC in Multimedia Computing. When I was twenty three I went back to Austria and became a multimedia director for an advertising agency. I started working for Microsoft when I was twenty four in the UK. I opened up their London office in the city. I became the head of the e-media department. I then became a consultant specialising in e-commerce and internet transactional websites. I worked as a project manager on very heavy transactional websites. I ended up working for the BBC, Arsenal FC, De Beers, The Ministry of Sound and Wilkinson.

103. When I was twenty seven I was offered a dual scholarship to read law at Buckingham University. I did the full LLB honours degree in two years. After I left Buckingham University my intention was to become a lawyer. However, I discovered there was a lot more money in what I had been doing before. I then went back to e-commerce and project management. I was signed off work two years ago because of clinical levels of PTSD, anxiety and depression. Last year I did three post-graduate diplomas in US law at Harvard Law School.

## **Impact**

### *Whilst still at school*

104. I remember that when I returned back to Aberlour after the incident all the pupils knew what had happened. They knew the details of what had gone on. I don't know where the other pupils got that information from. I don't know whether it may have come from [REDACTED] I just don't know. I was teased and ridiculed. They called me "gay", "a homo" and said things like that I "liked it." I was bullied to a certain extent. There was a boy called [REDACTED] who was particularly bad. We had a fight in the senior boot room. I ended up beating him up. That's when the bullying stopped. I think that the other boys knew perfectly well that if anybody said anything to me again they would get the same treatment that he got. It was never mentioned again.
105. One of things that I couldn't understand, and kept saying to my dad, was "why me? Why did I get abused? Why did that happen to me? Why not anyone else?" Dad initially didn't say anything. He used to just say "I don't know." That was his sort of standard response.
106. I remember sitting with my dad at [REDACTED] in front of the fire when I was thirteen or fourteen. I was in floods of tears about my abuse. I was still asking "why me?" I didn't understand it. Dad then turned round and looked at me as if I was completely

stupid and said "isn't it obvious?" I asked him what he meant. He then said "it's because you stood out." I was the athletics captain, the skiing captain, the rugby captain and an officer in the school. I stood out. I remember my dad saying that to me as if it was yesterday.

107. After that conversation with my dad I completely shut down. I decided that I didn't want to stand out at Gordonstoun. I just wanted to bumble along, be average and keep my head below the parapet. My education became effected. I no longer strove to be the top of the class. I was not even close to that. About the only things I tried at was being in the British ski team, rugby and athletics. Everything I achieved was outside of the classroom. That was different to what it had been like previously. At Aberlour I had strove to succeed at everything inside of the classroom. I was one of the highest achievers in terms of maths grades and all that kind of thing.
108. I believe that there was a subconscious knock on effect. I backed off from everything from an academic perspective at Gordonstoun. My GCSEs ended up being average. I took two A-Levels and I failed them both. It was almost like I was driving with the handbrake on. There was still a fast car but I just couldn't realise the potential that was actually there. I was very happy to keep that handbrake on.

*In adult life*

109. I've had to re-learn in my own head what I think and feel about my own abuse. I used to say "my abuse was not that bad. It wasn't like I was bent over the headmaster's desk and raped on a daily basis. It was essentially a fondle." Through saying that I was trying to minimise it in my own mind. I now think differently. When someone tells me that they have been abused I never ask about the details. Abuse is abuse. Abuse is black and white. It is wrong. There is no gradual shading of grey.
110. If you have been abused you know how other people who have been abused feel. You understand their quirks and foibles. You understand why they re-act to certain situations in certain ways. The friends that I speak to now all just know. We, as that

little group of people who were affected in our childhood, understand why the other people in the group are the way that they are. We understand because we are all the same people. I know that my mother and my partner would absolutely love to understand why I respond and react to certain things in the way I do. However, unless you have the mind of someone who has actually been abused you'll never really understand it.

111. I can't for a single second blame all my misdemeanours and, at times, my outright diabolic behaviour, on the fact that I was abused as a kid. However, it does explain quite a lot when you sit back and analyse it from an objective perspective.
112. I don't trust anybody. I just don't trust people. There is only one person on this entire planet that is here to look after me. That person is me. There are people who have the best will in the world and all the best intentions. I understand that, however, I will still not rely on anybody else. I know that I am the only person in the world that I can trust.
113. Trust is in absolutely everything you do. The reason I became a consultant and started contracting was so I could do my job, say goodbye to people and leave. My lack of trust has affected my relationships with friends, girlfriends and family members. It's affected my relationship with everyone I come in contact with. My lack of trust has probably destroyed an awful lot that didn't need to be destroyed. I will turn around and walk away from a friendship or a relationship if I think there might be a problem in the future. Nine times out of ten I'm probably imagining that potential problem.
114. I was diagnosed with PTSD in either 2013 or 2014. I have been signed off from work since that diagnosis. I've obtained a forty seven page psychiatric report which clearly states that the abuse I endured has had a direct causal link to the fact that I have got PTSD, anxiety and depression.
115. Anxiety is awful. My anxiety has been of the level that I would have to throw up first thing in the morning every single day. I would wake up, open my eyes and think

“shit, my day.” I would struggle to get out of my bed to the toilet in time to throw up. I would run to the toilet. I could throw up as much as three times a day.

116. My anxiety means that I sit down and analyse every single word and email I write. When I think about things logically I realise that the things I do, because of my anxiety, are ridiculous. However, anxiety is just overpowering. My anxiety is down to my lack of trust and not trusting myself. I have absolutely turned to alcohol because of my anxiety. That started probably in my mid-twenties. It was a route to escape and to numb fears.
117. When you try and make progress with things you hope that people will understand, listen and the wrongs of the past will be righted. When those things just don't happen there's only so long before you turn around and say to yourself “I've just had enough.” I tried to commit suicide about seven years ago. There was nothing untoward happening in my life at that time. I had just had enough. I was fed up with banging my head against a brick wall.

### **Treatment and support**

118. I am on Citalopram which is an anti-depressant. I am also on sleeping pills so I can sleep at night. Because of the fact that I currently don't pose a risk to myself or others, NHS England are not helping me. That has meant that if I want therapy I have to fund it privately. I can't afford to do that. I just don't have the money.
119. I speak to other people who are victims every single day. That helps me reflect on my own time and circumstances. By talking and reflecting with other people who are victims it actually helps me. I know it helps them also. We're kind of there together. I think that, between us, the spiral is progressively upwards instead of downwards in terms of how we are. We're not a group of people who are digging each other into their own graves. If anything we are building each other up.

## Reporting of abuse in adult life

### *To the police*

120. About four or five years ago a reporter from the Times managed to get my mobile number. I don't know how he got it. He called me on Valentine's Day. He asked me about abuse at Gordonstoun. I didn't give the reporter any comment. However, I thought that if a reporter is calling me up then there may be something still going on. I wondered whether [CFH] was still alive. I wondered whether he was still abusing. It was then that I decided that I should speak again to the police.
121. I reported what happened to CID in Barnstaple not long after speaking to the reporter. The CID officer I spoke to is called Louisa Sarnie. My complaint was then sent up to Elgin because of jurisdictional issues. I then was contacted by a police officer from Elgin called Alan Milton. I provided him with a statement.
122. After about a year Alan Milton contacted me again. It was clear that they had done some pretty serious investigating into [CFH]. I was told that [CFH] had gone on to teach in a school in Essex after Aberlour. I can't remember the name of the school in Essex. Alan Milton said that [CFH] had left that school under a similar cloud. [CFH] then moved on to Africa. The police had managed to track down a former headmaster of a school in Kenya called, I think, The Rift Valley School who confirmed that. The police discovered that [CFH] went on to teach there. Apparently [CFH] had died in a car accident.

### *To journalists*

123. I spoke to the police in Barnstaple long before I spoke to journalists. When I did speak to the journalists I decided to waive my anonymity. Unfortunately stories sell in newspapers and get more coverage if there is a face to put to a name.

*Instruction of lawyers*

124. I instructed lawyers to raise a claim against Gordonstoun. A claim has been raised. Gordonstoun won't even sit down at the table. They won't have a conversation about what happened. I've had to change lawyers because I get the impression that lawyers are a little bit scared of taking on an establishment like Gordonstoun.

**Records**

125. I have asked for my records from both Aberlour and Gordonstoun. I approached, through my lawyers, the principal at Gordonstoun about two months after Alex Renton's article came out. The principal at that time would have been Simon Reid. I was told that my records were missing. I have been told that when Aberlour House moved from Aberlour village to Gordonstoun's main campus five or six years ago the school lost an awful lot of records.
126. My lawyers have also contacted the police for a copy of the report following my initial complaint. They have no record of the interview they had with me. I have been told that my police records are missing. They have a copy of my complaint but not a record of what happened after that. I have also been told that the procurator fiscal's records are also missing.
127. I have a full copy of any records that were sent to me by both Aberlour and Gordonstoun. I have every single school report and so on but I don't have anything that Aberlour or Gordonstoun were and are holding themselves.

**Lessons to be learned***Continual assessment and background checks of staff*

128. I personally believe that no matter how accurately you vet a barrel of apples there still might be a bad one. Any paedophile or predator was probably not always like

that. Interviews, pre-interviews and background checks will catch a certain number but it won't catch the people who become that way later on. I think it is important to continue to analyse people throughout their employment. I think that is especially important in establishments such as Aberlour and Gordonstoun where it is essentially "jobs for the boys." If you have been a staff member at an establishment for twenty years your record before you joined might be whiter than white. However, that might have changed in the intervening period. How you catch that element I do not know. Perhaps some form of continual assessment is the way forward.

#### *Current culture of reporting*

129. I believe that one of the more hopeful aspects of all of this is that in this day and age people are more comfortable talking about things when something inappropriate has happened. In the past it was definitely all hushed up. You just didn't talk about it and carried on. I'd like to believe that if something inappropriate was done to a child now that child would feel comfortable enough to turn around and make a noise. I suppose sitting back and shutting up was very much what we were trained to do when I was a child. I would like to think that children nowadays wouldn't just 'sit back and shut up.'

#### *Thoughts on the way Andrew Keir's trial was conducted*

130. I supported some of the people I had been speaking with during the prosecution of Andrew Keir. During Andrew Keir's trial in Elgin I wasn't allowed in the court to support the victims. That was because they gave their evidence in closed court. Gordonstoun, however, were allowed to have their PR Director and lawyer present. I don't think those persons should have been allowed in the court. That makes no sense to me at all.

#### **Final thoughts**

On CFH continuing to teach



131. I know that <sup>CFH</sup> [redacted] went on to teach again. I know that he went on to teach and leave a school in Essex under a similar cloud. I know perfectly well what he continued to do.
132. Being told that <sup>CFH</sup> [redacted] went on to teach again probably broke me more than the actual abuse in the first place. I was destroyed. I can't help thinking "if only, as a twelve year old, I had pushed things. If only I hadn't relied on my parents and trusted their judgement. If I hadn't done that then maybe I would have been able to stop <sup>CFH</sup> [redacted] from moving on." I should have had the fortitude to say "no, stop him now forever." There are victims out there from this guy and I could have stopped him. I will never forgive myself. I do blame myself. I feel like I have enabled him. I live with that.

*On the lack of investigation and prosecution at the time of my initial complaint*

133. I think that the police should have followed up my complaint irrespective of whether my parents had entered into an agreement with the school. The police should have had a duty to attempt to prosecute no matter what. It would have been nice if there had been an investigation by Aberlour into what had happened. That would never have happened though. I don't know what would happen now but that wouldn't happen then.
134. 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... [redacted] .....

Dated... *8 July 2018* .....