

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

[REDACTED]  
IDN

Support person present: No.

1. My name is [REDACTED] IDN That was the name that I was known as when I went to boarding school. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1955. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before boarding school

2. My father was [REDACTED] and he was from Tarbert, Argyll. He served in the military service and worked overseas in Northern Rhodesia, Southern Africa. I was born in Lusaka, Zambia. My father died aged fifty nine.
3. My mother is [REDACTED] but everyone calls her [REDACTED]. She is from Aberdeen. She worked for the Ministry of Transport in Zambia as [REDACTED] personal assistant. My mother is one hundred and two years old. She has pretty serious Alzheimer's, so no longer knows me or my brother. My brother, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is three years older than me.
4. I went to Lusaka infant school in Zambia and then Lusaka boys' school. I have very fond memories of early childhood.
5. In 1967 my father got a job with the UN working in Ghana, West Africa. My parents did not know much about the local schools in Ghana, and I don't think they would have been up to scratch anyway, so they kind of had to send my brother and I to boarding

school. There was some discussion about whether we would go to boarding school in Edinburgh or Glasgow and discussions around fees. I then went to Edinburgh Academy at the age of eleven. I did have a term at my father's old school in Tarbert before starting Edinburgh Academy.

### **Entrance exam / travelling to Edinburgh Academy for the first time**

6. If I had any anxieties around going to Edinburgh Academy, it would have been around entrance exams for subjects I had never studied before like Latin. That was nerve racking. My brother was much brighter than I was, and he sailed through. I got through by hook or by crook.
7. I got to see the Academy when I did my entrance exam. I remember it was weather that I hadn't experienced before. I remember getting kitted out at R.W. Forsyth. It was quite exciting getting a new uniform, rugby shorts and rugby boots. All of that was exciting for an eleven year old. It was the newness of it all.
8. There was a lot of initial excitement around going to boarding school. I had some introduction to it before as my brother had gone to boarding school in Zimbabwe. I think that was a fairly brutal experience for him but all I remember is him pulling away on the steam train with his trunk. If my father had not got the job in Ghana, I would have gone there too.

### **Edinburgh Academy, Edinburgh**

9. I was at Edinburgh Academy between 196█ and 197█. It was an all boys' school. In my head I would have thought the senior school was of the order of around six hundred boys.
10. My parents paid fees for me to attend the school and there was no support in terms of bursaries for that. I think my parents were attracted to Edinburgh as it was the capital

city and they thought it was a nice place. They also had a bank account in Edinburgh, and it was somewhere in the middle between Tarbert and Aberdeen.

11. I had a few nicknames at the school. One was IDN and was coined by Hamish Dawson, my house master at the time. The other was IDN, which I was not so pleased about, but most of my friends addressed me as IDN

#### *Layout of Edinburgh Academy*

12. The boarding houses were at a place called Kinnear Road, Edinburgh. In front of the boarding houses were some playing fields, which were great for sporting events and just kicking a ball around. Fettes College was also nearby. I was in McKenzie House to start off with. We had a daily walk to senior school past the Royal Botanic Garden and the Water of Leith. We would emerge at Henderson Row, where the senior school was.
13. The senior school was a sort of neo classical design with grey stone. It was rather blunt if you were looking in through the gates at Henderson Row. To my mind it was quite a severe looking place. It was low rise, and the centre part was the assembly hall where there were classes attached.
14. To the left and right there were buildings that extended all the way from the front gates to the rear of the school. The rector and the senior common room were to the right. The library was also to the right and then beyond that were the physics and chemistry laboratories.
15. At the very back centre was the gym and to the left was a junior block where eleven year olds worked and Hamish Dawson was in that block. Coming back up Henderson Row, to the left was English, history and French. The arts tended to be on the left and the sciences on the right. The dining hall was to the left of the gym, and above which was Hamish Dawson's classroom. There was a dining hall and a tuck shop on the ground floor.

*Divisions and houses*

16. The boarding houses were fairly prepossessing. I think they have now been converted into luxury flats. MacKenzie was the largest house with all of the smaller children and Dundas was the smallest house. There were two others called Scott and Jeffery. MacKenzie, Scott and Jeffery were all in a line on the same road and Dundas was over the other side of the road. Dundas had maybe twenty to thirty boys in it, it was very small. MacKenzie, Scott and Jeffery had at least eighty to a hundred boys. It was majority day pupils at the school.
17. ICG was the house master for MacKenzie house. He was quite an endearing chap, small, and a pretty accomplished cricketer. ICA was the house tutor and the opposite of ICG. He was very tall and very lean. He was not full of human warmth and empathy.
18. Dundas had Hamish Dawson as house master really on his own. There was a fellow called IBP and his nickname was IBP. He had gone to Australia for a year and come back with an Australian accent. He was a huge man and probably weighed about twenty stone. He would occasionally step in when Dawson had other things to do but the only other people that lived in the boarding house was Dawson, his wife and his two daughters. They were very separate from us, naturally.
19. In Scott House, in my first year, the house master was Mcllwaine. We called the house tutor CXL. His surname was CXL. He was later replaced by ICR and Mcllwaine may have retired. Mcllwaine was replaced by Stuart Fowley. Then there were visiting tutors as support who were normally teachers that would step in from time to time to supervise things like prep.
20. The big division was between day boys and boarders. Things like football would have been quite a serious contest. Everyone was grouped at senior school for athletics, but football was not an official sport of the school.

21. I really don't know how the houses were divided up. Scott House had a lot of strong personalities, and we were proud of that. It became a bit tribal. Your team was your house.

*Academic years and houses*

22. The children in MacKenzie were aged eight to eleven years old. The eleven year olds were called 'Geits', which I believe is Latin. I spent a year there. At the age of twelve I then moved to Dundas House, which had Hamish Dawson as house master. I am not sure if I was there for three or four terms. I then finished up at Scott House until the age of seventeen, which was one of the senior houses.

**Staff at Edinburgh Academy**

*Staff structure*

23. Strangely Dundas House did not have a house tutor. House tutors were subordinate to house masters and generally younger. They were often bachelors and their job was to supervise prep. They basically supervised the kids. They supervised homework, when we brushed our teeth and when we went to bed. They would also sometimes rotate, so you might have someone there not relating to the boarding house like a teacher. You also had live in house tutors.
24. The house masters lived in the boarding houses. House masters were exclusively male and the top dog. They set the tone of the place and encouraged, motivated and disciplined. They also controlled in some ways as a bunch of boys together can become playful and disruptive. Their job was to manage that. As boys became older, they could be big people, like adults.
25. House masters were also like mentors. If you had a particular strength, they would take an interest in taking that further. They were like coaches in a way. They were all also teachers in the school.

26. In school the Academy was traditional so all the teachers would be in gowns, but in the house, the house master would be more smart/casual. They kind of set the tone for the place.
27. There were usually matrons in every house. They were usually elderly ladies as when they got younger, they caused a bit of a stir amongst the boys. A lot of kids were homesick after being torn from their mother and the matron wore the shoes of a mother sometimes. I don't remember being terribly homesick, but I am sure I shed tears a couple of times. If you ever had a set back at school, of any kind, then you would feel you didn't have the crutch of your parents' presence to share the burden. Occasionally the matron would act as a maternal figure and someone you could go to if you were in some distress. I don't think I ever did, but I knew that was available.
28. ICH [REDACTED] was the rector and he lived [REDACTED]. I think he lived with his sister. He had done war service and my parents were aware of that as they often spoke of him with a very high regard. I think he was decorated for bravery. The house masters would report to him ultimately. He also taught [REDACTED] so I was very aware of him. I think that was a very good thing as he kept his hand in and knew what was going on. He was a very good [REDACTED] and also taught [REDACTED].
29. ICH [REDACTED] struck me as a lonely figure, but I think his heart was in the right place and he would be horrified if he knew any or some of what went on.
30. There was also a board of governors above the rector but as an eleven year old I was not aware of the particular governing of the school. ECG [REDACTED] had some connection with the school who was a senior [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]. Whether he was on the board of governors I am not sure. I was aware of such a body, but I wasn't aware of who might have been on it and whether or not they might have been approachable.

*Staff*

31. I had two or three male teachers that were exceptional. They had a genuine interest in young people and getting the best out of them. You knew they were good teachers as they could control a class without raising their voice unduly and without beating at all.

**Siblings and other children**

*Siblings*

32. My brother was always the typical older brother. There was a certain amount of kudos and coolness about being three years older and he was wiser than me. He was very supportive getting me home and back to school after the holiday period. He was very good at organising and made sure we caught our aircrafts and taxis on time. Anything beyond the limits of school, he handled, and I could relax and be lazy. He was the route master.
33. At school he hung out with quite a cool bunch of guys and could be aloof from me. It was uncool to fraternise with someone three years junior. That age difference meant a lot at that time, but I still knew [REDACTED] was always there if I had any difficulties.
34. [REDACTED] communicated more with our parents than I did. I was very glad to have a brother at the school who could carve a path through the school for me, and I could follow in his wake. It didn't work out as perfectly as that sounds, but it was still helpful to have my brother ahead of me. I was glad of his presence.
35. [REDACTED] and I might have had a year together in Scott House before he went off to university, but he was no part of the other houses. He only knew Scott House.

*Background of children who came to the school*

36. There was a lot of farming stock at the school. That was kids whose parents were farmers and lived significantly far away to justify boarding. There were also quite a large number of pupils at the school because it ran through the generations, so their dad or grandparent had gone to the school. There were also forces people, so people whose parents were based abroad like Hong Kong. Strangely there wasn't a lot of foreign nationals. It was typically a white British school and exclusively male.

**Routine at Edinburgh Academy**

*Early memories of being at Edinburgh Academy*

37. My earliest memory was probably being handed over to ICG [REDACTED] and my parents leaving. I had a sense of one door closing and another opening. The door of normal family life in Africa was closing and another in loco parentis was opening. ICG [REDACTED] and ICA [REDACTED] were my new parents as it were. I didn't make a strong parental connection with them. I simply saw them as authority figures.
38. I am sure I was attached to another boy who walked and talked me around the house but I don't remember a tour specifically. I think I felt a combination of fear and trepidation, but also excitement. My father had gone to boarding school, so it was a little like following in his footsteps. It was a sort of nervous excitement. I wasn't overly traumatised. I might have had a couple of instances of being homesick and tearful, but I don't even know if I sought comfort at those times. You are vulnerable, emotional, and small and you don't understand it all, but I wasn't traumatised.

*Daily routine*

39. I was struck by the cold at the boarding houses. They had big cast iron radiators, but they didn't seem to generate enough heat. We would get up quite early in the morning.



For most kids getting up is not the easiest thing in the world. We would all dash to the washrooms to brush our teeth and get some clothes on because it was cold.

40. Really smart guys were able to take their tie, shirt and jumper off in one piece, so it could all go on at once in the morning and you warmed up a little quicker. I am not sure how hygienic it was but there was that to start the day. The water tended to run cold too, but there must have been some hot water.
41. Once dressed we would head across for breakfast. I think we then went back to the boarding house and took the walk down to the senior school, which was probably around a twenty, twenty five minute walk.
42. Classes would begin at nine in the morning, and we would maybe get a break around ten thirty. Most of us would try and get a mars bar and a packet of crisps if you were lucky. That was something to look forward to. At the time milk was also still provided.
43. Lessons were about forty minutes long and sometimes you could get a double lesson which was just a little too much on one subject. I didn't look forward to them. We broke for lunch at the back of the school. After lunch you would be able to fool around in the yard and kick a ball or talk to your mates. Then there would be more lessons and school would end.
44. After school was games. I did squash lessons at Raeburn Place when I was eleven. For the most part it was up to the playing fields and the boarding houses, and it would be rugby, cricket or athletics. There were also tennis courts which I enjoyed, but I didn't compete for the school. Rugby was the official sport of the school, but a lot of us liked to kick around the round ball and took every opportunity to do that.
45. After games you would come in for a hot shower and get changed for tea at the junior school. Then we would have prep for at least an hour, maybe two. It was a time of quiet concentration. If you were restless or immature, you would maybe fool around like I would sometimes do and get in a spot of bother. After that I don't know how much time we had on our own before bedtime. There must have been some.

46. On Saturdays we had model making or ping pong. There were a couple of game's rooms in the houses with miniature snooker tables. There were music rooms with pianos, and we had the playing fields. Saturday was quite a nice day.
47. On a Sunday we went to church, which I didn't enjoy, and homework if you hadn't finished it on the Friday. There was a lot of physical activity on the fields again. We didn't tend to go to the senior school at all at the weekends as we didn't have reason to. It was all centred around the boarding houses at the weekends.

#### *Sleeping arrangements*

48. Bedtime was teeth brushing, getting into bed and the light would be switched off. I forget the time. Maybe it was around nine o'clock as ten o'clock sounds a bit late. The house tutors would hang about outside the dorms and if you were ragging it would give them cause to come back in and give you a good talking to. Ragging was things like pillow fights and mock scraps. It was all pretty playful stuff and nothing sinister. We would eventually all settle down and go to sleep.
49. In MacKenzie they had big dorms and you could have had ten to twelve kids in a dormitory. They had iron beds all in a row, linoleum floor and windows looking out on to the playing fields.
50. Dundas was slightly different as it was a smaller house and more intimate with maybe only twenty to thirty boys. The dorm that I remember in my year there were seven or eight boys to the front of the house, overlooking Kinnear Road. It was an L shaped room. I don't have a strong recollection of the other dorms. The year groups determined the dorms. I don't think at any point I shared a dorm with anyone outside of my year group.
51. In Scott house there were dormitories too. When you got older you could get a study if you played it right. It was either one or two boys in the study. I shared a study with a chap that is still a great friend of mine today. I have known him for fifty five years now.

52. An alarm would be raised if a child was particularly unwell or in distress. You would just holler. Senior boys were called Ephors and were essentially prefects. You could alert any of them or the house tutor, house master or matron if something was wrong. It wasn't like we were abandoned.

*Mealtimes / Food*

53. We would eat our breakfast and tea at the junior school, which I was never part of as I started the school as an older pupil. It was a sort of canteen. It wasn't exciting, you would maybe get cornflakes and a fried egg for breakfast. I can't say the food was great, but it sustained you. They seemed to do a lot of steamed puddings like spotted dick and custard. I think there were waitresses and ladies who served the lunch. We didn't have a dedicated place and just dived in. I don't remember going up for lunch I think we were just sitting there and the food was put in front of us, which was very generous.
54. If there was something you didn't like you wouldn't eat it. Breakfast you could handle as it was very basic. You did miss home cooking though that's for sure. I don't remember any oversights because I probably didn't have any issues of my own. My mother was a good Aberdonian and always insisted you ate what was put in front of you, so I always did in the main.

*Washing / Bathing*

55. I particularly remember the changing rooms. They were used in relation to sport and were on the ground floor. They were next to the boot room. There was a shower block, and they were good showers. I think it was a relatively recent extension. It was a good hot shower with a lot of power, so I enjoyed that as hot water was a luxury. There were maybe eight or ten showers.
56. The washrooms for the dorms were usually on the same floor. They would have toilet cubicles, wash hand basins and mirrors. Mostly it was toothbrushing and toileting there. I suppose later on we would have been shaving. I don't remember any baths,

certainly not in MacKenzie and Scott house. The shower blocks were separate. The ablutions were good and modern and came with the comfort of everything that brings. The shower blocks were integral to the boarding houses.

57. I don't have any recall of masters lingering unnecessarily in the shower rooms. The shower rooms became a favourite spot for smoking. There was an extractor fan which was handy. Once the masters knew this, they would make a point of coming in and woe betide you if you were caught smoking. In my experience there was nothing sinister like masters hanging around for the sake of seeing little boys changing. I think it was mostly purposeful, to get us all out to play or in to get washed and dressed.

*Clothing / Uniform*

58. I must have moved from shorts to long trousers at one point, but quite when I am not sure. The bottoms were grey flannels and we had white shirts and a blue and white diagonal striped tie. We also had a tweed jacket, an Edinburgh Academy cap and a navy blue raincoat. If you were in public places and needed to have a smoke, you would tie your raincoat up and think no one would know you were a schoolboy. Our shoes had to be lace up. We couldn't have pull ons.
59. For sport we had rugby shorts and a navy blue rugby strip with the school colours of blue and white stripes. We then had stockings or socks with rugby boots. If you were good enough, you got colours for rugby or cricket which would be a white jumper with a stripe to signify that you had colours.
60. I think there were huge cane baskets in our dorms for our laundry. Everything had to be named and our names were sewn into our clothing. I don't remember how we got it back. It sounds like we were a spoiled crew. I don't remember quite how it was returned to me and I certainly didn't do any laundry.

*Personal possessions*

61. We must have had lockers where things could be kept but we wouldn't have had any valuables. It was long before iPhones and iPads. There might have been lockers in the boot room, but I don't recall having bedside cabinets or anything like that.

*Pocket money*

62. I did receive pocket money as I was able to go up to Goldenacre with it, which is a nice area of Edinburgh. At the senior school there was another tuck shop as well. Quite how much I got, I am not sure. It wouldn't have been more than two and six pence per week, but enough to get a couple of quarter pounders of sweets. The money would have come from my parents, but I wouldn't know how. Unless my parents gave the school a float of money that was maybe dispersed as a weekly allowance. Pocket money was never withheld as a form of discipline.

*Schooling*

63. I think the schooling was good. A lot of it was what you chose for yourself. I mucked around more than I should have as a boy, but the opportunity was there. I suspect starting two years after other boys who started Latin was a disadvantage for me and I got shot of it as soon as I could.
64. As a child you have to learn, and it is very different to being an adult where you choose to learn. I have some regrets about not applying myself as hard as I should have. I liked the camaraderie and the sportiness of the place. I liked jetting off to West Africa on the holidays. I should have taken more advantage of the education than I did, but I have done fine and had an interesting life. The opportunity was there to stretch yourself, it was just down to the individual how far they wanted to take that.
65. Life is one big competition and when you are young you don't necessarily take that on board. You just swim because you enjoy the swim but what you should be doing is

improving your time and swimming faster. I don't think I was as competitive as I should have been.

66. One of my regrets was not signing up for the Duke of Edinburgh Award. As an adult now I would have loved to have done that but then I thought it was cool to shrug off such opportunities back then. It wasn't.

#### *Religious instruction*

67. We had to go to church every Sunday. I am sorry to say that when you force people to do things there is often a natural resistance. Sometimes we fooled around in church, and I am not sure the congregation appreciated all the Edinburgh Academy boys at the time. We would tend to pass messages to each other in the hymn books.
68. There was assembly every morning where we would sing hymns and there was usually a reading from a senior Ephor. The rector would take the assembly and there was a great big organ pipe to start the day. There would probably be the Lord's prayer. I am sure that was a daily occurrence. I think the school was Presbyterian Church of Scotland, but we had English boarders as well and an English church in Goldenacre that they could go to if they wanted.

#### *Chores*

69. We were expected to have clean kit so things like our rugby boots and school shoes would need cleaning. There were all sorts of chores, but we weren't cleaning the toilets or anything like that. Maybe we should have been. We had to make our beds. Our chair and table had to be aligned. It was just part of the experience of boarding not a punishment.

#### *Leisure time*

70. As I got older, I remember going up to Goldenacre quite a bit. There were some little cafes there. Like most kids I was quite interested in smoking at the time. One of the

great pleasures of boarding school life was having sufficient pocket money to buy a quarter pound of wine gums and sherbet lemons. You could also enjoy a coffee there.

71. If you were lucky, you might have had a day boy's parents invite you out for the day at the weekend or some relatives if you were lucky enough to have them in Scotland. I was lucky and had a cousin who lived in Grangemouth, and he used to take me out to watch athletics sometimes. It was always a nice day out and something to look forward to as it was a break from boarding, with people you liked.
72. An exeat weekend was the ability to leave the boarding house for a day, with the permission of the house master. You would be collected in the morning and entertained by your host, who would provide lunch and return you to the boarding house before nightfall. It was like a very small vacation with people not connected with the school. It was a relief to be out and about. You felt a sense of freedom as you could wear casual clothes and do and say as you please without any overarching supervision.
73. For me that would be my cousins, uncles and aunts. They would ask about my experiences of school and if I wanted to unburden anything I could do that. You might have great friendships at school, but it is not the love and affection you get from family.

#### *Trips / Holidays*

74. We had Corp camp. That was usually in the summer up in the Highlands somewhere. We would collect wood and make a fire and have some beans. I was in the army. The highflyers tended to be in the navy or the RAF. We would march up and down the playground on a Monday afternoon too with kilts on.
75. There were geography field trips to coastal areas where you might be looking at the lichen from a tree or picking up barnacles from a rock.
76. I also did a bit of plastic slope skiing at Hillend. That was encouraged. We also did a trip up to Aviemore and Glenshee, but that was freezing.

*Birthdays / Christmas*

77. I did not always go home on school holidays because of expense. Occasionally I would spend half term or Christmas with a relative in Scotland. I don't think I was ever at the school for Christmas. I don't recall birthdays being marked or a fuss being made. They weren't so touchy feely in those days.

*Letters / Telephone*

78. There was letter writing home on a Sunday, I think. I wasn't as good as my brother at writing letters to my parents. I would eventually write to them and receive back much more than I had sent. There was a phone box outside the boarding houses that could be used for local calls, but it would have eaten a lot of coins for a call to West Africa. I suspect I didn't speak with my parents much. They would call the headmaster to speak to me if that needed to happen.
79. I am aware of using the phone box. I think there was a moment in Dundas House were a group of us felt particularly aggrieved and we were all queuing up to call home and protest about things. It was possible to communicate, and phone was the quickest way to do it.

*Visitors*

80. The whole school was encouraged to turn up and support the first team when they were playing rugby. Relatives would come along in support too and encourage the team to win. There was a lot of traffic there. With the day boys they had parents who lived in Edinburgh. That was a healthy engagement. I had my cousins who would come and watch the games.



*Inspections*

81. I don't have any recall of inspections at all. Certainly not in the boarding houses. In those days I suspect we weren't involved in inspections, but I could be wrong. It may have happened, and I wasn't aware of it.

*Pastoral care*

82. You had your peer group who were there at the same time and experiencing what you were experiencing. Friendships were important. Your first platform of support were your kindred spirits. People of the same age, in the same class and possibly in the same house.
83. If you were unwell you would go to the matron and possibly a doctor. That took care of the physical side. In terms of guidance or support I would say it was much more about supervision at that time in the form of encouragement and motivation. The stuff that is important today was not so apparent back then. The relationship between teacher and pupil was almost adversarial whereas I think today it is much more of a partnership.
84. If you had some kind of personal crisis, you would be able to go somewhere. You weren't an island. You shared a house with people. If you didn't have the gumption to go and seek help someone would have noticed.

*Healthcare*

85. There was usually a rudimentary medical, where the doctor would be brought in, and the matron would be there. You would be made to cough and such like. Inoculations and stuff would have been with them too.
86. There was a sick bay and if you were poorly you would end up there in a bed. It was usually in isolation. There were definitely separate units for a sick child. I was mostly well so I didn't have much experience of that. I mainly just had coughs and colds and

kept going. It was very stiff upper lip stuff back then. I don't remember being off school or breaking any bones.

87. I do have a traumatic memory of the dentist in Goldenacre. He must have been in the army as he used an army field drill on my teeth. It was foot operated like a sewing machine. I didn't go to the dentist for three years after that. That was grim. He probably didn't have a choice as we were in turmoil as a country at that time and if he needed to drill someone's teeth without power that must have been the only way he could find. That was the time of the 'three day week'.

#### *Running away*

88. I do remember boys running away and one boy who was a sleepwalker but that is not really intentional. I can't recall the specifics, but I do remember the generalities of children who wanted to walk away. I don't know what happened to them when they did.

#### *Bedwetting*

89. I did not have a problem with bedwetting, but I think it must have been a problem as I did notice rubber sheets that were put down on our beds. I think it is probably something that you outgrow over time. I was aware of it and not a great fuss was made of it. It was just addressed with a piece of rubber.

#### **Discipline**

90. The teachers could gate you if you had been a bad boy. That meant that your ability to physically move about was limited and you couldn't get to places like Goldenacre and the sweet shop at the senior school. You were gated and that was the punishment. You didn't have normal liberties.

91. We also had to write lines, which was absolutely pointless. If you had a civilised teacher that was beyond beating, then you got lines. It was just writing the same sentence over and over again.
92. I don't remember day school beatings at all, but they must have happened. I am so orientated to the boarding houses I don't remember day school corporal punishments. There must have been so many rules as so many of these institutions relied on them. I am sure there would have been a rule book, but I can't remember one. There was just an expectation that you be polite, particularly to people outside the school. If you were in your uniform in the centre of Edinburgh, you had to be a good person.

### *Bullying*

93. I don't remember specific incidences of bullying, but we did fall around a bit in the dormitories and things could get nasty. Even a pillow fight could end up going too far. Intensity could sometimes build up and someone would get hurt, but frankly I think that is just part of growing up. Bullying wasn't as shrill as it is today. Back then it was more the law of the jungle.

### **Abuse at Edinburgh Academy - Mr Dawson**

94. When I started at the school Dawson was my maths teacher. He would come into the classroom 'hail fellow well met' and, on his desk, he had a great big jar of giant, colourful jellybeans. He would hand those out for good work or deeds. At this time, I had no experience of him as a house master it was more like a day boy experience. I thought he seemed like a flamboyant, fun, great guy. In the eyes of some boys this made him a terrific teacher. Now, for me, it looked like early grooming before I had even heard the term.
95. When you got into his boarding house, it was different. This was his personal fiefdom. He was more serious. He was pretty controlling and didn't take much dissent. His wife

and daughters were kept well away from the boarding house. His wife would occasionally appear in the scullery doing some bits.

96. I know Dawson had been to Gordonstoun and I am pretty sure Oxford. He rowed for his college. I think he played the French horn. His father was a wood sculptor with many of his work now on display at the Glasgow School of Art apparently. Dawson was a civilised man on paper at least. He just took it upon himself to do old fashioned disciplinarian stuff to the 'nth' degree. That was the unhealthy part. For me there was nothing of an overt sexual nature except that you were dropping your pyjamas to a middle aged man wielding a tawse or a gym shoe.
97. I had been beaten by other masters but nothing ritualistic like Dawson. It was just the consequences of an action. Usually if you had done something that warranted a beating with another master it was done there and then and it was over. That was your punishment and as soon as you recovered life would go on.
98. With Dawson he would call you in after tea and tell you what you had done wrong and then that you had to meet him at nine o'clock in the sick bay, which was at the top of the house with no other rooms around. If you were really unlucky and were caught fooling around in the dormitory at night, you'd be told to meet him at six or seven in the morning, so you had all night to think about what was coming to you. This was psychologically taxing.
99. You would then hear him mount the creaking staircase and appear with a gym shoe in one hand and a tawse in the other. He would ask you what one you wanted, not that you wanted either. He would then ask you to drop your pyjamas and bend over and he would administer the beating on your bare backside. As I recall the choice was something of the order of six of the gym shoe or three of the tawse. It was a very clear choice. He always came up with both instruments. It was just you and him in the room.
100. I can't say it was worse than that. The potential for it to be worse was great, but for my generation I don't think anyone was interfered with in any sinister way.

101. I can't say that I was beaten that often by Dawson, maybe two, three or four times. It wasn't a weekly occurrence. Very bad boys would get beaten rather more often and rather more badly. There just wasn't anyone else who did this in the way that he did. It was just a little bit too elaborate and ritualistic.
102. After he made me head of house, late on in my time at Dundas, I was expecting to be beaten and called to the sick bay one time. After hours of nervous anticipation when he told me to drop my pyjamas, he just tapped me on the bottom and said that I knew that he wouldn't beat me. I found that to be a creepy moment.
103. The beatings were institutionalised. When I was head of house, the idea was that I put boys' names in a book who had committed misdemeanours, which then gave him a justification for beating them. I couldn't bring myself to put anyone's name in that book and I was no longer head of house at the end of that term.
104. I think on reflection when he did beat me, I stupidly wanted to make it look like it had never happened, and he probably liked that. He probably thought I could take a beating. When you went back to your bed sore after his beating it wasn't a badge of honour. There was always a certain amount of shame.
105. What Dawson also did was try to make a cold bath a jokey affair. You would get that because you had committed a small sin. It wasn't a beating offence. It would involve being submerged in a cold bath for up to a minute and the water was cold in Edinburgh. Dawson stood at the door with other little boys about him. It was a bit like a collective romp. It was like a kind of playful torture. You would be in a bath, naked, freezing cold and he would make light of it with other pupils by his side. You could probably commit all sorts of offence in the name of a joke or a jokey atmosphere.
106. By the time you reached seventeen or eighteen you would think that someone might have gone and punched his lights out. I am not saying that is a good thing, but you would have thought someone may have been vengeful.

107. There was just no care there from Dawson. He was probably the only person that respected this old fashioned disciplinarian thing that he had. I don't know how he got through thirty one years without meeting a whole pile of complaints along the way even if corporal punishment was permitted. I don't know how he negotiated that. I suspect if he was alive today to defend himself, he would no doubt claim he acted within the law. Corporal punishment may have been permitted at this time but what he did as punishment was nearly always excessive.
108. In the case of Dawson, he just liked beating. Any justification and he would do it and he would do it on your naked buttocks. He probably thought he wasn't doing anything illegal. I think he was pretty sadistic.
109. In Dawson's case he built around himself a licence to beat and that was unhealthy. He wrote to my parents and described himself as an old fashioned disciplinarian, which is exactly what my parents wanted to hear. Most parents hear that and think he is going to turn their boy into a fine young man. I am not sure he did, but in putting his case out there he was sort of licencing himself to start beating the offspring of many parents. The fact that he had his own boarding house in which to do it was bad news.
110. Dawson had a very long run. I think he retired early and went to Cheltenham, and I have heard a horrible story that he was working as Father Christmas in department stores. I heard that through Nicky Campbell the television presenter who I contacted after he spoke out about Dawson in the media. That is the last that I heard of Hamish Dawson.

#### **Abuse at Edinburgh Academy – recollections of incidents involving peers**

111. There was a tutor in Scott House who was known for beating with a hockey stick. He would charge from one side of the room to the other were boys were bent over. I never experienced this, but I knew that other boys did. I was pretty fearful of that. That seemed to me to be a crazy instrument of torture to use on a kid. A hockey stick was

heavy and a serious piece of kit. I think this was a rare occurrence so I would rather not identify this tutor.

112. There was also the clacken, which was a Scottish thing and another instrument of torture. It was like a very large flat wooden spoon with a round head. I never experienced it but was aware of it being used by house masters somehow. It wasn't Dawson as far as I believe.
113. I read Nicky Campbell's article about Dawson fiddling in his underwear in front of the class in a pretend, jokey atmosphere. Clearly, he was an opportunist. That was the sort of devious thing I think he might do. For me he was just an old fashioned sadist.
114. What was prevalent for me was the ability to beat, but it didn't mean everyone used it, it was just legitimate at that time. The year before I joined the school, in 196█ was the year that they stopped senior boys beating juniors. It was so Victorian. It was incredible that an eighteen year old could beat an eleven year old. Thankfully that had gone when I started but you would probably have found that even most parents in those days gave their kids a smack. I think I was belted once by my father in my entire childhood. I am sure he would say that was entirely justified and I have no problem with that.
115. A friend of mine told me some boys were taken down to the cricket pavilion by Dawson to have a bucket of cold water thrown over them on one side and then the reverse side. This would be at six in the morning and the boys would be in the presence of only Mr Dawson. Quite why he did that I don't know as the pavilion was near the phone box and a bit away from the boarding house. I am not sure if that was the extent of it or if he did other things that he shouldn't have.
116. A great and lifelong friend of mine was just like the rest of us until, on one occasion, he snapped, phoning his father to tell him about the beatings. His father, who had himself attended the Academy and knew something of public school tradition, took full account of what his son was saying and told Mr Dawson that he understood beatings took place at school but on no account should they ever be administered to bare

flesh. Dawson was more circumspect after that, never again beating my friend.

117. If you had been beaten particularly badly, as one boy did then that did become a badge of honour. He had to go and see the matron the next day as he had welts like tractor marks rolled across his buttocks. He was a sporting guy and a bright fellow. He was very engaging. That is one episode that sticks out prominently to me. I don't believe the matter was reported further. Most of us lived with this brutality thinking it was somehow the norm.
118. I don't even recall him being a brilliant history teacher, but I am biased. History was his thing. I like the sort of definition of a private eye idea that there is no smoke without fire and I don't recall anyone trying to find the source of the fire. There must have been a lot of smoke around the school.
119. There were no checks and balances. I don't know what happened to the matron when this boy revealed the mess that he was in, but today you would expect that to have been taken further to either the boy's parents or the teacher that did the damage. I would think today the teacher would at least be suspended until investigations had been carried out. It didn't happen. There was a culture of grin and bear it, stiff upper lip and don't tell. It still feels like that.

### **Reporting of abuse**

120. I really wasn't aware of anything pervasive while at Edinburgh Academy. I am surprised to have learnt there has now been that many reported. It sounds like some sort of club for paedophiles.
121. We once had a bit of a revelation in the house when it was a particularly cold winter and games had been cancelled. We all came into the common room and were chatting or doing homework when Dawson came in and ask what the hell we were all doing there. We told him games had been cancelled and he said to get the hell out. He made us march around a field directly outside the house and when he wasn't looking, we all



started making calls from the phone box as we had had enough. It was a bunch of twelve year old revolutionaries who wanted to shake the system!

122. I don't know what happened as a result of that incident. I didn't call my parents as the phone box wasn't sophisticated enough to call West Africa. I must have just hung around. It was a really strong feeling. Normally you wouldn't get an entire house up in arms. We already felt really aggrieved for the boy who was badly beaten and this pushed us over the edge.
123. We thought it was important that someone knew what was going on. Dawson's behaviour didn't change after this. There just weren't any safeguards as it was a small house with no house tutor. He just liked the beatings a little too much.
124. I wouldn't have mentioned anything that Dawson did to my family in detail, but the generality would have been known. It was simply the world we knew, and we had to deal with it as best we could. I also wouldn't have mentioned it to any of the teachers at the school as it was more of an adversarial relationship back then and not the partnerships you see today. I am sure I would have shown them the damage if it was now.
125. Even before Nicky Campbell came forward, I can remember many conversations with my old pal about Dawson. Dawson would always come up if we were socialising after a certain period of time and we would say he never got his comeuppance. I hope this is not perverse, but it is quite gratifying that we now have got him in the end.

### **Leaving Edinburgh Academy**

126. I did my Highers and got into Aberdeen University to study English and International Relations.

### **Life after being at Edinburgh Academy**

127. I moved down to London after university and worked for a publishing company. My father mentioned a job at a bank, so I did my banking exams and after a year in London was posted to Saudi Arabia and the Emirates. A bit like my father, I spent my working life abroad and after twenty three years in banking I switched to education. I worked at a British Embassy sponsored school in Qatar as the Business Manager.
128. I have three grown up sons and I am currently retired and living in Spain with my wife.

### **Impact**

129. My time in boarding school has only impacted me to the extent that when I am with my old pal the subject will come up. People like Dawson are uniting in a strange way. At least you have a common enemy. As youngsters we had a common enemy and it was him and the world is a better place without him now.
130. Only as an overhang my recall of the man is pretty vivid. I can see his clothing, his spectacles, his sideboards and hear the squeak of his slippers coming up the stairs. I remember him vividly and people like this have a disproportionate effect on your life unfortunately. Me and this old pal of mine are like two peas in a pod in terms of closeness and we hope at some point Hamish Dawson will be brought to book. Without dancing from the rooftops, we are both pretty relieved this Inquiry is happening.
131. I had misgivings before coming to speak with the Inquiry as I felt I was being a clipe. But if you don't clipe these guys just keep doing this stuff.
132. For me we are only dwelling on one individual here and without him my whole experience of the school was a positive one. It has made me who I am in many ways. I have made friendships for life. The facilities were tremendous apart from not having a swimming pool. I still to this day don't think they have one. I don't regret at all going

to the Academy. They can't be held responsible for one wayward teacher, so there are no hard feelings here.

133. We did choose to send one of my sons to a boarding school in England, so clearly the experience wasn't so bad that it put me off the idea of sending one of my own children to boarding school. He absolutely loved it. It was a great experience. That is why it is a shame Hamish Dawson now overshadows the school and I suspect has done a great deal of damage to the school.

### **Contact with Edinburgh Academy and former pupils since leaving**

134. Apart from my old pal, who has not contacted the Inquiry, but knows I have, I have had really no contact with the Academy since leaving. I am not that much of an 'old boy'. If I were, I would have been at the academical club and stuff. I am still excited when I see an academical play for Scotland. My path has just been different. I was in London for some time and then working in the middle east. I have spent much of my life working abroad and I am now still living abroad albeit retired.
135. If I was in Scotland in the past, I would maybe see some old pals and I did go back to look at the school once when I was in Edinburgh. I would like to go again next time I am in Scotland just to touch base.
136. Since Nicky Campbell has come out about Hamish Dawson, I have had contact with him and Hamish Dawson's daughter. Prior to that I only spoke generally with my parents and brother about Dawson, but I never took any other concerted action with a third party. If Nicky Campbell hadn't come forward, I wouldn't have contacted the Inquiry.

## **Records**

137. I have school photographs from the houses, but no school reports as such. You will have seen the photographs as every school has them. My mother may have some school reports and when she passes, I may find them, but I am not aware of having anything really apart from my educational certificates. I did keep some Edinburgh Academy chronicles for a while but now they have all gone.
138. I haven't been good to the school in being there in any capacity after leaving. I have never even thought of applying to the school for what records they may have of me.

## **Lessons to be Learned**

139. I just think it was an extraordinary time in that we allowed the Victorians to reach into the late twentieth century and allowed the brutality of beating children to get them to do things the right way. There are other ways of doing that, as we all know now. Fortunately, the law has stepped in to abolish corporal punishment and that is a plus. I think most schools are very aware of child protection measures now and if they are not, they are found out pretty quickly.
140. It was a pity that Hamish Dawson was allowed to do two things. He carved out a very nice niche for himself with no other live-in professionals at the boarding house. It was his fiefdom, exclusively. We didn't see his wife, nor his children so it was an undiluted Hamish Dawson versus the rest of us.
141. The other thing that he did in terms of niche was he tended to focus his teaching and of course his boarding school age group to pubescent or pre-pubescent boys. So twelve and thirteen year old boys. The fruit was just coming to bloom if you like. His interest was clearly in young boys, as in inflicting punishment on them or for any other reason.

142. Even in daytime his teaching was pretty much only to that age group. I don't remember him mixing it up with senior boys. He was like the male equivalent of Lolita, where the fruit looks the best and it is at that time of life that it is about to bloom. Boys of that age were impressionable so if they did report something he could always fob it off with they are young, emotional or hormonal. He must have done that for thirty one years.
143. Dawson had such a very long run at it, which is troubling. I also read that he had a very nice farewell address from the then rector, which I think refers to something like 'bar a couple of bumps in the road'. A couple of bumps in the road could mean a lot more and could be mountains in the road. I would like to think that the school therefore had warning one way or another that this chap was sailing very close to the wind if not beyond.
144. What is also troubling is that after Dundas, Dawson moved to MacKenzie, which is even younger children. I think he spent several years there. I don't know how many complaints if any were made about him at the time, but I would be surprised if any of his peers weren't aware of his practices. It is all supposition, but I wouldn't have thought a thirty one year rein at the school was unblemished and he would have had something.


### **Hopes for the Inquiry**

145. My hopes for the Inquiry are cliché, that it never happens again, which is impossible. There are certain basic human instincts here. It is matters of people's hearts and minds. How do you get into someone's heart and mind to see if they are corrupt, sadistic or even a paedophile and get through to them?
146. You have got to have the structures and you have got to have more of a partnership between pupils and the teaching body. It was more adversarial in my time and boys versus masters, masters versus boys. Those days hopefully are gone, and it is much more of a collective effort with everyone on the same page. I am using a whole string of cliches here but it has to be constructive, stimulating, educational and motivating.

147. It doesn't matter how much legislation you bring in, if you can't get to the heart and mind of the offender or fraudsters, you can't get to them. You just have to have the structures in place to make it a bit more difficult for them to perpetrate their particular crimes. Edinburgh Academy clearly didn't have that structure then, but they may have it now. It should just be a clear line where children are not taken advantage of by adults.

**Other information**

148. 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..... 16 February 2023 .....