

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

KHL

Support person present: No

1. My name is KHL. My date of birth is 1961. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before boarding school

2. I was born in England. My father's work brought him to Scotland and we moved when I was a baby. I have a stepsister called who is ten years older than me. My good childhood memories are all in the place where we lived. We lived in a nice area with a large garden and a forest nearby. I was friends with my neighbour next door and spent my time climbing trees and playing in burns. I was a happy soul and I have fond memories of living in that house.
3. My father had a good job and typically left home at 8:00 am and came back late evening. He was academic and intelligent. My father was an intense guy and not very communicative. He passed away in 2015. My mother came from a working class background and didn't go to university. She was a jovial character and the life and soul of the house. Later on, she had health problems and she has now passed away. My mother worked briefly when we first came to Scotland but after that we lived off our father's income.
4. I went to nursery school and then to the local primary school. My sister went to a private school in Edinburgh and travelled in on the train. At the age of seven or eight,

I started at the Edinburgh Academy Prep School in Arboretum Road. The Prep School is also known as the Junior School. I don't remember any conversations with my parents discussing that change. It seemed a logical change and a natural transition because my sister was going to school in Edinburgh.

5. There was an interview but I don't remember an exam. Presumably, I had a report from my primary school. I recently asked myself why my parents decided to send me to that school and not the school where my sister was. That would seem like a logical thing to do. I don't know why and I have no way to find out.

### **Edinburgh Academy - Arboretum Road and Henderson Row, Edinburgh**

6. There was a general sense of bullying in the school, not just from staff but from elder pupils called ephors. It's a Greek word that means the same as prefect. Ephors were given that extra capacity to control. There was a day in, day out sense of trying to fly under the radar as much as possible and not be seen. Looking back, it was a shitty, miserable, and harsh environment all round.
7. [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED] was Mr IGG [REDACTED] and one was Mr Burnett. John Brownlee was the deputy headmaster. At Junior School we wore blue wool shorts in winter and lighter weight grey shorts in the summer. We had a blue and white tie and a blue blazer. In Senior School, the blazer turned into a green tweed blazer and we wore long trousers.
8. In my Junior School class, there were about 25 of us. At the Senior School, that changed as you specialised in arts and sciences and the numbers reduced. There was a sensation that we were a lot of kids but I don't know how many. The Junior School was located at Arboretum and the Senior School was at Henderson Row. I didn't feel I was in a school that was over-populated or that had a sense of being small. I was in the Junior School for three or four years and then I became a boarder.

## **Edinburgh Academy - Junior School**

9. I started at the Junior School as a day pupil when I was seven or eight years old. I walked to the train station with my sister and took the train with her and other pupils who went into schools in Edinburgh. Then I caught a bus from Waverley Station down to school. I walked the last three quarters of a kilometre to school. Going with my sister made the transition easier. I went from a local primary school near home to a bigger school with more pupils. As a young child, Edinburgh Academy seemed to be a school on a bigger scale.
  
10. I joined a class where most of the pupils had already been there for a couple of years before I arrived. I didn't have any problems in settling in within the class and my new pupils. I was a friendly type of young boy and I was eager to make new friends. I didn't have any issues with that and I made new friends within the class quickly. I was initially a happy young boy there. It was a bigger school and there were lots of new opportunities that I hadn't had at my old primary school. I was sports orientated and loved all my sports. I carried huge amounts of stuff with me. We had bags with our books and games bags. If you played an instrument then you had that too.
  
11. The Junior School had a big hall where there was a stage where we did readings and musicals. Behind the stage was the gym. A sliding door separated the gym and the stage. As you stood in front of the school doors, there were a set of classrooms to the right with windows that looked over the front playground. There was a shelf under the classroom window and under the shelf were two layers of lockers. We kept our books and things in them.
  
12. We weren't moving around from classroom to classroom. The teaching staff were predominantly male. There were some exceptions but not many. One was called Miss Barry. We had a tarmac playground in front of the school and one at the back. There was a big grass area which was an athletics track and where events were held

on Parent's Day. In the initial years, I had happy memories of spending breaktime down there playing football.

### **Abuse at Edinburgh Academy - Junior School**

13. The Junior School, and subsequently the Senior School, turned out to be hell in different degrees both for me and for other boys. That was because of things we were exposed to and the treatment that we received. Abuse is both what was received and what we were exposed to, things you shouldn't have to see. There were a number of teachers at that Junior School that I received abuse from. We lived in an environment where we felt very fearful of our teaching staff, not all of them, but certain figures were considered to be torturers and nasty people. I use the word nasty because it's the kind of word you would use as a young child.

*John Brownlee*

14. John Brownlee was a radical case in terms of physical abuse. By that, I mean extreme punishment delivered by what was called the clacken. It was an old Scottish heavy wooden spoon. It was about forty centimetres long with a thin handle and thick spoon shape at the end. We referred to Brownlee as sadistic which seems weird because I don't think of it as a word that we would have at our fingertips, in our child's vocabulary. It points to the fact that he was so extreme in his punishment that we went beyond the vocabulary that was normal to us.
15. One case that sticks terribly in my mind is when he punished one of the members of our class. One of my classmate's head was stuck into one of the lockers in the classroom and he was severely walloped by Brownlee with the clacken. Every time he got hit, his head went up against the top of the locker. Even now, it seems unbelievably monstrous behaviour.
16. Mr Brownlee's class was above us. I have recollections of when other boys were punished by him, hearing screams from upstairs. It was a fearful environment to be

brought up in. I was living in permanent fear almost every day. I had the idea I had to get through the day without being punished. It was in the back of my mind that I didn't want to be hit with a clacken or have my hands whacked with a belt.

*Iain Wares*

17. There was one major figure at that school and that was Iain Wares. He had a group of pupils that he endeared himself to and others who he took an immediate dislike to. He was definitely a weird character. I was physically and sexually abused by him. He had a very short temper and seemed to explode exponentially in a short time. He was a nasty guy.
18. There were innumerable times when he pinned students to the board or to the wall, holding them with his arm across their chest. The treatment was out of all proportion and bore no relation to the misbehaviour. It was done to boys who arrived late to class, or were making too much noise in the corridor, or didn't have their tie straight.
19. Sexual abuse was predominant in the class to most of us. Wares would often call us up to his desk. It was a high desk. We'd have to hold our jotters in both hands. He used this as an opportunity to put his hands up our shorts and fondle our private parts. This happened to me and I saw it happen to others.
20. Wares was involved in a few different sports and one of them was rugby. My worst experience with him was in the changing rooms at Arboretum after rugby training. It happened at the end of my time at Junior School, just before I went to Senior School. I was about eleven years old. I was one of the last ones there and the last one to go into the showers. Wares was there, as he often was. He got undressed and came into the showers. He stood behind me and rubbed soap over my back, my legs, and my bum. I could hear a heavy breathing noise behind me. I ran out of the shower. I don't know what would have happened if I'd stayed. I put my clothes on quickly and ran. I then made the journey home as if it had just been another day. There was no sharing of what happened with my parents. The process of denial and communication channels falling down went on and on.

21. In my case, and in many others, Wares had this horrible punishment where he picked you up by your sideburns. He took your sideburns and pulled them up, to levels that were extremely painful. After the incident in the showers, that punishment seemed to go on the rise and I was generally a well-behaved kid. There were others that got up to more tricks.
22. In the changing rooms some of the stronger students did what they called 'towel flicking'. It was the typical kind of thing that young kids get up to. Wares witnessed this and did very little to stop it happening.

Mr IDP [REDACTED]

23. We had a gym kit that was blue shorts and a white top. IDP [REDACTED] was adamant that we weren't allowed to wear any underpants. As a way of checking we weren't doing that, IDP [REDACTED] would often tell other boys to take down someone's trousers to check. It sounds horrendous now. I don't know if we thought it was weird at the time or if we thought it was part of being at the Edinburgh Academy. It was humiliating.
24. IDP [REDACTED] had a big boxing glove that he called 'Jemima'. If you were misbehaving in his gym class then he got another boy to put the boxing glove on. The boy was responsible for hitting you as punishment. Again, it was a humiliating process.

#### **Reporting of abuse at Edinburgh Academy - Junior School**

25. I don't know why none of us questioned what was happening. We were a collective group of young, innocent little boys, many of whom were experiencing or witnessing abuse of one kind or another. Why we didn't question it is an unanswerable question. No-one seemed to share what was happening outside of the school walls, with anyone.

26. There was one exception and one boy in my class did share what was happening with his parents. His parents immediately contacted the Junior School. They turned up at school and I believe the police turned up. This was a family who had a certain position in Edinburgh, professionally speaking, and who carried a certain amount of weight within Edinburgh society. I believe it was only a few months later that Iain Wares was conveniently sent from Edinburgh Academy to Fettes.

### **Edinburgh Academy - Senior School**

#### *The decision to board and early days as a boarder*

27. My father's employers moved him to England. My sister was married and at university in Edinburgh. I didn't have any power in the decision to board and I don't remember having any active discussion with my parents. I don't think my mum wanted me to stay. That was more than evident later on. I think it was driven by my father. I began boarding when I was nearly thirteen years old and in the Senior School. My parents moved south.
28. The transition was hard. I guess it is for most young people left in boarding school, when they've been used to living at home and have a close relationship with their mum and dad. I was left in a fairly large school with some people I knew and some people I didn't. I was sad and confused. I felt abandoned a little bit. The nights were long and I cried a lot. It wasn't easy. When I was left as boarder, I was already in a semi-closed down modus operandi. My communication with my parents was unconsciously becoming restricted because I wasn't sharing what was happening at school. My safe haven was my garden and my parent's house. It was all I had. Being left at the school as a boarder was traumatic.
29. My mother had a depression after that. Her life was in Scotland and she did a lot of sports. When my parents moved, my mother was lonely and had health problems. That led to depression and my mother was in a psychiatric hospital for six months. My father continued working. For me, that strengthened the lack of communication

and warmth as a family unit. We were physically separated and I could see my mother falling into a depression. I couldn't do anything and it was a sad time.

*Staff at Edinburgh Academy – Senior School*

30. The headmasters were Mr ICH and Mr Ellis while I was at the Senior School. Mr ICH was the first of the two. Mr Ellis was elderly and his features were sharp. Mr ICH was younger. There was a reception area and the headmaster's office was out of sight, in a building adjoining the main school. I don't remember any female teaching staff in the Senior School. There was a teacher's common room. Mr ICG was our cricket coach.
31. Hamish Dawson was the boarding housemaster in McKenzie House. Mr Evans was a science teacher and was a boarding housemaster at Jeffrey House. Both houses had deputy housemasters. BXK and Mr IFR were deputy housemasters for a while. The boarding houses had matrons but I can't remember names. They were the person you'd go to when you felt ill.

*The boarding houses*

32. The boarding houses were on the same road as the Junior School. Dundas House was the boarding house for the lower ages but I'm not sure what the starting age was. I was a boarder at McKenzie House and then at Jeffrey House, until the age of seventeen when I left the boarding house system. In McKenzie House we slept in dorms and in Jeffrey House you had the option of having your own study. Scott House was another boarding house for older pupils. You could basically choose between Jeffrey and Scott House.
33. Edinburgh Academy was not predominantly a boarding school. The numbers of pupils who were boarders was relatively small compared to the day pupils. The facilities in the boarding houses were sufficient to give all the boys their own room, when they were older. There weren't that many of us. In the boarding house, there

was a TV room, a small music room, and a games room. The games room had table tennis and chess. You could listen to music.

### *Ephors*

34. There were school prefects called ephors who were identified by a special tie. Their prefecture overlapped with their capacity as a boarder. I was one of them in my last year and a half. God knows how. They were chosen by the staff, including the headmaster. Like the rest of the pupils in the Senior School, some were bullies and some of them weren't. I don't remember fagging being officially organised and structured.

## **Routine at Edinburgh Academy – Senior School**

### *General Routine*

35. Depending on what house you were in and how old you were, you were either in a shared dormitory of between six and eight or you could be in your own study. There was a bell in the morning which meant it was time to get up. We got dressed. There was one eating area for everyone across the road at the Junior School and we had our meals there every day. The junior boys had their lunch there during the week.
36. We walked from the boarding houses to the Junior School to have breakfast. It was a short walk. We went back across to the boarding house to get our bags and books. We walked to either the Junior or Senior School for class. The walk to Senior School was past the Botanic Gardens, along a short path through a forest, and in a back way to the school. It was the quickest route. If you were a day boy then you'd come in the main gates on Henderson Row.
37. There was a dining room at the Senior School where we had lunch. We sat in class groups and usually there was a member of staff at the table. Sometimes there was horrendous haggis which no-one liked. At weekends, the boarders had all of their

meals in the Junior School. You ate with the people you were sharing a dorm or the boarding house with.

38. There was a time when we needed to be in bed and a time for lights out. As you got older and progressed to your own study, the time of lights out was more flexible. Lights out was accompanied by the housemaster coming round, checking that everyone was in bed, and turning the lights off.
39. There was a bathroom on each floor with a toilet, basin, and bath or baths. Before you went to bed you had a wash. If you needed to get up at night-time you would go to the bathroom. I don't think there was enough privacy in the bathrooms. Everyone could see in the bath and it wasn't closed off. There were also changing rooms downstairs where we changed when we'd had sports. It had a door going straight out to the Newfield playing fields.
40. In the week we had prep time which was supervised. It was for a couple of hours at least, every evening. We did our homework in a group, in two rooms that were joined. The housemaster or deputy housemaster sat in the middle and supervised the homework. Then we'd have a bit of free time which was watching telly, reading, or going up to your dorm. There wasn't a feeling of having a lot of free time in the week. The day was marked out and my week was full.
41. The real free time started after sports on a Saturday. As a younger boarder, you couldn't walk off the premises. We messed around in the games room and you could do more recreational sport with other boarders. In winter on Sunday evenings for a couple of months, boarders had the chance to learn to ski at Hillend. As you got older and just prior to me leaving the boarding house, there was a little more freedom. Legally speaking, the school was responsible for where we were and what we did. Officially, we weren't allowed to walk off school premises without notifying where we were going. Of course, some of us did.
42. The school did holidays and trips but I didn't do any of them. Hamish Dawson and other teachers took boys to the north of Scotland on what was called the 'Puffer

Trip'. They went on a train and spent a couple of weeks there. Being a boarder, the last thing I wanted to do was spend more time at school during the holidays, especially in view of what was happening. In half term I would either go home or spend time with my sister. At summer, Easter, and Christmas I went home. I never stayed at the boarding house for any longer than I needed to.

43. The doctors would come to the school. I don't recollect going to a clinic outside the school. I went to hospital once because I got concussion playing rugby. We had rugby training one Christmas and the ground was frozen like concrete. I woke up in hospital. Concerning dental care, I only ever saw a dentist when I was at home.
44. I wouldn't say it was an atheist school but there was no obligatory church attendance. The school assemblies sometimes had songs we sang. There was no major religious slant.
45. Concerning chores, we had to keep our own stuff clean but we weren't expected to wash floors or anything like that.
46. In terms of celebrating our individual birthdays, there was never any given opportunity to do so.

### *Sports*

47. It was a twenty minute walk from the Senior School to the sports grounds. There were two days when we all had to do sports. We'd finish classes at 3:15 pm and walk up to Arboretum and do our sports practice in the late afternoon. The sports facilities being offsite made it feel the numbers in the school were dispersed in some way. The changing rooms were a mess. They were cold and had splinters in the wooden floors. In today's society they wouldn't be acceptable but I understand those were different times.
48. We had matches against other Edinburgh private schools on Saturday mornings. Cricket was a full day in summer. Eventually, I was able to dedicate my time to one

sport which I chose. My prospects as a sports person were good and I enjoyed sport. I got on well with the other players but, as a result of everything that was happening, I lost my way.

### *School*

49. The day was from 8:30 am or 9:00 am. You kicked off the day with assembly in the main hall. Then we'd go to our respective classrooms, some of which were adjoining the school hall and some were dispersed through the school site. Physics and chemistry classes were given in specific classrooms because the nature of the subject meant they needed specific equipment.
50. We had a break in the middle of the morning for ten or fifteen minutes. As the years went by and things got worse, I tried to find a way of getting through the breaks and being as less visible as possible. The classes were where I took refuge because I felt safe. Classes were an area that was supervised by a teacher and a controlled environment.
51. We had another series of classes and then lunch at 12:30 pm or 1:00 pm. There were long tables with benches and we were all sitting together. We didn't rave about the school food and it was what it was. We had a short break after lunch and then our final classes, until we finished school at 3:15 pm. If you were doing sports, you trundled up to Arboretum and did whatever sports you did. At the Senior School it was rugby, cricket, tennis, or athletics.
52. The schooling seemed demanding at the time but doable. The demands of the academic syllabus didn't seem overwhelming. Everything was geared around exams at the end of the year. There was no continual assessment. We had term reports and end of year reports for our parents and ourselves. It was a guideline of our performance that year but didn't have any weight. It was all about doing as well as you could in your end of year exams. I don't feel there were gaps, from an academic point of view. I did the Cambridge exam but I didn't get in. Some of us tried to truant as much as possible and not go to school.

*Visits / Inspections*

53. My parents didn't visit much. My father was working and was limited in what he could do because he worked in England. I remember one occasion when he visited. My mother didn't have that type of mobility because her health deteriorated badly after moving south. My sister didn't visit me a lot. I may have gone to visit her.
54. I wrote a lot of letters to my parents. We had a time called writing hour or something like that when we were invited to write to our parents. I'm not sure if the staff read or vetted the letters.

*Decline in sporting achievement*

55. As a result of physical and sexual abuse from peers and from teachers, I went into my own little world. I was a good all-rounder. I was considered a promising sportsperson and I was involved in a lot of other school activities. I'd been a sociable young kid who made a lot of friends and had a lot of friends. As a result of what was happening to me, my ability to have any focus disappeared and I fell off a cliff. My performance went downhill and I saw people around me whose performance was still good. I never understood what was happening, and why, when I was there. That made it worse. There are some things I remember and some things I don't. I wonder if that's because my mind closed down as a way of protecting myself.

*Discipline*

56. We grew up and lived in an environment where there was discipline. We lived in fear of corporal punishment which, in many cases, went beyond what could be considered remotely proportionally correct. We were led to understand that we went to a school with a long tradition and a culture that was considered in good esteem. We were brought up to understand that we were the beacons of that school and represented the school. We were expected to come up to the image of the school, whether that be in the way we behaved in the school or outside of the school in

school uniform. I don't know of a written code of conduct but there was a sensation of being expected to keep up to school standards.

57. Any teacher could administer corporal punishment. John Brownlee used the clacken. Mr Davidson used the belt. You had to open your hands and he would belt you. Corporal punishment was considered to be within the culture of the school. The behaviour that merited corporal punishment was purely subjective and completely at the teacher's discretion. I didn't receive the clacken or the belt but I saw others receive it. I don't know how to quantify it. Corporal punishment happened twice in a week and then might not happen for two weeks.
58. There was detention where people were held back from class and were told to write out the same sentence hundreds of times. In terms of other forms of punishment, we were sometimes deprived of participating in an event. Ephors were not allowed to physically punish pupils but abuse of their position did happen, for example physical abuse to other, younger pupils.

### **Abuse at Edinburgh Academy - Senior School**

*Hamish Dawson*

59. Hamish Dawson was a source of weird activity for myself and the others. Within the classroom, he had this thing with jelly babies. He'd offer you jelly babies as a way of appearing to be kind. In a similar way to what Wares did, he called you up to his desk and offered you a jelly baby. You ended up with hands up your shorts as well, fondling your bum and that type of stuff.
60. Within McKenzie House where he was housemaster, it was all under an umbrella of appearing to be witty or funny. Most of what he did was done with a smile on his face and he covered it up with a masquerade of it being a game. Hamish Dawson spent lots of time in the boarding house as opposed to his own house. His house was separated by a door and his family lived there.

61. We shared dorms in McKenzie House. When we were in bed, Hamish Dawson had our hands loosely tied to the frame of the metal bed. Our pyjama bottoms would be pulled down and his hands wandered over our genitals and our stomachs. This was visible to people in the dorm. There was no attempt to do this behind closed doors. It was done freely, openly, and publicly.
62. There were changing rooms in the downstairs of the boarding house where we had coat pegs and kept our rugby boots. Hamish Dawson made us have cold showers when we behaved badly and that could be leaving your dirty rugby boots on the floor. He watched you in the shower. After you had your shower, he made a mark on your forearm or your bum as a way of indicating you were a misbehavior.

IBU

63. IBU was weird. He was a gym teacher and an IBU. He had a habit of watching us all have showers after gym.

*Peer abuse*

64. To make matters worse, I got sexually and physically abused by my peer group in the boarding house. The bullying and abuse were extreme. I was sodomised by my peer group boarders. I was penetrated on three or four occasions and I was forced to masturbate others. I was a boarder in Jeffrey House when this happened.
65. There were a couple of brothers at the school. The elder was an ephor and the younger one was an ephor as well. The younger one physically abused me when we were both boarders. I have a horrendous memory in Jeffrey House. The younger brother was a strong lad and he crunched me up into a ball one evening. I had a feeling of complete, paralysed fear where I thought my back was about to be broken. That is all I wish to say about peer abuse.

*Abuse of others*

66. A lot of bullying took place between the senior and younger pupils. Some might have been unofficial fagging. Some horrendous things happened and there were cases of extreme violence. A classmate of mine was physically abused by a boy above us. The boy was physically a much more developed child. He virtually pulled the scalp off my classmate. It seemed like one more case of everything else that was going on, on a day to day basis. It didn't stand out like it might now.

*Abuse in Scott House*

67. I didn't experience it but I believe that in Scott House there were two ephors who were put in charge of the boarding house. They were particularly bullyish in the way they behaved and controlled the younger members of that boarding house.

**The decision to cease boarding at Edinburgh Academy**

68. I was so sad at school and I didn't know what to do. As a way of trying to call for help, I self-harmed. The scars and marks were visible. I didn't understand why I did it. I was confused. In hindsight it was my way of trying to tell the world something was wrong. What made it worse was that I was asked how it had happened and I didn't have the balls to say why I'd done it. I pretended and said I'd fallen. It didn't add up and I guess no-one believed it. I then felt even worse because I didn't have the courage to take the necessary step forward and use that as a springboard to tell people what was happening. Instead, I used it as a springboard to take a step further back and return into my shell. I had to live with the scars for however long it took.
69. I realised at that time that I wasn't able to communicate with girls because of what was happening. There weren't any girls at school but there might be a party in the boarding house with a sister girls' school. I was losing confidence in myself as a person, day by day. I couldn't even communicate with boys, let alone girls. I saw

others, including those that abused me, looking and feeling so confident and having their groups of friends. I felt isolated and miserable. That doesn't help if you want to start a conversation with someone from the other sex. I felt I was totally lacking in skills to communicate with girls but needing to communicate with the other sex. The sum of that was that I couldn't stand the thought of staying in the boarding house for another year.

70. My sister stayed in Edinburgh and I eventually asked my mum and dad if I could live with her for the last year and a half. I didn't tell them the reason why. That made things worse because, although I wasn't lying, I wasn't sharing the truth with my mum and dad. I was in a mess and needed to get out of the boarding school. I did go to live with my sister and her husband. I did the Cambridge exam which meant I did an extra term, rather than leaving in the summer of 197█. My involvement in extra-curricular activity was the only thing that kept me vaguely in touch with other classmates. The friendships I'd had at the ages of twelve to fourteen all disappeared.

### **Leaving Edinburgh Academy**

71. I left Edinburgh Academy in December of 197█.

### **Life after boarding school**

72. I briefly lived with my mum and dad and then went to university. I didn't know what to do. I ended up at university because it was what my parents expected me to do and I ended up doing what my sister had done. I wasted most of my time there which I'm eternally sorry about. There was a huge sense of freedom for me during my time at university due to being away from that hideous school environment. It was new people and new faces, and a new start. I didn't have any focus on why I was there or what I wanted to do. I had no interest in studying. A lot of it is due to leaving school with very little energy.

73. I lived in England after university and didn't know where I was going. I worked doing menial stuff. My personal relationships with women were still hard and I came to the conclusion I wasn't going anywhere economically or professionally. I decided to obtain a further qualification and use it as a way to travel and find what I wanted to do in life. I took a job abroad as an opportunity to travel and never travelled any more. The job was badly paid and not the expected follow on from my education.
74. I married knowing early on that it wasn't right. I have two marvellous children. I helped in my father-in-law's business and became a partner. It wasn't a great financial success and I was underearning. My wife's brother has mental health difficulties and created difficult times for everyone. My father-in-law's office was in the basement of his house, so I lived and worked in the family environment. I didn't have a separate space for myself. My father-in-law didn't let anyone have their own time. I felt like I was drowning. It was a pressure cooker.
75. I saw the opportunity to move due to my son's sport, for a year. Once I was outside of the environment, I took that occasion to force a divorce. It helped me to see things objectively. I got custody of my kids and looked after their education. My professional life was hard because it was so mixed up with my ex-wife's family. I had to manoeuvre my way out of that, which wasn't easy. I continued in the same line of work, as a self-employed person. I had a period of three or four years where I earned a reasonable amount of money. That was the best period of my life from a financial point of view.
76. The company was bought over and I took a severance pay in 2018. In hindsight that was a mistake. I paid half in tax and the rest I spent on my children's education. I had spent half my life doing something I had zero interest in and I thought I would do something I wanted to do. I set up a professional sports academy with a partner and put a bit of my own money in to make it work. It was a financial step backwards but I had the cushion of my severance pay. I needed someone to say to put the money somewhere safe and make it make money for you.

77. Eventually, I left the academy because it wasn't making enough money for two people to work in it. I had a couple of projects after that. They were dream projects which you hoped would materialise and they never have. It goes back to shutting everything off and thinking everything is going to correct itself. Now I have nothing in the pot. It's tough at 62 years old with nothing to show for it.

### **Impact**

78. I want to make it absolutely clear that the sexual and physical abuse received directly and indirectly at the Edinburgh Academy, both as a day boy and a boarder, had an enormous negative effect on personal development at school, and in my subsequent professional life as well. My development at school was stifled and held back due to anxiety, solitude, sense of blame, denial, and functional strategies that I had to use as a key part to just "surviving". I left school completely unprepared for any subsequent further education, and professional careers. Above all, the denial aspect of things that closed down communication with my closest and dearest family and friends, and the survival mode characteristic of burying my head in the sand hoping that the storm would blow over, has had huge negative effects on my personal relationships, as well in my professional life.
79. There was a time before going to the Junior School that I was a happy lad. I had lots of friends and I had no issues with communication. Then there's an after point. I struggled there as a consequence of what happened and I've struggled ever since. I've struggled to tackle and confront things that my intuition was telling me were not right, for example my marriage. I've struggled to know whether a professional opportunity was right for me. At the end of the day, we're all responsible for our own decisions but I can't help feeling that things would have been different if I hadn't gone through what I did at school.
80. The thing that really messed us all up so much, was this process of denial that lived with us for the whole time at school and became embedded in us. We were all lucky kids because we were sent to a well-established private school. Within the means

we had as young children, we understood that we had been sent to a school by parents who thought that school offered us a good education and would give us opportunities in life. Some of my classmate's parents were even friends of the teaching staff, who ironically were mistreating my classmates. As young kids we couldn't understand how those two things could be put together. We were in a good school where we were supposed to be looked after and here we were, being mistreated at horrendous levels.

81. There was confusion in our minds. It was a total contradiction. We grew to think this is what school was like. When your confidence and self-esteem fall then your capability to question things that happen to you also falls exponentially. For the ages we were, to talk about and share those experiences with other people required a huge amount of confidence beyond what you'd expect from a child of ten to twelve years old. We lived in an environment where you weren't expected to clipe on your peers and, even less so, on the teaching staff.
82. Having been called up to Iain Wares' desk and having my balls fondled and having seen other classmates experience the same thing, I then went back home at the end of the day, to my mum and dad. When I was a boarder, I went back to see my parents twice a year. Time after time, I didn't say anything to them. As a young child, I didn't have the relationship with my mum and dad to go to them and share that type of experience with them. I don't know what I felt but I felt ashamed. That shit was becoming all bottled up inside. I think of all the times I shared with my father and my mother, as an adult, and I never spoke to them about my difficulties at work and in my marriage.
83. Even when I lived with my sister later on because I was going crazy and couldn't bear the boarding house anymore, I didn't share it with her or her husband. From a cognitive point of view, I was at an age where I was much more aware of life in a broader context. I was living under the same roof as them but I was incapable of sharing what had happened to me with my sister. That process of denial and bottling stuff up built up for so many years and has become an embedded pathology for me, all my life. It's caused me problems in my professional life and in my personal life.

84. Someone told me human beings are capable of putting up with high levels of stress. The only real way of knowing what you're capable of is by pushing yourself. You discover you are able and capable of much more than you thought you would be. We were exposed to all that shit but I don't think we ever thought of it as shit. That's the only way I can reconcile this process of denial.
  
85. I feel violent towards those individual members of staff that treated us like that. My biggest claim is against the school as an institution. It was there as an institution to provide us with an education but also to look after us mentally and physically, and to provide an environment in which we could thrive. So many of us didn't thrive at that school. So many of us left not wanting to go back. It was a horrendous place that none of us wanted to have anything to do with ever again.
  
86. It's sad to think so many kids left having become individual islands at the age of fifteen or sixteen. On a day to day basis, from the time they walked in the gates until the time they left, they were trying to protect themselves. Friendships that had prospered when we were ten, eleven, and twelve, disappeared by the time we were eighteen. We were virtually strangers. We were trying to get from one day to the next in the best way we could.
  
87. We left school hardly knowing each other. As more stuff has come out, the sad and wonderful thing about all this is that some of us have reconnected with people who we haven't spoken to for 45 years and who we were very friendly with at school. I've reconnected with someone who was a very close friend at school. We ask why we didn't contact each other. I don't have an answer, maybe it's the idea of going back to those times by yourself.
  
88. I left school not knowing what I wanted to be, not knowing what I was good at, and having lost two or three years of developing my sports. I left that school under-developed and unprepared for anything. My mind was so absorbed with trying to get through the day without being bullied by ephors or abused by teachers. How could you thrive in that environment? How could you think about things bigger than school,

like life in general or what you wanted to be, when all you're trying to do is just survive? I hold that deeply against the school. The abuse at school has caused me and others a lot of shit at different levels.

89. I haven't mentioned the names of my peer group abusers because I firmly believe that violence breeds violence. A lot of the abuse that happened, whether it be bullying, sexual abuse, or physical abuse, to some extent is a knock-on effect from what we lived through every day. We lived through brutal and violent behaviour from teachers who we were supposed to look up to as our reference and who were supposed to be teaching us what was good and bad.
90. I would never have dreamt of sending my kids to a boarding school. I'm partial in that decision because of what happened to me. If I extract that element out of the equation then I can't understand why parents would want to park their children into a boarding school. It seems so unnatural but I'm aware of the boarding school culture in the United Kingdom. I wish my family could have communicated better. I wish my father could have communicated better with the family. I'm missing those elements that I would dream of having in my own family.
91. When I left university, the job that I did was not exactly what my parents would have been expecting or what could be seen as logical step forward. It was more a step backward. I worked in badly paid jobs. When I married, I was putting my head in the ground and hoping my marriage would correct itself and be what I wanted it to be, or that it would come to an end quickly. It didn't and lasted for eighteen years. From an emotional point of view, it was a disaster in lots of ways. My marriage was a mess and I dedicated my time to my eldest child and his sport. I had a stunted dream because my sports had fallen off the cliff. I'd never found out if I was good enough to work in sports. I carried that over into my family life with my son. That is not the ideal situation for anyone to be in.
92. I close up and close down. I find it hard to challenge things and that has had a knock-on negative effect in different aspects of my life. Failure at both levels, in my personal relationships and in my personal life, have led to conscious thoughts of

suicide on a number of occasions during the last thirteen years. I'm not bad enough to take any action but I've thought about it actively. It's sad. If this had all come to light twenty years ago, I'm not saying it would be easier but I analyse things more now. I've found the last year to be really hard. Professionally I'm in a mess. My personal relationships have been a mess. Finding myself in this situation at my age is tough. There are concerns, despair, and general sadness. It's all been triggered off again.

### **Edinburgh Academy's response to allegations of abuse**

93. The school dishes out these hollow statements, saying they're sorry, they deeply regret what happened, are working in the best interests, and are working with the Scottish police. From what I see, what I've read, and what I know, the school colluded at all kinds of levels with staff behaviour that was totally unacceptable. The collusion has been between schools and within the school itself. It's a long-established school that's going to celebrate 200 years of history next year. The school preferred to put their image and reputation before the health and wellbeing of the pupils who were inside its walls, for decades. It's sick. In many cases, for example Iain Wares and <sup>IPT</sup> [REDACTED], the school gave glowing reference letters for them to go from one school to another. A school headmaster, or teachers who are at a school for ten or fifteen years, doesn't go through that time not knowing what is going on in that school. It's the duty of a headmaster to know.
  
94. The concept of safeguarding which we have now was not so formatted and understood in those years but you don't need to have that type of training to be aware of safeguarding concepts. What was happening in that school in my time, beyond my time, and probably before, was intense paedophile activity and abuse. When staff were able to behave in that manner so openly, it means they felt comfortable that they were not going to be clipped on, either by my peer group or other teachers who would hear of what was happening.

## **Compensation**

95. I have brought a civil compensation claim against the school. There are still things to do. There are quite a number of us involved. Our individual claims might be converted into a group claim because there are so many common elements.

## **Reporting of abuse**

96. For decades, I didn't share what happened at school with my parents or anyone. As a result of my divorce, I shared for the first time with my sister in 2011. She was the first person to know what happened. I never had the chance to speak to my father about it because he had passed away. I did try to speak to my mother but her mental health wasn't good. She wasn't able to register what I was saying.
97. My sister drew my attention to an article in The Times newspaper which spoke about the school, Nicky Campbell the Scottish broadcaster, and the scandalous number of teachers who had been identified as possible abusers over a twenty year period at the school. Reading that encouraged me to follow up. I contacted the journalist Alex Renton and, through him, Nicky Campbell. I was aware the actor Iain Glen also publicly tried to make a statement. He suffered abuse and was in Nicky Campbell's year. Apart from that, I hadn't found the energy to go back.
98. The Times article encouraged people who thought of themselves as victims of abusers to contact Scottish Police. I got in touch with the police and I saw them in January 2023. That was the first time I reported what happened. They have my statement but I haven't seen a written record of my statement. I was concerned about what I should do in terms of naming people and I asked the police. I named teachers but I haven't mentioned peers. They said I could do that anonymously through Crimestoppers which I probably will do.

### **Treatment / Support**

99. I've spent decades remembering the abuse but not being able to understand its relevance to me and my later life. I got divorced and went to get some counsel in 2011 because I was down and needed a professional to talk to. The counselling was not in the context of what happened at school but in the context of what happened to my marriage.
100. I shared what happened at school but in nowhere near the detail that I've shared with the police or the Inquiry. This person for the first time in my life put a name to what happened at school and called it 'functional strategies'. The trauma was so great that you develop a way to survive. In my case that was to close up in a shell and bury my head in the sand. I'd hope the storm blew over and when I came up, it'd all be gone. For the first time in my life, it made me understand by putting that name to what had happened. I understood so many other things that have been negative in my life because of this inability to confront things. It was a relief to have a name to put to it and I understood the effect it has had on my life.

### **Lessons to be learned**

101. I'm not an expert in safeguarding but procedures are in place now, more than they were before. That requires inspections and control from outside the school. I'm not naïve enough to think the school hasn't moved forward and I'm sure it's a safer place than it was when I was there. There must be some objective control on how the school looks after pupils in its care, for example pastoral care. That was non-existent in the sixties and seventies. Our parents placed their trust and confidence and money in that school, look at how so many came out of it. That is fraud.
102. I hold deeply against the school, the suspicion that there was collusion and hiding of facts and behaviour at high levels. That could be above headmaster and at governors' level, and beyond. There needs to be transparency. People need to be

held to account regularly. That isolation needs to change and is common to all types of institution, not just boarding schools.

**Other information**

- 103. I hope the Inquiry will lead to the provision of safety, in its broader sense, to all those people who do not have the means to obtain safety from within the walls where they live or spend their day. That could be a care home, foster home, or school. These places are closed off from the rest of the world. As young kids we were at the mercy of the teaching staff, not all of whom were abusers. Some seemed to be good people but some were toxic.
  
- 104. 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 KHL .....

Dated 14 de julio de 2023 .....