

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

KIU

Support person present: No

1. My name is KIU. My date of birth is 1980. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before boarding school

2. I was born in Aberdeen, but we lived in Cruden Bay. My dad was an airman. I think he was stationed at R.A.F. My parents are called and . They met when they lived in Glasgow, although my mum is from Canada. My dad was sixteen years old when he married my mum, and my mum was twenty years old. Theirs was a marriage across the sectarian divide, so it was never going to be supported. I have one brother, , who is in the military.
3. I lived everywhere when I was a kid. We moved everywhere because of my dad's job. As well as living in Cruden Bay I understand that we moved to Peterhead, although I don't remember that at all. We lived in military housing near . I remember it was freezing cold. There was only heating in the living room, the bedrooms didn't have any heating in them.
4. When the Falklands War came about my dad was sent to the Falklands. I don't remember him going but one of my earliest memories was him coming back. I think the war ended in August 1982 and he didn't come back until February 1983. My dad was a radar operator, and his job was to monitor ship movements between East

Falkland and West Falkland. I have a letter that he wrote to me on Postman Pat notepaper.

5. My father was not a particularly expressive individual and when he came back from the Falklands, he had what I now know to be Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. He was 22 years old when he came back, and he just sat in an armchair and rocked.
6. My mum was a complicated character and didn't make friends easily so the only person she had to talk to was me. I was quite a backward child then. I couldn't say my own name when my dad left for the Falklands but by the time he came back I was talking in complete sentences, there was nothing in-between. So, they were then worried that I was too advanced. I found school and play groups boring. I didn't like children I liked older people more, particularly old women and their stories of World War One. I think my mother found that very difficult.
7. After the Falklands my dad applied for a posting to Germany. He went, but my mother and I didn't. We were prevented from going pending a Home Office investigation because my mother hadn't declared that she was born in Canada. My mum was eventually allowed to stay in Britain, but it took a long time to sort it. My dad was posted back to Lossiemouth, where he didn't want to be, and that would have been when I was between three and five years old.
8. Between 1983 and 1984 I went into foster care. My mother has struggled with her mental health all her life and she had complications with her pregnancy when she was carrying my brother, so she had to be admitted to hospital seven weeks before he was due. I don't know what the complication was. Also, at that time my dad and I were in a car accident. I don't know if it was before or after my brother was born but the social workers were aware of my mum's precarious position, and I remember they came to the house to take me away. My mum was hysterical and barricaded the door.

**■■■ and ■■■, Foster care 1983 to 1984**

9. I was placed with a couple called ■■■ and ■■■. I remember them very distinctly. They were in their mid-fifties, their kids were older than my parents. ■■■ had been in the R.A.F. Their house was quite old fashioned although they had a colour television, and we didn't. They were really nice people. ■■■ was really chatty and took me out for walks, whereas my mum didn't.
10. I was allowed to see my mum once a week, or once a fortnight. ■■■ would take me to a café and then leave, out of respect for my mum and I. ■■■ was supposed to stay but she would stand outside to make sure I wasn't being taken back.
11. I think the placement with ■■■ and ■■■ lasted a number of months. It was such a warm environment. My parents' house was physically cold but also emotionally cold. No-one in our house smiled. Nobody talked, it was a very silent house. There was a hubbub in ■■■ and ■■■'s house. When I went back to my parents I would cry because I missed ■■■ and ■■■. I also missed the environment they gave me. It was stimulating. They talked to me and played board games with me. I couldn't fault it.
12. I have positive memories of ■■■ and ■■■. One of my biggest regrets is not going back to find them and thank them but I don't know where their house was, and I don't know what their surname was.

**Return to family care**

13. Because my mum's concerns about my development changed to being concerned that I was more advanced than I should be, I went to Rosebrae School just outside Elgin, which was the pre-preparatory school for Aberlour. I don't know how we afforded it.
14. Rosebrae was quite a nice school, I liked it. My mum had to get a little car to take me there and that gave her some independence. I don't know what date I joined Rosebrae,

but I know I left in [REDACTED] 1985 to join the local state primary which was quite an odd time to join a school. I knew some of the kids in my class because they lived in my street, although I wasn't particularly friendly with them. I was friendly with one boy who lived in a massive house between Forres and Elgin. I used to stay with him at weekends and it was a house you could get lost in, whereas my family lived in a two-bedroom flat.

15. If there is a common theme in my life it has been being in privileged surroundings but having come from a vastly different background. My grandparents were from Drumchapel. Three of them and most of my dad's siblings worked at the Singer sewing machine factory and when that shut down along with the Goodyear tyre factory they lost their jobs, along with most of the estate. In contrast, when I was at Aberlour school, the boy in the bunk above me was the Duke of Hamilton.
16. I was withdrawn from Rosebrae quite suddenly and I don't know if that was for financial reasons. I was then in three state primary schools until I was nine years old because we had to move wherever my dad went. My mum worked and so I would walk back from school myself and let myself into the house. I had quite a lot of independence. Looking back, I am horrified about the level of independence I had at that age. I don't know if that was normal back then, but I would be horrified now if a child of that age said that they were letting themselves into their house alone.
17. When I was seven years old my mum reconciled with her parents. She wanted a better job and so she needed babysitters. That was her long-term goal. The route down from Moray where we lived to Glasgow, where my grandparents lived, took you past Dunblane where there was a school for the sons of military men. In those days there was no by-pass, you drove straight past the school. I don't know if it's still there.
18. One simple question about the school led to my parents applying for me to go there. I sat the test, but I didn't get in. I think they would have found me too much, and I think I would have found the school too much. My dad had joined the air force and he wanted his children to join up too, but I was never going to join the military. I can't do things without questioning some things and in the military, you have to follow orders

regardless of what you think. However, the idea of such a school stuck with my dad so I tried for a few places. I tried for Glenalmond in Perthshire, a school in Edinburgh, and Aberlour, which I got into.

19. I had to sit three or four exams in one day to get into Aberlour House, when I was nine years old. I had to visit the school to sit the exams, but I don't remember that visit. There was no looking up past papers in those days and my parents couldn't afford a private tutor. When I told my teacher at primary school that I was going to Aberlour House, she screamed with delight.

### **Aberlour House preparatory school 1990 to 1992**

20. Aberlour was the preparatory school for Gordonstoun and also offered the biggest scholarships. I was there on three forms of external funding. I had one grant from the R.A.F., one from Moray Council, the scholarship and my parents also made a payment. When I got in to Aberlour House I remember my gran sent me a cheque for £50, which was a lot of money then. I can still remember trembling when I was holding it.
21. Before going to Aberlour House I had to buy a trunk with my name inside and there was a big, long uniform list. It must have bankrupted my parents because they had to pay for it. There was only one shop in Scotland, in Edinburgh, where you could get all the stuff. I can't remember what the shop was called but it was next to Nat West bank.
22. I had mixed feelings about going to Aberlour House. I was very apprehensive, I felt like I was doing something for my parents more than anything else. They weren't very demonstrative, but I felt like I was making them proud. I was also looking forward to the fact that there would be people around to talk to. However, I did feel scared about being away from home and not having that security. There were day pupils at Aberlour House but that was never going to be an option for me, there was no way my mum was going to drive back and forward every day. There were only a few day pupils at Aberlour House. They probably weren't even ten per cent of the school roll.

*Location / Layout / Staffing of Aberlour*

23. Aberlour House was a big stately home with a drive that came up on both sides. The building looked very impressive. It had a big front door with three columns, like a hotel entrance. In front of those columns were playing fields that you went down steps to. On the west side here were woods and there was an old lodge that had fallen into disrepair. There was a big statue, but I can't remember who it was. It looked like Nelson's Column to me. On the right were the stables where all the horses were kept. On the east there were more woods and staff housing and a gate. There was a shortcut that you could take through the Walkers' biscuit factory to get to the village.
24. The head teacher at Aberlour House was a nice man called Brian Head. I think he joined the school when I did. People still talked about T.C. who was Sir Toby Coghill. He had been the head of the school for about thirty years. The reviews were quite mixed, but he was a legendary figure at the school. I don't know what had changed after he left because I wasn't there when he was the Headmaster, and nobody could really quantify what had changed.
25. Mr Head was quite a jovial, approachable character. His wife worked at the school too. I don't know what she did, but she was always around. They lived on the premises. They had a bungalow at the back of the school. There was an obstacle course behind the school, and they lived on the other side of a roundabout behind that.
26. Looking back, Aberlour House was a beautiful building. The main building was such that you would walk around it in a square shape. When you entered the school you went into a grand hall, for want of a better phrase. It had a chequer-board marble floor. There was a massive circular table in the middle and that's where your mail arrived.
27. There was a grand staircase that went around to the right. That went up to the boys' dormitories. I don't know how the girls entered, they might have got into their dormitories from the side. Further on the ground floor, to the right, was the staff room,

the headmaster's office and a gong for dinner. To the left was a common room which had a television, but it wasn't wired up to receive any signal. There was a piano in the common room and lots of stuffed dead animals. In the hall there was also a table-tennis table and a noticeboard.

28. There was a pillar in the dining room and on one side of the pillar was our rewards and sanctions scheme. They were called Ups or Downs. They published the Downs but the never published the Ups. If you got three Downs you got detained for punishment. Beyond that was a small snooker table that didn't really function properly. Beyond that was a dining room, which was an overflow from the main dining room which was next to the kitchen.
29. Upstairs the stairs split and took you to the first floor of the main building. I think there were five boys' dormitories. I was in three of them. Spynie was the first, then Lochindorb, and then Auchinearn. The big dormitory in the middle was called Towie Barclay. I can't remember what the other one was called.
30. Next to Spynie was a small room where Mr Hanson would stay when he slept over, although he lived locally. Mr David Hanson was the Deputy Headmaster and became Headmaster when Mr Head left. In the room next to Lochindorb was the room where Mr Derek Jones lived. Mr Jones and Mr Hanson were the only members of staff who stayed in that part of the building. I don't know if any female staff stayed where the girls' dormitories were.
31. When you came downstairs at Aberlour House, on the east side was the shower room and on the west side there were toilets. Next to the showers was a changing room which was used for changing for sports as well as the showers. Next to that was a laundry room. I don't remember how laundry was done but it was clearly done. We didn't do our own laundry. To the left of that were stairs down into the school, or out of the school, where we went to do our morning run. At the end was where the Housemother or Matron lived, and round to the right was where all the girls' dormitories were.



32. When I arrived, there was a Housemother, as opposed to a Matron, and her name was Norma Galley. She was from Dundee. Her room was the intersection of where the boys' dormitories ended, and the girls' dormitories started. I'm quite sure there was another teacher's room there as well. Norma Galley was gone by the first Christmas I was at the school. We came back after Christmas, and she was gone. I don't know why. She was a tall, reasonably slender woman. Her hair was black and grey, in a Purdey cut. I would imagine she was in her early forties. She was quite nice. She didn't come around a lot, but you could go to her. A lot of the boys didn't like her because the previous Matron, Matron Allison, had left. Matron Allison came back two terms later. She was quite a harsh figure. She was quite loud and quite brash, whereas Miss Galley was quite motherly. Miss Galley wore her own clothes whereas Matron Allison wore a coverall.
33. The Matron or Housemother was there to look after us but beyond that I don't know what hours she worked. She was there early and there late at night.
34. The Logie family lived on site in a self-contained apartment at the back of the main house. Mr Logie taught Design Technology. Unusually for the staff, Mr Logie was Scottish. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
35. We had a French student, someone who had come to get experience. We had a few of them. they lived on the ground floor, on the opposite side of the building.
36. Mr Duffy was the music teacher. He had one of the teachers' houses, on the Walkers factory side of the school. There was a modern house for the cook, Norman Ling, and the maids. They all lived together, which was a bit odd. Their house was at the back of the main school building. In the same way that there was a road running along the front of the main building, there was a road running behind it too.
37. I don't think that any of the other staff stayed on site.



38. I was at Aberlour House between nine and eleven years of age. The youngest pupils at Aberlour House would have been six or seven years old and the oldest would have been thirteen years old. It was assumed that when you joined, you would progress to Gordonstoun. It was assumed that was where I was going. Some pupils went to Fettes.

### **Routine at Aberlour House**

#### *First day*

39. I can't remember much about my first day but when I arrived at Aberlour House the biggest challenge was the gap in life experience between myself and the other pupils there. I had never really thought about the type of people that might be there and you can't type-cast everybody but that was probably my biggest initial challenge. Someone mentioned having an Aga and I didn't know what that was. I met people who rode horses, and I don't think I had ever seen a horse except on a screen. I had never left Scotland and most pupils at Aberlour House were not from Scotland. I had what would broadly be described as a West of Scotland accent when I went to Aberlour House and no-one else talked like that. The accent that I have now is probably one of the lasting legacies of my time at Aberlour House.

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

40. I was put in the new dorm at Aberlour House, but it wasn't a new dormitory, it was refurbished. My dormitory was called Spynie. The dormitories were all named after local castles. The house my parents live in was on [REDACTED] so I don't know if that is why I was placed in Spynie dormitory. The dormitory had pink dividers like you might see in offices. The screens created a corridor from which there were little compartments. I was furthest from the end on the left. I was quite glad of that because the windows never shut properly so I was in the warmest place. I used to feel sorry for the boys who were next to the windows, but they were fine with it. They were used to living in old houses where the windows would be open.

41. There were bunk beds. The boy above me was called [REDACTED]. I think there were about 200 pupils at Aberlour House. The boys' dormitories were for 14 to 16 pupils, apart from the little one at the end which was for 8 pupils.
42. The dormitories were loosely organised by age, they were not just random. The last dormitory I was in was the smallest. I don't know if they realised that I was fragile and needed to be in a smaller group. Looking back, all the boys in that dormitory were not that sporty.
43. The bell rang at 7:15 am for us to get up. The first thing we did was go for a run. I don't remember anyone coming in to wake us up but there was an adult at the front door to check us off when we went for our run. The bell would sound three times with a fourth longer ring if there was no run, but there would have to be a blizzard for that to happen.
44. After our run we got changed and went down for breakfast. We didn't get a shower or a bath until after games.
45. I think bedtime was at 9:15 pm. The teachers came round to check we were all there and the lights went out. I used to sit up for ages. I think I cried most nights. If they heard, nobody came to check if I was alright, except for once. In Lochindorb dormitory [REDACTED] had the bottom bunk across from me and he asked if I was alright. I just lied and said yes. [REDACTED] was in the year above me. I don't know what happened to [REDACTED] but when he arrived he had a big circle of friends. By the end of school, he was only really friends with a boy called [REDACTED]. People used to suggest that they were in a relationship together, but I don't believe that for one second. I think he was just a softer character, or someone who was willing to be a softer character. He was ostracised for it.
46. To me, the school was like 'The Krypton Factor' for the ruling classes, because it pushed us to physical and social limits.

*Mealtimes/Food*

47. You were assigned a table and that's where you ate three times a day. The tables were numbered. There were twelve tables in the main hall and eight or nine in the other. The little dining room was a lot nicer. It was a bit cosier, and it was all teachers who were there during the day.
48. Every table had a teacher at the head of the table. The teachers were there every lunchtime and if your teacher lived on site then they were there at breakfast too. We didn't sit in the same place, we moved round the table every day. The person who was sitting at the bottom right of the table would be the helper. It was their job to serve. They would go and get the teacups, the toast, and other things.
49. There was never really any disorder at mealtimes. I have never been a morning person so I wouldn't have been particularly active anyway. If anything was going on around me, I would have been completely oblivious to it.
50. Lunch was the main meal of the day, where we had two courses. It was always disappointing when they brought out soup because we knew we weren't getting pudding that day. Our tea in the evening was only one course.
51. I don't know if there was enough food but there was food. I didn't eat a lot back then. Weighing only 19 kilograms there was only so much I could take on. There was a salad bar at lunchtime. I never was a big fan of vegetables, but some are and there was the opportunity to eat what you wanted. There were some boys who were overweight.
52. If you weren't eating enough, there was no concern at all. Other boys used to joke that they were going to sell us off for meat, but that I would be O.K. I don't remember being forced to eat food, but I do remember that if you weren't wearing a tie, you didn't get in. One night someone else couldn't find their tie so they took mine. That meant I didn't get fed that night.

53. To drink, we had tea, milk, or water. I always liked it when people drank water because it was there on the table, but I didn't like having to make tea to everyone's specifications when it was my turn to serve.

*Washing/bathing*

54. The bathroom had a row of sinks that we would wash ourselves at after our morning run. Beyond that were baths which were never used. On one side there were nine showers all open. Depending on who was supervising we had to move along the showers every twenty seconds because of the next people coming along. You would just get a squirt of soap and then it was time to move. You never felt that you were really clean.
55. A teacher would supervise you in the showers, there always had to be someone supervising showers. Male and female teachers would sit watching us. I remember Matron Allison used to supervise the showers. That was her job. I don't know the set-up for the girls' showers, but I would imagine there were male and female members of staff supervising them too.
56. We got a shower in the afternoon, after we had games. There was a graduate assistant aged twenty-one called Jonathan Howell who was working at the school. One day I was among the first pupils back in after games. He asked what we did next, and I said that we had a shower. He said he would come back in twenty minutes, but I told him he had to watch us having a shower. He was stunned by that idea. There would be fifty-year-old members of staff doing the same thing.
57. I don't remember feeling either comfortable or uncomfortable about being supervised in the showers. It was a time of vulnerability, but I don't remember there being any physicality or any photographs taken. There were about twenty other people in the room so if anything like that had happened, the news of that would have spread.

*Clothing/uniform*

58. You wore a shirt and a tie. We had a navy-blue V-neck jumper and corduroy shorts, all year round. There was a games kit and bits of that were purple, which was the school colour. The reports were purple as well.
59. I don't think there was a formal outfit. Some boys had kilts. I didn't have one.

*Leisure time*

60. We went into the village every Saturday. We had pocket money that was supplied by our parents. As you went up through the school, or as you got more responsibility, your pocket money went up. I started off with 50p per week and it went up to 70p. If you got extra money you were supposed to declare it. My gran used to send me the odd pound note and stupidly I would declare it to begin with. Then I just used to keep it, which is what I imagine everyone else was doing too. I think the others got more money than I ever did because they used to come back from the village with a lot more stuff than me.
61. After lunch we had a rest. We would lie in our dormitories for forty minutes in complete silence. You were allowed to play chess because it was a silent activity. I formed a friendship with [REDACTED], one of the French exchange students. They were always really good at chess. That was probably the closest friendship I had at school, but he left after a year. I did get quite good at chess, but I haven't played in thirty years.
62. There was a little bit of free time, after prep in the evenings, but not enough. I used to just wander around the school or read. You could go anywhere and just hide. Kids who took music lessons would do music practice. There were indoor sports for people who were interested in that.
63. In the summer months you could go outside because the nights up there were very long. From November to January, I would just hide in the library with one light on and

read. I wasn't hiding from something, I think it was just that it was the only time I felt in control.

64. We would go skinny-dipping in the river Spey, and the teachers would come with us. The river was just across the road from the school, and we all had swimming shorts. If you went down to the river you didn't wear them, but you did if you used the school pool. The shorts were part of the kit list. It would raise red flags everywhere now, but then it was just part of the culture. The teachers would come in swimming with us. They were male teachers and they didn't wear shorts. How did that even happen in the nineties? There was a lot of peer pressure to take part in things at school and I think that in the teachers' eyes that was a good thing because it made us into these fine, upstanding individuals.
65. I remember Mr Logie was into canoeing and the school ordered canoes. You started canoeing practice in the swimming pool and once you were better you got to go down to the river.
66. The weekends were really boring. There was school on Saturday morning. We finished school at 1:00 pm. Most weekends were just running about in the school being a bit feral. There were some organised activities at the weekend. I remember I took up orienteering because it didn't involve contact with a ball. I quite liked geography and maps and I could just run about looking at things. We would go out to places that were maybe an hour away to do orienteering.
67. There was sometimes a film on a Saturday night, but I didn't want to watch the great classics, I just wanted to watch normal television. Even as a kid I never really liked kids' programmes, I liked watching Australian soap operas.
68. You were allowed one Exeat per term. It was an orange piece of paper that you had to apply for, and it would be signed to say you were allowed out. That meant you were allowed out anywhere, as long as someone came and got you. My mum used to come and collect me. I presume that they only let out a certain number of people at one time because I can remember applying for my Exeat one time and being refused. I had to

write to my mum and ask if we could make it another time. I had very limited time with my parents, but I think that suited them more than it suited me.

### *Trips and holidays*

69. I joined the choir. I used to love to sing when I was a little kid, and I joined the choir in whatever school I was in. I loved the choir, they went on tours and stuff like that. One year we sang in Glamis Castle for the Queen Mother. We stayed at the home of one of the pupils in a place called Friockheim.
70. We got to go to Murrayfield sometimes to watch the rugby. I still like watching rugby.

### *Schooling*

71. The classes at Aberlour House were mixed but sports were separate.
72. There were a variety of lessons. There was Drama, English, Art, Design and Technology. On the other side there was the geography room which faced a different way. I learned later on the geography teacher was a Falklands veteran as well. Behind Geography was Maths, Science, and computing. Mr Hanson was the Maths teacher and when he became Headmaster we got a new Maths teacher, Miss Murray.
73. Towards the end of my first year, I plucked up the courage to admit to a teacher that I was not particularly happy. Their response was to encourage me to read and appreciate Shakespeare.
74. Latin was in a building called the octagon. In the courtyard where there had presumably been stables was the third form. They stayed in one room and people came to them whereas all the other forms moved. I was fourth form when I started. Mrs McQuarrie taught the first and second forms and Shelagh Davidson was the third form teacher.



75. The swimming pool and the library were in the courtyard as well. Aberlour House did have a lot of facilities compared with what I had come from, but they were very basic facilities and they weren't very well maintained or looked after. The swimming pool was in a polytunnel and even in June it was freezing.
76. I had been used to being schooled in one room. Although the distances weren't large, you travelled from room to room at Aberlour House. That was new to me, and I liked it. Most of the classrooms were in one area. We had a noticeboard with news. One half-term I was responsible for keeping the news up to date on the board and I did that by reading the newspapers. I had to read The Times at ten years of age. It was the only newspaper we had. I put up a report of the death of Freddie Mercury but that got taken down.
77. There were more lessons in the afternoon, after we had a shower following games. It was quite a long school day. I think we finished at 4:55 pm. After tea we had prep and that took ages. We did prep where we sat to eat and it was for an hour, sitting in silence. That was supervised by the teacher on duty.
78. They also had Expeds, short for expeditions. We had to do one every year, but I hated them. They did them during the activities week and you were told where you were going on Exped. One year I had to walk around Cape Wrath. My backpack was heavier than me. I was always at the back because I couldn't carry all the stuff. On the second day I asked if I could have a lighter pack, but they said no. I was mocked by the other kids because I had asked for a lighter pack. David Hanson took us on that Exped. On the third day he told me that he had swapped the contents of the bags around, so my pack was lighter. It was marginally lighter.
79. The second Exped I went on was to the Isle of Scalpay because one of the kids' parents owned it. It was the first time I was aware of being on an island. Back then there was no Skye bridge, we had to go on a ferry. On Scalpay we did farm work. I had to chase sheep that were going to be castrated. The sheep weighed more than I did, and they were stronger, but we had to do it. You would be looked down on by staff and pupils if you didn't.

### *Sporting activities*

80. When we went for a run in the morning, the boys would have to run with no top. We would have to run in the snow. We were expected to leap out of bed and run without any hesitation. I kept my shorts, underwear, and plimsolls next to my bed. The run was about 700 or 800 metres. The boys would go down the driveway on the left side, the girls on the right. We had to run to the furthest away of two speedbumps and then come back and go in the side door. My motivation for running fast was to be back inside where it was warm.
81. All the pupils would have to do this run, even the six-year-olds and the seven-year-olds. There was no adult to help them. I look back and I think, "What on earth were we doing?" If you tripped up and hurt yourself you were left. You were expected to pick yourself up and go. We were checked out as we left but that was it. The staff relied on it being a small community and nothing could be hidden. They would know if you went outside the school. There was an informal surveillance of kids, by kids.
82. We did games in the afternoon before we did more lessons. We did games first because in the winter it would get dark earlier. Games were mandatory.
83. If there is one thing Aberlour House gave me, it is the running about. I have no co-ordination, so I was never going to play elite sports. I was never a tall child, and I am not a tall man, but I did become more athletic. I played hockey and I played rugby. In the end, I would say that I did enjoy them whereas in primary school I dreaded school sports day. It was something I found incredibly stressful.
84. If you didn't do well in sports, you didn't get on in Aberlour House. You were considered weak and feeble, and that was by the staff far less your contemporaries. As a teacher now, I try to keep an eye out for those who I call the Mathletes. Those who have no sporting inclination whatsoever, but they are great at chess, or can write an amazing essay, or love science experiments and playing with robotics. Even though I have no

interest or understanding in half of those things I try to support those pupils because the sporty pupils already get support.

85. For a lot of the pupils, their dads had played sport for Gordonstoun so they had to as well whereas my dad would leave school to go and play pool in a shopping centre. What the school was trying to create was the generation that would be running the country now. They clearly haven't done a very good job of it.

#### *Healthcare*

86. I remember we all had to be weighed every year. I was 19 kilograms when I arrived, there was nothing of me. There wasn't much more of me when I left.
87. There was very rudimentary health care at Aberlour House. There was a small medical office on the ground floor. We weren't registered with a doctor at the school. There wasn't a school nurse, and the Matron was largely administrative. I was prone to chest infections which I largely attributed to living in households where there was a lot of smoking. One of the few things I liked about Aberlour House was that there was no smoking. I went and explained the symptoms of my chest infection to a teacher who was on duty. I was given a cough sweet and sent away. This went on for days and in choir practice I couldn't hold my breath long enough to sing one line. I remember they called a doctor out for me, and he gave me some medicine. I would imagine it was antibiotics.
88. I had a wart on my finger for years and nobody took any notice. I got a verruca, and I didn't know what it was. I just assumed it would go away. Somebody must have noticed because I remember getting taken to a medical centre and it was burned off with acid. It was not like the treatment they have today.
89. I didn't see a dentist at Aberlour House. I saw the dentist when I went back home.

#### *Religious instruction*

90. We had Sunday service every week at 7:00 pm in the school hall. I was in the choir, so I sang at the service. We also went to the church in the village for the Christmas service. Even though I am not a believer, I like church at Christmas.
91. We had assemblies on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays and we would have to sing hymns at assembly. There were Muslims at the school, but they would just have to stand at the back. They were expected to be there but not to do anything.
92. I don't remember God being everywhere at the school. I remember thinking that if the bible is supposed to be giving us love, then why aren't the teachers and the senior pupils who were dealing with religion not doing what the bible said?

### *Work*

93. After breakfast we had to do housework. You would be allotted a part of the school to tidy. We were in pairs, to make sure the other one did some work. A Sociologist could have studied our willingness to administer our own form of justice to one another. It was crazy, it could be an opportunity for bullying or bad behaviour.
94. I was quite lucky in that the person I was put with was a girl called [REDACTED] who hated me. She was a day older than I was, but she was in the form below me. I had been forwarded a year because of my results and she resented that, so our housework was always very silent. We did our thing and that was it. I had to tidy the French room sometimes. The school did have people who polished the floors and things like that, but it was an expectation that we would tidy.
95. I remember one year I had to do the Drama room and it had no hoover. I had to pick all the bits up off the floor by hand. Next to the Drama room was the English room and they did have a hoover. We used to race there in the morning to try to get the hoover so we could use it, but it wasn't a difficult room to clean. We just made sure the windows and the sills were clean, picked up the bits off the floor, and threw them in a bin. I don't remember having any other place to tidy.

96. I don't know what would happen if you didn't do your work to a required standard of satisfaction. I don't even know if the work was formally checked. We just relied on one another. [REDACTED] would always tell me if I missed a bit.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

97. The school didn't do anything for your birthday. My birthday was in the holidays. I think parents could organise for a cake to be sent in from the bakers in the village. I remember some people had birthday cake. I went camping with two Muslim brothers. I had to request that our sausages didn't have pork. I remember one of the brothers called [REDACTED] had a massive cake and he gave me a piece. That was the only time I remember celebration of a birthday.
98. You would get the birthday beats on your birthday. People would throw you up in the air, pick you up again, and throw you in the air. You would land on whatever was underneath you.

*Personal possessions*

99. With the money that my gran had sent me I bought a red transistor radio because we weren't allowed to watch television.

*Running away*

100. I thought about running away at Aberlour House constantly, but I had nowhere to run to. Aberlour House was quite isolated. I probably had a certain degree of independence that other pupils didn't have. I was used to using public transport from a very early age. Looking back, I would have known how to run away. I knew where the buses picked people up and if I had saved a few pounds my grandmother had given me I would have got somewhere. The only choices I would have had would have been going to my parents, who would have returned me right away, or my grandparents in Glasgow. That would have caused more problems than it would have

solved because they would have kept me, which is what I would have wanted. I just wouldn't have wanted to lose my parents as a result of that.

101. I thought about running away a million times because my parents were often out of the country depending on where my dad was deployed, and my brother got to go with them. He never left them.

#### *External Inspections*

102. I don't remember anyone coming in and inspecting the school and as a teacher I am very aware of that process now. I have teaching friends in Canada who are horrified by the level of 'policing' that we have. As a senior leader now, I am expected to go in on a regular basis and inspect the teaching and learning of subjects about which I know nothing.
103. The school's inspectorate now come round every three years, but I don't remember anything like that at Aberlour House. Maybe they had come round just before I went to the school and came back just after I had left two years later. Maybe it just wasn't as widely talked about back then. Given the changes in legislation regarding the inspection of school, the law has done its thing. It is now whether the people who are subject to the laws do their thing.

#### *Family contact*

104. On Mondays we had letter writing time. We had to write to somebody. It would be fair to say that most of my letters went un-answered. Every break-time I would go to the massive table in the hall to see who had written to me.
105. There was a boy who had left after the Christmas term. I had an address for him in Somerset and I wrote to him. Sometimes he would write back. Reading between the lines I think he had suffered the same fate at school that I did. As time went on the replies faded away.

*Discipline*

106. The worst thing I experienced from a teacher was detention. I was a reasonably good student. I used to fly through lessons and as I came to the end, I would slow down my writing, so I didn't stick out.
107. We had the ups and downs system at Aberlour House. if you got more than three downs in a week there was a punishment. That might be what we called Boggy Jobs, like cleaning the toilets, picking up litter, or scraping chewing gum from underneath desks. In my second year that was all done away with, and we were made to learn poems instead and declaim them to the entire school. I only had to do that once. All of the poems were about animals. I had to recite Rhinoceros. If you got it wrong, you were doing it again the next week.

*Prefects / senior pupils*

108. For the first half-term you had an unofficial grace period, to learn the ways of the school. If you were caught doing anything minor, the senior pupils would let you off and declare 'you're ok, you're on grace'. After that if you were caught doing something wrong you would have to go on report to one of the senior pupils. I don't know if these senior pupils were self-appointed or not. They would administer punishments. You would be hit with their fist anywhere they wanted. You could be hit in the face. I remember being hit in the stomach once.
109. Another punishment was that they made you lean against a wall in a seated position and hold that position for a minute. In reality most people couldn't hold that position for more than twenty seconds. When you fell down, you would be kicked. I don't think there was a record kept of these punishments. I think the school staff did know about the punishments.
110. There was a boy called [REDACTED] and he would beat the living daylights out of you if you went on report to him. There was another boy who would do the same. They would punch or kick you or use any implement that was around. They might use a ruler and



the strap of a dressing gown was quite popular amongst the senior pupils. That could be quite painful against bare skin. You would typically be taken into one of the dormitories because there was no-one around during the day. you would be given the choice of being hit with or without shorts on. You got fewer hits with your shorts off, so I always took that option.

111. I think there were prefects and they were referred to as junior helpers and senior helpers. There was no rule book. I remember being put on report once and I asked why. I was just told, "Just go on report." I reported to [REDACTED] who was a nice young man. He just said, "Don't do it again." [REDACTED] stepfather was the [REDACTED] teacher in the school and a lot of us thought it was strange that [REDACTED] stayed in the school and not with his mother and her husband.
112. These punishments happened to everyone. I didn't witness it happening to others, but you were told about them. You didn't believe it until it happened to you.

### **Abuse at Aberlour House**

113. I was told that there was one teacher and if you got sent to him for punishment, he had a tin of Quality Street sweets on his desk. He would throw a few sweets on the floor and as you bent down to pick them up you would get whacked across the back. You didn't even get to keep the sweets. I don't know what you would be hit with. It didn't happen to me so I can't substantiate that allegation.
114. I stood out at Aberlour House because I wasn't a sporty child. I stood out anyway. My parents always said, "It's always good to be different." But I hated the fact that I was. People did have nicknames at Aberlour House. I don't think I had a nickname. If I did have I am not aware of it. There was no kindness towards anyone. There was no pastoral care.
115. Derek Jones was the English teacher. He arrived when I arrived, and he formed a bond with me as we were new boys together. He reminded me of Jeremy Beadle. He

had glasses, an unkempt beard and a pot belly. He ran the photography club. He invariably had a camera around his neck.

116. I think it was mid to late November 1990 and I had not completed French homework and I was stressed-out about it. Bedtime had happened but I got up out of bed and was wandering about. You had to ask permission from the senior pupil to leave. I can't remember who that was, but I just left anyway and went to the toilet. Everyone else was asleep. Mr Jones noticed that I had got out of bed, and he asked me if I was O.K. I lied and said that I had a stomach-ache. He put his hand on my shoulder as if to say, "come with me." He walked me back, and I thought he was going to take me to the dormitory, but he didn't, he took me to his room. I had a certain degree of trust in Mr Jones that I might not have had with anyone else.
117. In his room was a big, old-fashioned bed. It had a wire headboard. He sat me down on a wooden chair and said he would give me some paracetamol. It was the first time I had ever taken a pill. My mum and my gran used to crush them down in milk. The pill looked huge, but I just thought, "This is what adults do." He gave me the pill with some water. I swallowed it and to my surprise it went down. He then gave me a second pill.
118. My next memory is lying across Mr Jones' bed, not the way you would lie if you were sleeping on a bed. I had pyjamas on that were hideous. They were brown striped pyjamas. My first concern was that I thought I was going to fall off the bed. My legs were off the bed. I think I tried to sit up, but I couldn't find the strength to do so. The next thing I was aware of was that I felt cold between my knees and my waist because my pyjama bottoms were down. Jones was standing in front of me taking photographs of me. I remember the flash of the camera and I was always scared of camera flashes as a child. I reached down to pull my pyjama bottoms up, but Mr Jones' hands went on mine and the pyjama bottoms went back down to my knees. My genitals were exposed. I think I fell asleep again.
119. When I came round again, Mr Jones had my penis in his mouth. I tried to stand up, but I fell back. I was so groggy. It reminded me of the previous year when I had teeth taken out after anaesthetic. Because I couldn't fight it, I just laid back and thought, "I

hope I go to sleep and don't wake up again." I had no strength to fight it. I feel like I just gave in. I firmly believe it wasn't paracetamol I was given. I wish I had been asleep for the whole thing, but I had repulsive moments of clarity.

120. I don't know at what point that ended because my next memory is being carried back to my own bed. I presume Mr Jones carried me. I remember feeling very groggy the following morning when I went out for a run with everyone else. I wondered if I had dreamt what had happened and for quite a while I thought it was some dream associated with puberty, but I couldn't reconcile that with my memory of walking into the room before this happened.
121. There was another event that occurred on a weekend which was foiled by [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Spynie dormitory had the compartments, and I was in mine on my own. Mr Jones came in again. He was checking everyone, and I just assumed he was on duty. I remember thinking that I hoped he didn't find me. I moved into the corner of my bed up against the wall, hoping that he wouldn't see me, but I put myself in the most vulnerable position. That time there was no paracetamol to numb the pain.
122. Mr Jones asked me if I was alright. I said that I was. I was sitting cross-legged, and he commented on that. I straightened my legs out and he grabbed me, and his hands were inside my shorts. I tried to pull his hands out, but he got them back in again. Then the door opened and in came [REDACTED]. I have never been so glad to see someone. Jones stood up, said something to me, and went. [REDACTED] asked me if I was O.K. and I said I was fine. I didn't want to explain what had just happened. I was ten years old and didn't really understand anything about sex.
123. I dreaded going back to school after Christmas but the dread disappeared when I found out Mr Jones was gone. There was no explanation given to the children. He was only there for one term. It would be wrong to say that life at school got better after Mr Jones was gone or that it was a positive experience because it absolutely was not. I think that what most of the children who were at Aberlour House experienced was abuse, whether that was sexual or not. Maybe I just know that because I deal with that in my professional life as a teacher for over twenty years.

124. Knowing what I know now, a lot of things that happened after that made sense. There was a change of Headmaster. The Housemother was accused of not looking after us well enough and she left at the same time. We were told she had gone back to Dundee.

### **Reporting of abuse at Aberlour House**

125. I didn't report the abuse I suffered while I was at Aberlour House. I was bullied reasonably often. I was teased for not being sporty and teased for having a Scottish accent. There was one boy who threatened me with electrical components. I reported bullying to a senior teacher and it was never effectively dealt with, so I was never going to disclose the abuse I suffered from Mr Jones.

### **Leaving Aberlour House**

126. There was a recession in 1992 and one of the grants was cut. My parents couldn't afford to plug that gap so my last day at Aberlour House was [REDACTED] 1992. [REDACTED]
127. When I went back into state education after Aberlour House I was the only one with a more refined accent. It was the opposite of when I had arrived at Aberlour House, although I was just like the other children in state education, I had just had a two year gap-year at Aberlour House. I was in three different schools related to my dad's role in the RAF. The first school was huge and the opposite of Aberlour. I found the adjustment quite difficult. I was there for four years in total. The second school was a grammar school in Suffolk. I would make friends with other children in school but didn't socialise with them outside of school. I was scared of making any formal friendship bonds.
128. I took a year out at seventeen, as I was too young to go to university, and did a computer course at college.

### **Life after being in Aberlour House**

129. I went to university in Canada, and it was ostensibly to get as far away as I humanly could. That was when I was eighteen years old. There was some family who lived there, although at that stage I didn't really know them. It wasn't necessarily the right decision, but I ran away. I came back, begrudgingly, for a career as a teacher because working life in Canada is quite hard. That's why a lot of people from western Europe tend to go to Australia or New Zealand rather than Canada. I came back in 2005 and I only intended to stay for a few years, but I met my partner and life happened.
130. I was a local councillor for a number of years and when I was first elected, I thought I would be running the council one day but I purposely set out to ruin my own career so that my head didn't go above the parapet. One of these days I hope I will not be that person, but I have been hoping that for a very long time. I seem to rise to the top of things reasonably quickly and as soon as I do I sabotage it and fall back.
131. As a teacher now, I have some insight into what the people who were teaching me were doing at the time. I never encountered Mr Jones while I was a teacher. I understand that he died in 2009. It means that no-one else can suffer at his hands, but it also means that he can never face any justice, despite the efforts of the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry and the Scottish Government.

### **Impact**

132. I left Aberlour House with a lot of qualities that have helped me in life, but I also left with things that have ruined substantial bits of my life. There is so much more I could do but every so often I reduce myself to those two events, even though I know I am more than just those two events. Every so often, every three or four years, I will get to a high point and then I will destroy it myself because I don't feel like I should be there.

I should be a Head Teacher by now and I have been in positions where I could have been, but I purposely demote myself because I don't feel I should be in that position.

133. My biggest problem came in my mid-teens when I realised I was gay. I blamed Mr Jones. I felt like because my first experience was with him, that experience had made me what I am. I know that it is not the case, but for a long time I thought that. It took me over twenty years to get over that. I was in my mid-thirties before I finally accepted that this is how it is. Maybe that was more a reflection of a societal change. My parents still haven't accepted my sexuality and that's why I have a fractured relationship with them. Ironically my grandparents did not care one bit. It's only been in the last seven years that I have lived as openly as I do. I live with my partner, and we have been together for fifteen years.
134. I am an island. Some of that is family circumstance but I blame my time at Aberlour House for that. I have an inherent distrust of anybody and everybody new that I might come across. What are they going to take from me?
135. I have no doubt the abuse I suffered at Aberlour House had an effect on my academic achievement. I have always had self-doubt. When I was doing my A' levels I was in the stream for Oxbridge, but I didn't have the confidence to go through with it, even though I got the grades to get me in. I was concerned that the norms and values of Aberlour would be replicated and I had no desire to re-enter that environment even though it may have changed my life immeasurably in the long run.
136. I made one attempt on my life, in 1998. I was found by a complete stranger. They called an ambulance. That was when I was seventeen years old and that's when I decided to go to Canada to study history and politics. I haven't tried that since, and I don't think I would, but the feelings are constant. I won't take medication unless I really have to.

## **Treatment/support**

137. I fell into an incredibly deep depression in my late teens. I was just handed pills and told to go away. these pills robbed me of my short-term memory. I can remember details from years ago, but I couldn't tell you what I had for breakfast this morning. That loss of short-term memory inhibits my day-to-day life, unfortunately. I make lists and have notebooks, but I lose them, and I can't remember where I put them.
138. In 2019 I sought counselling. There were a lot of things going on at that time. Where I worked was not particularly pleasant, my grandmother was dying, and I had just bought a flat to let out, so I was worried about paying for that. I went to my G.P. for anti-depressants to stabilise me while I was waiting for the counselling to start. I was supposed to get six sessions in person but I got two sessions in person, two online, and then I was discharged.
139. I made two further attempts to get more counselling, but they were unsuccessful. I cannot afford private counselling. A base level counsellor in London is £90 for 45 minutes. If you want somebody half decent, it is well into three figures. I know this because of some of the kids that I teach and some of the cases I deal with at school.
140. About eighteen months ago I resigned myself to the fact that it wouldn't happen because the only counselling I could access was a one-size-fits-all. I had a friend who was seeking counselling, for completely different reasons, and we were getting the same thing and it wasn't really working for either of us. I don't want to be critical of their efforts, but the options available under the NHS have been sadly lacking.
141. I don't think I can ever move on from the abuse I suffered, I don't think anyone in my situation can move on but we can mitigate the circumstance of it. I am connected, via Facebook, to two of the boys I was at Aberlour House with. We don't hold regular conversations. I don't know if those two fell prey the way that I did. There was a Facebook group about the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry which I was part of, but it doesn't exist anymore. I don't really go on Facebook now.



## **Reporting of Abuse**

142. I didn't tell anyone about the incident with Mr Jones in the dormitory for 25 years. My partner was the first person I told about it. He has been very supportive. He doesn't dodge the issue when I have felt that I needed to talk about it. He tries to understand.
143. The first time I formally reported the abuse I suffered was to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry. That was after a long time of thinking about it and then there was a big gap after reporting it where nothing was done, with no criticism of the Inquiry intended, because the world went into lockdown. I think I am a lot stronger now than when I first reported it. I may seem composed when I am discussing the abuse, but I don't feel that way. I have to seem composed when I am in front of people at school.
144. I have heard other teachers talk about trying to empathise with someone who has suffered abuse, but you don't really understand it unless it has happened to you.
145. My parents don't know about the abuse I suffered, and I will never tell them. I wanted to tell the Inquiry because I am motivated by doing the right thing, even though doing the right thing is not always the easiest thing to do.
146. John Findlay, who has gone public, suffered the same things that I did. He was in the year above me and as I was advanced one year, he must be two years older than me. I remember walking into his dormitory once to get something for someone. I would have been eleven years old, and John would have been thirteen years old. John was standing and had a red face. I got the impression he had been crying. It was the first conversation I had with him. He was a tall, good-looking, sporty boy. He was one of those people you wish you were. It was strange to find him in that situation. I remember he said to me, "Always stand up for yourself, or they'll have you." He didn't explain further what he meant.
147. When I read John Findlay's story in the Daily Record, the picture of him showed him hunched over. As I read his story, I remembered the strong young man I had met but

he seemed like just a wreck given what he was saying. Part of me wants to meet John Findlay, to thank him about going public with his story. I want to commend him on being much braver than me by going public because I will hide my account.

148. I did go back to Aberlour House in 2019. I was going up to Glasgow regularly to see my grandmother after my grandfather died. I bought a old car to keep up there because it was cheaper than getting taxis everywhere as my grandmother had reduced mobility. I don't know what possessed me but one day I drove up to Moray and stayed for two or three nights but Aberlour House has been sold, the prep school has moved to the main Gordonstoun site. The building is now the headquarters of Walkers shortbread because the factory was next door. I didn't even go up the drive. There was no reason to. I just drove and sat next to the lodge where Mr Duffy used to live. One day I did drive up to Gordonstoun because I had always been up there for concerts and that was going to have been my school in a year or two after my time at Aberlour House. When I drove up to Gordonstoun the gate was shut. I looked at it, but it wasn't a place of horrific abuse for me. I don't know if it was, but Aberlour House was.
149. I hate the compensation culture we have now but I do feel they owed a duty of care to me. A sum of money won't make these feelings go away, no matter how large. It might help with the costs of therapy, but I couldn't afford legal representation. I am aware from my professional life that in other schools where this has happened they have a victim fund. I just know that the schemes exist, I don't know what they do. I don't know who I would write to about it either.
150. The current headmistress of Gordonstoun wasn't personally responsible, she is probably not much older than I am. I would like to think that the institution has moved on in the thirty years since I was there, and I would like to think that they are cooperating with the Inquiry. I don't know to what extent they would positively engage with me but if that was an avenue I could explore then I would want to because I think it would make my life better in the long term.

151. When there was first publicity about abuse at Gordonstoun I believe they attempted to write to all potential victims, but I reckon I have moved seventeen times since then and I believe my parents would have moved about eight times.
152. I don't know how I would have felt about reporting the matter now if Mr Jones had been alive. I think I would have felt much more strongly if he were alive. I almost didn't report the matter to the Inquiry because he is dead, so what would come of it?
153. What happened to me was always wrong, but I like to think that I was in the minority of people who passed through that school. What I hope schools have learned is robust systems and that they are now following procedure.

#### **Records**

154. I think I have got my school reports from Aberlour House somewhere. I have since contacted the school and told them I have made contact with the Inquiry. I made a Freedom of Information request for my records and they advised me that records prior to 1998 no longer exist.

#### **Lessons to be Learned**

155. There is a far greater emphasis on child protection now, than there has been at any point in my career, and by default, in my life. The first attempt at child protection legislation in England was in 1989. If that made it to Scotland then it clearly failed me and countless others. There is a balance to be drawn between judging everyone by their worst and best specimens of humanity. I don't have the answers, but it bothers me that I assume everyone is an abuser. That's a sad state of affairs but if Mr Jones had been treated like that then I might not be sitting here talking to the Inquiry. I might have made it to all of my top jobs.

- 156. I don't know how things work in Scotland because I am not there, but I think that child protection has to be at the centre of everything, but I think that part of child protection is allowing them to take educated risks. I would like to think that Gordonstoun now fully vet their staff. I would like to think that if an allegation were made now, as opposed to in 1990, that the police would take it seriously. In 1990 it clearly wasn't taken seriously. John Findlay's parents were told Derek Jones would never teach again, but he did. There was a process then but it wasn't followed. That's how I ended up the way I did.
  
- 157. Anyone that is in loco parentis, no matter how long or how short a time that is, must realise that leaves an indelible mark on that child. The indelible mark that Aberlour has left on me will indeed stay with me for the rest of my life. However this has not been the legacy the school had publicly aspired to.

**Other information**

- 158. 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 May 2023 .....