

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HRQ

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is HRQ My date of birth is 1996. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before boarding school

2. I was born and brought up in Scotland. My dad is called [REDACTED] and my mother is called [REDACTED]. I have no siblings. I had a normal upbringing and went to my local primary school before going to boarding school. I was happy, we went on holiday every year and I attended the Scouts and karate and judo classes.
3. My dad's job involved him living abroad. My mum and dad didn't want my education to be disrupted by me moving with them, so they looked into sending me to boarding school for my secondary education. My dad says they contacted Gordonstoun to enquire about putting my name down and Gordonstoun suggested to look at Aberlour House, Gordonstoun's Junior School.

Preparation for boarding school

4. When I was nine years old, I spent a two day trial period at Aberlour and then went as a weekly boarder. When I was thirteen years old, my parents moved abroad and I went to Gordonstoun as a full-time boarder.

5. I enjoyed the trial period at Aberlour. It all looked good. The trial period was to attend the school as if I was already there and see how it went. There was no entrance exam. Rob McVain was the headmaster. I met him and he took me up to the dormitories to show me where people slept.
6. I was given a buddy called [REDACTED]. He looked after me and showed me where things were. I went to lessons and did a few sports activities. I went to French class for the first time. I lived a day in the life of a student who was there already and met people. It was all positive at the time and I was excited. You see this amazing place but eventually it unveils itself and you see the ugly side of it. There was no indication from [REDACTED] that there was bullying at Aberlour. [REDACTED] was one of the few people at school who I had no problems with.

Aberlour House, Elgin, Moray

7. I was eight, going on nine years old when I went to Aberlour. It is in the grounds of Gordonstoun but it has its own section. We were given a kit list at the start of every term to make sure we brought the right amount of socks and school stuff. Everything had to be labelled with your name.
8. Between the east and west gates of Gordonstoun is a mile drive. It is a big school. The building that is Aberlour is symmetrical. It is grand with big, glass windows and is open with sunlight coming in. The main entrance had a roundabout outside which was turned into classrooms later. In the main hallway you've got a whiteboard. In later years a TV was put up and showed slideshows of things going on. To the right were the main science blocks and English department, as well as the entrance to the headmaster's flat and the girls' dormitory.
9. Further down the hallway led to the massive playground and rugby and football pitches. They have a climbing frame which is an assault course. You had the woods in which we'd build dens and little villages. There was a staff room before the exit to the grounds. To the left was a hallway with the headmaster's office, a few bathrooms,

the main assembly hall and more classrooms for languages and maths. You went down some stairs to a locker room and drying area for kit. The locker room was for football boots and rugby boots. The bulk of the classrooms were there. They were dedicated to year groups rather than specific subjects.

10. When I joined Aberlour, the school was starting construction on a new extension to the building. It took a couple of years to finish. Those classrooms outside at the roundabout were temporary while the extension was being built. The main assembly hall was triple the size of the old hall. The old hall was converted into classrooms. There was a pantry, a computer locker and the entrances to the Assistant Housemaster's flat and the boys' dormitories.
11. The second floor was all dormitories. The matron's office was there and there were flats for matrons and other staff. If you took the stairs or the elevator from the main hallway then the common room was to the right. To the left were all the girls' dormitories and to the right boys' dormitories. In the extension they had more boys' dormitories. There were more boys than girls at the time. The refectory was in a separate building and was a ten minute walk away.
12. When I started at Aberlour there were less than a hundred boarders. Some were weekly boarders and went home at weekends and some were full-time boarders. There were day students as well. There were significantly more day students than boarders. The pupils were aged eight to thirteen years. We had a book with our weekly lesson plans, what sports we did, conduct code and rules and regulations. At the back were flight points and minus points. We took the book everywhere.

Staff at Aberlour House

13. Rob McVain was the head teacher. He filled in when teachers were away. Mr Prendergast was head of English. Miss Davidson was maths. Mrs Beattie was one of the matrons and a P.E. teacher. Mrs Saville was the main matron. She looked after all the students and sometimes gave us hot chocolate after sports. There were around twelve teachers in total and three matrons.

14. Mr McVain and Mrs McVain had their own flat downstairs. After the extension was built, an Assistant Headmaster was introduced who had his own flat. Two teachers slept in the same corridor as us, in their own flats. They were de facto matrons and were available to the students if something happened in the middle of the night. There was staff accommodation on the grounds and certain teachers, like the English and French teacher, had a small bungalow. The matrons did the bulk of looking after the students, from students reporting being called names to hurting themselves in the field. It was a basic staff structure.

Routine at Aberlour House

First day

15. I went after the summer holidays at the start of a new term in August. I was put back a year into Year 5 because I never did sciences at my previous school. I was eight years old and then I was nine in [REDACTED]. The first memory I have is sitting down in one of the temporary classrooms on my first day. There was a South African teacher and she was a nice lady. I sat down at a table and a girl called [REDACTED] just looked at me, gave me this horrible stare and looked down at her work again. That was within minutes of my first day. [REDACTED] was the first to bully me, the first to do anything and everything started with her. She looked at me and I that was it, I was the target. I was nervous and I took note of it but I didn't think anything of it at the time.
16. From then on I was picked on. It was small things at first but I got beaten up on that first night by a boy called [REDACTED]. His nickname was [REDACTED]. We got into an argument. I didn't initiate the argument but I stepped up and [REDACTED] laid into me. He punched and kicked me and put me on the floor. I can't remember if other people were there but I'd be surprised if there wasn't. I withdrew from people and thought I needed to chill out. It got worse from there.

Mornings and bedtime

17. Weekly boarders went to Aberlour on a Sunday to get ready for the week coming. I went to the dormitory, got settled down and met people. Then it's straight into the school week. Every dorm had a name. I can't remember the name of the one I was in. There were six to eight people in a dorm. Before the extension there were three boys' dorms and after the extension there were six. The girls had four dorms. In the afternoon you went to the year group classrooms for quiet time and prep work.
18. In my dorm were [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and myself. [REDACTED] only stayed for one year. Two or three of them were established students and the rest of us were new. Initially it was okay and I don't have bad memories sleeping in the dorms until later.
19. Each of us had a bunk bed lined up against the wall with your desk under the bed. When you opened your wardrobe it gave you some privacy and was like a little room. You had a space for your laptop, personal belongings and your pictures. There was a wardrobe and chest of drawers.
20. We got up at 7:00 am. Matron rang a bell in the corridor. I got up earlier to get to the shower early. When you have forty boys trying to get into four showers then you are waiting a while. I got showered, changed and ready for school by 7:30 am. There was a matron to supervise and check we were all dressed. We had to stand by our beds and get permission to go downstairs. We went downstairs to the main hallway. We had to sit there and be smart and quiet and then we were allowed to go to breakfast. You'd try to get noticed to be let go first.
21. Bedtime depended on your age. There was an hour's difference between the older and younger students.

Mealtimes / Food

22. If you were at the Refectory early then you got the hot food. On a Wednesday it was pain au chocolat and everyone tried to nick an extra one. It was the same with brownies which were really good. Sometimes we'd be last to go and miss out on our food because everyone had taken a little more than they should. You lined up, got your tray and your food and then sat down. You could sit with whoever you wanted.
23. The food was okay but it could have been better. One of the meals was a Sloppy Joe which was mince with slices of garlic bread on top. Breakfast was the best part. At break time you got a brownie or an apple. In the evening, Matron made jam sandwiches. Later, they introduced a tuck system. If you didn't like the meal then the default was to get pasta and put cheese on top. When the parents came for Parent's Day the really nice food came out.
24. All the students were at breakfast and dinner at the same time. The refectory was a big room. The Aberlour section seated at least 100 people. Gordonstoun had their own section in the refectory and sometimes, if it was busy, you would be put over there. Lunchtimes were staggered because there were day pupils as well and I'd sit with different people. Half of Aberlour went to lunch at a time.
25. There were around ten tables for students which sat between six to twelve people. There was a head table for teachers in front of the drinks machine. There was always someone around. Sometimes teachers walked around and kept an eye on us. On occasion, a teacher sat on our table because the head table was full. If it got too noisy the teachers told us to quieten down and sometimes told us to be silent while we ate.

Washing / bathing

26. You had a shower in the morning. In Aberlour, shower time was one of the times where no-one did anything to me. You had privacy.

Leisure time and pocket money

27. You could go to the swimming pool on Wednesday evenings. In summer we got a lot of freedom to go outside and play after prep. The younger students ran around and the older students went on the computer and on Facebook. Facebook was a big deal at the time. There were two leave out weekends a term when you could go home or stay in school.
28. A system was introduced where you were promoted in your dorm. Wherever you got to then you got an allowance of money. The top level was £1.20 and nothing was the bottom level. You could buy sweets with your money in the tuck shop.

Trips / Holidays

29. There were things like a cinema trip to go on. We could leave the campus and roam around. The school did skiing trips as an additional extra. I never did them because I wasn't interested.

Clothing / uniform

30. There is a school shop where you can buy uniforms and sometimes you can buy second-hand things. We wore navy blue trousers, a bright blue top and a navy jumper. We had a kilt, a suit jacket and a white shirt, and sports stuff such as tracksuits. We had double of everything so you had a clean set. We cleaned our shoes every Friday.

School

31. After breakfast we had assembly where we sang hymns and the teachers said some inspirational things. Then it was lesson time. We'd look in our study book to see what we doing that day and go off to lessons. In the younger years we all stayed together in the same class. The lessons were in half hour blocks and we had an hour and half of lessons before break time. Break time was for half an hour. Matrons came out with

fruit, hot chocolate and drinks. Then you played in the fields and the woods. We had little fights with sticks and swords.

32. We went back for more lessons and then lunch. The younger students went to lunch first. After lunch was reading time which was a time to reflect on the day. You went up to your dorm and read a book or thought about life. Someone patrolled to make sure you were doing what you had been told. Then there were sports, every afternoon. You name it, we'd done it.
33. After sport we went back and got showered and changed. There was a second break where we got sweets, brownies and more drinks. After that we went back for more lessons. After lessons the day students went home. If it was Friday then the weekly boarders went home on a mini-bus. If it wasn't Friday then we went to assembly hall again and all gathered in our dorms for dinner. We sat being quiet, waiting to be told to go for dinner. After dinner we congregated again before we went upstairs to do prep time, which was homework. You had to do an extra half hour prep time the older you were.
34. When we were younger we did activities like kayaking and archery. Expeditions were part of the curriculum. Eight students went hiking up the mountains for three or four days at the end of term. You spent the time in the wilderness with a teacher. The Cape Wrath expedition was the big one you did at the end of your Aberlour career. In the younger years there were more students and teachers on expeditions than on the Gordonstoun expeditions.

Sport

35. You had to do sport but I avoided it if I could. The abuse continued when I played sport, for example, if I played rugby then I was tackled for no reason. I avoided certain sports like rugby and football where I was in contact with other people. I did sports where I was an individual doing my thing. I did karate and judo which seems ironic because they are a fighting kind of thing. I had friends who I did that with and the classes were a safe place. I did rock climbing and athletics.

Healthcare

36. There was a healthcare system in place. In Aberlour, I never used it. I might have spent a day in bed if I was unwell.

Religious Instruction

37. Being a multi-national school we did have religious studies where the school taught us about all sorts of faiths. On Fridays we went to St Christopher's Chapel for our chapel service. That was at the end of the day before we went home. At some chapels they brought in an Imam who did Muslim prayers and taught us about his religion and we learned about Buddhism. There was some variety.

Birthdays and Christmas

38. I brought in a cake if it was my birthday and gave it to everyone. It was announced that it was your birthday and people were nice to you. A guy started on me and [REDACTED] said I had a day off because it was my birthday. School shut at Christmas, Easter and summertime.

Visits / Inspections

39. Parents visited on Parents' Day. There were Parents' Evenings where parents spoke to whichever teachers had taught you that year. I wasn't at the Parents' Evenings but my parents and I spoke about what was said. My dad says the Parents' Evenings were what he would have expected and they spoke about the standard things. Every Tuesday night we sat down to write a letter to our parents. The letters were checked, for example to make sure that we had written enough. We sealed up the letters.

Pastoral Care

40. My dad says all the pastoral stuff was a mystery to him and my mum because he was state educated. They didn't hear anything about the abuse at all. Dad says if he had known what was happening then I would have been out of Aberlour.

Discipline

41. If you did something good then you got flight points and if you did something bad you got minus points. The points were put in our study books. If you misbehaved then you were given a book which was blue, pink, purple or black in colour. It was like carrying a badge saying to the teachers you needed to be watched. For some students it was a badge of honour. How severe your punishment was depended on the colour of book. We had to carry the book around with us at all times and you'd have the book for a week or maybe two. If you got put onto a book when you got five minus points then you also had to write an essay.
42. If you got to a certain colour then you had to report in to the headmaster every day. If you got near to the last colour you'd be excluded from certain activities, particularly at lunchtime and dinnertime. You'd eat your dinner and then have to stand in the corner until you were told to go. You weren't allowed to interact with people. There was always someone on the book and standing in the corner. You saw students in the corners trying to interact with one another by mouthing words or hand signals. The teachers told them off.
43. You had to hand the book in to the teacher at the start of the class. The teacher wrote a report of everything you did in the book. If you were good enough then you'd move down a colour or get removed entirely. If you did more wrong then you went up a colour. Mr McVain signed the book off. That was all explained to me on the first day. My dad didn't know about it. I was on a blue book at one point and then it went to pink.
44. You got minus points for misdemeanours or shouting out too much. They could give you multiple points for being bad or good. When you got to fifteen points you got

rusticated, which was being excluded from school for a certain amount of weeks and then coming back. If that happened again you'd be asked to leave permanently. Being rusticated was the second most serious punishment to being asked to leave. You were never expelled but were given the opportunity to withdraw. The theory was if you were expelled then no other school would take you on. There were a couple of horrible people. Some people found out how to make things go 'bang' and they were gone from school quickly.

Abuse at Aberlour House

45. The abuse was all school house stuff but when you have to live with these people and sleep in the same room it becomes difficult. There is only one person called [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who I can think of who never did anything to me, from start to finish at school. He stuck up for me a few times and I remember that vividly. [REDACTED] started the abuse. I stayed resilient to the abuse and said I'd tell the teachers because I was being bullied.
46. As the years went by it became fruitless to do that. The students picked on me going between classrooms, at mealtimes and at sport. That was when the teachers were least around. Everyone backed off on expeditions and I made some friends. When we got back to school they were back into the routine and back to their old selves.
47. I don't remember who started it but in Year 6 the other students ruined my food at breakfast and dinner. It went on for two or three months and happened at least a couple of times a week, sometimes every day. I had my lunch and that was fine because I was with different people. All the day students were in and I chose to sit with people I liked. Particularly in the evenings, you didn't have a choice of who you sat with because the refectory was jam packed and you just had to find a seat.
48. The other students said I had one minute to eat and then they were going to fuck it for me. They put sachets of salt in my hot chocolate and spilt it all over the food. The food was piping hot and I was trying to get it down me. It might have happened to other

students once as a joke when people were messing around but to me, it was a regular occurrence.

49. Everyone joined in doing that. It was a lot of people and half the class at least. If they didn't ruin my food they were egging it on. I was a target. They did whatever they could to ruin my food and they always did. Sometimes I got seconds but they would do it again. One time, my tray hit the table and I hadn't even let go of it when it was ruined.

50. I knew it was going to happen, the bullying was so common and I accepted it. That was my lot in life. That was the first time I felt suicidal. I did my best to try and laugh it off because I was called a snitch and I wanted to get rid of the snitch mentality. The saving grace was that I'd be first in line for the jam sandwiches that Matron made in the evening.

51. I had comments being made about me left, right and centre about the way I looked. I was called 'ugly' all the way up to Year 13. That was nine years. They called me [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] because I was a 'girl'. I was called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I was bullied for my weight. You hear the stereotypical things about being too fat. I was too thin.

52. I avoided sport as much as I could. During rugby, the students tackled me for the fun of it. I stood there and got tackled for no reason. I remember [REDACTED] doing that. He had it in for me and was notorious for picking on me. It was weird because I was picked to be his buddy. He was French and didn't speak any English at the time. I hated playing rugby and football because I was a target. I was put in defence and I'd run away from the ball. I got shouted at and picked on for that. I got beaten up playing cricket. I was punched square in the chest by [REDACTED].

53. The students let me off on my birthday. That was the one day's grace I had. They wouldn't do anything that day but every other day something happened or I'd anticipate something happening. I felt anxious every day.

54. One time everyone was on expedition and I was in my dorm by myself. I made everyone's beds and made everyone's areas nice and tidy. I came back from my own expedition and they had trashed my area. I got upset and called my dad.
55. Year 8 was my last year at Aberlour and things got better. There was a period of calm and everyone backed off. I was happier being there. I felt I could be myself more. I did my own thing and stayed out the way. I played on my laptop. There was a time I went out with a mate of mine and I wanted to join in with the other kids. [REDACTED] stuck up for me and said to let me join in and that opened the door to a decent Year 8. That was the first time someone stuck up for me. I was more accepted.

Reporting of abuse at Aberlour House

56. When [REDACTED] laid into me on the first day, I went to Mr McVain. [REDACTED] got into trouble. The school did an anti-bullying chapel one week but the main avenue was to report to a teacher. That was more hassle than it was worth. I got a backlash from telling the teachers about things that happened to me, such as being called names. The other students would sneer at you and I was called a snitch a lot. I thought I had to toughen up and deal with it myself. When you have half the class having a go at you then it's difficult. I felt isolated. I stopped reporting to a teacher in Year 6 because of that. It took two or three years for the reputation to disappear.
57. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] and I became friends in Year 9 and in Year 12 she apologised to me for that. She said her reason was I looked weak and puny. That made sense to me. I accepted the apology because I had so few friends at the time.
58. Once, in the refectory, I was so hungry that when the students said my minute started now, I thought, "sod this." I went and sat at a table which was empty and I tried to make joke about it. The teachers noticed I had moved. [REDACTED] said to come back

because the teachers noticed. A teacher pulled me aside and I told them what happened. I can't remember who it was but it might have been Mr McVain. I was asked how long it had been going on but there was no follow up with me afterwards. It was, that is dealt with and now move on.

59. The spoiling of my food stopped. That was one of the few occasions where everyone stopped what they were doing. I was able to eat dinner for the first time in months. I was indoctrinated to that way of life and I didn't think telling the teachers was an option. Everything else carried on, and got worse. I don't remember any other interventions from teachers. I spoke to my mum and dad about a few things, like my dorm area being trashed. I didn't think about the not eating, at the time.

Leaving Aberlour House

60. The school encouraged moving on from Aberlour to Gordonstoun. Half of that's business and you had your original crew from Aberlour. It was a natural progression. My dad says we looked at schools in Edinburgh as well but I was content at Gordonstoun. That was because Year 8 went well and things had calmed down. I thought Gordonstoun would be better, all the childish stuff had gone and everyone had grown up. I was so wrong. If I could see the future I would have gone elsewhere.

Gordonstoun, Elgin, Moray

61. I went to Gordonstoun in August 2010 when I was thirteen years old. I was fourteen in [REDACTED] I was in Year 9. I left Gordonstoun in 2015 when I was eighteen. I was excited and nervous starting a new school. I didn't think the past would come back and get ten times worse. I was a full-time boarder. I went home three times a year in the holidays and I had guardians locally who I could stay with. My guardians are like family. If I had a leave out weekend or if there were small spaces where I didn't need to be in school then I'd stay with my guardians.

62. The school motto is 'Plus est en vous'. It means 'There is more in you'. The whole Gordonstoun ethos is about learning about yourself and pushing yourself to the limit. To give them credit they do a job of making you do that. There were about 500 students in Gordonstoun, including day pupils and boarders. There were boys and girls aged from thirteen to eighteen. There were five boys' boarding houses and three girls' houses. The boys' houses were Cumming House, Bruce, Round Square, Duffus, G House and Altyre. I was in Cumming House. The girls' houses were Windmill, Plewlands and Hopeman.
63. Cumming House was a World War II barracks because the school was taken over by the Army then. The graffiti went back to 1946. The classrooms were all barracks rooms for the soldiers. They were very old buildings made of wood and there were chimneys where they had the fires. When I left then the school started refurbishing it. If the buildings were to go on fire you had about a minute to get out. That was common knowledge and was even with all the fire regulations put in, like fire doors.
64. In the boarding house there was a floor where the housemaster's flat and office were, and a locker room. There was a basement where we put our trunks, which carried all our stuff to and from school. There was a main floor where all the rooms were. You had a couple of rooms which had multiple people in them but the majority were single bedrooms.
65. Cumming House was right next to Aberlour and it was the same difference to get to mealtimes in the refectory. It's hard to describe the building because it was complex. It has floors but has a segment which is up some steps and there's a landing with more rooms, a pantry and the housemaster's flat. The segment was not a whole floor in itself. There's a main common room and a balcony where the day students put their stuff and stayed to do homework.

Preparation for move to Gordonstoun

66. I don't know how they assigned us to our boarding houses, maybe there was a preference sheet. We had a look around the boarding house and I thought it was quite

nice. We spent about a week with the Gordonstoun lot. We went to their chapel service which was the same as Aberlour's assembly. We did their routine and saw the seniors. The seniors were the older students who looked after the younger students. It was fine.

Staff at Gordonstoun

67. Mark Piper was the headmaster at the time I moved to Gordonstoun. There were a lot of teachers, possibly as many as one hundred. When I was a senior, Mrs Morton was head of the senior year group. You had a main matron. The housemaster had a flat attached to the boarding house. Andy Collins was the housemaster at Cumming boarding house. When he left there was a new housemaster called Mr McNeil.
68. There were people who we called 'bashers' employed by the school. They were security staff who made sure we weren't smoking in the woods at midnight and that kind of thing. They were good people.

Students at Gordonstoun

69. There were some very rich students at Gordonstoun and it was the wealthy students who were the bullies. They sneered down at us. The Russians had their own table at lunch and you didn't sit at that table unless you had permission. The Chinese students kept themselves to themselves. If you talked to them about China then they stopped talking to you. People from Hong Kong were fantastic people, apart from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who bullied me. The students who got scholarships were a lot nicer. A former student sponsored one of the current students.
70. The Year 12 and 13 students were the seniors in the house. They keep an eye on the juniors, wake you up and do the registers in the morning, put people to bed and make sure you're doing your homework. The colour bearers were the prefects. They were given a coloured patch. They were the representative student body to the teachers. Then you had head boy and head girl. I never had any issues with the upper year group.

Routine at Gordonstoun

First day

71. We sat in the main room in Cumming House and introduced ourselves to each other. One person came with me from Aberlour House. He was called [REDACTED] He got bullied and didn't last long. I was the only Aberlour kid in there and it was all new faces.

Initiation and fagging

72. There was no initiation in our boarding house and the seniors did their best to get rid of it. They were the last year group to have initiation and they didn't make us do it. In other boarding houses there was initiation. One was that you ran down the hallway past all the students and they hit you. You'd get decked at the end of it. A student would sit on you, poke you on the chest quickly with their fingers and then slap you on the side of the head, saying "ding". That was called 'typewriting'. That didn't happen to me.
73. Fagging existed in a way. In Year 9 a student was being punished. His job was to warm up the toilet seat in the morning for the head boy. You had to be a butler for a day, get takeaway pizzas or do the ironing for the seniors. If you did that you got £5 or a slice of pizza. I never did any of that.

Mornings and bedtime

74. The younger students were in dorms and, as we got older, we got our own rooms. I got my own room a year younger because of the bullying. It was in Year 10 in the last term when I was fifteen years old. The teacher's knew I was a target and it wasn't a secret that I was being bullied a lot. That was because the teachers were seeing things and I did say some things. I got my own room to get away from people. That was one thing Gordonstoun did right. They were giving me allowances to get away from people.

75. A senior got up, got showered and changed before everyone else and picked someone to ring the bell that day. At 7:00 am you rang a bell around the boarding house to wake everybody up. You got showered. We were a lot more independent. You could have a lie-in. If you didn't go to breakfast, you didn't go to breakfast but it was encouraged to go to breakfast. We could have food in our rooms. On Sundays you got a lie-in until 9:00 am.
76. Breakfast was at 7:30 am. As long as we were in chapel by 8:15 am, that was fine. Gordonstoun kids go to St Christopher's Chapel every day for their assembly, which was similar to assembly at Aberlour. There were a couple of hundred people rather than fifty or a hundred odd. That went on to 8:45 am. At 9:00 am, lessons started. Again, we were given a study plan book. It was a different routine but the lessons were set out the same.
77. You took yourself to the lessons. There were classes, break time, more classes then lunch. There was an hour and half gap to have lunch and you could choose when to have lunch. You'd sometimes have a free period and you could do homework. You'd go back for more lessons.
78. There were sport activities and there was a lot more variety. I was able to get away from students so I chose swimming over rugby. I chose anything that would get me off the sports pitch and wasn't contact based. Swimming was for students who couldn't do rugby. I pushed for it because I was being picked on and they allowed me to do that. Mr Collins became aware I was a target so when I said I didn't want to do rugby but wanted to do swimming, he let me. They put me back into rugby at one point later on. The teachers sent me home early because I walked about and didn't want to participate.
79. It was up to the seniors to put the junior students to bed. I did that myself a few times. Unofficially the seniors kept an eye on things. As long as the juniors were in bed that was fine. Once the seniors went to bed it was just the housemaster in the house, in their flat with their family. The matron went home at night.

Mealtimes / Food

80. The food came from the same kitchen as Aberlour. The food improved at Gordonstoun however I would expect more from a school that charges £30,000 a year. There was no supper after dinner but we were able to go out and buy food to bring back. Some people bought microwave pizzas and stuff. There was somewhere to make those things. On Sunday you could get takeaway pizzas. When parents came then they got the good food out. You got steaks and banoffee pie instead of sloppy joes.

Washing / bathing

81. In Gordonstoun the students ripped down the shower curtains. They did that to everyone and it was just boys being boys.

Leisure time and pocket money

82. The gym and sports hall was always open in the evenings. Upon request, the P.E. teachers would open up other facilities. People played tennis in the summer and used the athletics field. I went on the morning and evening runs. There was a lot more to do than at Aberlour.
83. On the weekends we could go into Duffus, the local village. On Friday we had Elgin Leave and we could go into Elgin for two hours. We went to the supermarket or sometimes people went to restaurants. On Saturdays you got a social when you'd go to the cinema or get a disco. There were opportunities to go out and about if the school organised it. You could stay in school and you didn't have to go out.
84. Pocket money came from your parents. My parents gave cash to the housemaster who had a safe in his office. You went to the housemaster when you wanted money. There was a tuck shop in the house run by the seniors. The school shop sold everything from drinks to cough sweets. If you went to the school shop then that went on the end of year bill.

Chores

85. In Year 11 we had to clean the common room. We cleaned it after socials and after break time as well.

Sports

86. There were a lot more options at Gordonstoun and you were asked what you wanted to do. I did a lot of shooting, I enjoyed hockey and did quite a bit of that. Running was a big thing for me. I avoided the contact stuff as much as I could. I had started judo and karate when I was four years old and I had carried on doing that. It was an excuse to get away from the rugby field but it never clicked with me. I gave it up because I lost weight and you needed strength.
87. We went sailing on the Ocean Spirit of Moray which is a massive yacht. There was the Captain, First Mate and a couple of teachers between sixteen students. We crewed the yacht and it was about pushing yourself to your limits. Everyone was nice all of a sudden. When you're put out of your comfort zone with people you don't usually interact with, a different side of people is brought out. You are all trying to help one another.
88. They say if you push yourself to your limits you see the real person and character of who you are. People dropped the mask and became the person they are. I had a great time on the boat and on expeditions. It was a reprieve and I have good memories from sailing. One girl who called me ugly all the time said I was good looking. That was the only time she said that. After we finished that expedition she went back to her old self. The school went sailing to the Arctic once.

Trips / Holidays

89. Every year you went on service. The Thailand Water Project is the most famous one. You go to a village and build them a water tower. I wanted to go on the Sanai Project which is building a well in a desert for travellers.

School

90. I was on the creative art side of education and I loved it. The school has really good facilities and that's really what made Gordonstoun. At the theatre they had all the drama stuff. If you wanted to make theatre props you went to the Arts and Crafts centre. I went to the Design and Technology studio to create props. If you can think of a musical instrument then they had it. The Science department had all the equipment for chemistry and dissecting things. The education was fine and Gordonstoun is not known for high academic standards. The education is not poor but more about the outdoor education and pushing boundaries.
91. I was shutting down a lot and that affected my education. I enjoyed biology and did well in it. I came second in a competition in Media Studies. I was always doing things rather than sitting down with a pen paper.
92. At prep time, teachers came into the boarding house. If you needed help you could go to that teacher. A set of students were given a main tutor for academic help. You could go to another tutor of the subject you needed help with and there were no issues about doing that. My tutor was Mr Innes. The tutor would talk to you every week about what you were doing and what you needed help with. I didn't go to Mr Innes a lot but we met every so often to see how things were. The tutors came in sporadically throughout the week. It was also to make sure we were doing homework and not messing around.

Healthcare

93. In Year 12, there was a week where they had different food every day, for example there was Asian food. I didn't like the food and I didn't eat for a week, other than a bowl of cereal. I was fine not eating. I didn't feel the need to eat and I didn't feel hungry. I was running in the mornings, doing sports in the afternoons and going to the gym in the evenings. I put myself in the school hospital doing that.

94. The medical centre was taken over by the NHS or a private company near the end of my time at Gordonstoun because it was so bad. Particularly after my mate broke his leg, there were a lot of complaints about it.
95. A counsellor was introduced and I took advantage of that in my final year of school, Year 13. I was on the verge. Mr McNeill wanted me to go to the counsellor and that was the only time the school went a step further. The counsellor was a bit useless.

Birthdays and Christmas

96. Birthdays were celebrated as they were at Aberlour. As we got older, the housemaster would give us a couple of beers and we had a sit down in his flat. It was called 'brew time'. My birthday frequently landed on leave out weekends and I'd go to my guardians for the weekend.

Visits / Inspections

97. I don't recall any inspections of the school but it is likely to have happened. The Royal Family visited a lot and that was an annual thing at one point. The Queen opened the Sports Centre. I was in the Red Cross and they were showing off the First Aid service. Others were in the Fire Service. I wasn't good at keeping in touch with my parents.

School contact with family

98. My mum and dad had moved abroad. I had guardians who looked after me on leave out weekends whilst they were away. I wasn't aware of the school being in contact with my parents except on Parent's Day. My dad says school contacted my mum and gave updates but he doesn't know how regularly.

Discipline

99. We still had the coloured study books which were signed off by the housemaster. There were stages of severity. You got points and then you got detention or excluded

from doing things. A detention was where you didn't get to go to a social and had to sit in silence for two or four hours in a classroom whilst the social went on. Someone got up to ten hours and lost two and a half weekends of their free time.

100. You got rustication if you were really bad but sometimes the students would come back to do lessons. There's a bed and breakfast in Hopeman, a local village. If students didn't have guardians they went to the bed and breakfast. I find that strange, that for a punishment you'd go somewhere like a bed and breakfast all paid for. I was never rusticated.
101. If you weren't behaving and accrued a certain number of points then you'd be asked to leave the school. There was Sunday Labour where you woke up at 7:00 am and lost your lie-in. You go out with a senior student or a grounds keeper and do litter picking or menial tasks. I never did that.
102. If you get caught smoking then you get smoking points. If you get seven of those then you get asked to leave. You were asked to leave if you were caught drinking twice. There was a zero tolerance policy to having drugs or sex. I wasn't aware of anyone specifically being asked to leave but I knew that was the punishment system.

Abuse at Gordonstoun

Peer Abuse

103. Year 8 had been okay at Aberlour but when I went to Gordonstoun it was like starting from day one all over again. Within a week it was straight into the shit. It was horrible. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had stopped abusing me and I became friends with the people from Aberlour. The new people that came in started abusing me and that was where the worst stuff happened. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were the main perpetrators. They were childhood friends from Hong Kong. I lived in the same boarding house as them and they were a constant presence.

104. I can't remember how or when the abuse started. The first week was okay but it started straight off the bat. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] picked on me because I was small and I was called a [REDACTED] a lot from them, even though I'm not [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was the main one who did that. I can only assume [REDACTED] were frowned upon in their culture and they see it as an insult. I was confused by it half the time but it got frustrating after a while. They were jingling coins and throwing pennies and bags of coins at me, saying, "Look at this [REDACTED]." I told them to go away a few times and ended up telling the teachers.
105. It was like being back in Aberlour because everyone got involved at one point. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were making public jokes about me. Name calling, for example being called ugly and [REDACTED], carried on all the way through Gordonstoun. The name calling was public, everyone knew and I'd be surprised if the staff didn't hear about it.
106. A Spanish student cottoned on to what [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were saying and called me out on social media once over the holidays. I never saw that but dad saw it and got straight onto the school. The student didn't come back. He was expelled within three days and sent me an apology letter. I still have the letter. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] did that for five years and carried on in school.
107. I was playing rugby and just walking around because of the abuse on the pitch. The teacher asked if I wanted to go home and I said yes. He didn't bother disciplining me but said just to go.
108. It's hard to prove but I believe there was a bit of bribery and donations were made by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s parents to the school. The school was building a multi-million pound sports complex at the time and was in millions of pounds of debt. [REDACTED] boasted that his dad helped him out by doing that. It wasn't a secret. [REDACTED] got fourteen smoking points, was caught drinking and with drugs, and was still at Gordonstoun.
109. Around 15th or 16th September 2011, we went on a mountain expedition for two or three days. There were between thirteen and fifteen people from Years 9 and 10. I was fourteen years old. We went to Torridon Hostel and got ready for the next day to go up the mountain. As boys do, there was a lot of horsing around. One of the things

you do is tackle and wrestle a little bit. I saw it happen to other people and I sat on my bed, watching.

110. When it came to my turn I got it a lot worse. I walked in the dorm room. I was wearing pyjamas. I thought the lights were on when this was happening but they weren't. I was essentially blindfolded. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] started it. [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] wrapped me in a duvet and put me on the floor. Half the group were watching.
111. The first thing I thought was they did it to the other guys and it was my turn. They laid into me, punching and kicking a lot more than what the other guys were getting. I thought it wasn't right and started screaming, asking them to stop and saying it was enough. I was half under the bed, covered in the duvet and bound up by it. I couldn't see or hear what was going on. [REDACTED] used the coat hanger against me by inserting it into me and I started screaming. They were telling me to be quiet. I don't know how long it went on for but it felt like forever. I don't know how I managed to break free from them, but I did.
112. I went to open the door and a teacher called Ryan Denyer was stood there. He was a P.E. teacher and assistant housemaster at Cumming. Mr Denyer asked what all the sound was about. I pushed past him and went to the bathroom. I locked myself in a cubicle and cried. I went silent and a teacher came in and spoke to me. I don't know who it was. They were trying to figure out what was going on. I was in the bathroom for a couple of hours before I went to bed. I don't remember saying anything to any teacher.
113. It turns out the reason the teachers came to the door was because a member of the public was complaining about the noise. The noise was me screaming. The other teachers who were there were Luke Tattersal, Mr Ince who was the main lead of the expedition and Mr Myers who was a tutor and maths teacher. They were in the hostel common room when the incident happened.

114. I was silent for the expedition and didn't speak to anyone. I shut down and I was dead inside. Things carried on as normal and I was being picked on. I was sitting on a rock, staring into space, and the other students were flicking mud at me. The teachers told them to stop and I wasn't even aware they were doing it. We went up the mountain, came back down, went back to the hostel and then to school. I had to stay in the same room as the students who had abused me at the hostel that night and when we returned from the expedition. I got a two hour detention when I got back because I'd forgotten my walking boots.
115. The sexual assault wasn't a secret. It was public knowledge and that was the worst thing about it. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] made references to the assault and boasted about it. That's how I knew who had done it. Everyone knew about it and made fun of me about it. A year later, I came out as bisexual and a guy said I must have enjoyed 'the coat hanger incident'. We were at the bus stop and he was in a different boarding house. I verbally laid into him and he said sorry. It was one of the few times someone backed down.
116. In Year 10, I lashed out at the bullies once because it got too much. I was in the refectory trying to grab salt sachets. [REDACTED] kept pulling me back and did that three times. I punched [REDACTED] in the face and put him on the floor. I shouted at him, grabbed what I needed and walked off. The seniors grabbed me into the main head boy's room with all thirteen seniors staring down at me. Every time someone did something to me they only got spoken to.
117. The seniors asked how could I punch a guy. I said that through all the shit the bullies put me through all these years, the seniors had never stuck up for me once but I stand up for myself once and I was sat in a kangaroo court. One guy said I was right. I thought, thank God. I wish it had continued and there had been more looking after me but at least it worked that time. The seniors told [REDACTED] to take it on the chin because he had been a dick to me for the past couple of years.
118. There was a Duke of Edinburgh Award Silver Expedition which was an exception to people being nice on expeditions. There was only one teacher and eight students. The

teacher went up the mountain and the students were unattended for a few minutes. Students threw boulders down at me and my best mate, [REDACTED]. The boulders were bouncing off the hill and we were dodging and diving. The students were twenty feet up the mountain. I looked up and the boulders were seconds away from hitting my head. It wasn't funny. It was life and death. My mate got hit on the leg with a rock and his leg was broken.

119. I was the medic and helped patch him up. The teacher said [REDACTED] was fine and could carry on doing the expedition. We were up a mountain and the weather was crap. We had a satellite phone and could only hope it had a signal. I had to help carry [REDACTED] and he was twice the size of me. He went to the medical centre at school. They said he was fine and it was a bruise. [REDACTED] did athletics the next day and his leg snapped. His parents went ballistic. Nothing happened to the students who had thrown the boulders. The main guy who did it, his dad passed away. The school probably thought they couldn't punish a guy whose dad had just died.
120. When I was fifteen, a guy called [REDACTED] threw my stuff out of a window and I was getting really angry about it. I went to go out the door and put my hand through the glass by accident. I was bleeding. I was shouting, swearing and screaming, saying I needed to see the housemaster. I went to hospital and they cleaned it out. It looked severe at the time although it wasn't that severe. I have a scar on my wrist. My parents were notified that I'd injured myself by accident and the door slammed the wrong way. One of the seniors sorted it out by telling the students to get my stuff. I didn't tell the teachers what had happened. All they knew was that I'd put my hand through a door and they wondered why. I don't remember any punishments coming out of it.
121. In Year 12 when I was seventeen years old, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] kicked my right ankle multiple times when I was walking into class to try to trip me up. My ankle was sore and I was hobbling about on it so I was taken off exercise. I went to the medical centre to see a doctor because my ankle was sore. When I was there, I broke down and I was crying. The doctor asked what happened and I told him my ankle was being kicked. I think he understood I was being bullied. Somehow, I found out that he told Mr Collins, the housemaster but I don't recall any follow-up.

122. In Year 13 we had a Valentine's dinner. Me, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were sitting around the table and [REDACTED] was still making references to the sexual assault. Years later I was still dealing with it. Even after school [REDACTED] was sending me messages asking why I wanted to talk about it, unless I enjoyed it. They were sickening comments. I was looking for closure.
123. In my last year, my passport went missing on my second to last term, at the start of the Easter holidays. I was at a house party and thought I'd lost it. I later found out [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] stole the passport and got rid of it. I couldn't find it and I didn't get to go home for five to six months because of that. I didn't see my dad for a year because of the nature of his work. That caused a lot of agro. Mr Cox commented to me that I probably threw it away myself to not go home. Things were going sour then and I didn't have anywhere to go. I wanted to get away from people and I was falling out with my dad a lot. Mr Cox was leaving Gordonstoun on bad terms and was speaking his mind.
124. At the end of your Gordonstoun career you get a yearbook full of all the people in your year. You had to write your Gordonstoun experience in one word and [REDACTED] wrote 'coat hanger incident'. I didn't speak to him for a week after that. Every boarding house has their own section of the book and you got your own paragraph where you talked about yourself. The guys who took the photos cut me out of all the photos, apart from my individual photo. You have the whole of Cumming house in the house photo and just [REDACTED] Mr McNeil felt sorry for me.
125. We were doing a school reunion and it was being organised by social media. There was a drop down menu with choices of what you wanted to do. One of the choices was [REDACTED]. This was a year after we had left and they were still doing the [REDACTED] stuff. I didn't take any notice.

Reporting of abuse at Gordonstoun

126. If I had problems I'd go to the housemaster or the matron. Mr Collins, the housemaster was aware I was a target. Allowances were made because I was having such a hard time. I told the school about being called a [REDACTED] because that was ongoing. I was in the office at least once a month, for example when people stole food from my room. That was an ongoing issue for all the houses.
127. I never reported the sexual assault to the teachers but another student did. I don't know who reported it or when. The teachers knew about the assault and there is a record of it. I found that out from the police. When I look back, I think that the teachers and pastoral care should have been finding out what happened to me, they should have intervened and spoken to me. It's a core example of what they should have been doing. What happened to me was the worst thing that could happen to a student and the school should have been hot as hell on that.
128. On 19th September 2011, I was doing prep and was told the housemaster wanted to see me. In the room were Andy Collins and two tutors. I think Mr Ince was one of them. I realise in hindsight that they knew what was going on because a student told them. Only Andy Collins spoke and it was a quick conversation. Andy Collins said [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was being expelled. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were rusticated for two weeks.
129. Andy Collins asked if I was happy with that and did I want to do anything else. I just sat there and I nodded. I didn't know any better or that there were other avenues to go down, such as involving the police. There was no independent guardian there for me. No-one asked if I wanted my parents there.
130. [REDACTED] came back a year later, into a different boarding house called Bruce House. My theory is that goes back to shoving money to the right people. The rumour was that [REDACTED] was told not to interact with me whatsoever and he didn't. Protocol was put out of the window to protect Gordonstoun's image because that sort of stuff is damaging. At the time, I wanted all three of them expelled. In hindsight I'd want the police to be involved and I feel anger and disappointment.

131. My dad says the housemaster and his wife were supposed to act as surrogate parents in these sort of situations and Andy Collin's job was to sort it out. Dad says they covered up a serious crime to protect their name and their income. He says the systems are there but, if people ignore them, then the systems are of no use.
132. In Year 13 [REDACTED] said she was surprised I didn't go to the police. That's when it clicked in my head that something bad happened. I wasn't aware it was sexual abuse that happened to me. I just shut down.
133. When I saw 'coat hanger incident' in the middle of the page of the yearbook and me cut out of the Cumming House photo, I went to Mrs Morton. I asked if the students gave the school the pictures or did the people who made the book make a mistake. I think it was the students who cut me out because they took the photos. Mrs Morton's response was that she was really sorry and could give me a refund for the book. She didn't look into the reason why I was cut out of the photo and didn't show much sympathy. My life was shit there but I thought at least I had the yearbook. Now I only had [REDACTED] in the yearbook. After that, I stuck my finger up at the school.

Reporting to parents by Aberlour and Gordonstoun

134. My dad says Gordonstoun got £30,000 a year to ruin a good proportion of my life when they were supposed to taking care of me. My parents were miles away, abroad. My dad is fuming. My parents were not informed of any of the abuse, all the way through Aberlour and Gordonstoun. Apart from when I put my hand through the door, when they were told it was an accident and were only told a half truth, not one incident was reported to my parents by the school.
135. My dad says how could Gordonstoun think it was okay to speak to me about the sexual assault without my parents being informed or being given an opportunity to be at the meeting. I was only fourteen years old.

Leaving Gordonstoun

136. We have a Leaver's Ball at the end of Gordonstoun and that's the big event. You have a drink and cigars with the teachers. One day I drank cider in my room and I started smoking. The school threatened my Leaver's Ball saying I should technically lose it. I didn't care and still went to it. I thought about the people with fourteen smoking points and people rusticated and being expelled. I was threatened because I had a cider in my room.
137. There are two weeks left after the Leaver's Ball. Some people have exams or you go on your Duke of Edinburgh Award Expedition. When I came back from the expedition there were about two dozen seniors left because everyone has gone home. I was sticking a finger at school by that point and having a drink and a smoke in my room.
138. At the end there was just me and one other guy left. I got on with him. It was 6:00 am and we had vodka and cigarettes. We sat on the roof of the shower block drinking and smoking, watching the morning and thinking this was the last we'd be there. It was eerie but nice. The basher came and asked what we were doing but said he didn't care because we were leaving in a couple of hours anyway. It was a nice memory to have. I just wish the rest of it was better. I went to my guardians for a couple of days and then went home. I was eighteen years old.

Life after Gordonstoun

139. After school, I went back home. I worked in an Indian restaurant and in bar work. I decided to join the Air Force and so I came back to Scotland. I tried for a medic role and went to England. That re-opened communication with my dad. I tried to join the Air Force but that fell through. I tried to figure out what I was doing for a while. I've worked since then and been out of work for a total of three weeks in my life.

140. I went to college to study animal management. I did well there and went into my degree work. Covid happened and put that on hold. An opportunity came up to go into research and development in a pharmaceutical company. I took a leap of faith and went into that. I think I'm doing alright.

Impact

141. I feel like I lost a part of my life. When you're a child growing up you learn your interests, you might have your first romance and your first kiss. That was all robbed from me because I spent so much time isolating myself. After being sexually abused like that you don't have any interest in relationships. You don't want to think about it. It terrifies you a bit. If anyone fancied me then I'd run off.
142. In Year 7, I had my first suicidal thoughts. I was walking back from the refectory and thought to myself that I was going to be one of those kids who hang themselves. I was strangely at peace with that. I didn't feel anything towards anything. I didn't have the emotional capacity.
143. I shut down when I was fifteen years old, after the sexual assault. That was the day I died. When I went home for holidays I just wanted to sit in my room and play video games. I had friends online but I didn't see them. That was fine. I could be by myself and that was all I wanted to do. I self-harmed because I couldn't feel any emotions. I couldn't feel anything at all. Pain was instant. The last couple of years I've tried to rediscover myself and figure out who I am.
144. I didn't tell my parents about the sexual assault at the time it happened because I didn't realise that was an option. Four years after, my dad found out because I exploded. I said everything. I was a very angry person and anger was all I had left. I was happy as long as I was away from everyone and that affected my relationship with my parents. I don't feel angry with my dad because he did what he thought was right at the time and didn't know what was going on.

145. It got a bit easier at Gordonstoun but I don't know if that's because I switched off. When you stop feeling things then nothing affects you. You are dead inside. There is a lot less agro but I ended up self-harming to feel something again. It wasn't a good trade off. I wish someone had sat down and I'd been able to say what was going on. That would have changed everything.
146. You go into work and you lack basic social skills to interact with people. Gordonstoun equips you for a journey into a life that the wealthy benefit from. They don't prepare you for when you don't quite make that particular journey. The first thing I did was pot washing in an Indian restaurant. They don't prepare you for that.
147. All my mates were out having parties and I was working because I isolated myself. Mentally. I think I'm clear from it. Not totally but this is the best I've been in ages. This year I made a New Year's resolution that I was going to try and better myself, and get myself out there. I resolved to see people and do things. It shouldn't take until you are 25 years old to do that.
148. I look at my life and think, how the hell did this happen? They talk about privileged white boys but I was sexually assaulted by Asians and bullied by girls. The homophobic behaviour towards me came from the black community when two students didn't like the idea I was bi-sexual. I went to private school with all the opportunities there and travelled the world. All I got from it was a bunch of mental disorders and suicide attempts. That's a hell of a fall from grace. I should feel like I'm privileged and be thankful but I came out broken and destroyed.
149. I get angry when people say I should be grateful for what Gordonstoun did. I shouldn't be grateful because I got the crap kicked out of me and came out a totally different person. I'm a third of the way through my life and I'm only just discovering myself. There is some privilege when employers see Gordonstoun on your curriculum vitae but there is nothing good that I got from that place.
150. I'm convinced that the bullying over food at Aberlour has had an impact on my weight and how I eat today. I lost all my weight at Aberlour and one of the things I did was to

shun food. I tried to join the Air Force when I was eighteen years old but I had to put on weight. I spent two or three years trying to put on five kilogrammes. I was given supplements that are given to cancer patients by the NHS and which have 600 calories a go. I only managed to put on a kilogram a month. I tried everything I could to put on weight but I still can't. Now, I'm about fifty kilogrammes.

151. I'm convinced I have an eating disorder but I don't know what it is. Food and I do not have a great relationship. I should go back to the doctor and get it nailed down but I think that's just me and food now. I think it started from Aberlour. I've always been a crap eater and Aberlour is where I lost all my weight. The other day I only had one meal and I forgot to eat. I can't get full or have the feeling of being full. I hate it. Once I'm satisfied then I'm done with the meal. If I have a long journey to go on then I can't eat a big breakfast to be full.
152. When I couldn't get into the Air Force, I went into work. I fell apart and my mental health kept declining. My parents got divorced. I had a breakdown. I snapped and one day I had enough. I was self-harming and attempted suicide. There was a break when I was sane again and knew I needed help. The doctor put me on medication but that sent me further downhill. I stopped taking the medication and it took two or three years of therapy to get where I am. I pushed myself through university and built up resilience to what happened at school.
153. I was so indoctrinated to the abuse at Aberlour that I stopped feeling things. I shut down and kept my head down. That affected life at home because I wanted to hide away from people. I didn't speak to my dad for two years. Gordonstoun impacted the way I conducted myself and saw things. I was blunt about things and came over as rude when I didn't mean to. I disappeared and came back when I was ready. Later in life, that led to a personality disorder. I am black and white in my emotions.
154. A lot of my mental health and stresses came from my experiences in the environment of Gordonstoun. I was always in survival mode. I was always alert, denying things, watching people. Even now, I walk into a café and I'm looking at who's around me. That's what I used to, I'd walk into a dorm and look to see who was there. I was

diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder when I was 20 years old. One of the traits is not knowing who you are and feeling empty inside. I have spent so long soul-searching.

155. At the same time, I was diagnosed with Mixed Anxiety-Depressive Disorder (MADD). That has affected my life. For example it was my boss's son's birthday and they were having a party. I walked a mile and a half to get there. I turned around because I didn't have a card for him. I was worried about being judged. When my MADD gets really bad then it will dictate what I do. A couple of months ago it was really bad and I was sent off sick. It's always there but it can come and go.
156. I struggle with my self-image because of the name-calling I had for nine years. You try to take it in your stride but you start believing these things. I don't like wearing shorts. People make jokes and I take them as jokes now because we are adults.
157. I got six GCSE's and that was it. When I went to college and university I got merits. I went from getting a basic bunch of GCSE's to being near the top of my class. I don't think that's because of the quality of teaching but because of my mind-set at the time in Gordonstoun.
158. When I was going through a bad patch, a friend let me rent out his room. I don't know if it was related to Gordonstoun but sometimes I screamed in my sleep. He told me that and that was news to me. He's one of two landlords who have told me this.
159. I met up with [REDACTED] and apparently, behind my back, people were saying how sorry they felt for me and how guilty they were feeling for the way they treated me. No-one had messaged me or reached out. Do they hell feel like that. [REDACTED] apologised to me. He was the only person who not only did nothing, but was a good friend to me the entire time. If those people who say they are sorry now had left me alone then Gordonstoun might have been a more positive experience. I would have taken more advantage of the opportunities and been in a better mind-set to push myself.

160. I wouldn't send my children to boarding school because we are not the right class. There is a class and wealth divide at boarding school. There is no sense of equality. Wealthy students had a safety net and wouldn't be asked to leave unless they had done something really wrong.

Reporting of Abuse

161. I reported the abuse to the police three or four years ago. I'd had enough. I had been in therapy and tried medication for two years, after my mental health had taken a turn for the worse. I got into a stable state. I looked back and thought they're not getting away with this. I gathered up all the evidence I had and went to the police in Bedfordshire. I spoke to a lady.
162. That went on to a formal interview with police from Aviemore at Bedford. Then I spoke to Detective Sergeant Shannon Laing. She gathered in evidence and spoke to the school. DC Laing contacted [REDACTED]. He is not in the country and they can't do anything until he is. I would like to see [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] questioned. The police say they can't do much about [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] beating me up but [REDACTED] committed the act and he is the one they are going for. I spoke to the police conflict resolution team in Inverness and I'm waiting to hear from them. I decided to try to get an Inquiry into the school. I spoke to a lawyer and they said they couldn't do anything until the police inquiry was finished.
163. On 26th June 2022, Police Scotland contacted me to say a new investigation will be opened once Cambridgeshire Police have taken a new statement from me. A month has passed and Cambridgeshire Police still haven't contacted me. What the police have done so far has been good but it has taken a long time.

Other action taken

Revisits

164. Not knowing what went on, my mum said let's go on a trip down nostalgia way. We drove around Gordonstoun and I pretended to be happy. I wanted to leave and it brought back a horrible feeling in my stomach, a nervous anxiety.

Acknowledgment / apology

165. A few years after I left Gordonstoun I was going through a tight spot. I wanted closure so I messaged [REDACTED]. He asked what I wanted to get out of him and I said I wanted closure. He said get past it and it was just a couple of kids making jokes. He said there was nothing to think about and we were all just kids, unless I enjoyed the sexual assault. That didn't help.

Treatment / support

166. At Gordonstoun after the sexual assault, I went to a party, got drunk and had a breakdown. I said a few things I shouldn't have and lost some friends as a result. I didn't have many friends at the time. Mr McNeil asked me if I'd like to go into counselling sessions. There was a counsellor at school after the school hospital was taken over by either a private company or the NHS. I went for a single session. The session was useless and I didn't go back. At least there was someone to keep an eye on me.
167. A couple of years after I contacted [REDACTED] I had a breakdown. When I was nineteen or twenty years old I tried to take my own life, on two occasions. I've tried to get my eating disorder sorted a few times. It's taken a lot of therapy and medication to dull down my anxiety to a point where I can feel human again. The therapy lasted for two years. I had a mental health nurse and a psychologist.

Records

168. The police have records from Gordonstoun. They got a court order to seize them. I've never thought about getting the records myself.

Lessons to be Learned

169. There's lessons to be learned in the way male victims of sexual abuse are treated. I feel I'm fighting a woman's battle. A student was expelled for sending an email to a group of people saying, "Pants' party in the G House bathrooms, clothes optional." All the girls that were involved were talked to about whether the student had done anything to them and offered self-defence lessons.
170. I get sexually abused with all these witnesses and they expel one guy, bring him back and two people are rusticated. I was left alone. You see the difference. One was an email. I actually got assaulted. Sexual abuse happens to men and we need to get rid of that stigma. If I was a girl and a student did that to me then it's be all over the news.
171. You can phone Childline and have a chat with them but I had no idea I could talk to the police. What would be good is a third party confidential phone line which is available to all kids. You could phone, they would contact the police on your behalf, give some details and get that started. There should be an independent body that comes in to talk to students. There needs to be better protection. My parents were miles away and, if it wasn't for my guardians, I would have been very much alone.
172. I'd like to see boarding schools and private schools scrutinised as much as public schools. If something goes wrong in public schools you sometimes see it in the papers and they have inspections. I'd like to see private schools as accountable and as watched as public schools. I think private schools get away with so much. When a lot of money is shoved around it is trickier because money talks.

173. Boarding schools need to look at their policies and restructure their pastoral care.

174. 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..... *28 July 2022*