

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

MZJ

Support person present: No

1. My name is [REDACTED] MZJ [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1960. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going to Fort Augustus

2. My father's name was [REDACTED]. He was Catholic. He was a solicitor. My mother's name is [REDACTED]. She worked as a medical secretary. The reason she worked was to help to finance my way through school. She is Church of England. I have one younger brother called [REDACTED]. He is three years younger than me.
3. I grew up in North London with my parents and my younger brother. My younger brother went to different schools to me all the way through. Life was great at home. I initially went to a school in North London before going to a boarding school in Sussex called Hawkhurst Court. I went there when I was eleven years old. I was there for two years. My experiences there were reasonably positive. I left there when I was almost thirteen.
4. There were a number of reasons why Fort Augustus was considered as a place for me to go. I came from a strong Catholic family. My father was educated by the Benedictine Order and he wanted me to be educated by the same Order. He had found it very beneficial to him. At that time I was a bit of a late developer academically. I was far more interested in sailing, fishing and all sorts of other

outdoor pursuits. I remember that we talked about a number of schools that I could go to. It was ultimately my own choice which one I wanted to go to. I chose Fort Augustus because I realised that going to a school that was located at the foot of The Great Glen would give me everything I loved.

Contact with Fort Augustus before starting

5. I took an exam called the common entrance exam when I was about twelve. That was a generic exam which, in those days, allowed you to be able to go to schools like Fort Augustus. Fortunately, I passed that exam so that enabled me to be able to consider going to Fort Augustus.
6. We used to have a house up on the West Coast of Scotland. That meant it was easy for us to make an appointment to visit Fort Augustus before I started there. We called in the year before I started so that I could have a look around it. I remember thinking that it was an amazing place. I remember also feeling that, because of the way the school looked, it was quite daunting. That said, I liked the feel of the place. I liked the fact there were rivers full of salmon and trout and all the stuff I was into at that time. All that made it appeal to me.
7. During my visit there were no boys there because it was the summer holidays. We did meet someone from the school but I don't remember who that was. They showed us around a bit but we didn't see the whole school. I don't really remember much else about the tour. After visiting the school, and in the lead up to going to Fort Augustus, there wasn't really much preparation other than getting my uniform together.

Fort Augustus Abbey, Fort Augustus, Scottish Highlands

8. I started Fort Augustus when I was thirteen. That would have been in [REDACTED] 1973. I left in the summer of 1976. The school was run by the Benedictine Order. The school was predominantly an all-boys school. Probably towards the middle of

my time there two or three girls joined the school. They were daughters of members of staff who were teachers at the school. Fort Augustus had never had girls before they started. I think there were four or five girls at the school by the time I left.

9. It wasn't a big school. I think there was something between ninety and one hundred pupils in total there. The youngest that was there was about thirteen and the oldest was probably about eighteen.

The layout and facilities at Fort Augustus

10. Most of the school comprised of the part that was located in the old fort part of the building. It was full of dark stone and turrets. The whole place was integrated into the monastery that was also based there. Part of the building was for the school and the other part was for the monastery. You weren't allowed into the closed part of the monastery unless you were invited in.
11. The school part had three floors above a basement. The washrooms were located in the basement of the building. On the ground floor were a couple of classrooms that were used for the youngest boys, the assembly hall, the staff room and various other storage rooms. There was a refectory. The refectory was a huge big vaulted room with windows that looked out on the front and the swimming pool. The kitchen was located just behind the refectory. There was a phone booth just off of the assembly hall. On the first floor there were the bedrooms and study rooms for the fifth and sixth form boys. The housemaster of Vaughan also had a study and a bedroom on that floor. On the second floor were the main dormitories where the rest of the boys slept.
12. There was a tower that was attached to the old part of the building. It was accessed by a staircase that led from the main front door. The housemaster for Lovat's rooms were located on the first floor of that tower. There were two newer extensions to the building. Most of the classrooms were in those extensions on the ground floor and the first floor. The abbey church was also integrated into the main building.

13. In terms of the grounds, as you drove into the main driveway there was a large cricket field with a pavilion. That bordered out onto the Caledonian Canal. There was a swimming pool that was located at the back to one side. To the other side of the abbey church were some sheds and garages. The cadets had Land Rovers in those garages alongside sports equipment. I think they kept lawnmowers and that kind of stuff in there as well. Further on, past the garages and sheds, was a cemetery which bordered onto Loch Ness. At the back of the school were some bungalows which some of the staff used as staff accommodation.
14. The relationship between the village and the school was alright. I do remember that some of the youngsters in the village were always having a go at some of the boys in the school. Some of their parents in the village all ran businesses there and they were quite happy to take our money. I guess in that way it was a kind of mixed relationship. There were no issues, problems or bother there really.

Houses

15. The school was split into two houses called Lovat and Vaughan. I was in Vaughan. Each house had a separate dorm. There was one housemaster allocated to each house. It was a very small school where everybody knew everybody so the boys mixed in-between the houses. There was a healthy competition between the houses at sports. You wanted your house to win if there were house matches. That was part of the culture.
16. You were told which house you were in when you started. There was a bit of a connection to a particular house if past or current family members were part of that house. A friend of mine was third or fourth generation at the school. He went into Vaughan because his family had always been in that house. I am not aware of any boys moving across houses after they started. I wouldn't have thought that happened.

Staff composition and structure

17. It wasn't a big school so there weren't a massive number of staff there. Because of that you had contact with pretty much anybody who worked there. I think Fort Augustus was about half staffed with priests and half staffed with civilian staff. There weren't really that many members of staff who weren't attached to the monastery or part of the teaching staff.
18. All the priests lived across in the monastery part that adjoined the main school building. Some of the staff stayed in the village. Others lived in bungalows at the back of the school that were classified as staff accommodation.
19. Most of the priests or monks that stayed in the abbey had something to do with school. However, not all the priests and monks did. We had a little contact with those that were solely part of the abbey. However, it wasn't that much. You knew who they were and most of them knew who you were but they didn't really have much to do with the school.
20. The abbot was above the headmaster. He really controlled everything on the monastery and school side of Fort Augustus. That's an assumption on my part. The headmaster was in overall charge over the school. I wasn't aware of their being a deputy head.
21. There weren't that many staff below the headmaster so I assume the structure was fairly flat. There weren't heads of department amongst the teaching staff or things like that. I may be wrong but I can't really see how it was done any other way.
22. There was one housemaster for each house. I think they were similarly part of the flat structure below the headmaster. I don't think they were in charge of any staff. They lived within the main school building. They lived there because they had to be accessible to the boys in the dorms if we needed them at night time. As far as I am aware the different housemasters didn't have responsibilities outside of their own house to the boys in the other house. Your housemaster looked after his people and

the other housemaster looked after their people. I am not aware of there being any crossover at all.

23. I don't know how the other staff, like the matron, catering staff and so on, fit into the structure. It is just not something that I have ever thought about. I suppose looking back they were just all there and did certain things. There may have been a hierarchy there but I just don't know what it was.

Staff and other adults who were present at Fort Augustus during my time there

24. I can't remember the Abbot's name. He didn't teach. He didn't go away and hide in the monastery or anything like that. He was around the school. We did see him and talk to him. From what I remember he was quite approachable.
25. The [SNR] whilst I was there was called Father [MMF]. I have a feeling that he occasionally taught us [REDACTED]
26. Father [MFG] was the housemaster of Vaughan. He's dead now. He was my housemaster. He did teach but he didn't teach me. I can't remember what subject he taught. He was ex-military and was in charge of the army cadet corps that the school had. He was hard and quite old school. His attitude was "just toughen up and take it how it is." He was actually a very nice man. I had a lot of respect for him. He was fair.
27. Father [MEV] was the housemaster in charge of Lovat. I can't remember what subject he taught. He didn't teach me. He had no responsibility for me other than being a fellow member of the school community. I had very little to do with Father [MEV]. He knew who I was and I knew who he was. Occasionally he would talk to me if he needed something doing.
28. I remember a number of the teachers there. Mr Gavine who taught Geography. He was excellent. [MZV] taught [REDACTED]. He was a good teacher. He was quite abrupt but he was very encouraging. Mr Bryce taught maths. Father [MRQ]

taught [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I remember he also [REDACTED] at Fort Augustus and looked after the grounds. MFH or MFH was a lay [REDACTED] teacher. I didn't take [REDACTED] so he never taught me. There was a [REDACTED] teacher called [REDACTED] MZU

29. Brother Adrian ran the tuckshop that was on site. There was a young Brother who came from the United States. I can't remember his name. He was into sport, but he was only there for seven or eight months.
30. There was a guy there called Rudolph Lapinski. He was effectively a sort of cleaner. He was always about. I remember that he always smelt of disinfectant. We all thought he was a bit simple minded. He came to the monastery from Poland or somewhere. He wasn't part of the monastic Order but they took him in and he lived there. I think they fed him and housed him in return for him doing jobs around the school.
31. We had a matron. I think there was an assistant matron but I may be mixing up my memories with another school. I don't remember either of their names. Mrs Twaddle was the catering manager whilst I was there. There were some extra cooking staff who came from the village.

The children at Fort Augustus

32. There were several day pupils who I think were all sons and daughters of members of staff. Most of the pupils boarded at the school. The majority of the children were from Scotland and in particular the Glasgow or Edinburgh area. There were quite a few Italian Glaswegians. The school seemed quite popular with that community. Back then the second or third generation Italians were quite keen on Catholicism. Other than that it was a complete mixed bag in terms of the background of the pupils. There were some from wealthy backgrounds and there were some from not so wealthy backgrounds. There were a few other boys, including myself, who were from England and overseas.

33. Pupils I remember from my time being at Fort Augustus include [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and Colin Bryce.

Routine at Fort Augustus

First day

34. My parents drove me up to Fort Augustus from our place on the West Coast at the end of the summer holidays. They dropped me off before the first term started. They did that so they could be with me to see me in. The first day at any boarding school is a daunting and difficult experience. I remember that when my parents drove off I felt quite homesick.
35. I was welcomed in the same way as anyone is in any of these types of institutions. I was shown around and introduced to people. I was put in with the other pupils. I remember being nervous that I wouldn't know anybody. I then bumped into someone who had been at the same school as me in Sussex. His name was [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. He was from [REDACTED]. I later discovered that the school had lined him up to mentor me for the first couple of weeks. I didn't know that at the time I met him but that turned out to be great. I think it was [REDACTED] who was the one who showed me around rather than a member of staff.
36. I really can't remember whether I met with the headmaster on my first day. My guess is that he did try and get around to see everybody. I just can't remember whether I met him on my first day.
37. I don't recall the ethos of the school being told to me when I arrived at the school. There was a school motto, which I can't remember, but as far as I was concerned there was no real strong ethos at the school. It was just 'school' and we were there to learn.

Daily routine

38. Everything was controlled by bells. There was a bell that woke us up in the mornings. After getting up you had to go to the washroom in the basement to get washed. You then came back to your dorm to dress. You then went down for breakfast in refectory. You had to queue up behind the doors before they opened them up. After breakfast there was a short gap before classes started. I remember going down to the basement with other boys to polish our shoes during that time. There might have sometimes been assemblies held during this time. I don't remember assemblies being held all that often. A bell would then go for your two classes in the morning. I think we had a break between each lesson. After morning lessons we would go to the refectory for lunch. What you did in the afternoon depended on what day it was. At least one afternoon a week was given over to sport. On the other days it was lessons in the afternoon.
39. At the end of the school day we all sat together in the assembly hall and did prep. Prep was basically homework. I seem to remember that the prefects supervised that. You were supposed to be silent but you could talk to your peers if you wanted help. Prep was an hour to an hour and a half long. After prep we had our evening meal. After that we got free time. I can't remember what time we went to bed. I think there was a bell that sounded which denoted bedtime. I believe, when you got further up the school, you could go to bed a bit later.

Sometimes the weekends were structured and sometimes they weren't. We usually had sport on Saturday mornings. We could go into the village if we wanted to on Saturday afternoons. In the evening, at about 6:00 pm or 6:30 pm, we had what was called vespers in church. On Sunday mornings we went to church. In the afternoon we had free time up until vespers. We did that if we didn't have a match to attend.

Mealtimes / food

40. All meals were had in the refectory. The servery was next to the door you came in. You helped yourself to your meals. It was always self-service. The boys would file

in past a line of heated trays and pick what they wanted. There were big long tables in the eating area. I have a feeling that there was an etiquette as to where you could sit but I can't remember what that was.

41. There was a prefects and a staff table. The civilian staff, the housemasters and some of the monks who taught ate their meals in the refectory with the boys during the day. It was only the housemasters who ate with the boys in the evenings. The monks that didn't teach had a separate refectory the other side of the kitchen.
42. Generally I quite enjoyed the food but at times it wasn't great. It could be pretty bland. I remember that whilst I was there one of the catering managers was a woman by the name of Mrs Twaddle. After some time we got to a point where the food was really just extremely bad. It was horrific. All the boys effectively went on strike and refused to eat the food. We would go to the various tea rooms and cafes in town instead. [REDACTED] It transpired that she had been stealing most of the money she had been getting given by the school to purchase the food. She had been buying the cheapest food she could possibly get and was creaming off the profits. After she went away the food improved.
43. There was generally a choice as to what you could eat. It was always enough. You could always find something to eat. It wasn't as if it was one dish and you had to like it or lump it. It was just tough if you didn't want to eat any of the choices.

Sleeping arrangements

44. The two main dormitories were split across the two houses on the top floor. Both dorms were massive. There were probably between thirty-five and forty boys in each dorm. Neither dorm was split by age. They contained boys of all ages. You started at one end of the dorm and moved your way to the other end as you got older.
45. The dorms were split into cubicles with a metal bunk bed in each one. The cubicles were open fronted. It was effectively a line of big stalls with a bar across the top. I

suppose they put in the cubicles to afford you a wee bit of privacy. Each cubicle contained two lockers where you kept your clothes. I don't think that the lockers locked. You shared your cubicle with one other boy. The person you shared your cubicle with changed either termly or yearly. There were a few boys who left or came in during term time so it did change occasionally throughout the term.

46. In fifth and sixth form some of the boys moved out of the dorms to separate study bedrooms. They essentially had their own rooms. Those rooms were located on the floor below the main dormitories. There may have been another dorm for the very young boys but I am not sure.
47. We had sheets and blankets on our beds. We had to bring in a rug that went over the top of the covers when we started. It was before the days of duvets. I remember that the heating often didn't work in the dorms. It was very cold during winter time. We would put glasses of water out at night and by morning they would be frozen.
48. As far as I remember all the prefects had their own study rooms and did not sleep in the dorms. However, there might have been dorm captains or a boy who was allocated to oversee the dorms. If you had a problem during the night you could go directly down to the housemaster's room and knock his door.

Washing / bathing

49. The washroom was located in the basement. It was a very large room with a row of back to back sinks lined down the middle. Along one wall were ten to twelve open communal showers. Up at the end was a raised section which contained between four and six baths. The baths were also all open. Sometimes the hot water worked and sometimes it didn't.
50. There was a bath night. I can't remember how that worked or what night that was on. Generally you had a shower after sports. Use of the washroom wasn't supervised. After sports you might get one of the teachers coming in to speed

everyone up but generally we were left alone. I don't remember any problems surrounding washing and bathing.

Clothing / uniform

51. I think the uniform had to be bought from Jenners, which is a department store in Edinburgh. My parents organised all of that for me. The school blazer was worn by all the members of the team that were going away for matches and worn by all on Sundays. The blazer was quite in your face. It was bright red with black and white checks around the collar. There was a bird holding a piece of bread in its mouth on the breast pocket. The bird was called "the corbie." Each house wore a different tie. Depending on your house the stripes went in one direction or the other. It was very subtle. You kept your clothes in your locker by your bed in your cubicle.

Possessions / pocket money

52. Other than your clothes I can't remember where we kept our own personal possessions. Your parents were supposed to give money to your housemaster at the beginning of each term. You weren't supposed to keep cash. On a Saturday after lunch the housemasters would hold 'bank.' You would go to the housemaster's room and sign money out of your kitty. After that you could go into the village to buy sweets, comics or whatever you wanted. There was a tuck shop in the school that was run by Brother Adrian. We could spend our money there during our free time if it wasn't a Saturday afternoon.

Letter writing / telephone calls

53. I did receive letters quite a lot. My mother was quite a prolific letter writer. I don't think there was a session for us to write letters home. I don't think that it was compulsory to write letters back home. I have a feeling that there was a post box within the school where we posted our letters. Looking back I wasn't brilliant at writing letters. I didn't get any sense that there was any sort of censorship or anyone looking at letters when they came in or out of the school.

54. You could phone home if you wanted to. There was a phone booth with a coin operated phone which, I think, you were allowed to use at certain times. It had a door on it. You were left alone to make your phone calls. There was a phone box outside of the school's perimeter which you could use. It technically meant you were going into the village if you went to use it but boys just hopped over the wall to use it anyway. I don't think I ever personally received any incoming phone calls from my parents when I was at the school. I occasionally got a message from my housemaster to say that my father had called to say he would be visiting but that was about it.

School

55. School was just school. There were different classrooms assigned for the various subjects. I don't think I had a view as to the quality of the education when I was there. I wouldn't have known whether it was good or not. I remember the teaching was quite formal but that's just the way it was in those days. You stood up if someone came into a room. You put your hand up and didn't interrupt.

56. I remember liking English, Geography and Science. I particularly like Physics. I probably didn't do as well as I should have done in my exams. We weren't really prepared for taking exams. We were informed and educated, however, other than doing some past papers we weren't really taught how to sit an exam.

57. There wasn't really anything taught in terms of preparing you for adulthood. There was no career guidance or anything like that. There was absolutely no sexual education. There was nothing at all. You either had to learn that sort of things from your peers, when you were at home or you just didn't learn about it at all. Looking back at it all now they really didn't offer you an awful lot in terms of preparing you for later life.

Religious instruction

59. As far as I recall religious education was one of the lessons that we had. I can't remember who taught it but I have a feeling that Father [MMF] [SNR] occasionally took it. We didn't learn about any other religions other than our own.
60. I'm not sure whether assemblies were held every morning but when there were assemblies I think we said some sort of prayer. We all had to go to church on Saturday evenings for vespers and Sunday mornings for mass. The whole school went. Attendance was compulsory. I can remember boys not wanting to go and not turning up. There was no headcount as such. People did manage to slide off without being spotted. I guess that if the staff spotted pupils as being absent they would be disciplined by the housemaster. However, I don't remember witnessing or hearing about that.
61. You didn't have to go to mass during the week unless you were on duty. There were certain boys who were given the duty of being a reader. There were boys who were altar servers during weekends but not during the week. I was the thurifer which is the person who carries the smoking thurible. I did that for a couple of years. If your duty day fell on the same day as mass during the week then you had to attend then. I think there were one or two boys involved in each mass.
62. I do know that my parents had hoped that I would receive a decent religious education at the school. Ironically my brother, who was at a totally different private school, received a much better religious education than me.

Chores / work

63. I don't really remember having any chores. A group of friends and I got into the habit of cleaning our shoes but that was it really. I remember that when I was older I wanted to earn some extra money. I found a job that I could do in the village working in a shop. I then talked to my housemaster, Father [MFG], about getting the job in the village. He said that I could work Saturday afternoons if I didn't

have a prior commitment in a certain time period. . I ended up getting the job in the shop. I stocked shelves and things like that. I remember I introduced the owners of the shop to the idea of getting an ice cream machine. They did very well out of that.

Sport

64. There was quite a strong emphasis on sport in school. Hockey was big during my time there. The school had the first all-weather hockey pitch in Scotland. Over the years we produced quite a few hockey internationals. We didn't play football but we played rugby and cricket. The various teams at the school would play against teams from other schools. I think all the schools that we played were other boarding schools in Scotland. Matches were generally held at weekends. If we weren't playing in the teams we could go and support the teams if they were playing at home.
65. I wasn't that sporty. I remember that I always wanted to go fishing. That wasn't considered a sport. I remember getting myself banned from cricket so that I could go fishing. My housemaster knew that I really wanted to go fishing. He knew that I upset the field when I went out to bat so I think he allowed me to do that.

The Cadet Corps

66. Everybody joined one of the cadet corps that was at the school. We had army and navy cadets. The navy cadets had boats that they sometimes went out on. I was in the army cadets. The army cadets was quite well structured. My housemaster, Father [REDACTED] MFG ran that. He had been in the army before he joined the priesthood.
67. I came from quite a military family so I really enjoyed my time in the cadets. I managed to become the quartermaster. I had to look after all the stocks of uniform. I issued uniform to the cadets when they had damaged their own. The benefit of the role was that I could draw new kit when I wanted to avoid having to iron my old stuff.

68. I think we paraded one afternoon a week. We learnt lots of interesting things in the cadets. We took the Land Rovers apart and learnt how engines worked. There were expeditions into the hills and forests around the Great Glen during weekends. We would be away overnight when we went on those. We would be with Father MFG when we went on those expeditions.

69. There was an annual camp for the army cadets. I can't remember where it was held but it was held somewhere further away. The other expeditions with the army cadets at weekends were all held within walking distance.

Other leisure activities

70. There were a number of societies and clubs. I belonged to the photographic club. The school had a dark room, enlargers and all that sort of stuff. You could learn the pipes at the school if you wanted to. There was a library that had books that were appropriate for our age. I was one of the librarians. The librarians got their own room with a kettle and a toaster. The library was actually quite well stocked. We got newspapers every day which were very popular.

71. There was access to television in the school hall. We watched telly on Saturday evenings and whatever night Top of the Pops was on. On the night Top of the Pops was on we were allowed to watch that programme only. The telly was turned off as soon as it finished.

72. There was time to just chill with your friends. You could go into the village if you wanted to but only at certain designated times. I think that was on Saturday afternoons. I can't remember whether you had to wear your uniform. You would go into the shops and cafes there. I knew quite a few people in the village.

Trips

73. There were a few trips during term time. We would take a minibus if we were going out on trips. If it snowed there were trips to go to Aviemore to do skiing. Not

everyone got to go on those trips because it was an expensive activity. I remember going on a couple of theatre trips to Inverness.

Leaving the school during the day

74. I don't think there was a chit system when I was there. There was no formal 'signing-in' or 'signing-out' system. Broadly speaking, the only times you had to informally check in and out were mealtimes and church services. It would be noticed if you weren't there. I guess that those were the only points where a quick overview was taken by the staff. I do remember being asked by staff every now and then "have you seen so and so" when people weren't around.
75. If you wanted to go into the village at a time that wasn't usual you could go to your housemaster and say "I need to go into the village and buy whatever." He would either say "yes" or "no." I seem to remember asking once or twice and being given permission. When you did go out you did what you needed to do then came straight back.
76. I think that if you were being taken out by an adult who wasn't associated with the school you had to let your housemaster know who you were going to be with. You didn't just disperse. I remember one occasion where I was going to be taken out by friend's parents for a meal. The parents popped their head around Father MFG door, asked him whether it was alright to take me out and he agreed.
77. I remember occasions where I would go off and sit on bridges with my fishing rod and nobody would know that I was there. People running institutions like Fort Augustus now would never behave in the way they did back then when it came to letting children off-site. I think that is because nowadays the staff would be held accountable if something went wrong.

Holidays

78. I went home for the main school holidays. I used to get on a bus to Inverness then get a train to London. There were three or four of us that made the same journey. I've got a feeling that when we came back they collected us in a minibus in Inverness.
79. There were one or two boys who lived overseas who stayed at the school during holidays. I was one of the boys who stayed at the school during half terms. I did that because when I went home for the first half term to London I made an agreement with my parents that it was too far to travel for such a short period of time. There were not that many boys who stayed during half terms because most of the boys lived near enough to get home for the five days. Towards the end of my time at the school I used to stay with a friend and his parents in Edinburgh during half terms.
80. We had a thing called 'exeat' days which fell during term time. Some boys had parents that would come up and take them out on those days. Quite a lot of the boys, including myself, had parents who couldn't make those days because they were unavailable or too far away. If you didn't have anyone taking you out then you just hung around the school. I had a friend whose father had a boat. He would sail up and moor up on Loch Ness then take him out. Occasionally I used to go sailing with them on exeat days.
81. When you stayed at the school during the school holidays there were no formal activities put on. You had your meals laid on and that was it. You were pretty much left to your own devices. You were basically a free agent between mealtimes. You could do what you wanted really.

Birthdays and Christmas

82. My birthday fell within term time. I don't think the school celebrated it in any way. I don't recall the school doing anything particular. Your friends would do something

with you and you got any birthday cards that were sent in to you by post but that was about it. I went home for Christmases.

Visits / inspections

83. My father used to try and come up to visit when the school put on speech day. Speech day was when all the awards were presented at the end of the academic year. I think he made it up twice. He took me back home afterwards on each of those occasions. I do remember one occasion when he hired a car to visit me then drove back to catch a train. I don't really remember other parents visiting during term time. I don't know whether there were any arrangements for doing that.
84. I don't remember there being any external visitors who came into the school. I wasn't aware of there being any inspections whilst I was there.

Healthcare

85. There was a matron at the school. I think there was also an assistant matron. You could go and see the matron if you were feeling unwell. You didn't have to go to your housemaster before going to see them. You could go to them directly. The matron and assistant matron generally dealt with things like headaches, cuts, sprains and things like that. I can't remember where you would go if you were ill and couldn't go to school. There may have been a sickroom but if there was I don't think I ever went into it. I have no idea whether visits to matron were recorded.
86. There was a doctor who lived in the village. His son was at the school. I can't remember the doctor's name. He died in an accident. He was going to an emergency, was run off the road and went into Loch Ness. I remember that being mentioned at school. There weren't regular health checks but he, and the doctor who replaced him, came into the school if required. We did receive inoculations one time. I think that was the BCG which was a vaccine for tuberculosis. We all had to queue up for that.

87. I think there was the odd broken limb from rugby. I remember people being taken to hospital in Inverness. Occasionally an ambulance was called. It was all to do with sports related injuries.
88. I don't remember having to see a dentist whilst I was there. I remember going when I was back home but not when I was at the school.

Pastoral care

89. I wasn't aware of any formal system put in place in the school in the modern sense of pastoral care. If there was something like that I wasn't told about it. It was assumed that if you had a problem that wasn't medical you would go and see your housemaster. That wasn't explicitly mentioned to me but I came to realise that. I just learnt that from my peers. You kind of had to work that out for yourself.
90. I think there was a kind of informal hierarchy in the school amongst the boys. I think if one of the younger boys had a problem then they might speak to one of the older boys. They might in turn contact one of the prefects or one of the housemasters. From memory all of that was fairly fluid. If someone had an issue either during the day or night they could just go and knock on the housemaster's door.
91. I do remember younger boys being homesick. The housemasters generally dealt with that. There was one time when I was quite new to the school when I was getting quite badly bullied. There were three of them. I'd rather not name them. I subsequently became very good friends with one of them. I can't remember when that happened. It probably went on for two terms. It wasn't physical bullying. It was all psychological.
92. I hopped over the wall to the phone box at the front of the school, phoned my parents and told them that I wasn't dealing very well with things. I think I provided the names of the boys who were bullying me to my parents during that phone call. I then returned to the school. Within fifteen minutes Father [REDACTED] MFG came and found me and took me away for a chat. My father must have made

contact with the school. He took me into his study and we sat down. He was really really good. I don't know what he did after that but the bullying stopped. There were no repercussions. None of the boys who were bullying me came back on me for reporting them. Looking back, I think Father [REDACTED] MFG [REDACTED] was quite clever at dealing with that sort of thing.

Running away

93. Fort Augustus was quite a difficult place to run away from. The only way you could get away was getting the bus or hitching a ride. I remember one boy, that I knew fairly well, disappearing and reappearing three days later. The boy's name was [REDACTED] I remember he was dabbling with drugs at the time. I think there was a much broader issue going on with him. I don't know how the school dealt with him when he returned.

Pupils who died or were injured whilst I was at the school

94. I'll always remember [REDACTED] He was [REDACTED] He was a tremendous bag piper. One school holiday he was summoned home to [REDACTED] and put into [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Sadly, within six months he had been killed. That happened when I was about fifteen. I was told about [REDACTED] death by his younger brother [REDACTED] who was still at the school. He knew that I had been friends with him. He told me some time after it happened. I don't remember the school dealing with that in any way. It wasn't mentioned. I don't remember whether any prayers were said or anything.
95. I had a friend called [REDACTED] He was a very large boy. He went home one summer, rode a moped and came off it thirty miles per hour. He only had shorts and a t-shirt on. As far as I know, he has been in a wheelchair ever since. He didn't return to the school.
96. We had a [REDACTED] teacher called [REDACTED] MZU [REDACTED] who killed himself. He lived in one of the cottages that was used for staff at the school. I have a feeling that was in my

final year. He just did that then wasn't there. I don't think we ever found out the circumstances surrounding why he took his own life.

Alcohol

97. There was quite a lot of alcohol swilling around the school. Pupils would bring that back with them after going home or acquire it from shops through people they knew. I don't remember staff becoming aware of all of that. I am not aware of anyone being disciplined for drinking. I think that was because we were in such a huge area. You could be half a mile from the school, do what you wanted to do and nobody would be near you from the school.

Communication between parents and the school

98. I don't know what level of contact there was between my parents and the school as I wasn't home. The only thing I recall like that were school reports. Reports would be sent to your parents to let them know how you were getting on. I can't remember whether they were termly or yearly. As far as I am aware that was the only thing that my parents received from the school. I remember sitting down with my father and going through my report. He always said that I should do less fishing and more studying which was fair comment.
99. I remember the reports being fairly brief. Each member of staff wrote a couple of paragraphs for their subject. Looking back, I think the comments were fairly accurate. There was nothing in the reports discussing my welfare or how I was getting on day to day as a pupil at the school. There was nothing along the lines of comments in a pastoral sense. I guess the only way that my parents would know anything about that side of things was if I told them.

Discipline

100. As far as I was aware there were no hard and fast rules. Most of it you picked up as you went along. The way you behaved was more or less common sense. You didn't do anything stupid, go where you weren't supposed to go or be somewhere when you weren't supposed to be there. We all got up to all sorts of mischief and sometimes we got caught.

Housemasters

101. Discipline was handed out by the housemasters, I think, exclusively when I was there. I don't think the headmaster got involved with directly disciplining pupils. It was only the housemaster of your particular house who disciplined you. I was always sent to Father [REDACTED] MFG I have no idea whether he kept a record when he issued punishments. It wasn't the sort of thing that was mentioned on my report cards.
102. I was never sent to Father [REDACTED] MEV I didn't particularly like him. I knew I had to keep out of his way. He had a reputation for having a temper. He would get very angry and shout at people. I do remember the boys all knowing that if he started going red up his neck he was going to blow.
103. I can't remember individual incidents but I do remember Father [REDACTED] MEV getting very upset about something and shouting at boys. From memory that happened fairly frequently. I never witnessed him administering punishment to anybody. Other boys may have told me what his practice was when disciplining the boys in his house but I don't remember what that was.

Corporal punishment

104. Generally you were caned if you were disciplined for anything. There weren't really any other forms of punishment. It was only your housemaster who administered that. In Vaughan it was always done in Father [REDACTED] MFG study. If you

were taken into his study you were first told what you had been accused of or what you had done. He would then ask you for any comments. It was then usually three or six strokes of the cane to your backside. Three were given for not so serious misdemeanours. Six was the norm. That was done over your trousers. It really hurt. It would leave a red wheel and a bruise that would last a few weeks before going away.

105. When I was punished by Father [REDACTED] MFG [REDACTED] it was always one on one and the door was closed. I don't recall things like punishment books being kept. Knowing him he probably kept a record but it wasn't something I was aware of. I suspect there must have been some sort of record.
106. I got caned a few times. It was all for silly things. I was caught out late one night with a fishing rod when I should have been in bed. I once put a very large pike in the school swimming pool before the juniors were about to start swimming. They kind of knew it was me who did that.
107. I remember that I twice got caned by Father [REDACTED] MFG [REDACTED] for things that I didn't do. On one occasion somebody drove one of the cadet Land Rovers at very low speed with a load of boys in the back, turned a corner and rolled it. Father [REDACTED] MFG [REDACTED] found out about that, assumed it was me and caned me. He later found out that I hadn't been involved after that happened. He said that I had probably deserved it anyway. The other occasion was when one of the other boys took one of the school boats out on Loch Ness at about one in the morning. The boat was found with two large salmon in it. It was assumed that that was me and I was caned for that.
108. I was never present when another boy was caned. However, Father [REDACTED] MFG [REDACTED] study was at the end of the corridor before you went down the stairs. You would inevitably pass his study at times when boys were being punished. The door was always shut. You wouldn't be able to hear the conversations but you could hear some noise. You would hear boys being caned.

109. There were a few times I was given the cane and I really resented it. I felt it was over the top. I really did feel that it wasn't fair. You would hear of other boys getting far lesser punishments for what you perceived as far more serious offences. Every now and again you would hear of someone being caned for something and feel that it was a bit over the top. There were a few times I felt that the punishment issued to other boys was a bit disproportionate but I don't remember the specific incidents.

Other forms of punishment

110. We didn't really have any privileges so it was hard for them to take things away. Things like watching the television couldn't really be taken away because it was very difficult to police, was voluntary and not everyone went anyway.

111. One of the other punishments that was used involved Father [REDACTED] MRQ. His punishment was an hour's leaf raking or spending an hour in the afternoon cleaning out his [REDACTED]. Most of the time you were referred to him for that punishment by your housemaster. Occasionally, if Father [REDACTED] MRQ caught you doing something, he issued that himself. It was usually for things like smoking and things like that. If it was something serious then he would refer you to your housemaster straight away.

112. Most people, if they were given the choice of punishments by their housemaster, would pick getting given the cane over being sent to Father [REDACTED] MRQ. It was better to get your punishment over and done with than be stuck for hours with a rake.

Expulsion

113. There weren't very many children who left Fort Augustus. I guess that is because there were so few people in the whole school. There was a guy called [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who was in my house who was one of the few boys who left. He was American. He was caught stealing from the other boys. They found a whole stash of stuff that he had stolen in his locker. It was expensive pens and things like that. He disappeared because he was expelled. We didn't know he had been expelled until after the summer holidays.

Prefects

114. There was a prefect system. The prefects, alongside the head boy, were selected from the sixth form. They were there to keep things moving and running. If you had an issue you could talk to the prefects. If they felt it was important then they would take it to the housemaster. I don't really remember doing that because you could go directly to the housemaster if you wanted to.
115. The prefects role was really only to keep law and order. They would monitor lights out in the evenings, make sure people had gone to bed or weren't wandering around the school. They generally made sure that the pupils weren't up to high jinks. I suppose their role was much the same as any other prefect in any other school.
116. Only a short while before I started at Fort Augustus the prefects were stopped from issuing punishments or being involved in discipline. Because of that, if there was a disciplinary issue, they had to refer it to the relevant housemaster.

Awareness of abuse involving other pupils whilst at Fort Augustus

117. I didn't witness any abuse of other boys whilst I was there. The only thing that comes close to that is disproportionate use of the cane. No other child spoke to me about abuse they experienced or witnessed. I wasn't aware of there being any sexual activity amongst the pupils in the school. You didn't really talk about those sorts of things. You just didn't discuss things like that.
118. I have since learnt from the television documentary 'Sins of Our Fathers' what was happening at the school. I had absolutely no inkling that was happening to other boys at the school whilst I was there. Looking back I find it extraordinary that there wasn't even any rumour about what was happening.

Bullying

119. I don't think that bullying was an ongoing issue at the school. I don't think there was a prevailing undercurrent of that problem at the school. Generally, amongst the pupils, the older boys supported the younger boys. It felt like a very close small community. People did help and they did look out for each other. Occasionally you had a prefect pushing their luck but I don't remember the detail of that and it really wasn't a big problem.

Abuse at Fort Augustus

Abuse by [redacted] MFH [redacted]

120. [redacted] MFH or [redacted] MFH was a lay [redacted] teacher in the school. He was [redacted]. He's now dead. I didn't take [redacted] so he never taught me. Because it was such a small community everybody knew everybody so I knew who he was. He wasn't around the school all the time but he was there a fair amount because he was a member of staff. He wasn't in every day. I think that was because not too many of the pupils took [redacted]. He was probably in his forties when I was at the school. He smoked a pipe.
121. [redacted] MFH ran a shop in [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] I remember that we used to go and visit his shop [redacted]. Other than that I don't really know much about him. To us he was just another member of staff who was around.
122. When I was fourteen or fifteen I was at the school over a summer half term holiday. It was probably either in 1975 or 1976. There were probably about four or five boys who were staying at the school over that half term that year. After lunch one day I was sitting on a wall outside of the school. [redacted] MFH came along and asked me what I was getting up to and I told him that I was bored. He then asked me whether I

wanted to come back to his place to watch some films. In those days you trusted implicitly all adults so I agreed to go with him. I then got into his car and he drove us to his house.

123. I don't think anybody saw me get into his car. I don't think any of the other boys from the school who were staying there over that half term saw me leave. The people who were supervising us at that time were Father [REDACTED] MEV [REDACTED] and Father [REDACTED] MFG [REDACTED]. They were in the school but they didn't see me leave.

124. [REDACTED] MFH [REDACTED] drove a battered old grey car which was a Citroen, a Renault or something like that. It was about a ten to fifteen minute drive from the school to his place. I think he lived in [REDACTED]. It was somewhere around that area on or next to the shore of Loch Ness. I think his house was a fairly small cottage. I think he was the only one who stayed in his cottage. I don't think there was anyone there other than ourselves when we arrived.

125. When we went into the cottage [REDACTED] MFH [REDACTED] asked me whether I wanted a drink. I said that I did. He then gave me a glass of whisky and ginger ale. I knew it was whisky that he had given me because I had had it before. We chatted for a bit before he asked me whether I would like to see a film. I asked him what type of film it was. He told me it was a pornographic film. I'd heard of pornographic films but I didn't really know what one was. We had no education in that sort of stuff. I agreed to the film being put on.

126. I seem to remember that the furniture had already been pushed back in the room, there was a projector and he had one of those collapsible screens against one of the walls. He put this film on. We were standing watching it. I think we were standing because all the chairs had been pushed back. He then sexually abused me. I find it difficult going into the specific details of what he did to me. What I can say is that he forced me to do things to him. He was physically forceful. He was a short, very strong stocky guy. He was one of those people who were surprisingly strong. He did some things to me before trying to do more things to me. I managed to resist the things he wanted to do towards the end.

127. Afterwards he kept telling me that it was just a bit of fun. He said it was fine and not a problem. He told me that it was completely normal. He told me that he had had loads of boys from the school at his cottage and they had had fun with him. He told me that he had piles of photographs of the boys from the school. He kept on talking about that. He didn't get any of the photographs out but he did get his camera out. He said that he wanted to take photographs of me. Somehow I stopped him doing that. I wouldn't let him.
128. I was then stuck in his house with him. I could have walked back to school but it was a very busy road and a distance away. I was trapped. I couldn't get back to school. I had nowhere to go. I didn't really understand what had happened. I found being stuck there incredibly frightening. I didn't know what to do with the feeling of entrapment. I was there for another hour to maybe an hour and a half. He eventually gave me a lift back to the school. I don't remember him saying anything on the journey back to school. I think I was shutting it all out. I remember him acting as if nothing had happened.
129. I know I was back in time for the evening meal. I've got a feeling that may have been at about 7:00 pm. There was hardly anyone around at the time. I don't think anyone saw me being distressed. I had no contact with MFH after he dropped me off at the school. I didn't speak to anybody about what had happened.
130. The thing that really hit me over the following two to three weeks was the feeling of entrapment. I was deeply shocked about what had happened. It took quite a long time for what had actually happened to sink in. It was then that I started to understand more fully what had happened. I didn't know how to deal with it. I eventually kind of filed it. I literally just put it away. I couldn't wallow in it because I had no one to talk to or discuss it with. I realised that there was nothing to be done. I just had to get on with things. It all simmered down probably about a month after the incident. I then boxed it and put it away. It then stayed 'put away' for many years.

131. MFH never spoke to me again. I avoided him. I didn't feel comfortable around him. You could smell him coming before he got near you. I used to turn around and go the other way. I didn't want to encounter him at all. It may sound a bit odd but the overriding thought in my mind was "no I don't want to do this." He wasn't there an awful lot so it was fairly easy to avoid him.

Reporting of abuse whilst at Fort Augustus

132. I wasn't aware of anybody else experiencing what I did with MFH or with anyone else. I think that's what left me thinking I was an exception. As far as I was concerned I was the only person in the world that this had happened to. I felt that no one else would understand me or get what had happened.

133. I didn't know whether I could speak to my parents about it. I didn't know how I would speak to my parents about it. Looking back, if I had tried to tell my parents about what had happened they would probably have told me that I was wrong.

134. I certainly felt that I couldn't speak to anyone at the school about it. MFH was a trusted and respected member of staff. I was embarrassed. I wouldn't have known how to describe what had happened. I seem to recall thinking that no one would believe me if I said anything anyway.

Leaving Fort Augustus and life after Fort Augustus

135. I was sixteen going on seventeen when I left. I left after my Highers because I was leaving age. I could have stayed on for another year of sixth form but I didn't. After leaving Fort Augustus I went to college and studied engineering.

136. I went on to become an outdoor pursuits instructor and a youth worker for a number of years. I then went into the insurance industry. I did that for about twenty years. I

left because I felt what I was doing was immoral. I was being asked to make people redundant who were extremely experienced. We were replacing them with people who were younger and cheaper. I ended up walking because I couldn't be involved with that anymore. That was about twelve to fifteen years ago. I then got involved with a company developing environmental fuel burning technology. I then set myself up as a self-employed IT consultant. I have done that ever since. I've been much poorer but much happier.

137. I am married. I have five children of my own and a foster child. The youngest is twelve and the oldest is twenty three. We started the process of fostering about five or six years ago. Our current foster child has been with us for several years. We've signed up with him until he is sixteen to eighteen.

Impact

138. It only happened once. I don't quite understand in my mind why it is still burning but it is. Inside I don't really understand what's going on. It's such a long time ago and I don't know why it still has an effect.
139. I now realise that it has impacted certain parts of my life all the way through. It has had an adverse impact on all sorts of different areas. I've had times over the years, particularly when I am not very busy, when I go into not so much a depression but a distraught state. I start mulling things over and get angry. I get really cross. Increasingly it has become a bit more dominant in my thoughts. In the last two and a half years it has sometimes been so overwhelming that I don't know what to do. I've ended up cancelling work and needing to go somewhere on my own.
140. I used to be a devout Catholic. I still have my faith but I can't go to church any more. In the last four or five years I have got very bitter about the institution itself and all the other institutions that are piled up on top of one another. I think to myself "How dare you?" I'm just a tiny part of what happened when you think about all the others.

141. I think the whole thing has affected the way in which my wife and I look after our children. I have never beaten any of my children. We have always been very open with all of our children. I don't want any of my children to go through life not being able to talk to an adult about anything that has happened to them. I don't want them going about feeling embarrassed about certain situations, events or circumstances. I want them to feel that they can talk about anything and not feel awkward about things. In a way that is a positive that has come out of all of this.
142. Whenever I am in a situation where I think someone may be at risk from the sort of things I experienced I feel very nervous. I have tried very hard to make my children aware of the dangers and risks out there. My parents could never have had the sort of conversations with me that I have had with my children. Talking about these sort of things is difficult enough in itself when you haven't experienced the things I have.
143. What happened didn't really affect my relationship with my own parents. The relationship was quite a formal one. I think my relationship with them when I was younger was slightly standoffish anyway.

Treatment / support

144. Very recently the support team that the police put me in touch with have referred me to some people who are hopefully going to provide me with some counselling. I haven't managed to take that up yet.

Reporting of abuse after leaving Fort Augustus

145. I didn't speak about it to anybody for a very long time after the incident. It's been there ever since. I was aware of it but I didn't let it out.

Discussing in with family

146. My mother is still alive. She is almost ninety. I get on with her better than I ever have. I have conversations with her now that twenty years ago I could never have dreamed of having. About a year ago I did touch upon what happened with her gently. I formed the impression that she was clearly not going to get it. I ended up deciding not to go there. I haven't had the courage to tell my wife exactly what has happened. I don't know why. She knows most of it. She has been brilliant. She's been really supportive.

Reporting abuse to Murdoch Rogers

147. Some years ago I was contacted by Murdoch Rogers. It was at some point before 2013. Murdoch Rogers was a producer who was producing an investigative documentary into Fort Augustus which turned out to be called 'Sins of Our Fathers'. He got my details from someone else who had been at the school. I have a very distinct surname which means that it is not difficult to find me if you want to. The contact started off with an email. All he wanted to know was whether I could remember people I had been at school with. He didn't give me any names or tell me what it was all about.
148. I then watched 'Sins of Our Fathers.' That was in about 2013. It was difficult for me to watch. I recognised a couple of the names but I didn't know them from my time in the school. They were all older than me. Suddenly things started to click with me. I started to realise that the whole institution was just horrible. I formed an understanding of how there had been a conspiracy to cover things up not just within the school but within the Benedictine Order and further afield in the Catholic Church. The programme left me really angry and bitter.
149. I stayed in touch with Murdoch Rogers. Since he contacted me we have met up every summer when I have come up in the Summer to the Edinburgh Festival. From my perspective he is immensely professional in his approach. He never leads or gives information. He has never given anything away concerning other people. We

just discuss things. Every now and again I get emails from him asking for further information or whether I have any photographs. He never reveals who he is looking for further information for or anything like that. I've sent him odd bits of information. I think that is how he is putting things together. Looking back, it is my interactions with him that have opened up things for me.

Attempting to speak to my parish priest

150. I tried speaking to my parish priest about a year after 'Sins of Our Fathers' was aired. That was either in 2013 or 2104. He was just our local parish priest. I forget which Catholic Order he came from. I didn't disclose any details to him but said what I wanted to speak about and asked him for a chat. He effectively told me "don't be so stupid, these sort of things don't happen, go away." The shutters just came down as soon as I hinted what I wanted to talk about.
151. My parish priest was supposed to be the person who supports me and many other people in the parish. He was denying me that support. He was supposed to be, in my mind, my first port of call. I was left thinking that if he didn't want to know then who else would want to know. I was left thinking that they were all just in it together. The fact that it is still happening that you can't go and speak to your parish priest about these things speaks volumes. These are the grass roots. They should be able to listen to these things and help you.

Reporting abuse to the police

152. Up until recently I still unconsciously wanted to leave it all in a box. However, I eventually came to realise that I needed to open up, get rid of it and deal with it. I needed to get rid of it not just for me but for everybody else. I think it was Murdoch Rogers who said to me that if I needed to speak to someone about it I needed to speak to the police. He said that it was entirely up to me and that he was just giving me the information that there were people out there I could speak to.

153. I decided to speak to the police earlier this year. It was initially quite difficult to find the right person to speak to. To begin with I rang 101. They didn't really understand what I was trying to do or report. I eventually got through to someone who was based somewhere between Edinburgh and Glasgow. I forget exactly where the place is. The person I spoke to knew about the inquiries the police were running. I then got a call back from my local police who informed me that I could record a statement in Suffolk and they could in turn send it up to Scotland. I then made an appointment with Suffolk Police.
154. I provided Suffolk Police with a statement in May or June 2019. The interview was held in a suite in an industrial unit in Ipswich. You would never have known that the office was there. It was very discrete. It was specialist officers who interviewed me. They were very professional. They were excellent at what they did. During the interview I provided a lot more explicit information concerning the incident with MFH than I have in this statement. A video of the interview was sent to Scotland and they transcribed what I reported. My statement has now been signed and filed with the procurator fiscal.
155. I am in contact with a police detective in Scotland. She has been providing me with updates. Her name is DC Deborah Doherty. Her police number is DC887. She is based in divisional headquarters in Inverness. She has been absolutely superb. I can't fault how the police have acted since I approached them.

Contact with Fort Augustus and former pupils since leaving

156. I haven't made contact with the Benedictine Order. I wouldn't know how to make contact with them. I haven't had any contact from the school since I left. I visited the school a couple of years after I left. I remember that I discovered MFH was still there. I didn't go and seek him out. I haven't had any contact with the staff. I did have contact with a few friends from Fort Augustus for a few years after I left but I don't now. I think people just change and diversify when they get older.

157. I know there are Old Boys gatherings. There is an AGM held every October each year in Glasgow. I have never attended them. The only thing I have kind of tapped into is the Old Boys website. It is run by someone who was at school with called Colin Bryce. I've used the website to try and look stuff up and find out if there is anyone who has passed away. For a while there were a lot of comments on there about the revelations that there were coming out. There were a lot of denials. I felt that it wasn't for people who weren't involved to be issuing opinion on these sort of things. I think all of that has now been toned down on the website. It's all really non-committal when those sort of things come up.

Records

158. I don't have any records from my time at the school. I wasn't aware of the staff keeping any records whilst I was there. Records may well exist though.

Lessons to be learned / other information

Awareness of abuse amongst pupils

159. We were very sheltered and innocent back then. We had no sex education to speak of. We didn't have the language or vocabulary for those sort of things back then. We just didn't know the word 'paedophile.' I had no idea that adults did that sort of thing to children. I had absolutely no concept that this sort of thing even existed.

160. I don't know how many boys in that school have been affected by abuse but from what I have heard in the media since, it was a considerable number. I don't think any of us knew what was going on. No one talked about anything. If you had talked to your peers about abuse you had suffered then I think that your peers would have viewed you as strange and thought that it was your fault. I think you would have then been ostracised. I don't think anyone spoke to anybody at the time about the things that happened. I doubt, having been there, that anyone spoke to their parents

or took things up with the school. There just wasn't the means or vocabulary to allow you to do that.

Awareness of abuse amongst staff at the school

161. Although MFH was a member of the lay staff he was still a member of that institution. What happened to me didn't come under the auspices of the church but under the auspices of the school. I wonder how much the school knew about what was going on.
162. I may be wrong but I have a feeling that Father MMF knew what was going on in the school. The Abbot was a very nice man but a bit ineffective. In my mind I think he would have also known. I think they were both aware because I know that staff members were moved. That doesn't happen unless somebody says that they could or should be moved. To me, the whole distribution of responsibility was corrupt. The whole network was corrupt. It was broken.
163. I discovered from 'Sins of Our Fathers' that some monks had come to the school either as priests or brothers for a short time then disappeared. I have thought back to my time at the school whether I recall that happening. I don't recall there being a high turnover of staff but I do remember people leaving suddenly amongst the monastic staff.
164. I do remember when Father MEV disappeared. I was either fifteen or sixteen. It was during term time and I think it was a week day. He was literally there one day and gone the other. The school provided absolutely no explanation why he left. The rumour machine amongst the boys was that he had an affair with the Mother Superior of the sister convent and they had both eloped. Knowing what I know now from 'Sins of our Fathers' there must have been boys there who suffered abuse from him but none of them talked openly about it when I was there.
165. I remember a young Brother who came from the United States. I can't remember his name but he was much younger than the other monks and was really involved with

the children. He was into the sport and so on. He was there for seven or eight months and then he was gone. I can't remember what year that was in. Overnight he disappeared.

166. Back then, we didn't have any insight as to why people left so quickly. Looking back, after what I have learned, I wonder whether it was part of their system. I wonder whether the American monk was one of the monks that they were feeding around the system. I wonder whether he was one of those people who they moved from one school to another so that things didn't catch up. I don't know whether he was involved in anything or not but after seeing 'Sins of My Fathers' I do wonder.

Views on corporal punishment

167. Looking back on it, the use of corporal punishment by the housemasters in the school, although accepted at that time, was not a nice experience to go through. It has left scars. I have spoken to other people who experienced corporal punishment and they are still suffering from the fact that they were beaten. I know it was the way things were done back then but I do still resent that side of things. I don't resent my housemaster for issuing corporal punishment but I resent the system that allowed that to happen.

Ability to report things

168. We had no one to turn to and, even if we did, we didn't have the vocabulary to describe things. We didn't have any concept that this sort of thing went on. Looking back we were all really on our own. Children should be talked to and educated in the broadest sense about danger. I think it is important that any institution should make sure that the children in their care know who they can talk to. There should be someone available who is approachable and who will listen. There should be someone available who you can go and see, close the door and not be afraid to talk about absolutely anything. Someone who won't criticise or judge you. That culture needs to be there. I just think that putting that in place is fundamentally important and that was the bit that was missing from my time at Fort Augustus.

Final thoughts and hopes for the Inquiry

169. I have had split feelings about Fort Augustus. One side of it is dark and I don't really want to go there. There is just a big black mark on it. There's a dark edge to it. The other side of it I really enjoyed. I loved the setting and the place. Nowadays, I feel more saddened, angry and bitter about it all. I have an underlying feeling of having been let down.
170. The perpetrators are either very old or dead. There is not a lot that can be done with them. However, I think the Benedictine Order has got an enormous amount to answer for. There have been several responses from the Benedictines over the years from people at various different levels. All the responses have been non-committal. They have 'wiffled' around with their answers. The whole set up needs to step back and take a look at itself. I think they need to stand up and say that they accept the things that happened did happen. They need to accept that things have gone wrong. They need to accept that they have tried to cover things up. They finally need to apologise. I think they need to be held accountable.
171. Thinking more widely in the Catholic Church the current pope is being non-committal when talking about abuse in the church. He has got to stand up and be accountable as well.
172. I don't know the scale of it but I'm sure that will come out when the Inquiry publishes its report. On a personal level I want to put my experiences into a more secure box mentally. I want to put it away. More broadly, I thought if I spoke to the Inquiry and the police around the same time then hopefully the two would link up and corroborate things that other people have potentially come forward with. I don't know how many other people were involved with MFH I suspect that there is a number. If, through speaking to the Inquiry and the police, I can corroborate some of the things that other people are saying then that will do me.
173. I hope that the Inquiry will help children and young people to become more aware of the need to communicate and the fact that there are people out there that they can

communicate with. I hope that other people who went to the school, or who are involved with the Benedictines or the Catholic Church, can start to close things off. If we can all chip into the Inquiry then I hope it can help all of us collectively rather than individually. I know a lot of the people who were involved in the school are dead but I still think it is important that we begin to close it. I just hope that something positive comes out of it all and the Inquiry makes a difference.

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.

MZJ

Signed... ..

Dated... 21/08/19