

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GEZ

Support person present: No

1. My name is GEZ. My date of birth is 1965. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before boarding school

2. I lived in Pitlochry with my parents and . My father had his own business and for a while my mother ran a . Part of the time she was there we stayed in accommodation attached to it. I am the second oldest child in my family. My older sister is fifteen months older than me and I have two younger brothers, who is four years younger and who is 8 years younger.
3. I would say I had a non-remarkable but happy childhood albeit I didn't see much of my father as he was working all the time. I went to Pitlochry Primary School, got on fine there and had no issues. When I was in either primary four or five Pitlochry High School burnt down. For some reason the school didn't get rebuilt for years and the pupils were having to get their schooling in various huts around the town which was really chaotic.
4. My folks took the view that you only had one chance at education so decided that because the school wasn't rebuilt they wanted to send me to boarding school. My parents weren't overly wealthy but they felt they were in a position to put me to boarding school and chose Morrison's Academy. My older sister went to Pitlochry High School but she had her mind made up what she wanted to do in life and there was

maybe the element of her being a female, and although that is wrong nowadays and I didn't agree back then either it was different times. My brothers didn't go to boarding school as by the time it was time for them to go the fees had rocketed and my parents couldn't afford to have two of us there at the same time. If one had gone then the other would've had to go and as Pitlochry had been rebuilt by then they went there.

5. I don't know how Morrison's was narrowed down and I can't remember if I was actually asked if I wanted to go to boarding school. I may have been and can't remember, however that was the decision that was made and I was quite excited about it.
6. About a year before I was due to go I had a visit there. To me the place seemed massive and there was a sort of excitement about it all as even at that age I could see the opportunities. It was all very formal but there was no exam process to get in. I did have an interview with the then rector Mr Johnstone-Jones and I'm pretty sure my parents sat in on the interview. There may have been a brief conversation individually I can't really remember.
7. I was successful at the interview and was due to start in September 1977. Before I started I was sent instructions with a whole long list of clothing and kit that I would need to take with me. It would have been expensive for my parents. It was all very regimented but was quite exciting going to the outfitters in Perth to get my uniform and a big trunk to keep everything in. None of my friends were going on to Morrison's and it was a big change for me.

### **Morrison's Academy, Crieff**

8. I was twelve when I went to Morrison's Academy. At that time Crieff was dominated by the School. The school was in the middle of the town and had two separate buildings, one for boys and one for girls. They didn't mix at all until it changed to become co-educational when I was in second year. There was a primary and secondary school and there were about a thousand pupils of which I would say fifty percent were boarders.

9. The school and the boarding arrangement was very separated out and it wasn't part of the school campus. It was very much a sense of, you left school and went to a separate place.
10. There were six or seven different Victorian style boarding houses situated around the town. For the five years I went to Morrison's I was in Glenearn Boarding House. It was probably the biggest and it housed sixty five boys. There were two other boys' boarding houses and three or four girls' ones. There was no mixed houses until a lot later on after the school was co-educational and even then it was just the really young boys that were housed with the girls. The boarders were of all ages and I think the youngest in our house was six years old.
11. Glenearn House was in Perth Road, Crieff and consisted of two buildings joined together by a structure. When I first started one building had the dining room, kitchen, offices and a medical room on the ground floor and various sizes of dormitories upstairs. The other had the common room downstairs and more dormitories upstairs. In the structure between the two buildings there was a room that was laid out like a classroom that was used for prep.
12. All that was in the dormitory was a metal bed and a small unlockable bedside cabinet for each boy. It was a big room with a big sash window and no heating so it was cold. There were a couple of old knackered storage heaters in the hallways.
13. The Housemaster and Housemistress had a flat on the top floor of one building and the assistant Housemaster and Housemistress stayed at the back of the other building.
14. The housemaster when I first started was Harry Beattie who was ex RAF and had just taken over from 'Paddy' Turner. Paddy wasn't his actual first name, just a nickname because he was Irish. Harry Beattie and his wife Retta came in and took over the role of Housemaster and mistress and they were both lovely people. He didn't have a teaching role in the school. They were parents and their children had been to boarding school when Harry was working for the East India Company after he left the RAF.

15. The assistant housemaster and mistress changed two or three times whilst I was there. I think the first one was a secretary at the actual school, then there was a physics teacher who was there with his wife and children. After that a P.E. teacher and her husband.
16. The roles of the staff and prefects at the school and the boarding houses were separate albeit some of the housemasters or mistresses were teachers as well. Similarly if you were a prefect at school you were usually a prefect in the boarding house as well.
17. There was also a matron, cleaners and two or three local ladies who were employed as domestic staff in the laundry room. In year one there was a cook at our house but in year two the whole school changed to a refectory system.

### **Routine at Morrison's Academy**

#### *First day*

18. I started at Morrison's on 12 September 1977. Everybody arrived at the school the evening before the term was actually starting and it was chaos with sixty odd new pupils arriving from all over the world. My parents dropped me and it was a case of just getting allocated my dormitory, getting my trunk of belongings out the car and then my folks left. It was very hard and I remember one moment very well. Bearing in mind I was only twelve all my dad did was shake my hand, get back in the car and then they drove away. I can remember that like it was yesterday.
19. The housemasters were there milling about but it was more a mixture of prefects and senior pupils as there were so many of us, that showed us round and to our dormitories. It was a disciplined environment but I don't remember getting any rules or regulations explained. It was more a case of reading the information we had been sent and learning as you went along.

20. The next morning was our first day at the actual school and it was hugely different experience from anything I had ever known. In those days every morning at 9:00 am, there was a formal assembly in the very imposing memorial hall. All the teachers trooped in dressed in their full black cloaks, there was the singing of a hymn, a reading and any school announcements. It is ingrained in my head that at that time I was thinking what on earth is this. I was on my own, away from my folks and I didn't know anybody.
21. We then went to our form teachers and the ones I had were the Latin teachers. A lot of them had probably become teachers on the back of the Second World War. They were at the end of their careers and were grumpy old men. I remember sitting at the back of the class with a boy [REDACTED] who was a day pupil and looking at each other as if to say what are we doing here. It was petrifying just because of the characters, the whole formality, the big building, it was all so new and was a huge change from Pitlochry primary school.
22. It was finding my feet in a strange environment that I found it difficult at first as it did not seem geared to a twelve year old boy and what he might be thinking, experiencing and what he might be concerned about. I remember discussing it in later life over a beer with my brother who joined the military and we likened the culture at the school to that of the military.
23. I actually remember taking my children there to show them around and they said it was like Hogwarts from the Harry Potter films.

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

24. At 7:00 am every morning a gong would go off in the house that signalled everyone was to get up and go for a wash, get dressed and have breakfast before going to school.
25. You had to be mustered and ready to go to breakfast by 7:45 am. The morning routine wasn't particularly closely supervised but everyone knew that if you were late or

stepped out of line then some form of punishment would be administered. After breakfast it was back to the house to clean your teeth and then muster again to go to school.

26. In the evenings after prep and shoe cleaning you went for a shower. Bedtime was about 9:00 pm or 9:30 pm in year one and each age group had a different settle down time. You would be allowed to chat for a set period before lights went out.
27. In years one and two I was in a dormitory of twelve boys and it was a mix of year one and two pupils, which looking back was a massive issue. After year two I went to a different dormitory and although it was a random allocation, there may have been some choice to go in with some friends but it was largely year driven. I don't think the dormitories had a name or even a number. There wasn't a prefect in charge of the dormitory but I think there was probably a nominated person within each room.
28. There was always a housemaster or assistant housemaster on duty who would wander round the dormitories and a duty prefect who would always be trying to catch people out. Once lights had gone out there was meant to be silence. Inevitably when the lights went out we would chat and somebody in the dormitory had a radio. We would listen to Radio Luxembourg. What should have been a relaxing time wasn't because there was the underlying current of fear and worry that if the prefect caught you they would burst through the door and there would be some sort of violence meted out if you hadn't been sleeping.

#### *Mealtimes/Food*

29. In year one we were fed in the dining room in Glenearn House. It was tables of four and it was very regimented. You had to be on your best behaviour every minute of the day. It did need a structure or it would have been mayhem. Prefects would be sitting watching that everybody was following the process and that nobody stepped out of line.



30. By the time I started year two the whole school was operating on a refectory system where all the pupils got their meals in the Academy Hall which was a big building in the town. We had to walk there for all our meals. Breakfast and dinnertimes were staggered by houses arriving at different times so that everyone wasn't converging on the refectory at the same time. It was slightly more relaxed and it was a self-serve system. There was housemasters and prefects at the end of each table to make sure that nobody stepped out of line or misbehaved. Lunchtime was a much more casual approach and some of the day pupils went as well. The food was okay and it wasn't an issue. If you didn't eat it nobody force fed you it just meant you went hungry.

#### *Washing/bathing*

31. There was a big washroom with a row of sinks where we got washed in the mornings and a room just off it with a number of single shower cubicles where we had a shower before bed. None of the actual washing or showering was supervised and even the really young ones just got on with it themselves. I don't think I ever saw or was aware of them ever getting any instruction on how to wash properly.

#### *Clothing/uniform*

32. We had to buy everything before we started the school and everything had to have a nametag sewn in to it. Each boy had lockers in a boot room and there was store room where you kept your blazers and casual jackets on hooks. We also had lockers at the laundry room where the ladies washed and ironed your clothes and left them for you. The prefects would check your clothes and if they weren't folded in the precision manner all hell would break loose and a random punishment would be handed out. This could be an essay or it could be some sort of physical punishment like being struck with the slipper over the backside. What that caused was a constant fear of getting called out and some sort of violence attached to it.
33. Each night before you went to bed you had to make sure you sorted out all your kit and spent time in the boot room cleaning your shoes and rugby boots.

### *Schooling*

34. My form teacher when I started was Mr Meachan. He was older man and the school at that time was dominated by older male teachers. I suppose that was just the culture of the times. However by the time I left there was a mix of male and female teachers who were a lot younger. That probably changed when the school moved to become co-educational when I was in year two. This was a massive change and a lot of the older teachers were not happy. The culture softened which was absolutely a good thing.
35. We followed the Scottish curriculum and were pushed and well supported to get a good education although I think based on conversations with a flatmate who went to Crieff High the academic achievement was very similar. What Morrison's did give you was other experiences, the school one with all the activities and the house one. I didn't go on to do a sixth year because I didn't think it was fair that my parents couldn't afford to send my brother as well and by this time I already had a deferred acceptance for Edinburgh University so didn't need to stay on.
36. I had a lot of friends at school who were never paying attention and I just thought they were wasting their time and their parent's money. I saw this school as an opportunity, worked really hard, made friends with a lot of boys from my house who were in the year above and I used to sit and study with them.
37. School finished about 3:30 pm each day.

### *Sporting activities*

38. Sport dominated outside of the formal education. After school it was sporting activity and usually that was rugby. It was either training or playing matches four days a week. Rugby was huge at Morrison's. In the summer it was cricket and athletics and sports days was an athletic match, not an egg and spoon race. Any activity usually ended up in and inter school house competition at some point during that season and I really enjoyed it.



### *Leisure time*

39. During the week you didn't have much leisure time as such because of the structure of the day. After the sporting activity, you would go for dinner and then the evenings were dominated by prep which took place between 6:00 pm and 8:30 pm on Sundays to Thursdays. This had very formal structure and the room was set up like a classroom environment with desks. It was very regimented and the housemaster or assistant housemaster would supervise and control it but not teach as not all of them were actual teachers. On a Thursday night you were allowed to take a break to watch Top of The Pops in the common room but if you did that you had to make up the time at the end of the prep session.
40. On a Friday and Saturday night we were allowed to watch TV in the common room. There was a big recreation room at the back of the house where we went and kicked a ball about or we could go out in the back garden and throw a rugby ball.
41. On a Saturday we usually had a rugby match either home or away and on a Saturday afternoon we were allowed to go into town. We would go for a walk up The Knock which was a hill that overlooked the town and mooch about the local cafes for a bowl of chips and a drink of coke. Up until the last couple of years when the rule was relaxed, we had to wear our uniforms so that you were easily identified and so had to be on our best behaviour. There were regular problems with our compatriots at Crieff High. One of my friends, [REDACTED] of Crieff Hydro and very much ad hoc we would get to go up to the golf course and hit a few balls about as we had a membership through them.
42. There would occasionally be social nights on a Saturday for all the boarders at the Central Hall and on other Saturdays the film club would occasionally show films.
43. On a Sunday afternoon there was a walk for everyone from the house organised by the senior house pupils. We would still be dressed in suits or kilts from having been

at church in the morning and it would invariably be up The Knock and usually ended with some sort of violent game going on.

44. I was a member of the Morrison's Academy Scout Group which met in the school on a Friday night. I also joined the climbing group and the choir and there were loads of other clubs and activities available for all the pupils to join.

#### *Trips and holidays*

45. There was always opportunities to go on trips and I did go away overnight with scout troop. I went on organised climbs with the climbing group and I was heavily involved with the choir who travelled to Edinburgh, Perth and elsewhere for the opera.
46. In the summer between year four and year five I went on a really good holiday to Rome, Florence and Venice with the school. I remember we flew from Luton and I presume that was because it was cheaper so we would've had a coach to take us down there. Parents had to finance all these trips and holiday. There was a ski club that would organise trips in the winter abroad and up to Glenshee. The ski club was too expensive and I knew my parents were tight for money so didn't join but I never told them that was the reason why.

#### *Healthcare*

47. There was a matron who I would describe had a role of the 1980's version of wellbeing. I think she probably had some sort of medical qualification as she was the one involved in any medical matters. In year one there was a younger lady and although I have some evidence, a lot of this is hearsay, she got binned because she was too friendly with the senior boys more than anything else. Harry Beattie recruited an older lady who came in and took no nonsense from anybody. She became part of his management team and took a turn of being the member on duty some weekends.
48. Matron was in charge of the sickbay at the house. There were four beds in it and they pulled in a local doctor or nurse if pupils were really ill. I was there once for two weeks

with a really bad flu. If you got badly injured playing rugby or otherwise you went to Crieff Cottage Hospital. I was at the accident and emergency a few times following sporting injuries.

### *Bed Wetting*

49. I didn't wet the bed when I was there but I do remember one of the wee ones did and I'm sure it would have been dealt with sympathetically by matron or whoever. Again in the culture of the boys there would've been a lot of hassle over that as nothing was private. Not hassle from staff just the boys but that is all supposition on my part.

### *Religious instruction*

50. There was church parade every Sunday, you got no choice and you had to go. Up to and including third year you had to wear a kilt and then a suit as you got older. I was Catholic so a few others and I used to walk down to the Catholic Church which was at the bottom of Crieff. I saw this as a good thing as I was away from the main crowd unsupervised.
51. There was no emphasis at school on any particular religion. There were no prayers during the week but you did sing a hymn at assembly every morning. Latterly there was pupils coming in from abroad and were a lot of ex-pat community children being sent from abroad especially from Africa, the Middle East, the Far East, and some from Military families. I can't remember if there was any specific religious provision made for anyone of a different religion. There was capacity for them not to attend church as by the time I was in year five there were a lot of Chinese students had arrived and I don't think they were made to go to church as they just worked constantly seven days a week on their studies.

### *Work*

52. We never had any allocated work or chores unless you were disciplined for stepping out of line, got gated and made to do what Harry Beattie called fatigues.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

- 53. I can't remember birthdays being celebrated which tends to suggest nothing was done.
- 54. There was the usual school activities in the lead up to Christmas and there was a house Christmas party in the Boarders Social Club at Central Hall. The school would close for the Christmas holidays and I would go home.

### *Family Contact / Visitors*

- 55. In the first four weeks of school boys were not allowed any contact with home and the reason for this was to try and help them overcome being homesick. Everybody just had to get on with it. Somebody somewhere had decided this was a good idea rather than parents or a twelve year old child thinking that was something they could deal with. I hadn't been particularly close with my dad because he worked all the time and five years at boarding school didn't help. I was close with my siblings and my mum and I think she was more bothered than me about the four weeks of no contact.
- 56. It was a long four weeks and that was a big change. There were very few public displays of emotion due to homesickness because I think that plays with what the culture did to you very quickly. You closed down and didn't show it as it was perceived as a weakness. You learned very quickly that any weakness was picked on, not prefects but just by boys and probably girls and that was magnified when you were in that environment twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. I learned quickly to keep things to myself to myself and there was nobody to turn to. Looking back if I had to turn to anybody for support it would have been matron or Retta Beattie but that wasn't how it felt at the time.
- 57. After that first four weeks there was no phone contact with parents but you probably would have been allowed in exceptional circumstances. Everybody wrote to parents once a week on a Sunday morning. My mum used to write me a letter every week but I think my dad only wrote once, forced to by my mum and it was one page in red ink. None of the letters were censored or read by staff.

58. My parents never saw my living arrangements as it was just never done and there was no formal visiting. They would come over for parents' night probably twice a year. There weren't any other arrangements in place for parents to keep in touch to see what progress we were making other than report cards. I suspect my mum maybe kept in touch with Harry Beattie now and again to see that things were okay.
59. In between mid-term holidays maybe once every four weeks you were allowed to go home overnight on Saturdays. Mum would come and pick me up, she would usually speak to the house staff that were on so there was the opportunity for an informal chat then I suppose. This could be blocked if you misbehaved. It was a draconian measure and did happen but I kept my head down and did what I needed to do so don't remember having that issue.
60. Sometimes parents from abroad would come and take their children out for the weekend or a meal.

#### *Personal Possessions*

61. We were allowed personal possessions but you never had anywhere lockable to keep them. Very occasionally things would go missing and this was dealt with by the boys themselves as this was regarded as a breach of trust of the people you were living with. There was a spate where money was going missing and that got really uncomfortable because there was a real trust thing going on. It was back to that cultural thing that when something happened you just got that feeling of oh god the shit's about to hit the fan and it's not going to be nice.

#### *External Inspections*

62. I don't remember ever seeing or speaking to anybody doing any form of external inspection.

### *Prefects / senior pupils*

63. The house captain and prefect roles in the actual school were pretty standard roles but viewed as quite prestigious as that is the nature of the beast in these schools. The roles at the school were taken very seriously and they were picked by the school staff. Selection was based on activities, what you were involved in and what you were giving to the school. Clearly academic had some element of it, sporting ability very much so and ultimately behaviour and everything would be thrown into the mix.
64. Glenearn had a house captain and I would say ten prefects. There was an overlap between school prefects and house prefects as it was pretty much a foregone conclusion that if you were a prefect at school you would also be a house prefect. The selection process was similar but it was pretty much the housemaster's call as to who they were. It felt as if there was a different criteria. It was more about characters who were likely to keep things in order and there was less emphasis on academia and sporting achievement. It was more an enforcer role and that was where the problem was because the prefects were left to run the house. In my first year the prefects would have been put in place the previous session so Harry Beattie would have had no input on who they were.
65. The prefects were never off duty and if they were just wandering through the house and saw you doing something wrong they just dealt with it.

### *General Culture*

66. The general culture in the house was one where there was a threat of violence from senior pupils. I lived in constant fear due to the rules of the prefects. They were meant to keep order and look after the regular day to day running of the house but it was 'boy law' and if the boy next to you was senior to you he was very much seen as being in charge. I likened my first two years in the school to the book and film Tom Brown's School Days.



67. In year one I remember being violently sick in the night and thinking I was on my own. I was only twelve years old but had nobody to turn to and didn't tell anybody because of the culture. Previously I would probably have been off school the next day but just got on with because I had nobody to turn to and I didn't want anybody to know.
68. There was 'fagging' in the house. On the most part it was harmless and I believed it was a good thing. There were junior boys earning money for cleaning and carrying a fag master's kit and books. They got 20p pay to go with 50p pocket money a week. It was abused sometimes as it was not regulated or overseen in anyway and some kids were treated really badly. Some boys didn't have a choice, it was down to character I suppose. I volunteered for it, I had a good relationship with him and he was a decent guy. In year five I paid for a fag and even gave him a Christmas bonus.

### *Discipline*

69. Discipline in the actual school was that they were still actually using the belt. That was still the culture of the school for the day and it wasn't meted out every five minutes. I genuinely don't think it was used in an abusive way. I don't remember anybody getting unfairly punished by the teachers at school.
70. In the boarding house discipline was completely different to that of the school. When I first started officially it was fatigues but unofficially it was violence. At the time Paddy Turner had been the housemaster he was also an old school style English teacher who disciplined pupils with the belt. He let the prefects run the house on that basis and was comfortable with that physical type discipline and punishment. In year one it was very much still that style.
71. Harry and Retta Beattie who took over from him as housemaster and mistress brought in something slightly more appropriate. She was a much more balanced human being. They had inherited what they came into but I saw a gradual culture change. The prefects would occasionally still mete out punishments in the form of five hundred word essays but the violence stopped. There was still respect as there was still a hierarchy.. They looked at it and managed it in a different way. They brought in fatigues as the

punishment for pupils stepping out of line and this would be things like gardening or sweeping the tennis courts.

72. I don't think it was a case that they got immediate instruction to get the system changed more that it was a subtle change they introduced and selected a different type of character as their prefects. The type of guys he brought in latterly as prefects were more thoughtful ones and they were a million miles different from these big bears who were just enforcers and ran rampage through the house.
73. It couldn't have been a conscious decision on Harry's part to sort the problem out it must have just gradually improved. If it was he would have come right in and just sorted the obvious problems there were.
74. I don't know whether the senior management team or hierarchy had any influence on these changes happening or not happening. There is two ways of looking at that. One, Paddy Turner was a maverick and they needed to get someone else in because was past his sell buy date. That would be the positive way of looking at it but if that was the case Harry Beattie would be brought into say that is not acceptable and stop doing that.
75. I worry that it is more he was retiring from that job, he'd done his time and Harry came along. When you look at Harry's CV he is ex-military, he's spent a long time abroad in the East India Company, I'm not sure his CV was high in pastoral care and wellbeing and I rather suspect it was he was another guy brought in to keep order and discipline in that boarding house. It so happened that he and his wife were parents first and foremost who gradually tried to sort things in a culture they had inherited and it just evolved as they got used to the job.
76. I'd like to think the school thought this needed to be sorted but I don't think that's what happened. It would be difficult to say if the school had any influence that they wanted it to be run the way it had been by Paddy Turner because there was very little interaction between the school and the houses on a daily basis. I never saw the rector or a teacher ever in the boarding house. That just wasn't their domain.

77. I'm not sure if the other boarding houses followed a similar pattern to Glenearn in terms of discipline and punishments. It wasn't something I discussed much with people from other houses but I know that some of the girls' houses were pretty harsh regimes as well. I can't draw entire parallels with ours and I'm not honestly sure if it mellowed over time.
78. The fact that the school put the young boys in a mixed house with all ages of girls instead of the harsh regime in with older boys maybe shows they were trying to improve things.
79. When I was a prefect I would hand out essays or some type of fatigue as punishment and there was no violence. Things had changed by then and it wasn't the right thing to do anyway. The fatigue punishments were not recorded anywhere. I do remember getting in trouble from a battle axe of a primary teacher Miss McCallum and was very embarrassed when she came up to the prefects room and asked to speak to me. She told me she had been approached by a boy [REDACTED] who didn't know what he was going to write for a three hundred word punishment essay I had given him to write on Mrs Thatcher's economic policy. She told me it was ridiculous and she would defy Margaret Thatcher to be able to write three hundred words on it.

### **Abuse at Morrison's Academy**

80. I don't think the teachers, housemasters or staff took part in physical abuse whilst I was at Morrison's but they must have known it was going on because it was just so obvious and wasn't hidden behind closed doors. All of the management team, the laundry staff, and the cleaners were all milling about and would pass by, walk through a corridor or a common room and must've seen it. They maybe just hadn't given it too much thought about what impact it was having because it wasn't just about the physical side of getting hit by something or by someone. I suspect what they didn't have in their heads was the impact psychologically on forty or fifty kids who were on the receiving end or expecting to be on the receiving end of that. I don't think they

were part of it but I don't think they thought through enough the effect of fear on kids in their care who witnessed the others being treated harshly. It was a bullying culture and they did nothing to prevent the unfair way we were being treated.

81. Although Paddy Turner was before my time in the house he was still at teacher at the school. It appeared that he had encouraged this culture of violence and fear as punishment. I had such high regard for Harry Beattie he was a lovely man but he then presided over this for three years where he did nothing overtly to discourage it when it shouldn't have been unacceptable.
82. Prefects had complete control of what they decided to do and there was no checks and balances applied. There were certain boys involved but I don't want to name them. Punishment violence was usually handed out there and then but sometimes boys would be told to go and report to the prefects that night at a specified time. There was violence from the senior pupils any time we had free time. The worst time was when the school was closed due to heavy snow and this usually happened a couple of times a year. Day pupils were sent home and we knew that meant violence was coming. There were other times when it happened but to me this was the worst.
83. It would all kick off because the system didn't allow for a whole three or four hours of down time, so it had to be filled with something. The prefects would run locker checks and they would just run riot. They would pull everything out our lockers and that was the worst time, you just knew it was going to happen and sure enough it happened. There was usually a queue of people waiting to get hit with a slipper or some other form of violence administered by an eighteen year old on a twelve, thirteen or fourteen year old. They sometimes used a track shoe albeit not the spiked end. That was pretty lethal and it would be on your backside over your clothing in front of everybody else.
84. I got beaten a couple of times but most of the times I did the right thing. If you needed to fold your clothes you would do it but occasionally they would just beat you regardless. Most of the time it was when people hadn't done the right thing that they got beaten but that didn't mean it was right. It was easier to just conform and comply with the rules.

85. On the Sunday afternoon walks, the year four boys used to lead it. This was quite threatening and it used to worry me what was going to happen. There was a varying degree of violence meted out purely for their entertainment and for them to have fun by either hurting or scaring us.
86. If there was structure in place there was more chance that you stuck to the rules but where there was no structure then basically it was a free for all as far as the prefects and senior pupils were concerned and you were at their mercy. It was these times when there was nothing to do where the structure was disturbed by snow or something else and these Sunday afternoon walks with violence for entertainment where my fear was most heightened.
87. In year three I had a bad experience with a small core group of my year who had a tendency to always pick on someone and I was chosen to be the one. Harry Beattie saw this and although he didn't deal with it there and then, by the time it came to year four he told me he was putting me in a different dormitory away from that group who had made my life hell and in with a group of boys who I got on and studied with.
88. Events at school were a release and it was two different dynamics as the domestic side back at the house was a problem area because I was constantly living in fear of violence.
89. I never saw, heard of, experienced or encountered any form of sexual abuse. I don't know if that is the same view as my peers but that is certainly mine.

#### **Reporting of abuse at Morrison's Academy**

90. I watched people getting hurt regularly but I was in a situation where there was no way I would go out and tell anybody, it just wouldn't happen as your life would be miserable. It was the culture of you don't tell anybody anything. It sounds crazy now as an adult but that's what it was. You thought it wasn't right but you couldn't tell anyone.



91. I never told my family anything but I do remember thinking that if my brother [REDACTED] was going to come to the school I would have to look out for and after him. However he didn't come and by the time he would have been coming the culture was changing so I doubt I would have said anything to my parents.

### **Leaving Morrison's Academy**

92. I left after year five when I was seventeen years old. I never went to university despite having been given an unconditional offer before I even had my fifth year results. As the place was deferred for a year I decided to apply for jobs at every bank going. The deputy head who was in charge of careers advice called me in a couple of times and was genuinely appalled that I was not taking up the place at university. I actually saw him thirty years later and he said to me 'Ah <sup>GEZ</sup> [REDACTED] you are the chap that did it differently.'

### **Life after being in care**

93. After I left school I went back to Pitlochry and I got a job in Bank of Scotland. I worked with them for thirty nine years reaching an executive role in Lloyds Banking Group prior to retiring.
94. I got married and had two kids with my first wife. We got divorced and I had another relationship where I had another daughter and this is where all the impact stuff starts.

### **Impact and treatment/support**

95. During that period I had cause to go to relationship counselling and at one stage the counsellor suggested we had separate meetings as she could see it wasn't going that well. I sat down with her one day and she asked me about my relationship with my parents. I explained I had a very close relationship with my mother but didn't have a close relationship with my father as he spent 24 hours a day, seven days a week



working and the only time I spent time with him was when I was working with him in the shop.

96. I then told her I went to boarding school and the conversation went down a different tact at that. Within ten minutes I was sitting in her office with tears running down my face and remember thinking where the hell has that come from. I felt embarrassed and kept apologising to her. I had no idea what was going on. Given her profession she was very good and talked me through it. She then explained to me the percentage of screwed up ex-boarders that she dealt with as a counsellor.
97. After that it was the first time I stopped to think, hang on a minute what was that all about and why. I went through lots of trying to understand it and the impacts it has had on me. I spoke to another two counsellors later. The bank was very good at the services they provided in relation to wellbeing and support. It always came back to those issues that shaped how I viewed things and why my relationships were always a challenge.
98. I separated from that partner and I have now been with my current partner for four years. Interestingly we were speaking about this the other day as we knew I was coming to speak to the Inquiry. She said two things to me. One was that ever since the day I had met her I had talked about this. I had no idea I had. Secondly she said it was really obvious to her why I keep pushing people away and this was due to the things I had told her about my background.
99. I never had these conversations with my wife and other partner because these things ended acrimoniously and we didn't have the opportunity to sit over a cup of coffee and say, 'Tell me what did you think'. It all adds to the fact that there are things that have happened at Morrison's that have caused me real issues.
100. I know from a very early age I simply closed down. I didn't discuss emotions because emotions and feelings are weaknesses that would get picked on and I think I have carried that through. I tried very hard in recent years not to do that but that is very difficult not to do from a learned behaviour since I was twelve. So that has had a

massive impact and any professional advice I have ever had has been on that basis or theme.

101. I think my ability to trust was affected or more an expectation if I open up here, this is going to be an issue for me no matter how close I was to somebody. The counselling opened my eyes to it and its true you have to understand what the problem is before you can start trying to fix it.
102. I've talked I have talked a lot about the two separate sides of things. I had problems with the domestic side of boarding and then there was the school bit where I just rolled up my sleeves, thrived on it, enjoyed it and was good over there.
103. I've seen this in my life and professionals have agreed, that I have kind of watched that being mirrored in my personal life. I finished as an executive in Lloyds banking group and I loved that job, loved going out there doing some major things and some of the tricky stuff that we achieved over the years. Domestically you then turn and go home, and like going back to the boarding house, it's just a car crash and I have recently come to think there is something there, a parallel.
104. I don't believe that spending so long in a house where I was males had a negative impact on my ability to form general relationships with woman. Some of my best friends in every stage of my life have been females.
105. I think there are two problems, one is boarding school in general regardless of how supportive and nurturing they have been I think the whole boarding school idea is not good for family relationships. Then you get into the culture of closing down and not wanting to tell anybody what's going on so there's two elements going on there.
106. There are two people who in my formative years I viewed as father figures if you like. One was Harry Beattie who I looked up to and thought was a great guy and the other was my English teacher Alan Andrews. Both were lovely men who looked out for me and I regarded them more as father figures due to my more distant relationship with my father.

107. I've had to work really hard on the relationship with my father and I think that's in a good place now. It was my previous partner that said to me I had to make that effort or I would seriously regret it.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

108. I have never thought about reporting any of the abuse since because even before coming to this process of speaking to the Inquiry I thought several times long and hard whether it was of any major importance. Only after some of these conversations with my partner that I have discussed today I then thought yes there is something I should be saying and should let somebody else decide if it is worthwhile.
109. I think reading the reports in the press about the Inquiry made me realise it was about the wellbeing and care of kids in care and wasn't just about sexual abuse in the religious orders. I thought long and hard about it because I thought what it is actually going to achieve, am I just going to drag down an institution that I have very high regard for and that is the dichotomy of it. For all the bad experience, I am hugely supportive and loyal to the school that gave me lots of opportunities and good things in life.

### **Records**

110. I have never asked for my records from Morrison's. I would be interested in seeing if there was records of the pastoral care side of things but I don't think back in the day there was any such records kept.

### **Lessons to be learned**

111. I think time has moved on so it is not as obvious now. I guess it should be adults who are responsible and not abdicating responsibility. It is a fine line between giving some

responsibility to senior pupils who are nearly adults to learn about managing situations but not walking away and handing it all over, or giving some framework to it with whatever checks and balances that are needed but were missing previously.

112. Listening to my son, who was head boy at his high school, how he was managed by the school management team, the terms they used and how it mapped into our corporate world gives me hope that the system is actually bring kids through with the right support and the right levers and mechanisms to help them do things properly. That stuff would never have been talked about forty years ago.
113. When I phoned the Inquiry I genuinely didn't know what my hopes were because in the back of my mind I was still wasting your time. What I hope for now is publicising where the problems were. The more that gets made public, I'd like to believe the better the chance there is of it not happening again and the cultures being looked at.
114. I know Morrison's don't do boarders anymore but there is a shed load of schools who do, that are looking harder at how they doing things and saying are we sure we don't do that stuff and are we sure we are getting this right. Presumably inspectors and auditors are crawling all over these places.

#### **Other information**

115. 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.....

GEZ

Dated.....

26/4/22