

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

CCP [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

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1. My name is CCP [REDACTED] I prefer to be referred to as CCP [REDACTED] My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1961. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
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Background

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2. I was born in Munich. My mother raised me after my father, who was an academic, died of cancer when I was three. I don't have any siblings. I am married although I have never had any children.
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Life before Gordonstoun School, Moray

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3. My mother was from Iran and worked as a diplomat for the Iranian government under the Shah. I initially went to a French school in Germany. We eventually moved to Iran for three years.
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4. My mother was later assigned to Lahore in Pakistan. I was then put into a school called Aitchison College. This was a semi military institution. The [REDACTED] at this school was British. His name was [REDACTED]. He had been to Gordonstoun and this was where it started with him trying to get me in there.
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5. I could speak very little English at that time. I was a Christian and being within an Islamic school it was difficult. Lahore was very much a post-colonial establishment. It was very disciplined.
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6. [REDACTED] moved back to the UK. He became the [REDACTED] at Red House prep school, Moor Monkton in York.
7. I moved to Red House when I was twelve and sat the common entrance exam for Gordonstoun. This was my first time in Britain. My mother remained in Lahore. To my 'infinite joy' I passed the exam and was accepted for Gordonstoun.

Gordonstoun School, Moray

8. The day I went to Gordonstoun I had to go to Kings Cross station, London to catch the sleeper train. Your name was on a list so that they knew you were there. I didn't know anyone. It was all strangers. There was no formal welcome or pastoral care whatsoever.
9. My first impression of Gordonstoun, when I arrived, was that it was spartan. I was put into Hopeman House. It was divided into two parts. One for the boys and one for the girls. You were told that if you went into the girls area you would be thrown out. There was about sixty boys and sixty girls.
10. I was assigned a room by a prefect. These were called 'horse boxes'. It was a long room divided into four. Each person had their own space. There was a bed and a desk in your space. This wasn't too bad.
11. There seemed to be two types of pupil at Gordonstoun. One set were from very rich, upper class and posh families. The rest were from families who had made their own money, for example builders. It was like they were trying to buy their kids an education. These kids were the ones that would deal out a lot the beatings. They were very rough. I don't know of any pupils who were at Gordonstoun whose parents had also been there. The exception was to this was [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. He was a year older than me and was also bullied and miserable at the school.

Staff

12. I had a house master at Hopeman called ^{DFN} [REDACTED] He was flamboyantly gay. There was a lot of homophobic comments from the other boys. His nickname was ^{DFN} [REDACTED] He was an outstanding house master and was one of the best teachers that I had. There was a female housemaster for the girls but I can't remember her name.
13. The next year I was moved to Bruce house. There were about 65 boys in Bruce house aged about 12 to 18. This was the second most expensive school in the country and we were put up in huts. They looked like where soldiers from the second world war would live. There was no insulation and little heating. The conditions were appalling. The house master there was Angus W Scott. He had no people skills whatsoever. He wasn't interested in you. His thing was to say to you "Get on with it".
14. Bruce had an average of around twelve boys in each dormitory. It was freezing cold. The mattresses were filled with straw. You were given army issue blankets and that was it. Eventually we threw the mattresses out. We were then given cheap foam mattresses. These gave all of us back pain, so we went and got the straw mattresses back.

Routine*Mornings and bedtime*

15. In the morning a prefect would come and wake you up around seven. If you didn't get up straight away you were tipped out of bed. You had to go outside in only your shorts, no top. It was called your morning run, which was about two hundred metres. Bearing in mind it was the Highlands and it was Winter, it was freezing. The only time that we did not have to do this was if it was raining or snowing.

16. After the run you came back in and had to take a compulsory thirty second cold shower. The shower was very powerful. In saying that if you were in the cool gang, athletic or something like that you were not forced to do this.
17. Once you had your shower and finished your chores you went to breakfast and then to the chapel. The whole school went to the chapel every day. Everyone was encouraged to attend irrespective of your religious background.
18. In the evenings lights out were between nine thirty and ten. This was enforced by either a prefect or the housemaster. There was very little time that was your own to study. This was even when you were studying for your exams. There was no encouragement from the teachers to study and do well whatsoever.

Food

19. You ate your meals at the main Gordonstoun House. When I first arrived meals were served to you at the table by a senior pupil. This changed later when they opened the refectory. This was a more purpose built canteen style system. You started having to pick up your own tray and you were then given your food.
20. The food was appalling. At breakfast you would be given really greasy bacon and eggs. There was lots of toast and jam and very poor quality coffee.
21. Given the amount of money being spent the quality of the food was very bad. I remember the spaghetti bolognaise. This was in a large vat. The bolognaise would be floating about in big lumps at the top of the vat, as it was not meat but a soya substitute.
22. There was a lot of food waste. This used to really annoy me. A lot of the pupils had food accounts in the town. They would go into town and pick up what they wanted.

School

23. School started about nine or nine thirty. A typical day would be education in the morning until lunchtime. In the afternoon it would all be sports based activities. The best of it was the school was rubbish at sports. I think every other school in Scotland was beating them at sports.
24. There were two good teachers. One was ^{DFN} [REDACTED] who was a [REDACTED] He was a very good story teller and really got you involved. The other one was Anthony Jones, an English teacher. Unfortunately I didn't excel in either of these subjects. I think this was because I still had a very limited command of English. There were no extra classes laid on for me to try and support me in relation to this.
25. A lot of the other teachers were younger and were clearly there on the cheap. They were like glorified baby sitters.
26. I managed to attain A and S levels in French and German before leaving.

Chores

27. You were assigned duties to do every day after school and at weekends. These were delegated by your house master. I had to help clean my house area. This included cleaning the toilets, changing the beds and brushing the floors. I thought my time could be better spent studying. It was the second most expensive fee paying school in Britain yet you had to do all these duties. I couldn't understand this and it struck me as being a wasted learning opportunity.
28. When I became a prefect I started to do the delegating. However a lot of the time you would have to show people what to do as you were accountable for maintaining the standards. Sometimes I ended up just doing the work myself.
29. There was a punishment book where it would be recorded if you hadn't cleaned something right. Time would be put against your name so that if one of the seniors wanted somebody to do a job for them they could check the book. Once they found

someone who had time they could use this person and the time for the job they wanted done.

Punishments

30. Apart from the time going in the book for misdemeanours you could also be given time as a punishment that meant you had to run outside. If your crime was seen to be worse you would be sentenced to a PD, this was a penalty drill. You had to run around the buildings in a circle for whatever time you had been given.

Hygiene

31. There wasn't always sufficient hot water. This would depend on when you had a shower. If you were last in the queue or late there would not be enough hot water. This could equate to about twenty per cent of the pupils. You could however have a shower when you wanted. The showers were all open plan. It was a sort of military style set up. Shower times were seen as a sort of social event.

Leisure

32. At the weekends you had to go to compulsory chapel on a Saturday morning. In the afternoon it was generally a sports event that would be on. If you could afford it you were allowed to go to Elgin. You had to let someone know where you were going.
33. There was a lot of drinking alcohol at the school. Pupils would buy drink in Elgin and bring it in. It was rife. I'm pretty sure that even now the fields around the school are still littered with empty alcohol bottles.
34. There was nothing to do in your spare time. There was no encouragement for academic study. The cool thing was to be involved in sport. If you weren't in this group you were left out. It was very much a "Lord of the Flies" type situation.

Holidays/trips

35. At the end of term I would go back to stay with my mum in Iran. My mother wasn't really interested in what was going on with me at school. She was an academic and I don't think she understood why I didn't want to go back to that school. there were also cultural issues. For instance, my mother was convinced investing most of her salary to send me to the school meant she was buying me a top notch education, "Because the Queen sends her sons there".

36. One of things that was compulsory at the school was a camping trip to the Cairngorms. This would happen once a term. You had to walk about thirteen miles a day carrying heavy equipment. It wasn't particularly enjoyable especially when the weather was bad. We had to eat dry food that we had brought with us.

37. Another thing that we did once a year was to go on a boat called the "The Sea Spirit". We would sail around the north of Scotland. There would be twelve of us on the boat. These "cruises" were run by a guy called Barney and a Commander Eddlestone who were also on the ship.

38. There were no sanitary facilities on the ship. The weather was usually bad and everyone was seasick. We were told this was what a lot of the money was spent on, keeping this ship. I think it was to toughen you up. If you could survive this you would survive anything.

Religious instruction

39. The religious instruction was Church of Scotland based. You would be assigned to do a reading in front of the whole school. I was petrified and I managed to get out of it. I think I might have bribed someone to do it for me.

40. There was a hierarchy of where you were allowed to sit. The seniors would sit at the back and the juniors at the front. If you sat in the wrong seat you would be hit by the "cool kids". It could be anything, a dead leg or a head tonk. They were very skilled at hitting you and inflicting pain.

Personal possessions

41. Most of the kids had a "tuck box". This would have been given to them by their parents. When they returned to school these were always full of sweets.
42. I did have my own money that I could use in town to buy things. In terms of actual possessions I didn't have anything of value.
43. There was a lot of stealing going on all the time. If you left anything lying about it would be stolen. I got myself a cash box for my pocket money and this was stolen. There were house searches going on all the time. These would be carried out by prefects under the supervision of the house master. After a while I realised there was no point having anything, it would just be stolen.

Birthdays and Christmas

44. I was always home for Christmas as this was a holiday. Birthdays weren't recognised at the school.

Visits/Inspections

45. I can't remember there being any external, quality control type inspections at the school. In the five years that I was there I did not have one single visitor.
46. Parents of new pupils would be shown around the school. Prince Andrew would be used as the head of guests to show the parents the premises. To me this was disrespectful and tawdry.

Medical care

47. There was a sanatorium staffed by two nurses. You could go there if you were unwell. A doctor also came in on a daily basis. It was probably similar to the NHS.

There was this approach that "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger". Some people had worked it into an art form to secure an exemption from sports.

48. There was a lot of misdiagnosis. I think they were clueless. On one occasion, when I was about seventeen, there was a flu epidemic. They didn't know what to do. The answer was to give you two paracetamol and told to go back to class. I felt so bad I it hurt to breathe. I decided to go to bed knowing that I may be punished for this. I was in bed for two days but didn't get punished. I was threatened with a punishment but there were that many people unwell they couldn't do this.

49. The level of dental care was appalling. I still suffer dental care issues from my time there.

Abuse

50. I was subjected verbally and physically to every form of racial abuse on a daily basis. My English was limited but I could understand what was being said. I would be called a wog, Paki and darkie, every offensive name possible. It would be done in class or in the street, anywhere. It was almost seen to be cool for the boys to call us these names. It was perfectly acceptable to abuse others.

51. When I was about fifteen the inter house swimming competition took place. The head boy from my house organised our swimming teams. He made all us "darkies" swim in the same team. We were made to wear black swimming trunks and we were called the "All blacks". It was so humiliating. I don't think the housemaster was aware but the swimming competition was in front of the whole school. You think that there would have been some questions asked why we were all in the same team. Our housemaster, Mr Scott, didn't want to rock the boat about anything that was potentially problematic.

52. My chief tormentor at Hopeman was a guy from Newcastle called [REDACTED] He was the whitest guy I had ever seen. I was much smaller than him. He would follow

me all over the house and give me dead legs and arms. He would call me a "Paki" and tell me to get out his country.

53. I told a senior boy what was happening. He would simply tell him to stop it. [REDACTED] would stop for a bit and then it would all start again. You never knew when you were going to be hit or abused. It was 24/7 even when you were sleeping. After Hopeman I think [REDACTED] left.

54. When I went to Bruce there was a boy called [REDACTED]. He was big and at least a foot taller than me. He was also one of the cool guys. One day he was sitting behind me in the English class. He started flicking a scarf at my head. It was really humiliating as it was in front of everyone including the girls. It got to the point that I asked him to stop it. He kept doing it so I punched him. I will always remember this. He grabbed me by the neck and pushed me through all the desks and against the wall. He was about to punch me when a teacher came in and stopped it. I was the only person to stand up to him but I never dared to stand up to anyone again.

55. This wasn't just happening to me there were a lot of other boys getting the same treatment. It was all about just dealing with it and getting on with it. This was the housemaster Mr Scott's mantra.

56. [REDACTED] was another boy who would hit me constantly for no reason. Out of desperation I eventually went to Mr Scott's office and told him that I was being beaten up. I told Scott that it had to stop. At this time [REDACTED] was right behind me as he had been chasing me. Scott just said "be sensible" or something like that. As a result [REDACTED] just kept doing it. I had no mentor that I could talk to. There was no pastoral care.

57. There was a Saudi boy called [REDACTED]. He was called '[REDACTED]' after the TV programme Roots. When the seniors were away at their meeting the juniors got a hold of [REDACTED]. They stood him on his head in a large garbage bin. They hit him with broom handles. [REDACTED]'s cousin saw what was happening and he rescued him.

58. Sometimes I would be locked up in a wicker basket for up to thirty minutes at a time by the seniors. I would be in there until after they had their dinner. It was called "Paki bashing".

Reporting of abuse

59. The housemaster Mr Scott knew what was going on. He would see things but would just come up with platitudes and not intervene. This was similar to what he had said to me when I reported the beatings to him.
60. I repeatedly reported what was happening to me to the senior prefects. Nothing was ever done. It was just accepted to be the norm.
61. Recently I tried to report what had happened to me to the police in Elgin. The initial officer I spoke with basically blew me off. I just seemed to be passed from one person to another with nobody doing anything.

Leaving the institution

62. I was happy to leave Gordonstoun but there was also a bit of the "Stockholm syndrome". I didn't know anything else. As I hadn't seen any form of contrast I felt a bit of identity and fondness for the place. It was like I had survived it.
63. I was probably academically in the top one per cent of the crop from Gordonstoun. However this was a lot lower when compared to the education standards at other schools. I think people thought that because the Queen's kids had been there it should be held in the highest regard.

Life after the institution

64. When I left Gordonstoun I was given an offer by Stirling University. Instead I decided to attend a crammer at Oxford instead. A crammer is like a sixth form college where you prepare to re-sit you exams. I also did A level Economics from scratch. I decided to empower myself and study philosophy on my own. I subsequently sat the Oxbridge entrance exam for Cambridge. By this time I really didn't care. The result of my philosophy paper was of a scholarship standard. This made me really angry as I had wasted five years of my life at Gordonstoun.

When I went to Cambridge I met a lot of well-educated people. I heard the experiences of kids from similar schools to Gordonstoun. Their experiences were completely different from mine. They had enjoyed school and respected them. On the whole these students were very well educated people. They could properly deconstruct sentences and write essays. This really messed me up as I couldn't do this. Again it made me feel very angry. I was clueless. I hadn't been taught how to write an essay in the five years I was at Gordonstoun. This was a huge setback for me.

65. After university I tried to get into the film industry. I also did further courses and obtained more qualifications. I later became involved in work with IT. I have also been a visiting lecturer at a lot of different colleges.

Counselling

66. For the last seven years I have had weekly therapy sessions for my anger issues. These therapy sessions are now less frequent are less frequent now as I am living abroad. This treatment hasn't reduced my anger but at least it has shown me where it is coming from.

Impact

67. My time at Gordonstoun has strongly affected the rest my life. I have anger issues where I can go apoplectic. It has affected my relationship with my wife. In terms of

my self-confidence, I still have huge issues. I have a self-hatred and sometimes I have hit myself. I think this is because I never stood up for myself when I was younger. In hindsight between the ages of twelve and eighteen I would have done things differently.

68. I have been left with a manically driven personality. I had to create an alter ego, like an actor in order to be functional. This lets me do my job pitching to clients or when teaching a classroom full of kids.

69. I have huge issues with authority. It's one of the reasons I haven't been able to function as an employee. When I have been it's been for a short period. I will always challenge supervision.

70. I have never had kids of my own as I wouldn't want them going through what I went through. I have found it difficult to love anyone.

71. Years after Gordonstoun I spoke to my mother about what I had been through. She was in complete denial. In fact she took the credit for me going to Cambridge when this was all my own doing. This made it hard for me to have a relationship with her.

72. On the positive side what I have been through has made me creative. I have created my own companies and become an employer although it's a hard slog. I am now able to rise to challenges and I will try and overcome any difficulties put in front of me.

Records

73. I have never tried to obtain my records from Gordonstoun. It would be interesting to see what they said about me.

Other information

74. 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.

CCP

Signed.....

Dated.....

17th May 2018.