

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GBG

Support person present: No

1. My name is GBG. I have changed my name legally in the United States because of my profession. I wish to use my birth name which is the name I was known by when I attended boarding school. My date of birth is 1962. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before boarding school

2. I was born in Bethlehem and my parents are Palestinians who were refugees who had been living in Lebanon at the time. We came from a very poor background. My father was in the oil industry and as such he managed to accumulate a certain amount of wealth and prominence.
3. The reason I was born in Bethlehem even though my siblings were born in Beirut, was because my mother had my sister who was a year and half when she was pregnant with me. My father suggested she go to Bethlehem to my grandmother's house. That would mean she had someone to look after her as we had no-one in Lebanon. She went back to Lebanon shortly after I was born. I lived in Lebanon until I was about ten years old.
4. My older sister is called [REDACTED] and when we were in Lebanon my mother was more of a single mum because my father was not around because he was always

travelling. It was us three basically. When he was away my mother worked for my father doing office work for him as well as looking after me and my sister.

5. As a child I was fiercely independent and I had a very adventurous imagination. I wanted to explore and devour life because I felt a need to. I did all the stupid things kids do my age but I think in a certain sense I was too smart for my own age. I got in trouble a lot and did things I knew were bad. I wanted the thrill. I ran into problems with my mom, she couldn't get me to school sometimes. The bus would be waiting and she couldn't get me to school. That kind of created a rift between my mother and father because my father wanted me to be a certain thing and I was not. I was born an artist and my father wanted me to be a well behaved student.
6. The sort of trouble I would get into was things like leaving the house and not coming back for hours so my mom wouldn't know where I was. I would be out with the neighbour's kids and be climbing other peoples fences, going in their yards and picking from their cherry trees. In Lebanon we had these walls to try and keep people out and at the top they would cement the bases of glass bottles so that no-one could climb over. My gang and I would put towels on top so we could climb over the wall. There was one incident where the dog in the yard was not on a leash and he came after one of the kids and he had to jump very quickly without putting the towel down. He got cut and the blood started pouring out. That was one of many things we got involved in. We would pick up bullet fragments and shrapnel off the streets and collect them. I was pretty much a free spirit.
7. Growing up in the late sixties and early seventies was the hippy era. I was like a flower child as I didn't have a care in the world. Nothing really bothered me. I wasn't afraid of anything, I just wanted adventure. It was all in the air at that time with demonstrations in Lebanon, skirmishes between this faction and that faction, bombings and assassinations. It was a pretty radical place but it was a very beautiful place and I have some very fond memories of growing up in Lebanon with all its tragedy.

8. My father was working for a company in Aberdeen called [REDACTED] which was a big contractor for oil firms. He told one of his colleagues about the problems he was having with me and that person suggested he think about putting me in boarding school in Edinburgh. This is what eventually happened.
9. My father didn't really discuss me going to boarding school, he hinted at it to see my reaction. I was very resistant and got very scared because I didn't want to be away from my mother. After a while it became a topic that was normal. Not discussed just talked about in a way like 'you are going to go to boarding school, it's going to be great and you are going to be able to play all these sports'. It was all these sorts of things and they were trying to sell it to me all the time and I was just on the receiving end. I was just very suspicious about it, in the way that it was presented to me. Eventually I just went but I went with every fragment of my body not wanting to go.
10. On the first attempt he couldn't get me in because they told him that Fettes didn't accept foreign students and that you had to have had a relative who has gone there before or something like that. He apparently had some other contact who was on the Board or something like that and he got me in eventually.
11. I had only left Lebanon twice. Once to go to Egypt with my parents to visit an uncle and once to go to Libya to see my father when I was seven or eight. I had never visited Scotland before I went to start school. I didn't speak English, my second language was French but it was broken French. French had been taught at my school in Lebanon. [REDACTED] stayed behind when I went to Scotland.
12. I was very frightened travelling to Scotland. It wasn't like my father accompanied me to the school. I was shipped to the school basically. At that time children who were flying alone would have a thing hanging on their neck with a plastic holder with a passport and a ticket. A stewardess or airline representative would take them from check-in to passport control and then to the plane. They would put the child by the commissary area of the plane by the bathroom for staff to watch them basically. It was a very lonely journey to London. I felt very scared and I cried the whole time. Someone from British Airways took me from one terminal to another to put me on the

second plane to Glasgow. I think this would be just before my tenth birthday. I turned ten in Glasgow. My father had a friend who was a woman and she had a son who was my age. They were going to host me before I went to school.

13. I was told I didn't need to take a lot of things with me, just underwear and things like that because at school it was all uniforms. You didn't have the luxury of having your own clothes, I didn't have a whole lot but I don't remember packing so my mother may have packed my suitcase. I think I brought some baked goods and maybe a gift for the woman who was hosting me. Her son was not going to Fettes. I had met him once before in Libya. My father had worked in Libya as he had a big contract there and he was the son of one of the engineers. I think I met him when I was seven and we got along quite well. I suspect it was that same engineer who suggested boarding school for me.
14. The time I had in Glasgow was interesting because I couldn't communicate with the boy so it was all about human behaviour communication. It is not verbalising things. It is a very lonely existence and even his mother couldn't really talk to me.
15. I didn't have to sit any sort of entrance exam for Fettes. They wanted me to go through the process of getting in like all the other students with all the other prerequisites and so forth but I didn't have any of that because Fettes wasn't accepting a lot of foreign students. I think I was one of the first few in 1972. I had a document I had to renew through the police. It was like a little green book and every time I would go they would stamp it.
16. Nothing had been done to prepare me for the move to a new country and starting boarding school. I didn't know what to expect and was completely ill-prepared. As a matter of fact when I did go to school ,which was maybe a few weeks after I arrived in Glasgow, I still couldn't speak any English. I think my father's logic was that I would have picked a little of it up.

Fettes College, Edinburgh

17. I started in the junior school which was for children aged 9-13 or fourteen I think. It was something like that. The senior school was 13-14 and upwards to seventeen or eighteen. It was all boys and the only women we saw on campus mainly were the cooks in the cafeteria, the nurse and the housemaster's wives.
18. The actual house where I lived was almost connected to the school. It was Moredun House, 2 Carrington Road, Edinburgh, EH4 1QR. Some parts of the school were newly built and the others were really old. They modernised another building and made it into the junior school. There wasn't a lot of students. I don't think there were more than fifty or maybe sixty. The main school itself was shaped like an abbey cross and that is the one at the top of the hill you can see on brochures and that type of thing.
19. If I am not mistaken virtually all the children were boarding. There may have been a couple of students, maybe children of teachers, who had homes outside of Fettes but I would say about ninety percent of children were boarders at that time. I do remember there would be cars lined up sometimes to pick up students so there had to be students who lived outside.
20. In the boarding house we were in one room and we had three bunkbeds so it was six of us all living at the housemaster's house. In my room I remember one boy's name was [REDACTED] who was a very big boy for his age and was much taller than everybody else. His father was in the navy and was the captain of a submarine. One of the other boys was a nice guy who was easy going and maybe had the last name [REDACTED]. We had to call each other by our last names. We didn't get to call each other by our first names. That was the protocol.
21. I wasn't in any other dormitory in the junior school other than mine so I don't know if there were more in my house or elsewhere. I am assuming there were because there had to be more for the other students who were boarding.

22. In junior school the housemaster and his wife were responsible for looking after us at night. If I didn't feel great I could knock on their study door and he or his wife would make me feel better. Again, when you can't communicate with someone who doesn't speak your language what can you do. You show up and if you are crying and miserable you can't express yourself.
23. In senior school I was in Moredun House and Mr ^{FTF} was the housemaster.
24. The structure of the routine and school are all very similar in senior school compared to junior school. Reserve Officers' Training Corps training was introduced in senior school on Wednesdays and you had compulsory chores to do and you just had more things you were responsible for. I don't specifically recall what all the differences were for me I just blended into the senior school.

Routine at Fettes College, Edinburgh

First day

25. My father showed up a few days before I was supposed to go to school and he and the lady I was staying with drove me to the school. I don't recall any visits to Fettes before this. I arrived a few days before the school started. I felt lost and didn't know what to expect. I cried a lot.
26. I met the housemaster whose name was Mr ^{FTG} and he was a very charming and nice person. He and his wife made me feel comfortable at the beginning. As days go by and you start meeting the other kids you realise it was not going to be an easy thing because a lot of the kids couldn't communicate with me. They looked at me and I was different from them, I looked different, acted different and couldn't speak the language. I wasn't accepted by any means. There was a lot of mocking and making fun right from the get go.

27. In those first few days Mr FTG either had a person who was working for him or someone who was a friend who walked me through the school. The junior school was separate from the senior school but they were on the same perimeter. You didn't interact with the seniors but you would see them here and there. It was just an introduction to that campus. It was just a huge campus for a little boy and I felt like I was in a country all of its own. That was the only introduction I got. They didn't even tutor me in English they just kind of threw me in there. I was just expected to learn English myself as I went along.
28. When I went to Fettes Junior School and I remember the housemaster's wife was from Malta and she tried to talk to me. Maltese has a little bit of Arabic in it. I didn't understand much of what she was trying to say and I didn't really know how to respond.

Mornings and bedtime

29. In the very first year I had problems sleeping. I was a mess.
30. On an average day we would be woken up around seven, get up and get dressed. After breakfast we would come back and get ready for class. They would ring the bell and you would be there for whatever class that you had.
31. Bedtimes were always very structured. We would be told it would be time for bed and we would have to go and brush our teeth and get into our pyjamas. We would have to be in our bunks and they would come and turn the lights off. Some kids would fall asleep right away and some kids would talk. Kids would get into trouble if they were caught talking. I think Mrs [REDACTED] would come in, ask who was talking and basically put them in check.

Mealtimes/Food

32. Our meals were taken in the cafeteria so in the morning we would go there for breakfast and it was horrible. It was porridge and if you got a fried egg you were lucky. If you were early enough you would get a roll so it was competitive at every level. It

was not a place you could just coast so you would have to compete with everybody else on everything including food. I remember on a Sunday we would have the best breakfast out of them all. On Sunday we would get sausages, baked beans and that kind of thing.

33. The cafeteria was used for the junior and senior school but there were different sections for the junior and senior schools.
34. The food was served to us so you would have to stand in the line, take a plate and go to the servers who would put the food on your plate. There was never enough food for everybody. If you didn't get there on time by the time you got over there would be nothing left for you except for porridge. Once they ran out of food that was it. The luxury of getting a bread roll was difficult. They put them on the tables and it was like a piranha attack. The kids would just grab them and take as much as they could. Some were greedy and some were not. Getting milk was not easy either.
35. The other meals were not much better really. It was a lot of stews and haggis. Things like that. It was very different from the food I was used to so I lived more on things from the tuck shop than I did on their food. I would buy potato chips and sweets. I was a growing boy and I was hungry all the time.
36. The staff didn't oversee the mealtimes because we had prefects. Prefects were students and they really shouldn't have been in charge in the first place. Prefects were senior school and they took care of their own people. There would be one member of staff there but they were not supervising or regulating the food distribution.
37. There were no choices with the meals. If you didn't like it there was nothing else to eat.
38. I think we could get tuck every Tuesday and Thursday although I am not sure it was definitely those days. I didn't get pocket money initially but I asked for it. I asked Mr **FTG** and I think he asked my father. There wasn't anything else I could use my pocket money for in junior school as you couldn't leave the school. I didn't handle the money.

It was basically a ledger so there was no actual physical money. There was a limit to what I could purchase at the tuck shop. They wouldn't let you spend an exuberant amount of money. I think back then the most you could spend was £1 or £2. It wasn't a lot of money it was barely enough to last you the two days.

Washing/bathing

39. We showered at night in the senior school and the showers for the junior school may have been in the morning. I think they had open showers which were not locked. I had no privacy. The shower in Moredun didn't even have a roof I don't think. The showers and bathrooms had no roof. You would walk into the showers and they were so steamy because it was so cold as it was literally outside and you wouldn't be able to see where you were going.
40. I found the lack of privacy extremely difficult. I came from a conservative culture and not showing your body was an important thing. It was very difficult and very embarrassing and humiliating for me. I would wait for everyone to be finished before I would go in.

Clothing/uniform

41. I think I arrived before school started and they took me to a place on the premises that had supplies of the uniform. They had all my sizes and that is where I got the uniform I needed.
42. Our uniforms meant that we were basically wearing shorts all year round so in the cold winters it would be very harsh. My body wasn't used to it and I would get really dry skin. I remember my knees would get so dry that if I bent them they would start bleeding. For me it was an excruciatingly harsh climate that I wasn't used to. I came from humidity and sun so I was constantly cold and shivering trying to get to the cafeteria on time.

Leisure time

43. I don't remember having free time but if I did have free time then probably my memory is supressing it as that was probably the time I would reflect on my life as it was at that moment. I didn't want to reflect on it.
44. At the weekend some people might read but we didn't have a TV privilege. We didn't have any kind of entertainment or recreational activities like games, table tennis or pool.
45. I was supposed to be in the choir. I was forced to go and had to show up like everybody else. It became mandatory for me to sing even though half the time I didn't know what I was supposed to be singing. I would just be mouthing. I still remember the gentleman who was in charge of the choir. He was a music instructor with a very distinctive look. He was a tall man with a beard and a crown of baldness which kind of made him look odd.
46. In senior school the temptations and things that went around were very much different and more serious. There would be alcohol in the school and people sneaking out from the campus when they were not supposed to and coming back. The kind of things boys would try to do.

Trips and holidays

47. We didn't get taken out for any trips like swimming or the cinema. I do remember who I believe was Andrew Lloyd Webber came and he was doing a production of Jesus Christ Super Star. He came to see us sing and picked us from the schools he had been to see to be in the production which was fun. We were involved in the production of that and also Joseph and his Technicolour Dreamcoat. We had school productions that I was involved in but they didn't give me a lot of lines for obvious reasons. We

would be transferred to them and that would allow us to be out later past our bedtime. We would get tang and biscuits afterwards. Tang was a powdered orange drink.

Schooling

48. I don't know if I can judge the quality of the teaching as I had nothing to compare it to. I came from a very open no rules situation to something which was the extreme opposite. Every ounce of my time, effort and being had to be structured to suit the school. In hindsight being an adult and reflecting back on a lot of the schooling I got it was very hard for me to retain information under these circumstances. It was hard to focus and understand so I struggled a lot. My reports were not good. Each one had teachers saying that I tried but was not progressing and I was not at everybody else's level.
49. I couldn't speak or understand English and I didn't know what to say. All I wanted was for them to tell me what I was supposed to do. They would tell me to sit in class and try to follow through. I would sit there clueless basically and try and figure things out. I didn't get any tuition to teach me the English language. Every lesson I got was in English and I didn't understand a word of it. I was taught Latin, English, maths and science and I didn't know any of it and I just sat there and stared at the teacher, pretending that I understood everything but I didn't understand a thing.
50. My English progressed after a while but I was always catching up. I never felt that I was at the speed of everybody else. There was never a conversation about me getting tutored in English it was just expected of me to try and adapt. I did the best I could and with hindsight I don't think I could have done anything else beyond what I had tried to do.
51. If I recall correctly it would be one or two classes with the teachers coming in and out so we stayed in the classroom and the teachers for the different subjects came to us. It was a very structured programme and we didn't have a lot of time off. Everything was at the school unless it was some sports when we would use the fields in the senior school.

52. I think after class in junior school we had sports but sometimes sports would be done midday. I think they picked and chose people based on their ability to play rugby and this would be done after school until it got dark.
53. I remember in junior school there was one lady who taught us French. In a way I think I was one of her favourite students because I actually knew a little bit of French. She was nice. I think she was the only female teacher. I get emotional thinking about her but I think it was because she reminded me a little bit of my mother maybe. It might be my only happy memory from that time.
54. In senior school I think the school day finished around six but we would have to do study time after the regular school. It was done at a little desk at a little cubicle where you sat down and you had nothing but shelves and books. That was your space when I was in Moredun House. That was the only time you got time to sit down and have space by yourself but when I say by yourself it is in the room with other people.
55. I managed to gain seven O Levels. No As, a couple of Bs and mostly Cs.

Sporting activities

56. It was all very structured. They would make us go for a run in the morning. I would be gasping for breath as I wasn't used to being very athletic at that time. I think that was in the morning before breakfast but we didn't have to do that every day.
57. At the weekends we would do sport so we would play soccer which I think was an organised activity.

Healthcare

58. We had a doctor in Edinburgh where we could go and when I hurt my hand I went there and they took an x-ray. The doctor told me I had fractured my knuckle and I was told to put it in hot and cold water. There was also a nurse based at Fettes at the senior

school. There wasn't a nurse in the junior school which is why they took me to the doctor. They had a driver drive me and pick me up in a van.

59. If I felt unwell in junior school it was basically Mrs [REDACTED] I could speak to. One time I went to Lebanon and as soon as I got back I broke out with this skin thing. I don't know what it was. It may have been measles or chicken pox but I infected a lot of people and they blamed it on me.
60. I think there were a couple of suicides during the time I was there. I am not sure who they were because I wasn't friends with anybody. It was mainly faces I knew. Maybe I knew a few names here and there but I never was friends with someone. I think one boy [REDACTED] and they found him about a week later [REDACTED] and you couldn't see it from the windows of the school. I heard about other boys dying whether it be suicide or not I am not sure. Maybe it was an overdose because they had drugs there too like [REDACTED] and all that.

Religious instruction

61. We went to church every day and on a Sunday it was a long service. It was something like an hour and a half or two hours. It went on and on. The main guy who took the service was a divinity teacher at the school and he was the pastor as well. During the week it was chapel in the morning after breakfast I believe but before school started. On a Sunday it was around ten or eleven.
62. My family was Muslim, secular Muslim, and we were not particularly religious. I asked my mother and father what I should do when everybody goes to church and they couldn't really tell me what I should or shouldn't do. They told me that I would be in the house of God whether that be Christian, Muslim or whatever religion. They thought as long as it is the house of God then it doesn't matter. I wasn't offered any other alternative religious service.

Personal possessions

63. Everyone would keep their belongings in their trunk which was kept in the bedroom.

Bed Wetting

64. I didn't have any problems with bed wetting. There was a boy that had a problem and he would get the brunt of bullying and laughing. [FTG-SPO] were not pleased about it but they were kind enough to kind of brush it under the table and not talk about it to give him a chance. That boy left, he couldn't stay.

Visitors/Visits

65. My father would drop by from time to time to surprise visit me. He actually, at some point, established a kitchen cabinet company with his Scottish partner which was in [REDACTED]. He ran that company to pay for my education basically. He would take me out of the school but we had a very strained relationship. I held a lot of animosity towards him. I was very scared of him too so it wasn't like a pleasant experience. Sometimes I couldn't wait to get back. It didn't give any sort of respite it was more of a chore than an outing. I would tell him about being bullied and stuff and he would tell me that if someone hits me I should hit them back doubly hard. I didn't know what to think of that and he didn't understand it. Sometimes it was six or seven boys against me.
66. One time I was invited home by another student whose name was [REDACTED]. I think his dad was a reverend. They were very kind people and I went to stay with them once and they brought me back. I am assuming my parents were contacted to authorise this but I am not sure. I may have had a conversation with my mother about it when I may have told her but I don't know if that was before or after the visit though.

Family contact

67. When I was new to the school I was told I could call my mother once a week. I would call her and ask her to please get me out of there. I would tell her I didn't want to be there. Sometimes she would cry down the line. My father dominated the family and it was his way or the highway basically. She was not equipped to have any authority and therefore she knew she couldn't do much about it. I felt that. I think it was so painful for both of us but especially for her because she is a single mom really. She didn't have anyone from the immediate family around her either. It wasn't something that was afforded to me every week because international calls at that time were very expensive. I got to make these calls for the first couple of weeks only. I would probably speak to my mum once every month or every six weeks. It was something like that. They would try to limit the length of the calls to a few minutes not only for the cost but they didn't want me to get more emotional. FTG-SPO didn't want me to get more attached to me talking to my mother. They were not present when I spoke to her. They would shut the door and leave me in their study.
68. While I was at Fettes my mother had my brother who is twelve years younger than me. His name is [REDACTED] and he lives in Sussex I think.
69. During holidays there were times when I stayed at the school and there were times I left. When I did go back to Lebanon it was either Christmas or summer, mostly summer. Sometimes at Christmas I wouldn't go back. One time I stayed at my father's friend who had a son similar to my age and one time I stayed with a family in England that my father had befriended. I did that maybe three or four times so really I only went back to Lebanon in the summer.
70. I was overjoyed going home and couldn't believe I was actually home. It is a very long journey from Fettes to Beirut and it took me a day and a half to get there. Going home gave me great joy for the first couple of years and then civil war broke out and it changed everything.

71. There was a holiday which was only three or four days and I stayed on the school campus for that. There were times when it would be me and another student. At that time I was numb and I think I repressed my feelings.
72. They did encourage people to write home but here lies a dilemma. I was at an age when I was barely beginning to grasp Arabic which is our written language and I didn't know English in the written language so how I am supposed to communicate with people? It was really hard to do. Meanwhile the school was trying to teach me Latin on top of that which was another factor to contend with.

Personal Identity and Isolation

73. No one took the time to speak to me about how I was feeling. I was away from my family in a strange country where I couldn't speak or understand the language. It was a very lonely existence. The school didn't do anything to accommodate my difficulties. No English tuition was given to help me and I was taught and lived in a world where I couldn't communicate with anyone and was made to feel very different because I was different from everyone else there. The only person who showed me kindness was [REDACTED] who was in my year. He was a very good student, he was the top student of the school. He was not a big boy, he was slight, he was thin and very intelligent. He was the boy who invited me to go to his house for one of the holidays. I can't remember which one. I have tried to find him many times but have not been able to connect with him.
74. My feelings of isolation continued throughout the senior school. I took my aggression out playing rugby. I think a lot of my fellow students respected the fact that I became a decent rugby player and I was able to communicate more.
75. I felt the only way to blend in was to change my identity. That was a lesson I learned very hard early on. I just wanted to be accepted but nobody accepted me in Fettes. Not even the teachers accepted me. I felt that I lost my family when I was ten, my parents, sister and later on a brother. It was just me so I decided to mould myself to

something that meant I lost my identity so I could live without having to worry about being accepted and part of something.

Discipline

76. Keeping in mind that the ages in the junior school were from ten to thirteen or fourteen the discipline part was very tame compared to senior school. It was mostly disciplining by you can't have this or you can't have that. Privileges would be taken away such as you can't go to the tuck shop. It wasn't physical in nature. I think Mr **FTG** did discipline somebody. He caned him but it wasn't me and I think it was because he left the campus.
77. They would use running as a punishment but that was more in the senior school. They would make you do a variety of different tasks in a row in a time limit and if you didn't beat the time limit you would be punished even more. It was a cycle. It was prefects who dished out the punishment and it was all traditional so these punishments would have been dished out for decades before then.
78. In the boarding house I thought **FTG-SPO** were quite strict but it was nothing compared to senior school strict. Not even close. For me coming from that flower child attitude it was strict but there was such a difference between the levels of strictness from junior to senior school.
79. I got punished a couple of times in senior school. Twice was for fighting once by the headmaster Mr Chenevix-Trench and once by Mr **FTF** the housemaster of Moredun.
80. I think there were expulsions and suspensions for more serious disciplinary issues. I think I heard about them but not in my house. I think Carrington House had one and I am not sure if there were any others. I think you could be expelled for not being at school overnight. I also think if you got caught shoplifting in the town and the police were involved then you would definitely get expelled. I think if you were caught with alcohol it was a caning. Caning was for smoking as well

Prefects / senior pupils

81. The senior school had a prefect system and the prefects were basically the enforcers of the rules and the traditions of the house that you lived in. They looked after the way things were done. When you move to the senior school you become someone's slave. You shine their shoes, pick up their laundry, tidy their study and really anything and everything they ask you to do. They can punish you for it. At that time I had been at Fettes for two years and my English was better. I could communicate a little bit better but I couldn't keep up with the classes and all the things they wanted me to do.
82. Prefects could not use corporal punishment. That privilege was given to the headmaster and the housemaster. The prefects could do more creative punishments.

Abuse at Fettes College, Edinburgh

83. I would like to say a general statement about junior and senior school as a lot of students couldn't handle it. They did go back to their parents to say 'get me out of here' because they were being bullied and they would leave after one semester. The students who stayed are the ones who didn't have choice and they were hard. They were hard because they made them hard. Their parents made them hard so the bullying that came from those students was unbelievable and really brutal. Their parents had treated them so poorly they became very hardened children. The school nurtured that atmosphere and it took pride in that toughness. It was known as a place to fear after I became more aware of where I was and found out it was one of the toughest schools you can ever attend. I believe that was quite well known. As an example they would always use other schools to motivate us with the rivalries and staff would humiliate us. They would breakdown the free spirit that I and some of the other boys had. That was their speciality. They wanted ultimate control and for them to do that you had to take pride in where you were and who or what you represented. It was pride in that name of Fettes. It was not specifically talked about but it is implied. It is implied in the strategy of breaking down the kids, humiliating them and making them feel worthless. They thought negative reinforcement would create tough kids who

would become real men. Fettes has memorials of pupils who had died in World War One and Two. This is not an institution that was known for its kindness. They wanted to build men out of boys and that is why we had our OTC training every Wednesday. We never got to be a child, all these children had to become men at that young age. That is exactly what my father wanted for me.

84. When I infected a lot of people with measles or chicken pox after my return from Lebanon the bullying got even worse. That was still when I was in junior school. It was everybody who blamed it on me because I was the one who got it first. They were saying that I had brought it from Lebanon and that I was a disgusting foreigner.
85. The bullying from the other boys started right away. It is easy to imagine at the beginning of the time I went to Fettes I was very small for my age. The longer I stayed the fatter I became but I didn't grow in height so the bullying got worse as not only am I short but I am short and fat. The teasing, mocking and bullying just got worse. It included tripping up and pushing and it all accelerated and I had to accept it. I got hurt. I had a black eye once. I also got into a fight with [REDACTED] and I hit my wrist against the metal frame of the bed and it broke. He was a big bully, nothing but a big bully. He wanted to provoke me as much as possible. Everybody looked up to him and he was like the authority between the kids. He was big and way taller than me.
86. I think [FTG-SPO [REDACTED]] and other staff were aware of what was happening. When I had my black eye they knew what had happened. I don't know of anything they did about it. I did something about it afterwards. I found a dead branch when I was walking from the cafeteria at night. It was pretty dark and the three people who bullied me the most including [REDACTED] were walking together. I had had enough. Something snapped in my head and I just ran towards them with the dead branch. Before they knew what was coming I had hit [REDACTED]. The others must have thought I was a maniac so they hurried back running into the house. I got in trouble for it. I had had a black eye from them and I was beaten. I think my weekend free time privileges were taken away and I had to stay in the dormitory. This all happened from the get go and continued during junior school.

87. There was a man who was the whitest person I have ever seen in my life. He almost looked like he was albino. He had white hair, white skin and his eye lashes were white and my guess was he was in his thirties. He looked freaky and maybe my point of view is just skewed by what he did but he did literally look odd. If I had to guess his name I would say Mr Smith but I don't recall for sure. He walked with a certain arrogance and there was a certain air about him where he always sucked the power out of everything around him. He had that presence where he wanted to make sure everybody knew he was in the room and when he wasn't like that he was angry. It was almost like he wanted to be the centre of attention all the time. I can't remember what subject he taught. It was either English, science or something to do with languages. He would point the finger at one of the students and say 'your turn you read' and we would have to read what the book said. The first time I witnessed him abusing was not when he was abusing me it was somebody else. He called the student up to his desk because he couldn't read well. The student would be standing up and he is sitting down. He would be pointing with a smirk on his face and he would put his hand up the student's shorts. At first you can't really tell what he is doing because the desk is between you and him. I remember the boy's reaction. He started crying and yet the teacher would continue, he wouldn't stop. I guess he would realise he would be pushing his luck so he would stop and the student would be sent to sit down.
88. It happened to me twice early in my stay at Fettes and by the time it did happen to me I understood what it was that he was doing. He was not only putting his hand up my shorts but he was groping my genitals and basically squeezing them. The first time it happened to me I couldn't breathe. I was shocked and I didn't know what to do. I had seen it happen before and I had seen the other kid's reaction but I didn't know what I should do and how I should react. I didn't know if this was a punishment, part of the school's punishment or whatever it was. I basically jerked back and he pinched the inside of my thigh. He continued to squeeze my genitals and all the time he had this rage in him that I could feel. He had this smirk like he was feeding off the power of children. After I started hysterically crying he let me go and I went and sat down. The second time I moved and he grabbed me by the hair and yanked it with such violence that I think I fell down on the floor. I stood up and I was so afraid but I had no choice but to stand up and he continued doing what he was doing. I think at some point I just

started quivering. My body was just reacting even though I was telling myself to stay there because I didn't want him to pull my hair again. At that time he knew he could control me so he let me go and I went and sat down. I think the shock just kind of took over. The fact that it happened the first time was shocking but the second time was even more shocking and I didn't know what to do. I just didn't know. I went to the other guy who I had witnessed this happening to him but he looked at me and walked away. I didn't know what to do or what to say. It happened maybe five or six times in front of me in class with other boys. I can remember their faces but I can't remember their names. It was hard because I didn't have any friends so I don't have any recollection of names. It was just me myself. I believe this abuse was both sexual and physical in nature. At the beginning it would be more molestation by squeezing our genitals. The way that he dominated us if we resisted became aggressive.

89. What I remember about this man is that he had two daughters and I think they were twins. One day I looked at them and I said to myself something like 'God help the daughters'. What he was doing to us made me fear what would happen to them. They were just babies then. I don't know if someone complained about him and he got into trouble but he went away for a while but then he came back. At a guess he was away for about a year. This was still when I was at the junior school.
90. This teacher's abuse was also on the rugby field as well. It wasn't sexual in nature but he was a total tyrant. He would pull boys' hair left and right, hit and kick them. It was just a pure vile meanness. He was a rugby coach and he was just a very violent man. He didn't behave like this when other adults were around it was only in front of the other students. He was very careful about that. I don't have a timeline about his behaviour because it happened so often so I don't know if it was part of the pre him leaving or post him coming back.
91. When I was in senior school, when I was thirteen or maybe fourteen, I was subjected to racist bullying. I ended up getting into a fight with two boys who had been bullying me and when the prefects walked in they saw me on top of someone so they thought I was the aggressor. I was going through this type of racist bullying throughout my time in Fettes because I was the brown guy. I was sent to the housemaster at Moredun, Mr

FTF Mr FTF asked me to go and find a branch that was whippy enough to hit me but wouldn't break. I was told that if it broke he would have to start over. That was the psychological torture that they used to break down the kids. I had ten minutes to go find one and go back to him. I did and he used it on me across my buttocks. Lucky for me it didn't break.

92. Another time I was caught fighting with my bullies Mr FTF told me what I did was very serious and I was going to have to have a chat with the headmaster. He sent to see Mr Chevenix-Trench who was regarded a war hero and everybody looked up to him and thought that he was such a great man but my experience is kind of bizarre with him. I was very frightened and this lady opened the door and let me into his study before he came in. He was a very small man and he had these glasses which had a patch over one of the lenses. I think he had been tortured in World War Two. He wasn't in great health and couldn't see out of one of his eyes. He asked me if I knew why and what I was there for and I nodded. He told me to lay on the couch with my back arched on top. He had an actual wooden cane. He struck me across my buttocks and I think he made me take down my trousers but I didn't take down my underwear. With Mr Chevenix-Trench it was different because it was almost like he enjoyed doing it. I could see for a small man the amount of force he put into it took every ounce of his effort to do it. It took unusually long before he started doing it. I remember I was very sore and tears were going down my eyes. He smiled at me, told me to sit down and then he rang a bell. The lady who had opened the door for me came in with tea. Very bizarre.
93. In senior school the mockery, teasing and bullying wasn't as frequent but it was much more violent. I wouldn't just take it anymore so I would fight back. That created a clash all the time with me defending myself. I was injured frequently. My nose was broken, I suffered bruising over my body and black eyes. I never got medical treatment for these injuries because you were expected to take it. There was never any enquiry carried out. The schools culture was about being tough. It was literally about ploughing through whatever the odds were. It was not about babying. If you went to the nurse people would mock you for it. That kind of atmosphere is really kind of military like. There wasn't anyone that I or any other child could go to speak about things like this.

94. When I was in Moredun the prefects put a boy in a frozen bath where he started having hypothermia shock. I witnessed that. The boy had to leave in an ambulance. There was a bath for the prefects and only they could use it. You have to keep in mind that that section of the showers and bathrooms had no ceiling so they would run a bath the night before until there was a sheet of ice on top in the morning and then they would put the student in it for a punishment for five minutes. I do not remember the name of the child who was taken away in the ambulance.

Reporting of abuse at Fettes College, Edinburgh

95. The first time I got a black eye [FTG-SPO] asked me what happened and I told them but I didn't see anything happen as a result. They didn't do anything about it that I am aware of. I think the staff were aware of the bullying but they didn't know what to do about it. It was lack of experience I think.
96. It was the same as the sexual abuse. It was rampant and it was obvious as it was in front of everybody and yet nothing was done about it. They looked the other way. Everyone knew what this man was doing. The students and the other teachers but they just didn't do anything about it. I remember one of the teachers saying something pertaining to him. I think it was about an incident with a boy but I don't exactly recall the incident but another teacher made a comment like 'oh you have so and so next' and he insinuated that he knew that this was a bad person. He kind of felt bad for us.
97. I never said anything about the teacher who sexually abused me and the other boys. I know I didn't have the words to tell.

Leaving Fettes College, Edinburgh

98. Right after I sat my O Levels my parents saw how depressed I was. I don't know what turned them into realising after six years at Fettes that it wasn't working. They decided to take me out and put me in another boarding school.
99. I went to a place called Hurtwood House, Guildford in England and it was the Club Med of boarding schools. It was the complete opposite. We had trips to the pub, we had a smoking room and gender co-ed. There were a lot of shenanigans going on between boys and girls. It didn't feel like a boarding school it felt like a big family. I think we had 56 different nationalities and it was not a big school, there were maybe 200 students. To me it was like I had been a prisoner on rehabilitation. I was someone who was extremely shy, didn't know how to communicate and I was always in a corner. It was extremely tough for me to adapt to that freedom that I had. I didn't know what to do with myself with all that free time.

Life after being at boarding school

100. I carried on with my life and finished my education. I always wanted to be an actor since I was a small boy but I knew my parents wouldn't go for it and wouldn't support me. I went to the United States with their help. They didn't want me to go to the United States at all actually. I visited my uncle when I was seventeen and I saw the US and the vastness of it. I could see the freedom and opportunity and I wanted to stay. I tried to get my uncle to talk to my father to let me move there and it worked eventually. It worked but my father was hoping he would make it so hard for me that I would beg to go back.
101. I went back at the age of eighteen and I literally lived in one room with a basin at the YMCA for a year and I had a bicycle where I had to bike three miles to go to college and come back. He wanted to make it so hard for me so I would go back to the UK but I hung in there and I changed his mind after I showed I could become a good student.

I went to college and studied Business. My BSc is international business and my Masters programme was in marketing.

102. Legally I couldn't work in America and I had to be a student full time so I finished everything in five years. When it came to going back my parents had moved from Lebanon because of the war and they had lived in Jordan so they wanted me to go back to Jordan. I had a Jordanian passport because Palestinians who were refugees were offered Jordanian citizenships back in the 1970s. I would have had to go back and serve two years of mandatory service and I didn't want to do that so I was trying to find a way to stay in America. I applied for a second Masters programme and I studied that. Meanwhile my parents had applied to immigrate to the US. I was very lucky as they got their approval when I was about to start my second Masters degree. Through my parents I was able to have the opportunity to become a US resident.
103. I changed my name when I became a US citizen in 1991. There is an opportunity for every US citizen who has been naturalised from another citizenship to change their name to whatever they want. I changed my name for professional reasons but now that I am going back in time the decisions I made may have also related to my childhood which was running away from my identity.
104. I got married although the marriage ended we have a son who is nine years old.

Impact

105. As a result of the Fettes experience depression started quite early in my life. It carried on for many years and carried on even when I moved to the USA. I have battled depression most of my adult life.
106. The family dynamic was fractured. I felt abandoned and I felt that what happened to me was something that I deserved. I internalised it and my head assisted in thinking it was something I should embrace instead of deny. It also created a problem for me of low self-esteem and not being comfortable in my own skin.

107. My thoughts have been self-destructive and many times I thought of suicide.
108. I have feelings of not being whole and of having been robbed of my childhood and cultural identity. I think that is part of the name change to be honest. Nobody accepted me at Fettes and I just wanted to fit in.
109. I have outbursts of anger and this primarily comes from the fact that there was nobody there to help.
110. When I was at Fettes I had to learn to become self-reliant because I couldn't rely on my parents any more. A lot of my friends thought I had become arrogant and full of myself but what it was was me distancing myself from people so I didn't get hurt.
111. I found it hard to form relationships. It affected my marriage, it is still affecting me now and it affects my son. My ex-wife would tell me she couldn't deal with my bursts of anger. She was a very sensitive person. I have never hurt anybody physically or intentionally hurt them emotionally. The punishment I use for my son is time out and I haven't even given him time out in four years.
112. I found it hard to keep a steady job having to accommodate people and play the political game of how to do a good job and move up the ladder. It is not that I was interested in it but it was a necessity for me to survive. I just had a big problem with authority. I just didn't feel I was equipped to deal with it.
113. I abused alcohol but luckily I didn't get into drugs. I tried to numb whatever I was feeling inside by acting out and feeling something else whether that be artificial or not. I just tried to mask what was inside of me. I did try to pretend to be normal. I'm still pretending.
114. Everything always comes back to Fettes and I have found throughout my life I don't know how to talk about it to people. During conversations where people ask where I am from and about my background they would be very amazed by it. People have

never heard anything like that before and it is like it is something from a movie. It is very surreal and people would never believe that was what it was like. It became like a badge of honour for me in a way because then I can process it in a positive way instead of a negative way. That is also masking something much deeper, that I was dealing with something in a different way than I should have.

115. A lot of the times my psychologist didn't even know because I didn't talk about the abuse. The abuse was something that was so sacred to me and I felt deep shame and I felt deep anger. Even to tell a psychologist or psychiatrist that that had happened would be giving them too much power over me. That is not something I like to do and it is something that I learned from boarding school that when you give someone power over you then they will abuse it. It has been very hard for me to talk about it and I only talked about it with a couple of people. That was much later on in my life, in my forties maybe. Now I am talking about it more because I don't want it to control my life.
116. I came away from Fettes feeling like I could handle anything because I was really tough inside. I was completely tough but I found it hard to feel anything and that can be an advantage but it didn't allow me to live my life because you are living your life at forty percent and not one hundred percent. Children at boarding schools are taught to not let people inside or have joy in their life. The skills they teach you are probably best suited for people in the military or something similar but not for me. They were definitely not for me as I am an artist and I have feelings and emotions. Maybe that is why I became a professional actor because I didn't want to be myself. I ask myself why and I don't know but these are the cards I was dealt. At this point I just want to make it easy for my son and be a good father to him. Like I have accomplished something.

Treatment/support

117. I saw a psychiatrist when I moved to America in the second year. He told me that I was clinically depressed and that I needed medication. I was on medication for a few

months and I didn't like the way it made me feel and I told him I didn't want to take it anymore.

118. I have been in and out of therapy. I can't say exactly how long for but I have had six or seven therapists for a variety of different reasons but a lot of this started from an early age. A lot of this comes not only from the abuse by the teacher but by the abuse from the students which was rampant and relentless.
119. Some of the therapy has helped but it is not about me anymore it is about my son. I am just trying to be a dad and I have never really had a dad.

Reporting of Abuse

120. When my son was about the age I was when I went to Fettes it made me think about the abuse I suffered there at such a young age. I didn't cross the doors of people in power because of my time at Fettes. It was a huge step to decide to report it to the police in Scotland. I didn't know if my abuser was still alive. It didn't dawn on me he would still be alive and then I started reading online about people coming forward and telling of their experiences. But then the police didn't do anything about it.
121. I felt it was not right that I tried to report it and they did nothing. So what if this person is ninety something years old, does that mean they should just forgive him? I knew him by the name Smith however I believe now that he has changed his name and is living in South Africa. I understand that they are considering extraditing him however I don't know if that will happen as I think the authorities are concerned about his age. I just wanted to do something about it because there were so many victims. The ones that I saw alone amounted to six people. Can you imagine how many more people there were? This is only about when he was at Fettes. We are not talking about other schools he went to teach in or anything about his own daughters. I don't know but it is disturbing. I am not doing it for anything other than I want the school to be held accountable because the school looked the other way many many times. I could tell they knew and they swept it under the carpet. Whether they have a network of people

who can do that for them or not they managed to manage it and it shouldn't be managed.

122. I haven't had any contact from the school since I left.
123. I contacted the police in Scotland about a year ago in 2021. I emailed them and they at first responded positively that they would like to take my statement and find out more details about it. They said they would forward it to another department. Then I got an email from someone who I guess was from that department and they said it is a historical crime and we will not be proceeding with it. I felt betrayed and it is a form of abuse really. It leaves me with the feeling of 'blame the victim'. It is very hard for me as these are the people who are meant to protect you and I have been failed again.
124. I have instructed a solicitor because I have had issues in my life and had I not had these issues then my potential would have been much more. The fact that I actually thought about taking my life isn't something any person should have to think about. I have thought about it hundreds of times. The fact that they knew about it and didn't do anything. They let him come back. I don't know if anything is happening. They asked me to sign the release of my medical records which I did. It was a lawyer in Scotland I contacted because I felt they would best represent me as a survivor and see what the school is willing to admit. I may hire an American lawyer because even though I am far from Fettes it seems like they are having some kind of event in New York. I thought to myself I should just go get myself a sign and stand out there. This would make people aware that my country are hosting the school that was responsible for my abuse. I haven't really fully decided if I will do this yet.

Lessons to be Learned

125. I think boarding schools for children up to the age of fourteen should be banned. I just don't think they should be available and parents should never ever be given permission to put their child out to a boarding school aged nine or ten. That is child abuse in my opinion. I would say that the experience that I got from Fettes changed

the trajectory of my life into something completely different than I imagined my life would be. They teach you to have no feelings or emotions and to be tough.

126. Boarding school prepares you for maybe how to react in a disaster or something but what else? Nothing. Okay you could get a wonderful world class education but if you are messed up in your head what use is that? You become a very complex person full of issues and insecurities but really intelligent and really educated but they are creating psychopaths and not people who are balanced. They create people who are ill mentally and giving them an education on top of it so because they are educated and as tough and hard as they can be they become dangerous. They become people who can do bad things to other people.
127. I hope by coming forward I can get something off my shoulders but that is only one aspect of it. I hope that enough people come forward and that will have an impact on the school. That they would do something about it and admit to it. They don't even admit to it to the point of what happened. I think the general statement was so generic and said something like 'they are one of many schools in Scotland....' No, Fettes needs to be identified exclusively and not be bundled up in a basket of other schools where abuse went on. That is diluting the extent of my pain by saying you are just one of the guys. Truth be told every single school should be named and be identified with a beginning date and list of people who came forward to speak of the abuse that happened to include the kind of abuse. These schools are still recruiting students and still charging money for the education. They need to take responsibility.

Other information

128. I learned about the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry through the Fettesian newsletter. I got it about a year ago and read about it. It said there was another Inquiry before and I thought I needed to be part of that process. It would maybe help me deal with things and move forward with my life. Maybe take something off my back or my chest. I don't know if it is going to help or not.

129. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed..........

Dated..... 25 May 2022