

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Kim WOLFE MURRAY

Support person present: No

1. My name is Kim Alexander Wolfe Murray. I have always been known by that name. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1962. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going to Boarding School

2. I was born in London and lived with my father, [REDACTED], and my mother, [REDACTED]. My father was a journalist. He and my mother married when they were both in their early twenties. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
3. My parents were quite bohemian and artistic. They had a lot of artistic literary friends who would come to visit us a lot. It was quite an interesting milieu to grow up in. We moved around a bit growing up because of my father's work. We spent time living in Leeds. Then, we moved to the Scottish Highlands where my father wrote his first novel. After that, we moved back to London when I was around seven years old. We returned to Scotland when I was around nine. We lived in my grandfather's house just outside Peebles and I spent a year at a local primary school. My parents decided, during that year, that they wanted to start their own [REDACTED] in Edinburgh.
4. My parents started their [REDACTED] around the same time I went to Edinburgh Academy in 197[REDACTED]. They were in the process of setting up this new venture and we were a good hour commute from Edinburgh, so I spent my first term at the Academy

as a boarder. My parents were generally of the view that they would send [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I to schools that best suited [REDACTED] needs. I was considered academically gifted and competitive so I was sent to Edinburgh Academy, even though my father had a very negative experience at public school and was very anti-establishment. He attended Eton College, but they didn't seem to consider Edinburgh Academy of the same ilk as English public schools.

5.



6. During the first year of the [REDACTED], my father was increasingly away from home [REDACTED] around the country. As time went on it became apparent that my mother excelled in her role as a [REDACTED] and ended up taking over the business completely. This coincided with the breakdown of the marriage which led to their separation. My father based himself in the flat in Edinburgh and my mother continued living in the house in Peebles until I was sixteen when it was sold. These were particularly stressful years for me, both at home and at school, with my mum operating as a single parent mother, running the [REDACTED] on a shoestring, and commuting to Edinburgh from the Borders.

Edinburgh Academy

7. I think I was quite keen and enthusiastic about going to Edinburgh Academy. I had a very open relationship with my parents so we had discussed it at length and it seemed like a good decision. I knew I was initially going to board on a temporary basis. Boarding seemed like a bit of an adventure. I was a big reader so I had read about children at boarding schools in various books and both my parents attended boarding

schools. It wasn't as if I was going to be too far from my parents and I would get to go home for some weekends.

Initial memories

8. I went to the Academy in the first year of preparatory school. I recall sitting an entrance exam prior to going to the Academy but I have no memory at all of my first day there. I also have very little memory of the daily boarding routine.

Mackenzie Boarding House

9. I was put in Mackenzie House with Mr Dawson as the Housemaster. I can't recollect the exact number of boys in the house. It must have been somewhere between twenty to thirty. We slept in dormitories with maybe five or six boys to a room. I remember there was an assistant housemaster, but I can't recall his name. There was also a matron around.
10. I have very vague memories of my time in the boarding house. I remember washing, brushing my teeth, getting into my pyjamas and being in the dorm at night. It was lights out at a certain time and we weren't supposed to talk after that, but we did.
11. After I had been in the boarding house for about a month, I started going home at weekends. It wasn't every weekend, but I have clear memories of taking other boarder friends, whose parents were living abroad, home with me for weekends on several different occasions. I was also able to write to my parents often.

Upper school

12. The upper school at Edinburgh Academy was like entering into a world of masonic rituals. The teachers wore gowns, you had the traditional form of punishment with the clachan and prefects were called ephors. There were all these unique little traditions within the school. In the background, you had this Greco-Roman architecture and a lot

of Greek ideals which the school adopted. It made it distinct as a public school, almost distinguishing itself from the other Edinburgh merchant schools, as they were known.

13. My general perception of the upper school was that it was a much more aggressive environment. The teachers were, as a rule, unfriendly and didn't take any particular interest in me or my academic performance. I gradually found myself losing focus in my studies and either the teachers didn't seem to notice, or weren't interested in the fact that I was no longer doing well. In my adult life, I've always put my loss of interest in academia down to the circumstances surrounding my parents separation, the atmosphere of the school and the feeling of not fitting in. More recently however , I have found it helpful to understand my behaviour according to the trauma symptom of disassociation. This would explain the sudden switch from being academically gifted to sliding into the remedial classes within the space of a year.
14. There were a couple of good teachers at the school who stand out as being the exception to the rule in terms of my learning experience. One was Chris Hall, a sculptor who came to the school every Friday afternoon after classes had finished when we did 'pursuits'. He showed an actual interest in my work and I've always felt that the things I learnt from him during that one hour made a lasting impression. The other was the English teacher and my class master for one year, Mr Jarman. He seemed like a kind man and I remember one time he was forced to punish me with a clachan due to some trouble I was in. I remember feeling sorry for him because you could tell he really didn't want to do it and the beating was more of an empty ritual.
15. If you got left behind academically at the Academy, there wasn't anyone there picking up on that. The classes were split according to grades. As I fell behind, I ended up in the bottom set which was full of bullies and lead to me being really badly bullied in my fourth year of upper school. It was the year I had Mr ICL [REDACTED] as my class teacher. I don't think Mr ICL [REDACTED] or the school were aware of, or took any interest in, bullying.
16. In my fifth year, I managed to escape becoming a regular bullying target and got accepted into what was considered to be the 'cool gang' which included some of the more charismatic boys in the year above. Once I got established with that crowd, my

studies really didn't matter anymore. At that time, the punk scene was coming in which just reinforced the 'I don't care' attitude. My interest completely fell away and my impression was that the school lost control in those years. The failure rate when we got to Highers was incredibly high. It would have been 197█ and a massive percentage of the school had to go back to resit their Highers, but I left the school at that point.

Pastoral care / Parental involvement

17. Pastoral care is a concept that didn't even enter my thinking when it came to the Academy. I was never aware that it was available or was a resource I could access, even during the term I boarded at Mackenzie House. That coupled with the lack of parental involvement with the school, did nothing to help the feeling that I was just falling through the cracks.

Discipline

18. There was of course corporal punishment at the Academy, but I didn't have any experience of being savagely beaten by a teacher. I did however have experience of teachers losing their temper. SNR █ during my time at the school, was Mr K SZ █. He came across a quite a weak man and he certainly didn't command the respect of the staff or the pupils.
19. There were ephors in the upper school, but I wasn't subjected to discipline or punishment by them. The boys who did particularly well academically or at sports tended to be picked to be ephors. They seemed to be a bit of a law unto themselves. I just stayed clear and tried to stay out of trouble, as much as I could.

Peer bullying at Edinburgh Academy

20. I was badly bullied in my fourth year of upper school. I used to dread going into school every day for fear of getting beaten up. I was picked on constantly for a period of time but had no idea why I was being targeted. I remember on one occasion getting picked up and thrown across a classroom by another boy. I don't wish to name him as there were several other boys involved. It was more a case of mob rule and an example of how the boys were imitating the violent behaviour of the teachers.

Abuse at Edinburgh Academy

Hamish Dawson

21. I initially encountered abuse within Mackenzie boarding house. Mr Dawson had a reputation for unusual punishments. My punishment was being told to strip naked and lie in a cold bath while reciting Baa Baa Black Sheep. Mr Dawson stood over me as I did this and I seem to remember two older boys being in the room. He just watched me and I don't remember him saying anything. He liked to co-opt kids and get them to participate somehow in these unusual punishments. I can't recall what that punishment was for. It happened shortly after I joined the school and I think it was actually some kind of initiation into the Mackenzie House way.
22. Mr Dawson would try to make out that these types of thing were a bit of a game. You were definitely being punished, but it was a game for him. I don't particularly remember the boys discussing his behaviour in the house, but it was quite a public thing. It wasn't as if it was done behind closed doors. Even at that age, I knew it wasn't right. I just didn't necessarily think of the sexual element to it. It was very humiliating.
23. I also have a memory of being down in the basement of the boarding house. I remember the boiler and heating pipes. This is where it gets confusing. I have a visual memory, or what I think is a visual memory, of being tied to the heating pipes and being tickled with a feather by Mr Dawson, or witnessing another boy being tied to the

heating pipes and being tickled with a feather. I just can't be sure whether that happened or whether it was a dream. It's very unclear.

24. There was a sinister aspect to being around Mr Dawson. As I found out when he was my history teacher in upper school, he had a whole series of punishment sticks. These sticks were all part of his performance. He would use them on boys for the smallest of errors. In retrospect, I can see he was quite kinky in the way he would find any excuse to get a boy to bend down so he could give him playful taps on the bum with the sticks. It was normalised behaviour for him.
25. Within the context of the upper school, Mr Dawson's antics didn't stand out, they fitted in. While his behaviour was inappropriate, he certainly wasn't a brute. He was friendly with the kids and not overtly aggressive like some of the other teachers. One thing I would point out about Mr Dawson was, at least for me, he was a good history teacher in the sense that I enjoyed his classes and he seemed to bring the subject to life.

Iain Wares

26. When I was a day boy in the prep school in 197█, Mr Wares was my class teacher. He taught maths and English, but that's not something I personally remember. I have a memory of being called out to his desk at the front of his classroom, on the pretence of him checking my work, or something along those lines. I remember it was summertime and warm outside. Mr Wares put his hand up my shorts and felt my genitals. I remember him looking at me in a very controlling manner, like I was in his power. Then he smirked at me.
27. I just remember feeling dumb struck. It was like I was paralysed. It's strange in the sense that I can remember the event and the feelings clear as day, but all the other memories around it have been lost in time. I don't remember much about the aftermath, but I do recall telling my parents what had happened.
28. When I first got to the school, I was told that Mr Wares nickname was 'Weirdo Wares'. The nickname was in general use amongst all the boys, so I can't recall the first person

who said it to me. I wasn't told why he was called that, but as soon as he abused me, it became clear. I initially thought it might have happened behind his desk so he could get away with it, but having recently spoken to one of my friends who witnessed Wares doing the same to another boy, I was able to visualise his classroom more clearly. It wasn't hidden at all. It was in front of the whole class and that was very much the shock of it as well as having some idea, even at that age, that he was clearly getting off on it.

29. Mr Wares got away with his behaviour for so long and in plain sight. Looking back on it, it struck me that he seemed to epitomise all the values of the school in his outward appearance. He was such a clean cut, striking, handsome man. You could describe him as dapper. He just fitted in to that culture. He was so much part of the system that he was protected by the school. The fact that his abuse was covered up by the institution that was responsible for the care of its pupils is unforgivable. That was something that really hit me after I left the school. The Academy was a law unto itself, reinforced by the very repressed, middle class culture from which a lot of the kids came.

Other abusive teachers - Upper School

30. In addition to Mr Dawson and Mr Wares, there were other teachers who had strange behaviours which stood out. There was a woodwork teacher who was a very strange man. I can't remember his name but I heard recently that there had been complaints about him. Mr ^{IBU} [REDACTED], the PE teacher, was an aggressive and generally unpleasant character. I remember him lurking around the changing room showers which I found strange. There was also Mr ^{IBP} [REDACTED] who was a [REDACTED] teacher and a very overweight man with an unpleasant smell. One of his punishments was to physically sit on kids. That didn't happen to me, but I witnessed it happen to other boys.
31. There was Mr ^{IDZ} [REDACTED] who was a [REDACTED] teacher. He would throw implements at us if we didn't get a question right. I remember being hit with a chalk duster which had been thrown at my face at high velocity. Then, there was Mr ^{ICL} [REDACTED], my fourth year class teacher. His nickname was ^{ICL} [REDACTED] which doesn't leave you in any doubt as

to his character. He was clearly a troubled guy. He was angry and aggressive and seemed to have a lot of problems controlling or disciplining a class.

Reporting of abuse whilst at Edinburgh Academy

32. Shortly after Mr Wares sexually abused me, I reported it to my parents which seemed like the natural thing to do. They reported it to the headmaster. I remember my parents coming to the school which was a fairly unusual thing to happen. Soon after my parents met with the headmaster, Mr Wares left Edinburgh Academy. I found it strange that he left because of my parents complaint to the school. Although I hadn't personally witnessed it, he was clearly doing this to others, so why hadn't it been brought to light before?
33. Mr parents were always very open with us and treated us like grown-ups. It felt a very natural and automatic thing for me to discuss with them. The idea of sex or talking about sex in our family context was quite normal. I became quite conscious as I got older that I really came from a very different background to most other kids at the school, who came from very middle class Edinburgh families. I felt very fortunate for the relationship I had with my parents and the fact that I was able to talk about what happened and it was acted on.
34. I also discussed the incident with Mr Dawson and various other things with my parents. My understanding was that they didn't think that kind of behaviour was unusual for a boarding school. Like it was part of the folklore of these institutions. However, what happened with Mr Wares was crossing a line.

Leaving Edinburgh Academy

35. I left Edinburgh Academy in 197█ at the end of the sixth year, aged 17. On my very last day, I remember meeting with my class teacher Mr Harris. He wasn't a bad man, but I didn't really have a particularly good relationship with him. His last words to me

were something along the lines of “your prospects in life are terrible, you are unlikely to succeed at anything you do in the future based on your failure to achieve anything worthwhile at this school”. I remember trying to brush this remark off and pretend it didn’t affect me, but it cut me to the core and felt like I had been stigmatised by him. I had no idea what he had previously thought of me as I had hardly any dealings with him in my last year. Today, I find it difficult to understand why a teacher would think it would be helpful to condemn a pupil’s life chances in such a comprehensive way on his last day.

Life after being at Edinburgh Academy

36. Shortly after leaving the Academy, I got a job in a factory through a friend who did work experience there. I got involved in drugs and then, a crushing depression seemed to come out of nowhere and stopped me in my tracks. I couldn’t carry on with my job.
37. I had a girlfriend at the time and that fell apart. I would be down one week and the next I would be excited, manic and high. I fell into a period of manic depression which lasted several years. I wasn’t completely incapacitated. I attended Stevenson’s College during that period to try to get some A Levels but dropped out after a term. At times, I was quite crippled by this illness. Most people in my circle weren’t even aware of it as I’d hide at home during my down periods. I did have suicidal ideation and made one attempt at taking my own life but stepped back from the brink at the last minute. It was a really difficult time, particularly as there was a lot less awareness of mental illness in those days.
38. While I was suffering from depression, I was living at home with my mum, just outside South Queensferry. She took me to see a psychiatrist at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. They suggested medication, but I didn’t go down that road. At the same time, I saw a psychotherapist who really helped me balance my mood swings. It made a dramatic difference.

39. Eventually, my dad sponsored me to go down to London to do some A Levels. It was a good experience for me to get away from Edinburgh. I got into London University to study English, but that didn't last very long. There were too many distractions in London.
40. I ended up coming back to Edinburgh, but I was still unsure what I was going to do with my life. I met up with a friend from school who invited me to a Buddhist Meditation group that was being taught by a visiting American Buddhist monk who lived in a monastery in Northumberland. It really helped me open up on a deeper level and brought more stability to my life. Soon after, my friend joined the monastery and six months later I followed him to train as a novice. A year and a half later I ordained as a monk and stayed for a total of thirteen years, leaving the monastery in 1984.
41. After I disrobed, I moved back to London for two years where I did a counselling course before returning to Edinburgh. I ended up working in community care, specialising in mental health until 2001. After the birth of my son in that year, I started up my own painting and decorating business as I didn't think I could afford to bring him up on the income of a support worker. I have since specialised in renovation and have acquired various plastering qualifications. In 2014, I got married to a woman who is half Scottish and half Indonesian. Over the last few years, we have been spending a lot more time with her Indonesian family. I have also been getting back into my meditation practice. In 2014, I got married and my family is from Indonesia. In the last few years I have been spending more time with my wife's family in SE Asia.

Impact

42. If a school is about readying you for the world, Edinburgh Academy was a total failure. More so, it was such a damaging experience for me. My attitude towards authority was negative and hostile. My time in the monastery really helped with that and gave me authority figures I could look up to who showed kindness, compassion and wisdom.

43. I believe my relationships have also suffered as a result of what I went through at school. I think this is partly to do with a lack of self-confidence and not being emotionally open. I struggled in the past to sustain functional relationships with women.
44. I have struggled with addiction and mental health issues since leaving the Academy. I previously attributed a lot of blame, for my mental health breakdown, to my relationship with my parents, family breakdown and drug use. However since the Edinburgh Academy abuse scandal has been more publicly aired, I have been able to reassess this in the light of remembering just how unhelpful my school experience was. I realised that I had completely shut down emotionally at an early age in order to cope. When I suffered a breakdown immediately after leaving school, it was like the whole system came crashing when all these different components combined.
45. I had a personal meeting with Alex Renton, the author, who was interviewed by Nicky Campbell on the 'Different' podcast series. The circumstances around Wares' dismissal from the Prep school on the back of my parents complaint had been discussed on one of these programmes, without me being named, and I was concerned that I hadn't been personally consulted. It happened that a cousin of mine was a neighbour of Alex's and I wanted to speak with him first as I was wary of getting directly in touch with Nicky due to difficult experiences I had with him during my school years. Alex asked what happened to me at the EA and I gave him a potted history of my abuse at the Prep School and how my academic performance had severely declined in the Upper School. I went on to explain how I had got into drugs and suffered a mental breakdown immediately after leaving school. Alex explained to me that, based on his research into public school abuse, my story fitted exactly into the pattern of academic decline and trauma informed symptoms of disassociation. This conversation had a profound impact on me and has gradually brought me to reconsider the impact of being subjected to sexual and violent abuse by teachers at an impressionable age.
46. I came across the term 'disassociation' which is used in trauma therapy. It made sense to me as I had clearly found a way to dissociate from my experience of being in a really

difficult situation, probably exacerbated by the fact that things were going badly in my home life in those early teenage years. I wasn't getting a lot of support at home and I wasn't getting any support at school. School was generally a hostile environment. This has been a fairly recent perception that I've had about what happened to me at school.

Reporting of abuse after leaving Edinburgh Academy

47. I have reported the abuse I suffered at Edinburgh Academy to the police. I provided a statement around May or June 2023, but I haven't heard anything further.

Contact with Edinburgh Academy and former pupils since leaving

48. I haven't had any contact with the school since I left. In 2001, I was contacted by the Scotsman to comment on a story about the actor Iain Glen who talked about the abuse he experienced while he was at Edinburgh Academy. They had been given my name by another ex-pupil who didn't want his name published. I told the Scotsman I was happy for them to use my name in relation to the abuse I suffered during my time there. I think it's worth pointing out that the school didn't attempt to make contact with me after the story was published, not that I expected them to reach out. Obviously, from what we know now, the school wasn't that interested in speaking to survivors.
49. I do keep in touch with some former pupils of the school through the Facebook Survivors Group.

Records

50. My mother was the repository of records and paperwork from my time at Edinburgh Academy. Unfortunately, she died in 2017 and any records she had got scattered and I can't track anything down. I know there were photographs from my time at school but they got lost.

Lessons to be Learned

51. My experience at school has made me appreciate just how important it is for teachers to take an interest in each individual student's welfare, both in terms of how they are doing academically and emotionally. It's important for teachers to see the person and not just look at students as people to funnel through the system and get through exams.
52. I feel it's important for the school to be held to account for the coverup, apart from anything else. That's really where my interest lies. My motivation is to help shed a light on what has happened. That's why I agreed to get involved with the Panorama programme which is looking into institutional abuse. My story was of interest due to my parents reporting the incident, which was an unusual event. Apparently, they were only one of two parents who were recorded as making a complaint to the school. I expect the programme to air in the next month or two.

Hopes for the Inquiry

53. I think the shame and disgrace of acknowledging that the Academy had a paedophile in its midst was significant and the reputation of the school was more important to them than the plight of the children. It's a pretty shocking thought, but it's the way many of these institutions worked in the past. Looking back, it seems like that era of the seventies was a very uptight and oppressive atmosphere. The society was only just beginning to come to terms with historical issues of Protestant guilt and repressed sexuality. Having grown up during this time, I've watched the transformation of Edinburgh into the festival city it is today. It was like the lid being lifted on all this suppressed mentality. In many ways I think it's now gone too far in the other direction of outright hedonism. Alcohol and drugs of course being the other way of covering up difficult emotions.
54. The authorities certainly didn't seem to know how to address the issue of teachers abusing children. It was just too difficult for them to acknowledge. I believe this has a

lot to do with how this level of abuse was allowed to continue for as long as it did at these so called respectable institutions.

- 55. I fully appreciated that the school, by all accounts, has implemented appropriate safeguarding protocols. I have also been impressed by the outreach of the present rector of the school and believe he is sincere in the apologies he has made to date. I sympathise with his position as spokesman for the institution of Edinburgh Academy, having to take responsibility for historic abuse that occurred many years before his appointment. However, I personally feel that the school has a lot further to go in their investigations of how teachers, with a known history of abuse, were protected and the systemic nature of this abuse, which was perpetuated over so many decades. It is not enough, in my mind, to allow “a few bad apples” to take the blame and for those ultimately responsible for overseeing the running of a school, with such a record, not to be held accountable.

- 56. 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..... 12 January 2024