

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

RMT

Support person present: No

1. My name is RMT. My date of birth is 1970. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Introduction

2. I am providing this statement in relation to my brother, KSB, who was born on 1975 in Berkshire. He passed away on 2023, before which he was unable to share his own account of the abuse he endured whilst at Edinburgh Academy.

Family Background

3. I am the oldest of five children. My sister, PKW, is a year and a half younger than me, then there was KSB in the middle followed by twin sisters who are two and a half years younger than KSB. All five of us were born within seven years.
4. We all grew up in a pleasant area of Berkshire, England, with a secure upbringing and attended prestigious private schools. We lived in a large house in an exclusive estate, and our parents spent most of their spare income on our needs. Including school fees and occasional holidays.
5. As the middle child, KSB often felt out of place. PKW and I were close together in age, and the twins were close to each other, leaving KSB somewhat isolated, so he had

to make his own friends. He was also a little physically ungainly: he was left handed with messy writing, and tight Achilles tendons, which made him less co-ordinated in running sports. He was actually a very good hockey player later in life.

6. Despite these challenges, KSB was notably intelligent, though he could be lazy and easily influenced. He was eager to fit in and was known for his cheerful, carefree nature.
7. Looking back, I ask myself if I was a good brother to him? Did I shepherd him through his early life and look after him? I would have to say that I wasn't, but at the same time there was no bullying or ill treatment, he was just my little brother.
8. KSB and I attended the same preparatory school, but when I was thirteen, I moved on to St Paul's in London for weekly boarding. I only saw KSB on weekends and during holidays after that.

Family move to Edinburgh

9. As KSB was finishing at prep school in 1981, our family moved to Edinburgh due to my father's job change. I stayed in London for my final year at St Paul's, so I was not present when KSB began day schooling at Edinburgh Academy.
10. I'm unsure why Edinburgh Academy was chosen, though our parents considered several schools in Edinburgh. KSB attended Edinburgh Academy, PKW went to Fettes initially, and the twins attended St. George's.
11. The twins adapted quickly to Edinburgh, adopting mild Scottish accents and enjoying their new environment. PKW struggled with anti-English sentiment at Fettes and later transferred to Edinburgh Academy, joining KSB a year after he started.
12. My own experience with boarding involved some mild bullying, but while I faced challenges, nothing serious occurred.

13. When my father's job moved us back to Berkshire in 1981, KSB had the option to move down to St Paul's in London, but chose to stay and board at Edinburgh Academy, fearing that moving might lead to worse conditions elsewhere.
14. At that time, I was living in Stockton-On-Tees doing a gap year job and later attending university, so I did not see KSB often and was unaware of his situation.
15. I wasn't paying close attention to how he was developing but I do know that when he first started at Edinburgh Academy there was talk of him going to Oxford or Cambridge. When he started doing his A-Levels, and then boarding, his aspirations and expectations just seemed to fall away.
16. I do remember the odd comment, round the breakfast table at home, that Edinburgh Academy no longer thought of him as an Oxbridge candidate. I did think that was really odd because KSB was very bright, but that maybe he wasn't following the subjects he was best at.
17. I know he looked up to me and wanted to follow in my footsteps but academically he was strong in English (he had wit and humour), whereas I was a straight down scientist with maths and physics. He did follow me, but it wasn't right for him.

Knowledge of abuse at Edinburgh Academy

18. I first noticed changes in KSB during school holidays; he seemed quieter, which I attributed to puberty or teenage angst, and just not being carefree anymore.
19. We all saw things like his hair had been dyed green. He didn't tell anyone in the family at the time that was done to him as a result of bullying. He didn't ever tell me directly, but I know he did tell other people that it had initially been done to him and he then did the best job he could to try and make it look more normal.

20. KSB did mention being bullied a little but, at the time, I was just thinking it was the same sort of bullying that I saw at my school. I was thinking it was verbal and nothing too serious.
21. The whole family was unaware of the extent of KSB's trauma, and we were perplexed as to why we did not recognise the signs.
22. He didn't ever mention any names for those that were responsible, never to me anyway, and he didn't mention if it had been only peer abuse or if there had been any staff abuse.
23. I don't recall ever seeing any bruises or marks on KSB. It wasn't something he talked about. He certainly didn't ever show me any injuries, nothing that I could link to anything that might have happened at Edinburgh Academy.

Disclosure of abuse by KSB

24. It wasn't until KSB was about twenty-four that he told me he used to sleep with a knife under his pillow at Edinburgh Academy, due to being bullied at night, which included being stabbed in the leg with a screwdriver by another boy. He didn't want to talk any further about it, so I have no idea who it was that stabbed him with the screwdriver. It was that bad he just shut the conversation down.
25. It was only later that I learned about his experiences through the survivor's group.
26. As far as family are concerned, I don't know if KSB spoke to anyone at the time. My parents would have known more about that, from their interactions with him then and talking with his housemasters.
27. PKW attended the same school so might have had more interaction with KSB. Further information might be found in any statements he submitted or documents he left. There

will also be whatever statement he finally managed to submit and whatever he had written on his computer.

Reporting of abuse to Edinburgh Academy

28. I don't know if there was anyone [KSB] could have spoken to at Edinburgh Academy about the bullying and I don't know if he did. I can only tell you what he told me and the circumstantial stuff around all that, including how it all played out later in life.

Life after Edinburgh Academy – [KSB]

29. After leaving Edinburgh Academy, [KSB] followed me to Durham University and pursued the same engineering course, indicating he performed well in his A-Levels.
30. [KSB] was drinking a lot by then and he ended up dropping out of Durham University at the end of his second year. He then took a place at Southampton University.
31. His excessive drinking became apparent in his twenties during a ski season job in Courchevel, France, where he was frequently inebriated.
32. [KSB] did settle down after he finished university. He did a lot of work renovating his house for his family. He went on to become a national account manager with a large [redacted] manufacturer. He worked with major retailers, he was really good at it, and he loved it. He was there a long time but eventually they had to let him go because of his alcohol problem. [KSB] really was a star employee until the drinking got too much.
33. He married someone with similar drinking habits, leading to a turbulent relationship marked by public drunkenness and disputes. Despite this, they were always holding barbecues and entertaining large groups of people in their garden. I only ever remember seeing him smoking and drinking, never eating; he would do all the cooking, but he just couldn't eat with other people around.

34. Our differences in character just meant we really didn't see each other for many years and although when we did meet up at family events he was always friendly and chatty. He was also extremely guarded in what he said and cut the social chit-chat right back.
35. He did love seeing other people have a good time. He loved running discos and being the one cracking all the jokes. He always just wanted to tell jokes and not talk about himself.
36. KSB's true strength was comedy. I've not known anyone remember as many jokes as he could. KSB used to write reports for sports matches, that were just eye-wateringly funny. Some of the matches didn't even happen, if the match was called off he would still write a fictitious match report and some of the reports were more famous than the matches that actually happened.
37. He was actually quite fit and healthy most of the time, it was only in the last two years where I saw his health completely deteriorate. At the time he was adamant that it was some for of digestion issue.
38. During a visit in early 2023 after he had returned from South Africa, I recall he was sitting in his back garden, wearing only a dressing gown; he was severely overweight and was really bloated. He said that was because of the drugs he took for his digestive issue.
39. KSB said something really odd to me that day, he said, "Nobody ever asks me why I drink?" I did think it was an odd thing to say, but just thought it was down to his marriage breaking up or his stomach hurting, something like that. I did ask him what the reason was for his drinking, but then he just refused to tell me.
40. I actually started to go back and see him more after that. I felt things were going downhill with him and I needed to see him, have dinner with him and have a proper boys chat, reconnect.

41. But he just got worse and worse. He had such low self-esteem, he was confined to his chair and wasn't washing, he was smelly, and he was very anti-establishment focussed, everything was wrong with everyone else. Within about thirty minutes I was thinking that I had to get out of there, I couldn't stand it. I didn't recognise this person anymore, I couldn't understand why he was so depressed and angry about everything, he just wasn't the brother I remembered.
42. Desperate as I was to have that final good moment with him, it never really happened. Next thing I received a call to say he was in a really bad way. I hurtled over to his house as fast as I could, but he had died by the time I got there.
43. Of course, now I totally regret not intervening sooner, but KSB was resistant to help and had distanced himself from everyone.

Impact on KSB

44. I believe KSB's experiences at Edinburgh Academy significantly contributed to his decline.
45. While psychologists link severe alcoholism to trauma, some people lack a clear rationale. KSB's drinking did not initially seem to warrant such an explanation, but retrospectively, the connections became clearer. When you eventually find out the true story, you ask yourself why you didn't make the connections sooner and try to do something about it.
46. KSB exhibited behaviours linked to his experiences, such as aversion to eating with others and a limited diet. These traits suggest psychological impacts from his time at Edinburgh Academy.
47. KSB was always very friendly, but he was also very guarded, he never gave much away about himself. He also kept his friendship groups extremely tight. It was literally four or five people, and they were extremely loyal to one another. They would have

done anything for each other, and they were always laughing and having a good time. KSB was always desperate to keep that group together, often prioritising their needs over his own. He just wanted to have a good time with his friends and be happy all the time, if he could. If he couldn't get that he would get depressed.

48. In later life, KSB was never relaxed, he was always slightly defensive and was quick to anger.

Impact on family

49. Everyone tells me that I was the one person KSB truly adored and worshipped. I'm not sure whether that's true, and if it was then what I'd done to deserve that. I certainly didn't counsel him through any of his problems or provide him with any support for it. If it's true that he held me on a pedestal and always wanted me to think the best of him then I expect that I was probably the last person that he would have opened up to. That was just his way, he wanted to protect everyone he could.
50. PKW was naturally more inquisitive and would have wanted to have known as much as she could about what happened. She was influential in digging deep and finding out what was going on and it was her who contacted the Inquiry. She was closest to KSB and would probably have had more contact with KSB than the other siblings.
51. KSB's death leaves me with profound sadness, both for losing him and over his lost potential. It took years for his trauma to fully manifest, and while certain events exacerbated his situation, the damage was likely done earlier.
52. Our family has been deeply affected by KSB's death and the loss of his son.

Reporting of abuse/Edinburgh Academy survivors' group

53. I doubt KSB sought counselling, given his scepticism towards professionals.
54. PKW did contact Giles Moffat, who founded the Edinburgh Academy survivor's group. She worked with Giles to try and use him and his friends as a way of getting KSB to talk. I believe she spent ages on the phone to KSB trying to get him to open up about what happened.
55. I believe KSB had quite a few conversations with the survivor group. Giles told me he had spoken with KSB quite a few times, but I don't know what they spoke about. I do know that when KSB heard other individual stories at the survivor's group, that were the same as his story, it did all seem to make sense to him. There was some pattern recognition there and I'm sure he then saw the root cause.
56. I don't think KSB ever managed to speak to the police, but I don't know that definitively. PKW doesn't know for sure either, but she does know he was writing something, and the only place would have been stored was on his computer or the USB pen stick that went in it.
57. On the day I picked up all of his records, computers, phones and devices. His estranged wife was worried about any debt he might have had, so I said I would take everything away and sort it out. I went through everything and worked out the state of all his finances. I did try to get into his laptop to see if there was a will or anything that might assist but it was password protected and we (nor my IT department) couldn't access it. PKW assured me that KSB had written a statement for the police, and that it was saved on that computer, but his wife suddenly threatened legal action if we didn't return the laptop to her, so she retook possession of it.

Lessons to be learned

58. Teachers need to nurture and develop the complimentary skills that children have that are non-standard. If a child is bad at something, they compensate, and may excel at something else. You just have to find out what that other area is. If your education system is geared to delivering the basics in a straightforward way you won't discover the other strengths children have.
59. I believe that there should be an independent childcare advisor who is there for children, especially at boarding schools. Their job should be to check in on every pupil. They should check their state of mind, check they are happy and are handling living away from their parents.
60. By all accounts though Edinburgh Academy had that role in place, that being [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. You would have trusted that person but lo and behold they were at the centre of the ring of abusers.
61. Making Childline accessible is another thing and encouraging schools to promote it. The irony there is that my father was a supporting founder of Childline.

Hopes for the Inquiry

62. I would hope that the Inquiry identifies as many of these barbaric child abusers as possible, that it prosecutes them to the absolute extent of the law, and that any gains they've made through their lives are stripped away from them and their families, and redeployed to children's charities geared at preventing abuse and to the children of the victims, for they are the real ongoing victims in all of this - they will all have suffered in one way or another, from the injuries sustained by their parents.
63. If the people who were responsible are now deemed too old to be prosecuted, then the rest of the world will see that abusers can get away with their crimes, and that cannot be allowed to happen.

64. I also think that Nicky Campbell should be knighted for his bravery in exposing this abuse, and setting in motion the investigations that are now taking place. It would have been extremely difficult for him to come forward, not least because victims are naturally reluctant to do so, but also it could have destroyed his own career. He bravely exposed it and started the tsunami that followed so I think he should be honoured.
65. 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.....19 September 2024.....