

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

IWO [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is IWO [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1970. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before boarding school

2. My parents are [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and I had one brother, [REDACTED], who was three years older than me.
3. I was born in Dunfermline, but when I was three months old, we moved to Hong Kong where I was brought up until I was about seven years old. Dad's background was that he had left school at fifteen and worked on ships with a company called [REDACTED] before joining the management of the company in Hong Kong.
4. I attended a German kindergarten in Hong Kong and then went on to Quarry Bay Primary School there. They were both nice schools, from what I can remember, although kindergarten was a bit odd, because some of the lessons were taught in German. I have grandparents in Dunfermline and I actually also spent a few months at a school there while my mum had some medical treatment.
5. When my brother [REDACTED] was eight, he went off to boarding school at Edinburgh Academy. A couple of years later, when I was seven, we moved to Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia and I went to the Alice Smith School there. When I turned eight, I too was sent to Edinburgh Academy as a boarding pupil.

6. Neither of my parents had any formal qualifications when they left school and after ending up in Hong Kong, they probably took a bit of a steer from other parents as to where [REDACTED] and I should go to school. They wanted the best for us and it seemed to be the thing at that time to send kids off to boarding school.
7. I don't remember being told that I was going to boarding school, but I remember sitting an exam to get in while I was at the Alice Smith School in Kuala Lumpur. I also remember having to get a big metal trunk, which was then filled with all my uniform and everything I would need.
8. I had some knowledge of the Academy before I went because I had seen it, but I don't recall visiting and being shown round myself. I remember being on holiday in Scotland one time and dropping my brother [REDACTED] off and him crying at having to go back to the boarding house. I don't remember what [REDACTED] might have said about it before I went, however my parents have since told me I was excited at the prospect of going myself because [REDACTED] was already there.

Edinburgh Academy

9. There were probably about three hundred pupils at Edinburgh Academy Prep School in total, which included some boarders, but most were day pupils. I would say maybe one-in-twenty boarded, although it did feel as if there were slightly more in the senior school. Of the boarders, most were Scots whose parents lived abroad, but there were also a few from other countries. I remember one boy came from Africa and there were a couple of boys from South Asia as well.
10. When I started at the school, like all the other boarders, I stayed in Dundas House for my first three, primary school, years. I think there would have been roughly fifteen boys in Dundas House, all aged between eight and eleven. After that, when I moved up to the senior school, I went into Mackenzie House and then Jeffrey House. By the time I got to the Academy, my brother [REDACTED] was in his first year of secondary school and had moved from Dundas House to one of the senior houses

11. Dundas House itself was a relatively small, three-storey, detached old house. On the right side as you came in the front door was a common room, which had a big table in it where we did our homework. I think the table was actually an old pool table that had been covered with a piece of wood. Further back in the house, to the side of the stairs, was a TV room, which was slightly smaller than the common room. To the left as you came in the front door was where the housemaster, John Brownlee, lived.
12. Mr Brownlee lived in Dundas House with his wife and two boys Neil and Graham, who were the same age as me and my brother. We had quite a lot of contact with Mrs Brownlee and their sons because their rooms all opened up onto the same halls that we all used. They weren't in a separate part of the building and so we were very much interacting with each other. I don't know if Mrs Brownlee had a formal role as such, but she was certainly around a lot, telling us to go to bed, or whatever.
13. Upstairs was much the same layout on the middle landing, in that our dorm was on the right and Brownlee and his family had the rooms to the left. Our dorm was above the common room and was a relatively big room with six or seven single metal beds spaced out around it. Also in the dorm were a couple of chests of drawers and each boy had a drawer to keep their things in.
14. There was another floor further upstairs, where there were a couple of bathrooms and two or three smaller rooms for boys as they got older. There was also a room for the house tutor, who was a man called Mr IDQ [REDACTED], although I'm not sure if he was there all the time. IDQ [REDACTED] was a man who was probably in his twenties and who had possibly just finished university.
15. There was also a matron in Dundas House, although she didn't stay there, she lived down the road somewhere. I don't recall her name, but she was a nice person. Her role was to do the laundry, sewing and repairing clothes and that sort of thing.

Routine at Edinburgh Academy

First day at Dundas House

16. I can't remember much about my first day, other than entering Dundas House and being shown to my dorm by the housemaster, Mr Brownlee. I do remember feeling excited at starting at the school and being with my brother, but very early on I was introduced to what Mr Brownlee was really like and that excitement changed.
17. I'm not sure if it was the first night, but I certainly hadn't been there for long and was in the dorm with the other boys having a pillow fight. We were all having great fun, when Brownlee came in and asked who was out of their beds. As it happened, I was in my bed when he came in, so I denied I had been. I stayed in my bed but the others were all taken outside and Brownlee whacked them. I could hear them and thought he was hitting them with a table tennis bat, or something like that.
18. Eventually they all came back into the dorm crying and I was crying too and that early experience defined my impressions of Edinburgh Academy. We had been having fun, but Brownlee's reaction was to whack us. It was an early realisation that Dundas House was not safe and that fun was not part of the place. I recall crying a lot in the coming weeks, feeling very homesick and very unwanted.

Mornings and bedtime at Dundas House

19. A handbell was rung at something like 7:15 am to tell us to get up and we had to clean our teeth, wash at the sink and get dressed. About 7:30 am we'd have to line up before we walked over to the primary school for breakfast, which was about five minutes away.
20. After breakfast we'd return to our boarding house, get our stuff ready for school and then line up ready for school. We'd all walk over to the school together and be there until about 3:00 pm, or thereabouts, when we'd return to Dundas House. Whatever the weather, after we returned from school we would get changed and then we were sent out to the field to play.

21. After that we would go across the road to the dining hall in the primary school for dinner and then we would return to our boarding house to do our homework. Homework lasted for an hour between 6:00 pm and 7:00 pm and then we had more free time until 7:30 pm, when we got ready for bed. Brownlee's study was next to the dormitory, so we were always conscious of not making a noise when we were getting ready for bed, so that he wouldn't come in.

Mealtimes/Food at Dundas House

22. We ate all meals in the dining hall in the primary school and there were always teachers about. They ate the same food as us, but they would take it into the masters' common room, which was next door and eat there. Occasionally, they would come out to make sure we weren't messing about.
23. We would line up to get served and return to our table at breakfast and dinner and we all sat at tables according to what house we were in. There were day pupils at lunch during the week, so we sat at tables according to what classes we were in. I can't remember lining up so much at lunchtime and I think they might have served us our food then, rather than us going up for it.
24. There might have been a little choice in what we would eat, but not much. It felt like breakfast was a meal broken up into bits over the week. We might have bacon on a Monday, sausage on Tuesday, Wednesday might be eggs and so on. Dinner always included chips, which would be served with chicken, or sausages, or mince, or fishfingers and that sort of thing. Sunday lunch was a bit better than normal and things like roast chicken would be served.
25. I don't remember what might have happened if we didn't like or eat whatever food we were given. I do remember one boy was a diabetic and brought his own food in, I think. I think we also got a biscuit in the house at some point, however I can't remember if that was after school, or before we went to bed.

Washing/bathing at Dundas House

26. I think we had a bath once or twice a week and we had to wash our hair in the sink once a week. There was no privacy, because there were two baths in the one room and there would be a boy in each and other boys could come in as well. I think we maybe had a shower in the changing rooms after playing in the mucky field outside Dundas House in the afternoon.

Clothing/uniform at Dundas House

27. I cannot think of any help that was given towards us getting dressed in our uniforms and ready for school. My grandfather had to tell me how to tie my tie, we were never shown by Brownlee or his wife.

Leisure time at Dundas House

28. We had about an hour of free time after school, when we would play football or something like that in the field near to Dundas House. We also had half-an-hour of free time after doing our homework, when we could watch television on an old TV in the TV room.
29. At the weekend there were always lots of sports going on. We used to play rugby in the autumn and spring terms and cricket in the summer term. That became more frequent as you went up the school.

Trips and holidays at Dundas House

30. One of the music teachers was into Gilbert and Sullivan and used to take us to various productions. I think I went to two or three. We were also taken to the cinema fairly regularly by Mr Brownlee or by the house tutor. The cinema was about a fifteen-minute walk away and we perhaps went once a term, but that was about all that Brownlee did.
31. One of the teachers, Mr [REDACTED], used to take us for walks in the countryside on Saturdays. Sometimes we would get the bus up to the Pentland Hills and go for a

walk there. Mr IBL actually used to come into Dundas House once a week or so to read us a story as well. I remember him reading 'The Railway Children' to us. He was a bit of an odd character.

32. Another teacher, whose name I can't remember, also used to come into Dundas House occasionally. It might sound a bit trivial, but he used to show some kindness towards us and he would play with us. It made a difference because I cannot remember Brownlee showing any kindness, reading to us, or playing with us at any time.

Schooling while at Dundas House

33. I joined Edinburgh Academy in Year 4 and Miss West was supposed to be my teacher, but she was ill for most of the year so I had various supply teachers instead. I think they were often other kids' parents, who may have been teachers elsewhere I'm not sure.
34. I cannot remember any physical punishment at school that year, but it wasn't a stable situation either. With having different teachers all the time nobody was really caring, however at least they weren't abusing you. There was a sense that I was at least away from Dundas House when I was at school and so I felt less scared.
35. My earliest recollections of my mental state are from my time in Dundas House, when I was eight years old. Every night I went to bed and hoped that I wouldn't wake up the next morning. I can hardly think of a moment I didn't feel like that. That was my one hope and I didn't have much desire to aspire to anything at school.
36. Academically, I was good at maths and poor at English. Mr Archdale became my teacher in Year 5 and he remained my teacher the following year. He was a very kind teacher and seemed to care about the children in his class.

Healthcare at Dundas House

37. If any boy was ill in the house there was a room set aside for that. The house matron would look after any boy who was sick and would make sure they were okay.
38. I remember feeling sick during the night once while I was staying in Dundas House, but I never asked for help from the Brownlees at all. I was too scared and just kept to myself. The following morning I was too unwell to go to school and I recall Mrs Brownlee came and gave me a bowl to be sick in.

Religious instruction at Dundas House

39. We had to go to church every Sunday morning. We'd get dressed in our 'Sunday best', which included a kilt, and all walk to the Church of Scotland, then walk back and then go for Sunday lunch. I don't recall any boy going to any different church.

Work at Dundas House

40. John Brownlee had a disproportionate reaction to things. I remember we were having a snowball fight and something happened, a snowball hit him, or something like that, and we ended up having to dig his garden all winter. Even when there was snow and ice on the ground, we had to dig his vegetable patch.

Birthdays and Christmas at Dundas House

41. I think birthdays were celebrated in Dundas House. I seem to recall you got a cake, but my birthday tended to be during the [REDACTED] Holidays. We went home at Christmas and I don't recall what celebrations there might have been at the school.

Personal possessions and pocket money

42. The best toys that some of the boys had were taken off them by the Brownlees and given to their own kids to play with. We would see their boys playing with toys that had been confiscated off us by either Mr or Mrs Brownlee.

43. We were given pocket money every week. I think we got either thirty pence or fifty pence handed out by Mr Brownlee to us every Saturday.

Family contact at Dundas House

44. There was no phone in Dundas House, but we wrote letters to our parents after lunch on Sunday. At some point in the afternoon, we'd gather in the common room and Brownlee would write out what the three highlights of the week were and we'd have to write them in our letters. They would be things such as going for a walk with Mr IBL [REDACTED], or whatever the rugby results were.
45. Boys could go home one weekend every half-term while we were in Dundas House. My grandparents would come and pick [REDACTED] and I up and we would spend half-term with them. At Christmas, Easter and in the summer, we would fly home to wherever our parents were. It was quite a journey, but at that time the airlines had someone who used to look after all the boarding school kids who were flying home.
46. It became harder and harder seeing my parents over the holidays. They thought I was becoming quieter, but actually I was becoming increasingly more depressed. The turmoil I felt inside became a physical churning whenever I had to return after holidays.

Sibling Contact at Dundas House

47. My brother [REDACTED] reacted to Brownlee's behaviour by becoming an extreme extrovert and rebellious. I became very much the opposite and shut myself down. I would see [REDACTED] on the one weekend every half-term, when we went to stay with our grandparents, but we didn't see much of each other at school.

Culture at Dundas House

48. That early, defining experience of Brownlee in Dundas House made me quickly learn to keep myself to myself. There was some camaraderie amongst some boys, but for me it was an isolating place and I felt desperately alone.

49. There was no support whatsoever. Brownlee set a culture whereby boys would mock other boys if they were seen to be weak. If you were crying, you were called a baby and that sort of thing.
50. I think the only time that Brownlee took me into his living room was to tell me that Mr IBL had died because he had been taking some experimental heart disease medication. Somebody has since said, however, that he might have killed himself.

Bed Wetting at Dundas House

51. I don't recall any issue with bedwetting that any boy might have had, however I do remember a boy who had other problems. I don't think he had been taught how to wipe his bottom properly and Brownlee mocked him every single day. Brownlee would display the boy's soiled pants to us all, trying to make us laugh at the poor guy. It was horrible. The boy needed someone to help him and instead this was the way he was being treated by our housemaster. That was the environment of the house. Mrs Brownlee would have seen this too and yet she did nothing to intervene or to help the boy either.

Discipline at Dundas House

52. I don't remember there being any written guidance or rules on what we could and could not do in Dundas House. Brownlee didn't seem to follow any rules anyway though, it was all random. We lived in fear because we might get into weeks of trouble and had no idea what we might have done wrong. There seemed to be no rationale behind his thinking, he was so unpredictable.

Mackenzie House

53. I moved into Mackenzie House and up to the senior school when I was eleven. My memory of my first impression of Mackenzie House is that it wasn't Dundas House. That and realising that I didn't have to go back was the biggest thing. Mr Lister was

the housemaster at first and he wasn't Brownlee and so everything after that was, I suppose, a relief.

54. It wasn't until I was thirteen and still in Mackenzie House, that [REDACTED], who had become the housemaster, asked me how I was. That was a big moment because nobody had ever asked how I was previously. I was taken aback. It was a stand-out moment. I can't think of anyone else who ever looked out for me, or cared about how I was.
55. Mr [REDACTED]'s son was in my class and so I suppose I felt he was approachable, but I never felt able to actually do so. I think I felt unable to expose myself. I think I still had that sense that no one really cared and therefore I didn't feel able to tell Mr [REDACTED] how I was really feeling.

Routine while at Mackenzie House

56. The daily routine at Mackenzie House was pretty much the same as it had been at Dundas House, except I had moved to the senior school. At school, I was meant to have a teacher called Mrs Hector, but she went off on maternity leave quite quickly and we had a supply teacher instead called Mr Fisher. My memory of my first year of secondary school is that Mr Fisher ended up taking us for virtually all our classes. I remember turning up for geography class and it was Mr Fisher and then going to chemistry and it was him again. There was nothing wrong with Mr Fisher, but it felt like they were just using someone to plug all the gaps and that the school didn't take our education very seriously.
57. As I went through the school there more specialised teachers for different subjects. My skills were in maths, biology and physics, I wasn't so great at English and French and subjects like that. My history teacher, Mr Harris I think his name was, was very good. He loved his subject and spoke well about it. Some of the biology teachers were good too and were enthusiastic about their subjects as well.

58. I have nothing against Mr Fisher, but a lot of the other teachers were like him and just made do. They didn't have an enthusiasm for their subjects and I wonder if I might have done better if, for example, my English and French teachers had been better. Having said that, I was given extra support with my spelling and went to a tutor. I think I had given up with myself by that stage though and I didn't fully engage with it.
59. We used to get a report card every term, which went to my parents and I think they would come occasionally to talk to my teachers. I can certainly remember them talking to my biology teacher.
60. I studied a combination of O-Levels and O-Grades and then Highers. I ended up with nine or ten O-Levels and O-Grades and six Highers.

Culture and Discipline in Mackenzie House and senior school

61. Discipline in the senior school was, again, all comparative. It didn't seem that there was much corporal punishment, but when teachers did use it there was a rationale behind it and none were as out of control as Brownlee. As we got bigger, the use of corporal punishment became even less.
62. There was a housing system in the senior school for sport, music and athletic competitions. I can't remember the names of the various houses, but there were three houses for the day boys and one for the boarders and I think boarders tended to be treated differently. I feel as if the boarders were viewed by the staff as being the troublemakers who were an inconvenient add-on to the school and that housing system was where that attitude came out.

Jeffrey House

63. I moved from Mackenzie House to Jeffrey House for my final senior years at Edinburgh Academy. Mr Boyce was the housemaster at first and then Mr RjX took over the role.

64. We still had to go to church on a Sunday morning as we got older, but we went on less of the walks on a Saturday because there was more of a focus on rugby. I was quite good at rugby and was either in the [REDACTED] or the [REDACTED] XV, but I got concussion at least three times, once in primary school and twice in secondary. I was taken to the Royal Infirmary for treatment, but it got worse each time and it would take longer for me to get my memory back and so eventually I had to stop playing.
65. I ended up being [REDACTED] for the [REDACTED] XV, however by the time I was in Year 5 of the senior school, I had started playing football. There was one football pitch, but there was only one teacher involved and football wasn't really approved. There was a football team, but we only played against one other school. It was almost as if football was only an option for people who couldn't play rugby and was kind of tucked away.
66. We used to sit and watch the telly a lot and some former pupil had bought a small snooker table for the house so we could play that. We also had to join the combined cadet force (CCF). I think the CCF was compulsory for two years and then you had the option of carrying on or not. I joined the army section and continued on after two years. The CCF was just what I would have expected it to be like. My memories are of often being out on a rainy day, wearing itchy clothing and of people shouting at us. I never took it too seriously.
67. I went on a couple of trips while I was in the senior school, I enjoyed getting away. I went for a week on a canal boat trip during the Easter holidays, which was quite good fun and there was also Blair House in the Highlands, where we used to go for various walks. That was okay as well.
68. There were no day trips in the senior school, unless they were initiated by us. We had a bit more freedom at the weekends and we could go and do what we wanted.
69. We were allowed to go out on a Saturday night and, although I don't think we were explicitly allowed to go to the pub, nobody was under any illusions that was where we were going. I would come back drunk sometimes and was even sick, but I would just

be told to tidy up and sleep it off. Nobody ever spoke to me about it or expressed any concern.

70. Girls could come and do A-Levels at the school and I mixed with them a little bit socially at weekends. I was very shy normally and wouldn't really engage with them very much, but when I drank, I became emboldened and it was easier. My routine was to drink very quickly and heavily early on, so that I would have the courage to speak to them.
71. The culture of the senior school particularly was that if you were good at sport you were admired. If you weren't, and if you were at all different you were treated very badly by other boys. Some of the boys who were from different ethnic backgrounds were badly mistreated, but it depended on who they were. [REDACTED] was a hero to me and my brother's best friend, a boy called [REDACTED], was a really nice guy, so that helped.

Abuse at Edinburgh Academy

John Brownlee

72. The horror for me all the time was living in Dundas House in a state of constant fear. I felt that Brownlee was trying to isolate us from each other and I did feel isolated. I felt such deep sadness all the time. We were meant to be afraid of him, but it was almost as if Brownlee also expected us to admire his power over us. He seemed to pick on particular boys more than others, but we all felt that fear.
73. Lining up for school in Dundas House was the most intimidating point of the day. One of the things Brownlee did was he liked to humiliate people and that moment when we were all lining up provided him with the opportunity. He would inspect us and would get a metal comb and pull it through our hair, so hard that he would pull our hair out. Sometimes he would actually drag us to the ground as he pulled the comb through our hair, it was so painful.

74. Another thing Brownlee liked to do was put his knuckles down the back of our necks and grip onto the collar of our shirts as he walked along the line of boys. We were all wearing our ties with our top buttons done up, so that when he was digging his knuckles into the back of our necks, he was strangling us at the same time. That was a daily occurrence as he was seeing us off to school. He wouldn't do it to everybody, but he would do it to different boys on different days and in an environment of intimidation and fear.
75. He also took that opportunity at the start of our school day to give out beatings. At times he would be in an absolute rage and completely out of control. I remember one boy, [REDACTED] who was a good squash player, threw a squash ball against the wall, which made the smallest of marks on the wall. When Brownlee saw this, he beat the living daylights out of him. He kicked him and punched him and threw him around like a rag doll in front of all of us. He didn't break anything, but [REDACTED] would have been battered and bruised and very sore.
76. Brownlee tended to issue corporal punishment in his study, but his punishment of boys was disproportionate to the offence he might have thought they had committed. I was never punished in his office, but he would summon boys there and I know that he used various instruments to hit them with. They might be struck with a clacken, a table tennis bat, or anything else he had to hand. He even had a golf club, although I don't know if he ever actually used it.
77. Brownlee used to inspect our toothbrushes. If they were wet, he assumed we had brushed our teeth. I remember a new boy started and I forgot to tell him to wet his toothbrush. I think I'd been at the school for a couple of weeks by that time and this boy, who was the same age as me, about eight or nine, started slightly later.
78. I remember thinking I should have told him. I felt so guilty for not doing so because when Brownlee discovered his toothbrush was dry, we were all taken upstairs and into the bathroom to watch the boy being punished. Brownlee filled one of the baths with freezing cold water and plugged an old shower attachment onto the taps of the other bath. We had to watch this poor guy be stripped naked and put in the cold bath and

then be pulled out and put under the shower, which was roasting hot. The steam was coming off it and the boy was screaming as Brownlee did this to him again and again and again – cold bath to hot shower to cold bath, back to hot shower.

79. Something that has struck me more recently about Brownlee's behaviour towards us is that, as eight-year-olds, he took us to a hairdressers that had lots of pornographic magazines lying around. Thinking back, it was like Brownlee was introducing us to pornography at the age of eight. There are lots of hairdressers in Edinburgh and yet he chose to take us to that one. I don't know what his reasons might have been, but it was totally inappropriate.
80. He was very proud of the way he behaved, beating boys up. One time he actually told me that he had beaten my brother [REDACTED] more than anyone else. He told me he had beaten my brother thirty-six times in one term, which would work out to be three times every week over the twelve weeks of the term, or it might have been 'six of the best' six times in one term.
81. The stand-out incident with my brother [REDACTED] was around the lead up to Christmas, when we were all in the dining hall and he and his friends ran in late. Brownlee was sitting at our table, which was a very rare occurrence, so perhaps it was the Christmas dinner, or some other special occasion.
82. Brownlee immediately took [REDACTED] and his friends outside and kicked the living daylights out of my brother. Afterwards he came back into the room and sat opposite me at the table with a big smirk on his face. He was intimidating, arrogant and smug and said to me "Your brother hangs out with the wrong crowd".
83. I'm not sure if it was that same day, or a short time afterwards, but as Brownlee wandered over to my brother's table, one of my brother's friends, a guy called [REDACTED], stood up, took a knife and held it to Brownlee's throat. It was just one of the knives from the dining room, it wasn't sharp. As I remember it, [REDACTED] told Brownlee that if he touched [REDACTED] again, he would kill him and for a moment I could see Brownlee's arrogance leave him. I think [REDACTED] doing that made Brownlee realise that

my brother and his friends would protect me as well. My brother was only twelve, but it was a hero moment. We felt like we had fought back and we were looking out for each other.

Mr IDQ

84. It is striking that the school just seemed to let Brownlee run the boarding house however he liked, with no supervision. The only house tutor I can remember was Mr IDQ and he enjoyed drinking a lot and sometimes he was very drunk. He had a decanter of whisky in his room that we could see from outside and we could see it disappear. He was the only other person in the boarding house who might have been in a position to look after us, but he wasn't actually capable and therefore Brownlee had a free rein.
85. Unfortunately, all the memories such as going for walks in the countryside with Mr IBL, get tainted. One time we came back to Dundas House after a horrible walk on a rainy day and, as we entered the hall where we all used to line up in the morning, Mr IDQ the house tutor came down. As we stood there, he asked if we'd had a nice walk. One boy, RQP, replied "No, we're soaking wet" and IDQ grabbed hold of the necklace that RQP was wearing and twisted it round his neck. He twisted it so hard that RQP passed out and dropped to the floor.

IBU

86. IBU was the P.E. teacher and he would hit boys occasionally if they were being rebellious, but it was nothing compared to Brownlee. If boys didn't do what he said he would punish them, however my memory of what he actually did is vague. There were stories at school of him punishing boys, but I'm not sure at this time what my own memories are and what I might have heard. I can't remember exactly what he did, but I don't think it was something that happened frequently.
87. I do recall once hearing about IBU chasing a senior pupil round the rugby pitch and getting into a fistfight with them. Some of the seniors were big lads and IBU

IBU [REDACTED] was a small person who they could fight back. We laughed it off at the time as just being IBU [REDACTED] losing it.

Mr IZM [REDACTED]

88. When I was away at Blair House in either first or second year of the secondary school, the teacher, Mr IZM [REDACTED] took us on a walk on a particularly hot day. I thought Mr IZM [REDACTED] taught [REDACTED], but I'm not sure. We stopped by a river and he decided to strip off completely naked and go into the river in front of us all. It was an odd thing to do.

Mr IDR [REDACTED] *woodwork teacher*

89. It was a common chat amongst the students that the woodwork teacher, Mr IDR [REDACTED] was attracted to boys. He paid more than a little attention to the better-looking boys who were in his class. I think everyone would have recognised that reputation.
90. I have a vague memory of him joining us in the showers at Blair House. Again, it was odd for a teacher to strip naked in front of you.

IBP [REDACTED], [REDACTED] *teacher*

91. We had a [REDACTED] teacher who was known as IBP [REDACTED], whose name was possibly IBP [REDACTED]. IBP [REDACTED] was quite a big guy and yet he would try and sit on boys' laps, but the thing I found really weird was he would put his forehead against the student's forehead and stare right into their eyes in an inappropriate, creepy way. I don't know what that was all about.
92. I look back now at Mr IDR [REDACTED]'s behaviour and that of IBP [REDACTED] and think it was wrong, but it became normal in the culture at Edinburgh Academy.

Bullying

93. I have been reflecting on the bullying at Edinburgh Academy and I feel it is as if we had been trained by John Brownlee in how to behave and that came out in how we acted with each other. It's almost as if it was as a reaction to how Brownlee treated us and encouraged us to behave, that rather than talk about it amongst ourselves, boys ended up fighting each other all the time. I remember lots of fights between boys in the common room at Dundas House. Whether those were a release from how Brownlee was treating us or a reaction to it, I'm not sure.
94. In the upper school, there were five or six boarders in my year and for a period of months one of us would be isolated by the others. Who that was would be rotated around the group. The group would single one of us out and they would be freeze out for a period of time, which I realise was bullying. You feel like you want to be part of the group and you do that by excluding somebody else. I regret that I joined in and I was part of that.
95. Prefects were called ephors and they could punish younger boys. While I was in Mackenzie House, I was caught by an ephor climbing a tree and was told to come down and told to write up the school rules fifty times as a punishment. That would have been something like about three hundred pages of lines, so I had to get my housemaster, Mr Lister, involved to sort it out. I think he spoke to the ephor about it, but getting lines was nothing compared to what I'd suffered with Brownlee.
96. I remember being caned by Mr Lister once. It was quickly over and left none of the lingering torment of Brownlee's abuse.
97. Each house had some senior boys and they might do things such as shoving your head down a toilet for something. That was called a "bog wash" and involved a senior boy shoving your head in the toilet and another senior flushing it, but again that was nothing compared to Brownlee.
98. I also have a recollection of getting my face smashed at one time, but I can't recall when, or why, or what the circumstances were. An older boy was involved, but I think

I treated it more as a light-hearted incident. It had been snowing and I was given a “grovelling”, which meant my face was rubbed in the snow. There was some grit in the snow and I got a few cuts.

Reporting of abuse at Edinburgh Academy

99. Reverend Haslett was an Irish man, who was a comic figure and I treated him as such. Certainly nobody told me he had a pastoral role in the school. No one told me that if I had any worries or concerns, I could speak with him and at the time I didn't realise that there might have been a member of staff who had such a role. I didn't even think Reverend Haslett could have actually been a minister because of the way he was. He seemed okay, he was known as an after-dinner speaker who drank a lot, but he was more of a 'Father Ted' sort of figure and not someone I could have considered confiding in.
100. Other staff would have known how Brownlee was treating us, but nobody cared. If you see someone getting abused, you should feel an obligation to intervene, but the school was not a caring environment where you might imagine someone would step in and stop it. There were some nice teachers, Mr Archdale was one, but I can't imagine even he would have intervened and done anything about it.
101. There were other staff around at least some of the time who would have seen how Brownlee behaved. There certainly was other staff there when he kicked the living daylights out of my brother when he came into the dining hall late. He whacked people at school as well and other staff would have known, but Brownlee's wife was also often watching on as he punished us in the boarding house. The house was small enough that she would have heard boys screaming and yet she did nothing to stop him, help us, or support us. In doing nothing about it, Mrs Brownlee, the school and other staff were absolutely complicit.
102. I have been carrying my experiences for forty-five years now and I felt that I had spoken to my parents about it at the time, but when it all came out about Edinburgh Academy last year, their reaction was that this was the first they had heard about it.

They asked me why I didn't tell them, which made it even harder because I felt like I had, but that they had chosen not to hear me.

103. They told me they remembered me always talking negatively about the Academy, but that was all. They also remembered [REDACTED] saying that he wanted to kill Brownlee, but not why. I think I blamed my parents to an extent for sending me to the Academy and I think that affected how I was with them during my holidays. I shut down because I couldn't understand how anyone could put their child through what we were going through.
104. More recently, my parents told me that they did once go and speak to Brownlee because they had heard that he had tied [REDACTED] to a chair or a bed and beaten him up. Brownlee told them it wasn't true and they said they then went to Ellis, who was the rector of the school at the time, and he said it would have been boys making things up and so, they told me, they believed him.
105. I think my parents didn't fully understand what we were experiencing. My parents left school at fifteen and they were doing what they thought was best for their children, but they sent us to an environment they knew nothing about. They didn't know what boarding school was meant to be like and I think they assumed what [REDACTED] and I were experiencing was just what happens. I think they perhaps thought that the boarding school ethos was men were made through discipline and they were trying to understand that.

Leaving Edinburgh Academy

106. I left Edinburgh Academy in 198[REDACTED] when I was eighteen years old and went to Newcastle University to study civil engineering, however I didn't know what I was getting into and I felt very unprepared. The school hadn't prepared me for university and my parents didn't have an educational background, so they couldn't.

Life after boarding school

107. I got through my foundation year at university, but I didn't want to engage with the life very much. I was still carrying the depression I had been suffering since my time in Dundas House, which had left me with a sense of worthlessness as a person and I was trying to drown out my sorrows through drink.
108. I didn't do much studying, however I did start going to a local church with a person who lived next to me in the halls of residence. I was in a bit of a state of despair and I went along with him and it made a big difference to me. I became a Christian during that period and at the same time I failed my exams and dropped out of university.
109. I went to work for a mission organisation in South-East Asia, based on a ship called 'The Doulos'. There were around three-hundred people from thirty-five different countries on that ship and we travelled around various countries and cities.
110. In August 1991 we were at a city called Zamboanga in the Philippines and putting on a stage show when someone threw a couple of hand grenades at us. I had organised a group of us to do Scottish country dancing, which I'd actually learnt from Edinburgh Academy, and that's what we had been doing when the attack took place. My dance partner was killed in the attack along with another girl, both nineteen, and twenty-four of us, including me, were taken to hospital.
111. My brother [REDACTED] and I had grown closer after school after we recognised the uniqueness of our lives and that there had been nobody, apart from each other, to share what we had gone through with. Nine months after I was injured in the grenade attack, [REDACTED], who was twenty-four and a policeman in London by that time, was killed in a car accident. That was a wrenching moment in my life.
112. I returned to the U.K. and went back to university in Glasgow and in 1997 I got a job in Newcastle. In September 2001 I joined the civil service and moved to London and, other than a short period working as a vicar at a local church, I have remained in the civil service since. I am now married and my wife and I have four children.

Impact

113. I carried the feeling of wishing I wouldn't wake up in the morning from being an eight-year-old boy, throughout my teenage years and into university and adulthood. I became very shy and introverted while I was still at school and it was only when I started getting into pubs and drinking that I felt I could come out of that shell.
114. That feeling of wanting to die was ingrained in me and was my takeaway from school. I started drinking too much and running around like an idiot while I was at school and that carried on into university. I felt I was useless and of no value.
115. I still struggle with feelings of low self-esteem and a lack of self-worth. I have an ongoing sense of questioning my value and it comes quickly to me in lots of situations. I have Brownlee towering over my head telling me I'm worth nothing and it would be better if I was dead and it's hard not to think that of myself. I have to push past those feelings, but it's hard and I'm still working on it.
116. I find it difficult to trust people and build relationships. Conversely, I am over-protective of my children.
117. My experiences have definitely had an impact on my relationship with my parents as well. It is only in the last eighteen months, since there has been everything in the media about the Academy, that I have started to try and work things through with them.
118. Brownlee has been with me all my life. Wherever I have been, whatever I have done, he has been with me. It is only in the last eighteen months that I have been able to try and detach from him, get him off my back and be free of him. My Christian faith is about forgiveness and I have been trying to forgive him for forty-five years.

Treatment/support

119. On the back of the grenade attack in the Philippines, I went for counselling and during the sessions, quickly got to talking about Dundas House rather than about having just been blown up. I realise that Dundas House has left me with deeper wounds than

being the victim of a grenade attack and seeing my friends getting killed and injured. I also realised that even dealing with the death of my brother in the car accident didn't compare with scars left by my experiences with Brownlee in Dundas House.

120. There were two types of counselling after the attack in the Philippines. One was with a professional and I felt guilty talking about Dundas House, when the session was supposed to be talking about Zamboanga. I think I felt that in some ways I was betraying my parents, or that I should have been able to cope with it. The other counselling was over a year and was more pastoral, in a way, and was helpful to a degree.
121. All the counselling quickly came back to Brownlee and Dundas House and trying to deal with the damaged eight-year-old boy inside me.
122. I found all the counselling helpful and after that period stuff started appearing in the press about Edinburgh Academy, which also helped me. The stories I heard and read validated my experiences. I had felt isolated for forty-five years. I thought I was carrying stuff that nobody else had experienced and so wasn't able to share with anyone. Finally, I realised there were others out there and that people were showing an interest.

Reporting of Abuse

123. For forty-five years I never considered going to the police, because I thought nobody would be interested. I had nothing to do with Edinburgh Academy after I left, other than keeping in touch very occasionally with a couple of people, however about ten years ago, my brother's best friend from school, [REDACTED], got in touch with me. He'd been trying to contact my brother, because no one had told him that [REDACTED] had died.
124. I realised when I was speaking to [REDACTED] that he was a completely broken man after what Brownlee had done to him. We had a chat and he told me that he'd heard Brownlee was dead, which I was pleased to hear. [REDACTED] told me that he'd been found

in a ditch somewhere. I thought it was a shame because there was never going to be any justice, but at least Brownlee was dead.

125. Now, however, since I heard the radio podcasts made by the broadcaster Nicky Campbell eighteen months ago, I realised that Brownlee was still alive. It is very isolating carrying this on your own, but when you realise that there is a collective of people, you realise that there might be a chance of some justice and I decided to go to the police myself.
126. Around Christmas 2022 I spoke to officers from Livingston and gave a statement about Brownlee mainly. It was good having the opportunity to share my experiences and hearing someone tell me that what happened to me wasn't right, it was a crime. The police have kept in touch about what has been happening. I don't know the legal terminology, but they expect some sort of court diet to conclude that Brownlee is not fit to face trial because, they have told me, he has dementia. They do expect there will be some sort of court procedure examining the facts, sometime next year.
127. It's frustrating how long it takes, but at least if there's an examination of the facts someone else is saying that what Brownlee did was not right and was, in fact, criminal.
128. Around the same time that I spoke to the police, I also started a civil case against Edinburgh Academy. I have instructed a solicitor and that is ongoing.

Edinburgh Academy survivors group

129. I have joined a 'WhatsApp' survivors group with thirty-odd other Edinburgh Academy people. It's been helpful being a member of the group, because it is breaking that feeling of isolation. It's been good for me being able to share my experiences.
130. I have not had any contact from Edinburgh Academy since I walked out the door thirty-five years ago. Not even when my brother died. The school showed no care or concern for me while I was there and that has not changed.

131. There has been engagement with the new rector through our survivors group, not with me personally, but that has been more positive. He has shown a lot more concern to try and right the things that happened in the past. I know that he went to every day of the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry hearings and, from what I can tell, he sounds like a good man. It does seem as if he is trying to do the right thing.

Records

132. I don't know whether my parents might have some report cards from my time at Edinburgh Academy. I certainly have nothing. I walked out that door and never looked back.

Lessons to be Learned

133. I have been cautious about speaking to the Inquiry because I was never taken into Brownlee's study, but I spent three years in Dundas House with no peace, no rest and living in constant fear.
134. Each child must be at the centre of every school. That wasn't the case for me. Brownlee was an extreme example, but Edinburgh Academy did not show any care or kindness. One moment of kindness from Mr **IDX** stands out, but that was not the culture of the school. Every child must be valued and cared for, beyond their sporting or their academic ability. When that isn't the case, the child must be able to raise it in some way because no child should be sitting in school thinking they can't get any help and that nobody cares.
135. I don't think a lot of the teachers at Edinburgh Academy were qualified to teach. I know that in state schools you have to be qualified and that should be the case in private schools too. People who were not fit to teach were teaching and I think the Inquiry needs to look at that.
136. It is good that the Inquiry has acknowledged what happened at Edinburgh Academy. I've carried it on my own and that acknowledgement has made a big difference. I hope

the Inquiry will recognise that it was not just Brownlee, but that the whole culture of a lack of care in the school was pervasive and it was unacceptable.

137. I hope the Inquiry will recognise the reality of what life was like at Edinburgh Academy and that our abuse was not an isolated thing. It happened to a lot of us and it shouldn't have happened to anyone. A lot of people either knew what was happening or were blind to it and I would like to see that acknowledged also.

138. I know that there will be hundreds of people who have not come forward and spoken of their abuse. My brother's friend [REDACTED] is a broken man, with no support. The school is doing nothing for him or anyone else. Nobody is caring for those who are sitting silently and who are broken. I hope the school proactively seeks out those people and looks after them.

Other information

139. 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..... IWO [REDACTED]

Dated..... 13 January 2024