

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

CDF

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is CDF My date of birth is 1964. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I am the youngest of three brothers, my older brothers, and are a year apart. I'm seven years younger than my middle brother. My parents were fairly middle class, my father was a senior lawyer in Glasgow and I was raised in Clarkston in Glasgow.
3. I went to Netherlee Primary School, which I didn't like, and my brothers attended normal everyday school. My father always maintained that my mother wanted one of us to go to a private school, although I think I ended up in a private school because my parents were splitting up and getting a divorce. I had only been at Kiel Boarding School for two months when they broke up so you could say it was kind of convenient timing.
4. I did sit an entrance exam, albeit, I'm sure everyone passed it, I certainly can't recall anyone ever failing it. I think that, on the day of the exam, we were taken round and shown my first dorm but other than that there wasn't any kind of familiarisation.

### Keil Boarding School, Dumbarton

*General*

5. I remember the grounds were big and there was a one way system with the roads. The main school building had classrooms and there was an old walled garden where there were some prefab style classrooms. There were a number of schoolhouses, IK House which was entirely dormitory, Mason House which had a two storey dormitory and had showers and a changing area for visiting rugby teams. There was also a stable block at IK House where we went for biology. I don't know what IK represented, I just remember we called it that.
6. There was an old stable block as well which was right at the top of the grounds, it seemed some distance away back then, we got IT, technical drawing, woodwork and chemistry there. That was also where the first year dormitory was, on the first floor. There were two prefect rooms in there as well.
7. First year had about 25 kids in the dormitory, we were all there together. Kiel operated on the principal that there were two deputies and two chiefs per house. The deputies were fifth year, the chiefs were sixth year and they were all prefects.
8. Each house also had a housemaster and a deputy housemaster. The first year dorm didn't have a housemaster or deputy who lived on site, they were elsewhere. Mr **QQY** was my first year deputy housemaster but I actually couldn't tell you who the first year housemaster was, it could have been **QQY**, I'm not sure.
9. There was a very clear hierarchy at Kiel. In first year if you didn't stop, nod your head and say 'sir', when a teacher passed you were getting either a copy or the belt. Basically you did what you were told and if a chief asked you to jump you basically said 'how high, sir'. We didn't address the depts as sir, but we did with all teachers and the chiefs.
10. The chiefs and the deputies were all selected by the headmaster, the housemasters, the teaching staff and the governors. If you were a deputy one year then you would

be a chief the next year. That's more or less how it worked. The senior chief came from the sixth year chiefs and, as far as the boys were concerned, he was like god. He was quite literally Jesus Christ Almighty and could do anything he wanted. He was the head boy but he was called the senior chief and he basically ran the school. What he said went and he was only answerable to the headmaster. The senior chief would run the assembly until the headmaster came in and took the prayers but the senior chief ran everything else, he took the lectern first and last.

11. The first year dormitory was in the main stable block and was just an 'L' shaped room. You had a locker with a clothes hanging area and three drawers and a bed, that was about it. You were also allowed to provide a locker for yourself, a small box, that could lock and you kept it under your bed. You could keep your own tuck and stuff like that in there.
12. We had a school uniform for leaving the school grounds which consisted of a blazer, white shirt, long trousers or kilt and shoes. In first year we had to wear a cap, but after first year you never wore a cap again. Then we had daywear within the grounds which was a green polo neck, grey shirt, blue shorts, knee length green socks and black shoes. You could wear the kilt instead of the shorts if you wanted.
13. There was a nurse and a sick bay, but there weren't any issues with healthcare or that side of things.

## **Routine at Keil Boarding School**

### *First day*

14. I don't have any particular recollections from my first day at Keil other than being shown our beds and told to get on with it. I was dropped off by mum and dad and I know I'd made it clear I didn't want to be there. Dad had said to give it one term and if I didn't like it he would take me out but that didn't happen. That's no surprise though as my old man says whatever makes him sound good at the time.

15. I do remember getting taught how to do hospital corners on our beds and being told how our lockers should look. We were told there would be inspections. They were always carried out by the chiefs and deputy prefects.
16. If the deputy or chief in your dorm didn't like you very much you would often walk in and find everything from your locker tipped out on your bed and your bed upside down as well. He would scream at you to get it all sorted. If he didn't think it was good enough he would flip it again. That was mostly in first year when they just crammed it all into you all the time, after that you just did it.

### *Mornings and bedtime*

17. We were woken up at 7am and were out doing our orderlies by 7.30am. Prefects got you up for the day. First thing was to get washed, then you did your orderlies. Orderlies were your daily chores or jobs. There were no cleaners at Kiel so the boys did everything.
18. My orderlies were cleaning and dusting the stairs and corridors and cleaning out the showers. We stopped about 7.50am and went to the main gym to line up in our table groups for breakfast. Breakfast was 8am to 8.30am then we went back to orderlies until about 8.45am.
19. We had the main assembly at 9am, which was mainly in the main gym or, on special occasions, in the main house.
20. We were in school all day and really only had our own time from about 8 - 8.30pm. That wasn't long though as lights out was 9pm, in later years perhaps 10pm. Chiefs and deputies could suit themselves.
21. On Saturdays there was a roll call at twelve o'clock and after that, if you weren't a full boarder, you could go home. You didn't need to be back until 9 o'clock on the Sunday night. I was a weekly boarder so I went home at weekends.

22. There were no curtains in the dorms and the heating was poor, I remember the cold metal framed windows. There was no talking after lights out or you would be punished.
23. Washing and bathing was adequate for purpose. There was no monitoring, it was mostly baths, in the main schoolhouse. There were shower blocks there as well.

#### *Food*

24. There was always a deputy and a chief on each dining table and the tables were divided up into all different years. So there was a range of age at each table. There would be two boys from each table on dish duty and they would bring the ashets of food to the table and take them back afterwards. The staff in the kitchen made the meals and did all the washing up.
25. During my second or third year the boys all signed a protest regarding the quality of the food. Until then a typical breakfast would be a slice of black pudding or a sliced sausage and there would be one loaf for the entire table of thirteen which meant not everyone was getting two slices of bread. So that protest went in and the headmaster and some governors came in and carried out an inspection, out of the blue. It was during dinner time and immediately afterwards, everyone in the kitchen was fired by the headmaster.
26. Trusthouse Forte then came in and the meals were much better. We were then getting three course lunches and three course dinners. The lunches were always decent but that was probably because all the teachers ate with us at lunch, so it had to be decent food. At breakfast the staff were getting proper meals specially prepared for them, they were certainly better than what we were getting.
27. The deputy or chief would serve the food at the table so they obviously always got the best and biggest helpings. If you were on dish duty you were last so you were

lucky to get anything, you were just stuck with whatever was left. If that was virtually nothing that was just tough shit.

### *School*

28. After the morning assembly at 9am we had three classes, each 45 minutes long. Then we had a morning break and a further two classes also 45 minutes long. Then we had lunch.
29. After lunch it was games, so there was rugby or cricket practice. If you weren't into sport then they had this lovely term, 'NH'. That was Natural History, which was basically back doing orderly work like raking up leaves or cleaning up rubbish around the grounds. That was me as I had no aptitude towards sports. We then had a further three 45 minutes lessons from 3.45pm.
30. In my first year I was sent to see a psychologist in Dumbarton who diagnosed me as dyslexic. Even at that time dyslexia wasn't actually acknowledged by a lot of teaching staff, even less by the teaching staff at Kiel. Their attitude towards it was that the child was just lazy. So I had that to contend with.
31. The classes were a lot smaller than at a normal school, we had 180 boarders and about 125 day boys, so only 300 or so in the entire school, spread over six years. I do remember that in first year we were all in the same class but from second year on we were divided into A class and B class.
32. We also had prep in the evening from 7-8pm when you had to be in your prep room. There would be teachers and prefects and we all sat in silence and did our homework. In second year that increased from 7-8.30pm.
33. Religious education was a scheduled lesson and very boring. We had prayers every day at the morning assembly but that was about it as far as religion. Lip service was paid whether you were Catholic, Protestant, Jewish or Muslim. RE was RE and morning assembly was, I suppose, Christian. The RE teacher was also the biology

teacher, I can't remember his name, but he was a minister and would wear a dog collar.

### *Holidays and trips*

34. We did go on outings, mainly with the music teacher. I remember we went to see Star Wars when it came out and we went to the theatre and some concerts. I can't think of any educational trips.
35. I would take any opportunity to get out though. In third and fourth year we had a woman geography teacher and she took us for orienteering. I jumped at that as it got me out the school and we did some events down in Clyde Park.
36. Our holidays, if we take it from September, were a September week, four weeks at Christmas, four weeks at Easter and eight weeks in the summer.
37. My birthday was not during the school term, which was fortunate, as some kids got a thumping on their birthday. If you were in the first fifteen rugby players or in the 'A' class you had nothing to worry about but if you were in the 'B' class with all the nasty little thugs, your life would be a misery. Your life was a misery anyway but a birthday was just another excuse.

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### *Visits / Inspections*

38. I'm not aware of any visits, maybe full boarders received visits at weekends but I wasn't a full boarder so I can't say.
39. I'm not aware of any inspections or anything like that. I can't imagine any inspections taking place from any outside bodies.
40. We got visits from the army, navy and air force every single year without fail. They talked to us, gave us slide shows and all the rest of it. If they recruited anyone from that system, they were already partially acclimatised to the military system.

### *Discipline*

41. There was discipline in the form of getting the belt from teachers at school. We would also get sent for 'copies' as a form of punishment. A copy is when you have allegedly misbehaved and you had to go to the master's workroom and get the housemaster to sign a piece of A4 paper. You then got a typed laminated script, usually something out the bible, to copy out as a punishment. You could get single, double or triple copies and if you got three copies in a week you got the belt from the deputy housemaster.
42. Some teachers had no discipline issues, they were strict but they had no issues. Mr **CDL**, was one, he taught **██████████** and he knew how to control his class. If he gave you the belt you knew, so no one messed about in his class. He didn't give the belt often but, by god, when he did he made sure it was worth his while.
43. I once witnessed Mr **CDL** giving the belt to a boy and the boy was down on the ground after three straps, and he got six. That was because a boy, **██████████**, had leaned out the window of the school minibus and asked a girl if she was a prostitute. He got what he deserved and I made damn sure I never got the belt from **CDL** after that.
44. You just wouldn't dare wet the bed as you'd be the butt of every joke in every classroom. Your life would just be a complete and utter misery. You'd be as well digging a hole and burying yourself, as your life would be hell. You could not afford to let that happen at all, it would have followed you through your entire time at Kiel. To be honest I didn't ever hear of it happening but it would have been a nightmare.

### **Abuse at Kiel**

45. I didn't like school and I didn't want to be there. I was bullied all the time, 24 hours a day, other than weekends, you couldn't get away from it, there was no escaping. At an ordinary school, at 4 o'clock you would get out but at 4 o'clock in my school you were back into class. Then all through the night, there was no break from it. They built up a fear within you, a fear of expectations, not knowing when, where or how it might come about.
46. I always remember when I was in first year, our years classroom was upstairs in the main schoolhouse. Period eight on a Monday was a private study period and wasn't allocated to a teacher. One of the kids was landed with being class monitor, which was not a popular position to be in. If anyone misbehaved the monitor had the job of writing their names on the board.
47. The next door class was Mr CDK, we called him CDK he lived in the IK house and was the housemaster there. He taught and and also trained the team. He used to ask his class, which was third years, if he should go through and belt some of the first years.
48. He would come through and belt those boys whose names were on the board. One time CDK came through and there were no names on the board so he gave the monitor ten minutes to write some names up. The monitor went mad and wrote about thirty boys names up on the board. In came CDK and he gave every single boy three of the belt, one at a time. There was no reason behind it, it was just mad and the boys were all getting belted and coming out the classroom crying.
49. When corporal punishment was banned I couldn't think how CDK would manage or how Kiel would exist without it. I heard CDK would have kids put their hands over the back of a chair then he would stand on another chair and jump off it from a height to strap them. He had six or seven different belts he would choose from depending on his mood. I was belted by CDK on numerous occasions throughout my time at Kiel.

50. [REDACTED] was one of my deputies when I was in first year and he literally thought he was a regimental sergeant major. That's how he walked, that's how he shouted and that's how he conducted himself. To my absolute horror he was then made senior chief when I returned in second year. By the end of second year even other chiefs were rebelling against him, that's how bad he was. He was not popular. I only knew him as [REDACTED] everyone in Kiel was only ever known by their surnames. My second year at Kiel was my worst year, I do remember that.
51. [REDACTED] was a nightmare, he would have us standing silent in a line for ages, when there was no teachers around. If you had spare time and were in the gym he would scream at you like a sergeant major in the army, he loved to exercise his power. He seemed to be answerable only to the headmaster. I saw him once tell a teacher to take a run and jump.
52. All of a sudden though, he left, it was early before the end of summer term. I'm not sure what happened but he left and all of that crap finished.
53. In first year I was never popular, I was small and fat and didn't fight back, so I was always going to be the one that got picked on. First year wasn't so bad, there was regular bullying, which didn't come as a surprise but after first year, that's when we were segregated into classes.
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54. Most of the bullies were dunces and were in the 'B' class, but, although my reading and writing ability was bad and I had dyslexia to contend with, I had a reasonably high IQ. However, that still didn't stop me ending up in the 'B' class with all the bullies and thugs.
55. I never ever showered at Kiel after first year up until fourth or fifth year when I could lock the door behind me. I never let myself get cornered anywhere and I always gave myself at least two routes of escape. That's the way I saw it. You could get cornered in showers and the bullies would flick you with towels, give you a ball blacking and all sorts of things. Ball blacking is when they put boot polish on shoe brushes and then brush your tender parts.

56. The bullies could be your own dorm mates. I just kept myself to myself and at night time I would curl up in a ball. If I didn't the bullies would throw rugby balls or rugby boots with metal studs at my groin or jump onto my bed and jump up and down on my groin while I was in my bed.
57. One of my chiefs, in the second year, was a prop forward in the first fifteen and if he caught you talking after lights out he took you out into the hall, put a brush handle under your chin and did push ups, up and down the wall with you. He was using the kids as weights. He would do that instead of giving you a copy. He never did that to me and I never saw him do it but I was told by other boys that he'd done that to them.
58. [REDACTED], I don't know his full name, was an absolute thug and made my life a god damn misery throughout every year. He was in every dorm I was in and thought it was hilariously funny to throw a rugby boot at me in the night. He also jumped up and down on my nuts when I was in my bed at night.
59. There was a black boy, [REDACTED] from Zambia, in my first year dorm and class. I remember at the start of second term a new boy from South Africa who was really tall, started in second year. He was fixing his bed and said to [REDACTED] "hey kaffer, make my bed". [REDACTED] froze, then hit the boy knocking him to the floor. No one expected that, but they actually ended up best of friends for the rest of school.
60. When I was in third year at Kiel I was assaulted by a boy called [REDACTED], I'm not sure of the spelling but that was his surname and that's what he was known as. He was the year above me, and it was his last day, so, with all his buddies around him, he decided to have a bit of fun. They went round the school looking for people to hurt, people like me.
61. I was in the snooker room, in the main school and all of a sudden the room filled with fourth years. [REDACTED] appeared, walked straight up to me and punched me straight in the gob. Then he disappeared. I'd been having a bad enough week and that was the

tin lid so I just went up to my dorm, got changed and walked out the school. I actually made it home to Clarkston before the school realised I was gone. Mr CDL phoned the house after I got there. [REDACTED] broke my tooth and cut my lip. I still have a black tooth from that.

62. I knew nothing about it at the time, but my dad took a civil action out against [REDACTED] and took him to court for punching me. [REDACTED] was expelled even though it was his last day. Their family had to pay compensation but I remember we gave it to a charity and I actually pinned the receipt from the charity on a notice board at the school. If I hadn't done that it would have got back to [REDACTED]'s mates that he'd paid me £200 in compensation and they would have taken out that £200 on me, in lumps. I posted it on the noticeboard so no one could say I'd profited out of it.
63. My old man did that without even consulting me. There was no police involvement as far as I know, but it was all done by my dad, so I'm not sure. I don't remember giving any statement to the police. I don't remember any follow up by the school in relation to that incident, there certainly wasn't any counselling or anything like that.
64. I recall an incident at Kiel in IK House when two of the boys in my year branded another kid on his legs with a heating element, the ones you put into cups to boil water. Needless to say they were expelled. That was just another kid in our year, another kid that was picked on, like I was. I didn't see it happen, but everyone knew about it and I saw the burns on his legs.
65. In fifth year, I was once grabbed by four fifth year deputies and held down, or suspended between two beds in a dorm. They had an arm or leg each and held me across the gap between the beds. They got this first year kid to come into the room and told him to start kicking me between the legs or he would get it. He did start kicking me and I lost my temper, that was one of the few times that I really lost it at Kiel. I threw two of the boys across the beds and grabbed the first year and tried to push him out the window. I didn't have anything against the kid, and I didn't throw him out the window as he was holding on to the middle post and the deps eventually got me off him. That is an extreme example as I totally lost it and it's one of the few

times I actually retaliated. As a result those deputies never bullied me again. Most of the time I would just try to disappear and hide anyway.

### **Reporting of abuse at Kiel**

66. There was no way you could report anything. You wouldn't dare report anything to a deputy or chief, no chance and there were no teachers I would have gone to. I wouldn't have had a heart to heart with them, my life wouldn't have been worth living because the bullies would find out. We didn't have any one to one's with teachers at all. It wasn't that culture.
67. If the teachers or headmasters knew of bullying at Kiel they didn't go out of their way to find out which kids were getting bullied. They didn't do anything about it. Day to day running of that school was left to the prefects, the teachers didn't have anything to do with it. Those responsibilities were passed on and it was really the children who were given the authority over the other children. It was therefore no surprise it was abused, as they were just young boys.

### **Leaving Kiel**

68. I left Kiel two weeks early at the end of my fifth year because I had a job lined up and I just wanted the hell out of there. I left with two 'C's' and 3 'E's' at O level.
69. I kept quiet about leaving early as they would have done something to me. If they knew I was leaving they would have had one last go at me. I managed to keep it quiet right up until my last night, which was a Friday.
70. I was being picked up on the Saturday morning at twelve o'clock and I wasn't going into that gym for assembly because I knew the bullies suspected I was leaving and would come to get me. I locked myself in the music room and didn't go to morning assembly. Then I heard the boys come looking for me. They were outside trying to

get in the windows and banging on the door. I wouldn't open the door, even for a teacher.

71. Eventually I did and I was taken to the senior chiefs room and kept safe in there until my brother came to pick me up. I was then escorted down to meet him and I left.
72. So it didn't matter what it was, it was the senior chief, and not the teachers, who was roaming around and in charge of things. If it was the orderlies, the NH, getting to classrooms and assembly on time, keeping quiet when in line or any of those things, if you stepped out of line then it was the senior chief you had to answer to. Basically he was the boss.

### **Life after being in care**

73. When I was about seventeen or eighteen I actually went back to Kiel, I went there on my motorbike. I knew the senior chief, he was a boy in the year below me. So I went in and I spoke to some teachers. The boy I knew came up and grabbed me by the hair from behind. He was asking me what the hell I was doing there and he started to pull me down towards the ground. I told him he had five seconds to let go or I'd break every bone in his body and he got the message. It makes me wonder why I went back and why he would do that. I've had nothing to do with the place since.
74. I went on to start working on a contract with a gardening firm. My mum re-married and it was my step-father who got me the job. I did that for a while, it was mainly seasonal work, then I had a period of unemployment and then I did some security work.
75. In 1986 I sat my Class 1 HGV driving and started working as a casual driver to start with. I was in Dumfries driving for Curry's for a couple of years, then I eventually got a full time position with [REDACTED] I've been driving HGV's ever since, thirty years this year it will be.

76. I met [REDACTED] down in England and we've been down here ever since.

### Impact

77. A lot of my memories from Kiel, certainly in third, fourth and fifth year are sitting at the top of the quarry there and thinking of reasons not to jump off. The grounds went down to the Clyde and there was an escarpment and a quarry where the stone must have come from to build the houses. There were places there that I found, where I could go or get to, where no one would know I was there. I spent a lot of time in such places, between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. They were also places where I could go to, and where I could hide, to avoid the bullying.

78. I know that when I left Kiel, I mentally flicked a switch, saying that I'd never be bullied again. I've since found myself in situations and I have stood up for myself. I'm not a hard man, not a fighter but other people don't know that. In a situation I can portray myself as a hard man, and they don't know that. I've never been in a fight since leaving Kiel.

79. Thinking about Kiel, it does still make me angry, and for a lot of years I thought that if I ever met [REDACTED] again I could kill him. He put me through five years of hell. I wouldn't know him if I saw him but that's how I felt about the guy.

80. I've now done things but it's all off my own back, my Class 1 driving and my City and Guild certificates.

81. During private therapy I have spoken a couple of times about my time at Kiel. I was hypnotised and spoke about it and the first time, it surprised me how close to the surface it still was.

### Records

82. The only records I got were the report cards at Kiel, they would be sent home. They would usually be one or two lines from the teacher, usually with 'could do better' or whatever. To be honest, I didn't care, I couldn't stand school. When you spend most of your time covering your ass and hiding yourself away, you're not going to excel at anything. Kiel didn't do me any good and no one at the school ever said anything to me or discussed anything from the report cards.
83. My parents would sit me down and speak to me, but with my mum, if someone said anything negative about me she would always say "you're in trouble" as I was always wrong. She would never say she'd been told something and then ask my side of it. That's just what she was like, even after I left school, she was always like that.
84. I have no idea about any other records and I've not applied for anything either.

### **Lessons to be learned**

85. I think it was insanity to give all that power to young boys. Young boys can be extremely nasty to each other anyway, and that's without the power of god. Of the kids that are going to rise to a higher level, 98% of them are going to abuse that power anyway. Just look at our politicians, I bet most of them were prefects too. I imagine any similar schools, Gordonstoun for example, would have been exactly the same.
86. If the teachers had given a shit that would have helped. The teachers being aware of what was happening on a daily basis and actually doing something about it. If the teachers ran things and were in charge then at least there would be an adult responsible for the day to day running. That wasn't the case though, it was sixteen and eighteen year old boys that were running the school.
87. The responsibility sits with the system, the system the school was run under at the time. Maybe the headmaster, 'Batch' we called him, could have done more but he was new when I started. His name may have been Thatcher or something like that. I

remember he was enormously fat and he took us for maths sometimes. I remember he was on Mastermind on the television. We all got the night off prep to watch him and he finished fourth out of four. The funniest part of that was that he had to get a special large chair because he was so fat.

88. The failure was the fact that boys, the chiefs and deputies, were running that school and had direction and power over other boys. They should not have had authority over other school children because they're still children themselves. Especially boys because they will take advantage of that. Whoever came up with that idea needs their head looked at.
89. We have to stop other kids having to go through what I went through, kids are still going through what I went through and it has to stop. They can't belt them any longer but there are surely other punishments.
90. For the life of me I cannot think of any other boarding school being run in any other different way. It seems a universal thing and it just cannot happen. Giving children that authority in that environment is insanity, no matter where the school is.

### **Other information**

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91. I saw Kiel was being investigated on their Facebook page and I decided to get in touch with the Inquiry from there. I saw the names of other kids that had sailed through on a golden tide and hadn't taken all the shit I had to put up with on their behalf.
  92. Today, I don't think anything is going to change anything, but I do just hope I can make it better for other children that may be in a similar situation to myself. Children who are not brilliantly academic or sports orientated, which seems to protect them from the worst side of things.

- 93. My hopes are that there is a cease brought to prefects having authority over other children, especially in those Kiel type environments, within schools. No one has any real idea what it's like being bullied twenty four hours a day for five or six days a week for nearly five years.
- 94. There is no cure for bullying, no matter what school, but there was just no adult supervision, as such, at Kiel
- 95. I do think it's disgusting what's happened to Kiel. That was the home of Denny the shipbuilder, he built the Cutty Sark, one of the most famous ships to come out of the Clyde. Kiel was his house, overlooking the Clyde and although the grounds have been developed the house itself was vandalised and set on fire and is now just a ruin.
- 96. 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 **CDF** .....

Dated... *11-5-18* .....