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# Report to the Board of Trustees of The Hotchkiss School

August 2018

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prepared by

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## **Executive Summary**

We were engaged to conduct an independent investigation into instances of sexual misconduct by faculty or staff against students of The Hotchkiss School that occurred at any time in the school's history. As a result of our investigation, we have substantiated allegations of sexual misconduct against seven former faculty members: Leif Thorne-Thomsen, Christopher Carlisle, George "Rick" DelPrete, Dr. Peter Gott, Albert Sly, Ronald Carlson, and Damon White. These instances of sexual misconduct took place from 1969 to 1992, and involved sixteen former students. This misconduct primarily involved unwanted sexual contact and intercourse. These seven men are discussed in Section IV. In Section V, we discuss three allegations of misconduct against three adults who were formerly part of the Hotchkiss community. While we were not able to name these individuals under the naming principles set forth in Section III, we found the accounts related to us to be highly credible. The conduct in these accounts included sexual contact and intercourse. Section VI briefly describes allegations of sexual misconduct that could not be substantiated or that amounted to boundary transgressions. Finally the Conclusion discusses the opportunities missed by people in positions of authority to stop ongoing sexual abuse.

Virtually every Hotchkiss graduate we spoke to noted the unparalleled education they received. We are convinced that it is a vibrant community that has seen its share of fine teachers, administrators, and staff over the years. For many graduates, Hotchkiss was a wonderful experience, yet a significant number of former students recounted enduring sexual abuse at the hands of faculty.

### **I. Introduction**

On February 15, 2018, The Hotchkiss School announced that it had engaged Allison O'Neil of Locke Lord LLP to carry out an independent investigation into reports of faculty or staff sexual misconduct with Hotchkiss students anytime in the history of the school. We received numerous calls and emails in response to the outreach efforts around this investigation. Some of the reports we received were first-hand accounts of sexual misconduct, while others were of events that were witnessed or about which a student or faculty member heard from others. The earliest reports we received were from the 1940s, before Hotchkiss became co-educational. The most recent reports we received were from the 2010s, although we did not receive any report from a current Hotchkiss student. We are aware that the school has addressed situations where faculty members crossed appropriate boundaries with students in recent years, but our investigation did not substantiate any sexual misconduct by a current faculty member with a student. The majority of events reported to us were clustered in the late 1970s and early to mid-1980s—the period of time immediately following Hotchkiss's transition to coeducation for the 1974-1975 school year.

Members of the Hotchkiss administration were aware of at least some of the instances of sexual misconduct at the time it was occurring. What emerges from our investigation is a series of missed opportunities stemming from cultural deficiencies around prioritizing student safety,

particularly in the late 1970s through 1980s; a lack of preparation for the transition to co-education; a desire on the part of the Hotchkiss community to deal with instances of sexual misconduct internally and a reluctance to involve outside authorities such as the police and the Connecticut Department of Children and Families; the use of the concept of *in loco parentis* (i.e., the responsibility of schools, particularly boarding schools, to stand in as parents to students) as both a sword and shield to excuse behavior that crossed boundaries with students and allowed sexual misconduct to take place; a belief that once an issue was reported to the school's outside counsel it was adequately dealt with; and a failure by specific individuals to act when presented with clear accounts of misconduct. It is also clear that more recently the leadership began to aggressively update Hotchkiss's policies and procedures for reporting and dealing with sexual misconduct by faculty. The school has engaged the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) to conduct a review of these policies and procedures.<sup>1</sup>

We thank those who came forward and participated in this investigation. We appreciate the candor with which Hotchkiss administrators and faculty spoke, and we particularly thank those former students who shared their accounts.

## **II. Events Leading Up to This Investigation**

### **A. Roy Smith Litigation**

On February 5, 2015, Hotchkiss announced to the community that a lawsuit brought on behalf of a former student, known as "John Doe," had been filed against Hotchkiss and former faculty member Roy Smith, who taught at the school from 1970 to 2000. According to the announcement, the lawsuit alleged that Smith "sexually assaulted" John Doe while he was a student. We have not, to our knowledge, spoken with the plaintiff in that case, nor were we able to speak with Smith, as he passed away in 2014. The school did not place any limitations on our ability to investigate allegations regarding Smith.

### **B. Carlton Fields Engaged**

On June 3, 2016, Hotchkiss announced that it had engaged the law firm Carlton Fields Jordan Burt, P.A., to investigate allegations of sexual misconduct partly in response to similar investigations undertaken by peer schools and inquiries regarding allegations of sexual misconduct from the *Boston Globe*. Carlton Fields was tasked with discovering instances of misconduct that were not the subject of a previous formal investigation or active litigation. Carlton Fields conducted extensive interviews, all of which were reviewed and some of which were relied on for this report.

### **C. The 1977 Class Reunion**

The class of 1977 held its 40th reunion in June of 2017. Prior to the reunion weekend, members of the class raised concerns about sexual misconduct and abuse that they witnessed as

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<sup>1</sup> RAINN will undertake a comprehensive review of the school's current sexual misconduct education and response mechanisms, including existing policies, protocols, and trainings. At the end of its review, RAINN will provide Hotchkiss with an assessment of its current programs and a set of concrete recommendations to ensure that the school meets or exceeds best practices.

students at Hotchkiss. On May 4, 2017, members of the class sent a letter to their classmates, which urged them to share any experience they had with sexual misconduct while at Hotchkiss so that a process could be put in place to seek recognition and contrition on the part of the school.

Following this outreach, these and other graduates formed HAFRAH—Hotchkiss Alumni for Reconciliation and Healing—to advocate for acknowledgement by the school of sexual misconduct that had occurred. In the course of its advocacy, HAFRAH expressed concern about the mandated scope of Carlton Fields’ investigation and pushed the school to expand its scope and transparency with regard to its inquiry into sexual misconduct.

#### **D. Locke Lord Engaged**

On February 15, 2018, Hotchkiss announced that Locke Lord would take on the expanded sexual misconduct investigation, and engaged us to investigate, draft, and publish a public report with no limits on timeframe or teacher.

We undertook to speak with anyone who wished to speak with us on any topic, even if it did not precisely amount to sexual misconduct and therefore was beyond the ultimate scope of this report. Further, the Board committed to publishing our full report, rather than a redacted or partial version. We were not limited to a particular timeframe, but rather were asked to investigate incidents of faculty or staff sexual misconduct against students at any time in the school’s history.

Prior to this engagement, Locke Lord had no relationship with and had not done any work for Hotchkiss. In order to maintain its independence, Locke Lord agreed that it would not be engaged by Hotchkiss in any other matter for a period of at least five years following the conclusion of this investigation and the publication of this report.

Hotchkiss did not impose any limitations on or direct our inquiry in any way. It gave us latitude to pursue a thorough, independent investigation. The school provided us with all documents and files we requested to the extent they existed. It provided us with contact information where possible for interviewees and made current faculty, administrators, and board members available for interviews.

### **III. The Investigative Process**

#### **A. Outreach to the Hotchkiss Community Regarding Locke Lord’s Engagement**

The February 15, 2018 communication announcing Locke Lord’s engagement was posted on Hotchkiss’s website on its page dedicated to “Preventing and Responding to Sexual Misconduct” and included contact information for Locke Lord’s investigative team. Hotchkiss also emailed the announcement to 8,491 community members, including alumni, current parents, current employees and spouses, former employees (including faculty), Trustees (current and past), and others (*e.g.*, current grandparents, past parents who donate to the school, and volunteers). Hotchkiss subsequently published information about the investigation in bulletins to

the community, in the Hotchkiss Magazine, and in reminder emails throughout the spring of 2018. A list of all outreach efforts is included as Appendix A.

## **B. Fact Gathering**

Investigators spoke with more than 150 individuals, including over ninety graduates and nearly forty current and former faculty members and administrators. In addition, investigators reached out to current and past members of the Board of Trustees and all living Heads of School. We reviewed approximately 200,000 pages of documents, including Hotchkiss faculty and staff personnel files, Hotchkiss yearbooks, rulebooks, policies, letters, depositions, prior investigation notes, articles, books, and materials provided to us by those we interviewed.

### *1. Previous Investigations*

Hotchkiss has undertaken several internal investigations since the early 1990s, which we have reviewed and taken into account where appropriate.

#### a. Special Advisory Committee Investigation

In January 1992, Head of School Robert Oden assembled a panel to review allegations from a former student of sexual misconduct by Hotchkiss teacher Leif Thorne-Thomsen (discussed below in detail). The panel consisted of former Head of School William Olsen; the head of a peer school; and a former Hotchkiss trustee, who also was a well-respected educator. The panel's report to Oden was brief. Based on the findings of this panel, Oden placed Thorne-Thomsen on a leave of absence and Thorne-Thomsen agreed to seek counseling.

#### b. Stapleton Investigation

After Thorne-Thomsen was placed on leave following the findings of the Special Advisory Committee, two graduates contacted Oden and told him that they had been sexually abused by Thorne-Thomsen while they were at Hotchkiss. In response, Hotchkiss engaged retired Connecticut judge James Stapleton to conduct an investigation into additional allegations of sexual misconduct by Thorne-Thomsen. Judge Stapleton produced a report (the "Stapleton Report"), which concluded that Thorne-Thomsen had engaged in significant sexual misconduct with multiple female students since approximately the time the school went co-ed. Oden dismissed Thorne-Thomsen from Hotchkiss in the spring of 1992 following receipt of the Stapleton Report.

#### c. Cowdery Investigation

In 2011, Hotchkiss retained the firm Cowdery, Ecker & Murphy, LLC to conduct an investigation into allegations by a graduate of sexual misconduct committed by three faculty members in the 1980s—two of whom were still at the school at that time. The ultimate report (the "Cowdery Report") substantiated the former student's account of sexual misconduct against Damon White and was unable to substantiate the others.

These investigations included interviews of survivors, witnesses and alleged perpetrators. In particular, the Stapleton Report included extensive interviews and transcriptions, which we reviewed and found to be helpful in our analysis for this report.

## 2. *Carlton Fields and Locke Lord Interviews*

We reviewed the extensive interview memoranda created by Carlton Fields and did not re-interview every individual. We conducted follow up interviews where we felt that we had new information to pursue, additional questions, or needed to speak directly with someone. We also received additional calls and emails from community members who had not previously shared their accounts with Carlton Fields.

We generally refrained from reaching out to alleged survivors of sexual misconduct if they did not first reach out to us or the previous investigators. Mindful of not wanting to force survivors to relive past traumas, we encouraged friends and community members to recommend speaking to us if an individual had a report to make. We did, however, reach out to every survivor whose account is included in Sections IV and V below, with the exception of one survivor who is deceased. Where we were not able to speak with the survivors, we relied on information from other sources, including sworn deposition testimony.

### **C. Confidentiality and Naming Principles**

We informed each individual we interviewed that his or her identity would be kept confidential to the extent possible. We agreed to keep confidential details shared by survivors unless they gave us permission to share them with other witnesses. To that end, former Hotchkiss students whose accounts are contained in this report are not referred to by name, but rather assigned a student number. In some instances, survivors with whom we spoke expressed significant concerns about maintaining their anonymity and out of respect for those concerns we have withheld most identifying details from those accounts. The general nature of these accounts is a result of an effort to protect the survivor and does not necessarily reflect the nature or depth of the report we received. Conversely a few survivors explicitly let us share more detailed accounts. Witnesses—whether student, faculty, or staff—also are assigned numbers in the accounts below.

We had full authority in establishing the criteria to be used to determine when it would be appropriate to name the Hotchkiss faculty who were the perpetrators of the sexual misconduct in this report; although the school provided input in this regard, the ultimate decision to use the following factors was ours alone and made in our sole discretion:

1. The severity of the misconduct, including but not limited to whether it involved sexual intercourse or sexual contact, as those terms are defined under Connecticut law;<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Sexual intercourse means vaginal sex, anal sex, or oral sex. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 53a-65 (2). Sexual contact means contact with the intimate parts of a person for the purpose of sexual gratification of the actor or for the purpose of degrading or humiliating such person. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 53a-65 (3).

2. Whether the individual's conduct involved coercion/grooming behavior;
3. Whether the individual engaged in sexual misconduct with more than one student;
4. Whether the individual was the subject of one or more direct reports in the investigation;
5. Whether Hotchkiss received an earlier report of potential sexual misconduct by the individual and how it handled that report;
6. Whether the school was aware of misconduct at the time the individual left Hotchkiss and assisted the individual in getting another job;
7. Whether the incidents could be corroborated and the amount and quality of this corroborating evidence; and
8. Whether there exists an ongoing current risk to students at the school or elsewhere.

In some instances, we received credible reports about certain individuals but were unable to obtain sufficient corroborating information to satisfy the naming criteria described above. Three such accounts are included in Section V omitting the names of the alleged perpetrators. We also received reports by numerous individuals of behavior, which, in our judgment, represented serious instances of poor decision-making related to appropriate boundaries between students and faculty or staff. These findings are included in Section VI.

This report represents our analysis of and conclusions based on the facts gathered during the course of the investigation. It necessarily is not a recounting of every report made in the investigation. Nevertheless, all the reports we received were taken into account and weighed with the rest of the factual evidence.<sup>3</sup>

#### **IV. Substantiated Reports of Sexual Misconduct**

##### **A. Leif Thorne-Thomsen**

Leif Thorne-Thomsen was a faculty member at Hotchkiss from 1964 to 1992. Thorne-Thomsen was a member of the Classics department (which he chaired beginning in 1977), was the cycling team coach (referred to as the "bike team"), and also ran the "wood squad," which was an alternative to joining a sports team and primarily involved cutting and splitting firewood for use in faculty residences. Thorne-Thomsen (often referred to as "T-T" by students, faculty and administrators) was married to his first wife, with whom he had two children, when he came to Hotchkiss in the fall of 1964. The couple became estranged and divorced in 1984. Thorne-

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<sup>3</sup> We received a number of reports that did not concern sexual misconduct by faculty or staff against students and therefore were beyond the scope of this report. This included first-hand accounts of student-on-student sexual misconduct. We shared this information with the school unless we knew the school already was aware of the conduct.



Thomsen would go on to marry two of his former students. At all times relevant to this investigation, Thorne-Thomsen lived off campus. Shortly after his dismissal in 1992, Thorne-Thomsen sued the school for terminating him. He also was a co-defendant with the school in separate cases brought by Student 3 and Student 4. All three lawsuits were eventually settled.

Thorne-Thomsen was a controversial figure during his tenure at the school, seen by some as a transformative teacher and mentor and by others as volatile and abusive. By all accounts, Thorne-Thomsen had an electric personality that drew in students. He was seen by students, faculty, and administrators alike as tending to Hotchkiss students who did not fit in, or were seen as troubled by their peers.

Thorne-Thomsen engaged in sexual misconduct with female students over a nearly two-decade period. Thorne-Thomsen abused girls who were vulnerable, a number of whom had experienced other sexual abuse earlier in life, and virtually all of whom felt they were outsiders of sorts. Thorne-Thomsen would ingratiate himself with them by sharing personal details about his life and coax them into believing that he was relying on them for emotional support. He used the trust these students placed in him as a teacher and mentor to engage in repeated acts of sexual misconduct. Many people who were interviewed as part of this investigation spoke about the stories that circulated regarding him and his abuse of female students.

Thorne-Thomsen, through counsel, declined to be interviewed for this report.

### *1. Student Accounts*

#### *a. Student 1's Account*

Student 1 came to Hotchkiss in the mid-1970s. Thorne-Thomsen behaved inappropriately towards Student 1 and also committed sexual misconduct against her. Student 1 believes that members of the administration were aware of Thorne-Thomsen's behavior towards her.

#### *b. Student 2's Account*

Student 2 enrolled at Hotchkiss as an upper-mid<sup>4</sup> in the mid-1970s. She first met Thorne-Thomsen at some point during the winter of her first year at the school when she spoke with him about joining the bike team in the spring.

During that spring, the bike team traveled to a race and spent an overnight in New Jersey. Student 2 reported that on the overnight she was nervous about the upcoming race and went to speak with Thorne-Thomsen. According to Student 2, during that conversation Thorne-Thomsen offered to give her a massage, and rubbed her face and neck. Thorne-Thomsen would later tell Student 2 that he could see underneath her nightgown during this incident and also that he had wanted to kiss her at that time.

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<sup>4</sup> At Hotchkiss, "upper mid" or "upper-middle" refers to the 11th grade year. The 9th, 10th and 12th years and graders are referred to as "prep," "lower-middle/mid," and "senior," respectively.

In the fall of her senior year, Student 2 would often go to Thorne-Thomsen's house in the evenings to study or to babysit Thorne-Thomsen's children. Thorne-Thomsen eventually started kissing and "touching" her on these visits. Around this time, Thorne-Thomsen also visited Student 2 in her dorm room with the door closed on several occasions.

During that fall, Thorne-Thomsen took Student 2 on a trip off-campus and the two spent the night together in a motel. That night they "did a lot of kissing and touching" but did not have intercourse. Several weeks later, Thorne-Thomsen did have intercourse with Student 2 for the first and only time while she was a student at Hotchkiss. Student 2 was 17 years old at the time. Student 2 reported that after this incident she was "very, very upset about what happened," and within a matter of weeks withdrew from the Latin course Thorne-Thomsen taught.

During her junior year of college, Student 2 began dating Thorne-Thomsen. The two eventually married in December of 1985. The wedding took place in the Hotchkiss chapel and was officiated by then-Head of School Arthur White<sup>5</sup> (who had been Dean of Students when Student 2 was enrolled at Hotchkiss). The couple had three children. Student 2 divorced Thorne-Thomsen in 1993.

i. Faculty-Witness 1, former faculty member

Although Faculty-Witness 1 would go on to teach at Hotchkiss for several decades, he was a young and relatively new faculty member when he was Student 2's dorm parent during her senior year.<sup>6</sup> Student 2 came to him and said that Thorne-Thomsen was "bothering" her, and Faculty-Witness 1 offered her the use of his apartment "if she wanted to get away from him." Faculty-Witness 1 went to a more senior faculty member who was the head of the dorm with his concern. The two went to speak with Head of School William Olsen about their concerns regarding Thorne-Thomsen being in a girls' dorm. According to Faculty-Witness 1, Olsen told them to "handle it" and to tell Thorne-Thomsen that he should stay away from the dorm. Faculty-Witness 1 did and Thorne-Thomsen came into the dorm less frequently thereafter; however, he would merely pull up his car to the front of the dorm and Student 2 would go out and meet him. After attempting to get help from Olsen, Faculty-Witness 1 went to the Dean of Faculty to complain about Thorne-Thomsen's behavior, but this produced no action.

c. Reports about Student 3

Student 3 enrolled in Hotchkiss in the mid-1970s. She met Thorne-Thomsen shortly thereafter and became a member of the bike team and wood squad. The summer after Student 3 graduated, her parents found her staying in a motel with Thorne-Thomsen alone.

Following this motel incident, Student 3's father wrote to Olsen and the Chairman of the school's Board of Trustees in September 1979 about Thorne-Thomsen and his daughter. Olsen

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<sup>5</sup> White was the Head of School from 1983 to 1989; he also was Dean of Students from 1965 to 1983. A list of Heads of School relevant to this investigation may be found at Appendix B.

<sup>6</sup> A "dorm parent" is a faculty member who was responsible for the residential life of students on a certain dormitory hall, and often lived in an apartment that was connected to the hall. Male faculty members often were assigned to halls with female students and vice versa.

appears to have conducted a preliminary investigation into the matter, and in October 1979 he placed Thorne-Thomsen on a paid leave of absence for the remainder of the academic year.

On May 7, 1980, Olsen sent Thorne-Thomsen a letter in which he offered him a chance to return to the school provided that he followed certain guidelines regarding his interactions with female students. The letter lauded Thorne-Thomsen as “never [having] anything except the most honorable and most open intentions” and stated that Thorne-Thomsen’s “honesty and naiveté have perhaps blinded [him] to the importance of appearances.” A copy of the letter is attached as Appendix C.

i. Student-Witness 1, Student 3’s brother and Hotchkiss graduate

Student-Witness 1 spent his upper-mid and senior years at Hotchkiss and overlapped with his sister during his final year at the school. Although Student-Witness 1 acknowledged that he has no first-hand knowledge of Thorne-Thomsen’s abuse of his sister while she was a student, he corroborated the account of his father’s interactions with the school following his sister’s graduation, described above. Student-Witness 1 reported that the incident and the school’s resulting inaction caused his father, formerly a proud Hotchkiss alumnus, to cease his support of the school. Student-Witness 1 reported that his father remained angry with the school for the rest of his life.

ii. Faculty-Witness 2, former faculty member

Faculty-Witness 2 was at Hotchkiss for nearly two decades in the 1960s and 1970s. Although he had no direct knowledge that Thorne-Thomsen was committing sexual misconduct against Student 3, he had “deep concerns about his behavior” towards her. Faculty-Witness 2 confronted Thorne-Thomsen about his concerns, but Thorne-Thomsen denied that anything inappropriate was occurring between himself and Student 3. Faculty-Witness 2 also recalled speaking with Olsen about the rumors surrounding Thorne-Thomsen and Student 3 but no action was taken as a result of those discussions.

In addition to the above witness accounts, we have received many reports that we credited about Thorne-Thomsen’s sexual misconduct towards Student 3 while she was enrolled at Hotchkiss.

d. Student 4’s Account

Student 4 enrolled at Hotchkiss as a prep in the mid-1970s and met Thorne-Thomsen that winter in study hall. Thorne-Thomsen would have Student 4 over to his off-campus home, including at times when she was supposed to be in her dorm.

In the second semester of her prep year, Student 4 and Thorne-Thomsen were sitting on the couch in his home when Thorne-Thomsen put his arm around Student 4 and then put his hand down the front of her pants. Thorne-Thomsen fondled and digitally penetrated Student 4’s vagina. Student 4 was 14 years old at the time. Thorne-Thomsen continued to engage in sexual

misconduct—but not intercourse—with Student 4 over the remainder of her prep year. Thorne-Thomsen sent Student 4 inappropriate letters over the course of her prep year.

Thorne-Thomsen first engaged in sexual intercourse with Student 4 in the fall of her lower-mid year. Student 4 was 15 years old at the time. Thorne-Thomsen continued to have regular sexual encounters with Student 4 throughout her lower-mid and upper-mid years.

In October of Student 4's senior year, Thorne-Thomsen was placed on a leave of absence as a result his behavior towards Student 3. Although Thorne-Thomsen spent some of this leave in California, he also spent a portion of it in Connecticut. While Thorne-Thomsen was in Connecticut, he had at least two sexual encounters with Student 4 during her senior year. During the spring of that year, faculty member Christopher Carlisle began committing sexual misconduct against Student 4—this misconduct is discussed more fully below. According to Student 4, Thorne-Thomsen was aware of this and instructed her on how to check Carlisle for “the clap” so that she did not transmit it to Thorne-Thomsen.

After Student 4 graduated from Hotchkiss, she had occasional sexual relations with Thorne-Thomsen during her first two years in college.

e. Student 5's Account

Student 5 entered Hotchkiss as a prep in the early 1980s. She first met Thorne-Thomsen during her lower-mid year when a friend of hers who was on the bike team introduced them. Student 5 joined the wood squad in the fall of her upper-mid year and joined the bike team the following spring.

The nature of Student 5's interactions with Thorne-Thomsen changed in the spring of her senior year. Thorne-Thomsen began to confide in her regarding his relationship struggles with his then-girlfriend and soon-to-be wife, Student 2, who at that point had graduated from Hotchkiss. These conversations weighed heavily on Student 5.

Thorne-Thomsen first became overtly sexual with Student 5 one evening that spring when he asked her for a back rub in his office. She complied and then Thorne-Thomsen pulled her into his lap and kissed her. Following this incident, Thorne-Thomsen began to kiss and fondle Student 5 when the two were alone. Thorne-Thomsen's actions escalated when the two went on a picnic with another female student following a bike team practice. Thorne-Thomsen put his hand up Student 5's skirt and fondled her vagina while the other student was lying nearby with her eyes closed. These encounters left Student 5 “confused” and “scared.” She did not know how to prevent Thorne-Thomsen's behavior.

Student 5 reported that she reached her breaking point one evening at his house, when Thorne-Thomsen undressed her and kissed her all over her body, including her breasts and vagina. He attempted to get Student 5 to kiss his penis and to have intercourse with him. She became very frightened and left. After this incident, Student 5 tried to avoid Thorne-Thomsen and did not see him much throughout the rest of her time at Hotchkiss.

Student 5's experience—described to then Head of School Oden in a November 1991 letter—was one of the main reasons for the formation of the Special Advisory Committee. In addition to participating in that investigation, Student 5 spoke with Judge Stapleton and with us.

f. Student 6's Account

Student 6 was a day student at Hotchkiss in the late 1980s. Thorne-Thomsen was Student 6's Latin teacher during her lower-mid year. After the first three months of school the two became close. As a day student, Student 6 would typically car pool to and from school, and on occasion, Thorne-Thomsen would give her rides home because he lived close to her. According to Student 6, Thorne-Thomsen acted as if he had a "crush" on her and was "very physical – touchy."

In the late spring of Student 6's lower-mid year, she stayed late at school one day and Thorne-Thomsen drove her home. When they reached her house, the two got out of the car and lingered in the driveway. Thorne-Thomsen leaned against the car and put his arms around her. He then kissed her on the face.

From the kitchen window, Student 6's mother saw the two get out of the car and linger. Student 6's mother described Thorne-Thomsen's behavior as "very intimate." She called her 18-year-old niece over to the window and the niece agreed that Thorne-Thomsen's behavior was inappropriate. Student 6's mother sent her niece out to tell Student 6 to come in. Student 6 did not immediately go in and so her mother came out and told her to come in. Student 6's mother reported that when she went outside Thorne-Thomsen appeared unembarrassed by her presence and totally "without conscience."

Student 6 initially defended Thorne-Thomsen to her mother but later that evening acknowledged that his behavior was inappropriate. After that, she became very uncomfortable and felt "like hell" about the incident. Thereafter, Student 6 did her best to avoid Thorne-Thomsen. The following winter she spoke about the incident with a female member of the health services department, who said that she (the adult) needed to report the incident to Head of School White, and she did. Student 6 and her mother also spoke with White about the incident around this time. Despite these complaints, the school took no action against Thorne-Thomsen and he continued to approach Student 6 for a period of time thereafter. There is no record of these complaints in Thorne-Thomsen's personnel file.

g. Student 7's Account

Student 7's interactions with Thorne-Thomsen, whom she knew as her advisor and as a member of the wood squad, were emotionally coercive. When she was a lower-mid, she confided to Thorne-Thomsen that she was having issues with her father, to which he replied, "I will be your father." Around this time, Thorne-Thomsen began to put his arm around Student 7, asked her to call him by his first name, and began sharing details about his marriage and personal life with her. These conversations made Student 7 uneasy: "I felt too responsible for his happiness, for being his sounding board. That was weird and uncomfortable."

Thorne-Thomsen wrote to Student 7 during the summer and professed his love to her. When Thorne-Thomsen first learned of the accusations against him that eventually would lead to the Stapleton Report and his dismissal, he reached out to Student 7, told her that he was depending on her, and that he was contemplating suicide. Once Thorne-Thomsen was placed on a leave of absence, he coerced Student 7 to meet him in the woods on the edge of campus. During these meetings he would kiss and fondle her, and the conduct eventually escalated to his digitally penetrating Student 7's vagina. Thorne-Thomsen also would show up in Student 7's dorm room. These uninvited visits continued when Student 7 was in college. While he was away from Hotchkiss on his leave of absence he would send Student 7 inappropriate letters; we have examined a number of these letters.

## 2. *Other Reports*

We received other reports of students who were sexually abused by Thorne-Thomsen. While we credited these accounts, we were unable to corroborate them to the extent necessary to include detailed descriptions of them in this report. One of the students who falls into this category, Student 8, went on to marry Thorne-Thomsen in 1997. She has at various times denied that any sexually inappropriate contact occurred with him while she was a student.

## 3. *The School's Response*

### a. Contemporaneous Reports of Thorne-Thomsen's Conduct

We have substantiated numerous instances over nearly two decades when Hotchkiss leaders were made aware of Thorne-Thomsen's sexual misconduct with students and failed to take effective action.

- 1974-1975: Head of School Olsen sent a relatively new female dean to speak with Thorne-Thomsen regarding concerns about his behavior with a female student. There was no follow-up after Thorne-Thomsen rebuffed the dean.
- 1976-1977: Faculty-Witness 1 and another faculty member spoke with Olsen about their concerns regarding Thorne-Thomsen's frequent visits to Student 2's dorm room. Olsen told them to "handle it" and did not follow up.
- 1977-1979: Faculty-Witness 2 spoke with Thorne-Thomsen about his concerns regarding Student 3. Faculty-Witness 2 also spoke with Olsen about the rumors that were circulating about Thorne-Thomsen and Student 3.
- 1979: Student 3's father wrote to Olsen to complain about Thorne-Thomsen after finding his daughter in a motel room with him. Thorne-Thomsen was placed on paid leave for most of the 1979-1980 school year but invited back the following year.
- 1981: Timothy Callard, who had not previously been a part of the Hotchkiss community, became Head of School and no one informed him about Thorne-Thomsen's history, including the reason why he was on a leave of absence during the 1979-1980 school year.

- 1988-1989: White was informed by a female member of the health services department that Thorne-Thomsen had acted inappropriately with Student 6. In addition, Student 6 and her mother spoke with White about this incident. No action against Thorne-Thomsen was taken.
- 1988-1989: Faculty-Witness 5, a long-time faculty member, reported to Head of School White that Student 8 was sitting in Thorne-Thomsen's lap in the dining hall. White apparently took no action.
- 1989: Robert Oden, who had not previously been a part of the Hotchkiss community, became Head of School. White did not speak to Oden about Thorne-Thomsen's history.
- 1990: A female staff member reported to Oden that Thorne-Thomsen was "far more intimate and far more suggestive and inappropriate [with female students] than she thought was all right." Oden spoke with Thorne-Thomsen about these concerns, and Thorne-Thomsen said that he was simply a physical person and that nothing inappropriate was going on.

b. Thorne-Thomsen's Dismissal

In the summer of 1991, a recent graduate contacted her former advisor, Faculty-Witness 3, then a teacher at the school, about suspected sexual misconduct that Thorne-Thomsen was committing against Student 8. Faculty-Witness 3 performed a brief investigation and confirmed her belief in the truth of the report she received. She wrote to Head of School Robert Oden on July 25, 1991 about her concerns regarding Thorne-Thomsen without revealing Student 8's identity.

Oden replied to Faculty-Witness 3's letter on September 16.<sup>7</sup> In his letter, Oden described his investigation into the allegations against Thorne-Thomsen. This investigation included reviewing Thorne-Thomsen's personnel file, and speaking with Olsen, White, and Thorne-Thomsen. During the discussion with Thorne-Thomsen, Oden revealed the name of the student he assumed was the subject of Faculty-Witness 3's July 25 letter (presumably Oden named Student 8). Thorne-Thomsen denied any inappropriate behavior between him and Student 8. In the letter to Faculty-Witness 3, Oden stated that he believed Thorne-Thomsen's denial.

In late October of 1991, Student 5, who had graduated in the 1980s, visited Faculty-Witness 3, her former advisor, to ask for a recommendation letter. During the conversation, Thorne-Thomsen's name came up; Student 5 told Faculty-Witness 3 about Thorne-Thomsen's behavior towards her, and Faculty-Witness 3 encouraged her to write a letter to Oden. On November 5, Faculty-Witness 3 wrote to Oden describing Student 5's interactions with Thorne-Thomsen using a pseudonym. Shortly thereafter, on November 19, Student 5 sent Oden a letter,

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<sup>7</sup> Faculty-Witness 3 was on sabbatical during the 1991-1992 school year.

which detailed the abuse she endured at the hands of Thorne-Thomsen while a student at Hotchkiss.

Oden began investigating Thorne-Thomsen again after he received Student 5's November 19 letter. He also spoke with lawyers for the school about the situation. The lawyers encouraged Oden to meet with Student 5, which he did on December 16. Oden kept diligent notes of his discussions with the school's attorneys and the board regarding how to resolve the situation. Eventually a three-person panel consisting of Olsen, a head of a peer school, and a former Hotchkiss trustee was formed.<sup>8</sup> According to its report, this "Special Advisory Committee," was tasked with investigating "a number of reports that had raised fundamental questions about the propriety of [Thorne-Thomsen's] behavior with several female students at Hotchkiss and particularly with regard to most specific charges raised by [Student 5]."

The Committee met with Student 5 and Thorne-Thomsen separately at Olsen's house on January 19, 1992. The Committee submitted its report to Oden on January 26, 1992. It stated that "[Though] we are unable to draw conclusions on the specific allegations of [Student 5], we are unanimous in our feeling that continued concerns for [Thorne-Thomsen's] conduct with students, particularly female students, raises serious questions about his continued place at the School." They recommended that Thorne-Thomsen "should be helped to go elsewhere and be relieved of his responsibilities as quickly as possible."

Following the issuance of the Committee's report, Oden met with Thorne-Thomsen where it was agreed he would take a paid leave of absence from the school, and that no final decision regarding Thorne-Thomsen's future at the school would be made at that time. Thorne-Thomsen would travel to California to receive counseling during at least the initial period of this leave. The leave of absence was announced to the faculty on February 3, 1992.

As word of Thorne-Thomsen's leave of absence spread through the Hotchkiss community, Student 3 and Student 4 spoke with Oden about their experiences with Thorne-Thomsen. On February 23, 1992, Oden engaged Judge Stapleton to conduct an independent investigation into the allegations of Thorne-Thomsen's misconduct. Judge Stapleton interviewed Student 3, Student 4, Student 5, Student 6 and her mother, and an additional student-witness, and also reviewed a number of letters Thorne-Thomsen sent to one of these students. Thorne-Thomsen admitted to "errors of judgment" in a letter to Judge Stapleton, but he declined to be interviewed.

In his report, which was issued on March 26, 1992, Judge Stapleton "concluded based upon clear and convincing, if not overwhelming, evidence that Mr. Thorne-Thomsen used his trust as a teacher, advisor and friend to sexually exploit, seduce or attempt to seduce, three female students of The Hotchkiss School over an extended period of time."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> While speaking with us, Oden acknowledged that Olsen, who was picked for the committee because of his institutional knowledge, was not the best selection for this committee.

<sup>9</sup> In regard to Student 6, Judge Stapleton found that Thorne-Thomsen's conduct towards her was "improper and inappropriate."



After receiving Judge Stapleton's report, Oden terminated Thorne-Thomsen effective at the conclusion of his leave of absence. Oden announced this decision to the faculty on March 30 and to the wider school community in the following days.

Following his dismissal and the issuance of the Stapleton Report, Thorne-Thomsen indicated that he would, in fact, like to speak with Judge Stapleton. Judge Stapleton met with Thorne-Thomsen in July and allowed him, through his attorney, to submit a written response. In addition, Judge Stapleton interviewed a former Hotchkiss student who spoke in Thorne-Thomsen's defense. Ultimately, Judge Stapleton concluded in his supplemental report, dated October 13, 1992, that "[n]othing in my interview with Mr. Thorne-Thomsen or the other information I obtained causes me to change any of those findings or conclusions" in the March 26, 1992 report.

Thorne-Thomsen sued the school in 1993 for failing to renew his employment. That case ultimately was settled in 1997.

We are unaware of Thorne-Thomsen ever obtaining another formal teaching position involving minors following his dismissal from Hotchkiss.

## **B. Christopher Carlisle**

Christopher Carlisle was a member of the Hotchkiss faculty from 1963 to 1982—although he was on a medical leave of absence for the 1981-1982 school year. He was a member of the English department and coached the girls' soccer team and boys' golf team for several years. He lived on campus with his wife and two children. Carlisle led a small student band that played folk and contemporary music. Multiple students described the band as incredibly important to its members in the late 1970s who viewed it as a safe space that gave them a group to which to belong. Carlisle committed suicide in August 1982.

### *1. Student 4's Account*

Student 4 met Carlisle in the fall of her prep year in the mid-1970s. During her senior year, she was a member of the student band with Carlisle and also was in his English class. During spring break of her senior year, Student 4 was visiting her friend in Connecticut near Hotchkiss and she needed a ride home. Carlisle was apparently traveling in the direction of her home and so Student 4 went over to his house to get a ride. There, Carlisle hugged Student 4, and said to her, "Let's go upstairs." Student 4 responded that she was afraid and Carlisle drove her home.

When Student 4 came back to school after spring break, she went to visit Carlisle at his home again and this time they had intercourse. She was 17 years old at the time. Student 4 recalled that they had intercourse about once per week for the remainder of her senior year. This took place at Carlisle's house and typically occurred when both he and Student 4 were free in the afternoons. Student 4's involvement with Carlisle continued for a little over a year after she graduated from Hotchkiss. Student 4's friend, a Hotchkiss graduate, corroborated that she knew that Carlisle was committing sexual misconduct against Student 4 while Student 4 was enrolled at Hotchkiss, and that she knew of this while the misconduct was occurring or shortly thereafter.

## 2. *Student 9's Account*

Student 9 arrived at Hotchkiss as a lower-mid in the mid-1970s. Carlisle was assigned to be her advisor. Student 9 also was enrolled in Carlisle's advanced English class and played in the student band that he led. Carlisle showed Student 9 special attention. At first, she was eager to please and excited that someone recognized her ability. At some point, however, Carlisle's attention became more intense, increasing particularly in her upper-mid and senior years. Student 9 and others we interviewed reported that Carlisle would single out Student 9 in English class and recite love poems to her in front of her peers. In band, he would write songs for and about her, then stare at her and sing them directly to her. Carlisle would come by Student 9's dorm room uninvited, sit on her bed, and talk with her. He would take her off campus and hold her hand.<sup>10</sup> Student 9 described feeling that he was obsessed with her. She became afraid of Carlisle and spent much of her energy trying to avoid his attention. Carlisle began to write Student 9 love poems and love letters. He sent them to her school mailbox, sometimes multiple times a day, and would also send them to her at her home on school breaks. One such letter included the following passage, “. . . I've thought about you even when I tried not to – and the enclosed poem will show that! It's hard to talk or even share what I write when feelings are so strong and we have to live in this world of confinement. I'm trying to find ways we can share each other's company naturally without making news.”<sup>11</sup>

Student 9 reported that he would turn anything she said to him into a declaration of love. She was terrified to speak with him, and thought that something was not quite right with him. She reflected that in many ways, he took away the things that she enjoyed about being a student, including her voice in the band. Carlisle also made Student 9 feel responsible for his wellbeing.

Several other former students we interviewed corroborated the intense attention Carlisle paid to Student 9. Student 9's bandmates reported that it was “obvious” that Carlisle was obsessed, fixated, or in love with her. One witness reported that he “terrorized” her. At some point during her senior year, two of Student 9's friends went to Head of School Olsen to report Carlisle's behavior. After her friends' visit to Olsen, Student 9 confided in her parents about what was going on with Carlisle. They went to Hotchkiss to meet with Olsen. Olsen reportedly told Student 9's parents that he would take care of it and not to worry. He never followed up with her parents and nothing changed for Student 9 except that she was assigned a new advisor.

Student 9 did not feel like she could seek help from any of the faculty or staff. Carlisle continued to write to Student 9 after she graduated. Student 9 does not recall answering those letters. She learned of his suicide while she was at college.

### a. Student-Witness 2, Hotchkiss graduate

Student-Witness 2 played in the band with Student 9 their senior year. Student-Witness 2 reported that Carlisle was a very volatile teacher—he could be emotionally very high or very low. Student-Witness 2 recalled that Carlisle began paying attention to Student 9 in a way that made other students feel he was attracted to her. Student 9 was visibly embarrassed by the

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<sup>10</sup> Student 9 reported that at no time did Carlisle attempt sexual contact with her.

<sup>11</sup> Student 9 shared several of these letters with us.

attention, but that did not deter Carlisle. Carlisle read poems in English class seemingly directed at Student 9 and all of the students felt uncomfortable. Carlisle would include details from Student 9's private life in the poems. Student-Witness 2 and another student decided to report Carlisle's behavior to Olsen because all of the students in the English class felt uncomfortable. At that meeting, Olsen thanked them for the report and sent them on their way. There was no follow up. After making this report, Student-Witness 2 was confronted by Carlisle who berated him for going to Olsen.

b. Student-Witness 3, Hotchkiss graduate

Student-Witness 3 was in Student 9's class at Hotchkiss and also played in the student band. Student-Witness 3 also was in Carlisle's English class with Student 9. Like many other witnesses, Student-Witness 3 recalled that Carlisle treated Student 9 with an intensity that he did not use with other students. Student-Witness 3 went with Student-Witness 2 to report Carlisle's conduct to Olsen because the situation had become "too weird." Olsen asked a few questions and said he would take care of it. He did not reach out to Student-Witness 3 again. Student-Witness 3 was confronted by Carlisle after making the report to Olsen. Carlisle accused Student-Witness 3 of being jealous of Student 9.

3. *Other Reports*

We also are aware of Carlisle having sexual interactions with a former student several months after she graduated from Hotchkiss. A description of this account is not included because we have corroborated that it did not begin until after the student left the school.

**C. George "Rick" DelPrete**

George "Rick" DelPrete was a faculty member at Hotchkiss from 1970 to 2004. He is perhaps best known as the school's long-time head football coach; he was also the Director of Athletics and taught history. DelPrete, through counsel, declined to be interviewed and denied the allegations in Student 10's account.

1. *Student 10's Account*

In the fall of Student 10's senior year—in the mid-1970s—she went to DelPrete's apartment to seek tutoring help for a friend. She sat on the couch across from DelPrete's desk, where he stood, as she talked about her friend. DelPrete began rifling through his desk, produced a pack of playing cards, and began to look through them. He then came around and showed Student 10 that the cards were pornographic. DelPrete put his arm around Student 10 and began rubbing her breasts and thighs. Student 10 became numb and the next thing she knew she was on her knees in the bathroom performing oral sex on DelPrete.

After that day, on several occasions, Student 10 received pornographic brochures in her school mailbox. She reported that DelPrete's address was crossed out on the brochures and Student 10's was substituted in its place. Student 10 confronted DelPrete about the brochures, but he did not respond except to say she should apply to college in Connecticut so she could visit him.

Contemporaneous with the conduct described above, Student 10 spoke to another student as well as her advisor. Her advisor went to Olsen. This led to a series of meetings involving Student 10 and some combination of her advisor, Olsen, and DelPrete. In one such meeting involving Olsen, DelPrete, and Student 10, DelPrete berated her and accused her of making up her account and of being promiscuous.

a. Faculty-Witness 4, former faculty member

Faculty-Witness 4 was Student 10's advisor and was a faculty member at Hotchkiss for several years beginning in 1970. He corroborated that Student 10 came to him with complaints regarding DelPrete's behavior towards her. He further corroborated the meeting between Olsen, himself, Student 10, and DelPrete. Faculty-Witness 4 recalled that during that meeting Olsen said he could not act because he could not determine which of DelPrete or Student 10 was lying.

b. Faculty-Witness 5, former faculty member

Faculty-Witness 5 taught at Hotchkiss for several decades beginning in the 1970s. He became aware of DelPrete's sexual misconduct towards Student 10 while she was a student at Hotchkiss. Faculty-Witness 5 believes he heard this directly from Student 10. Faculty-Witness 5 also reported that after he heard about the sexual misconduct, he stopped socializing as frequently with DelPrete.

c. Student-Witness 4, Hotchkiss graduate

Student-Witness 4 was in the same class as Student 10 and a member of the same extracurricular club. One evening in the fall of his senior year, he had a conversation with Student 10 in the school's chapel in which she told him about the pornographic playing cards and that DelPrete had forced her to perform oral sex on him. Student-Witness 4 also generally corroborated the account of Student 10's meetings with Olsen.

In 1991, Student-Witness 4 got in touch with the school to discuss the issues regarding sexual misconduct that he had observed while at the school. Eventually he was put in contact with an administrator, who, according to Student-Witness 4, seemed interested only in reports regarding Leif Thorne-Thomsen. Student-Witness 4 ended the conversation without revealing DelPrete's name. We have reviewed this administrator's notes regarding this conversation and they corroborate Student-Witness 4's account.

**D. Dr. Peter Gott**

Dr. Peter Gott was the medical director at Hotchkiss from 1972 to 2005. He also was the medical director at another private school in the area for a number of years. In the 1980s, Dr. Gott became a nationally syndicated medical columnist and appeared on national television programs. He is deceased.

1. *Student Accounts*

a. Student 11's Account

Student 11 was at Hotchkiss in the early 1980s. Student 11 went to Dr. Gott for routine medical questions. On more than one occasion, he told her he had to conduct a gynecological exam, despite the fact she did not come in for what Student 11 considered a gynecological issue. He touched her genitals and inserted his finger into her vagina. Dr. Gott did not use typical exam instruments, like a speculum, but rather always used his hands. Student 11 was uncomfortable, but she was not originally from the United States, and she did not realize at that time that these exams were inappropriate. She did not understand that she could say “no.”

b. Student 12's Account

In the 1980s, Student 12 became ill during her first year at Hotchkiss. She had to spend several nights in the infirmary. On three separate occasions during her stay in the infirmary she woke up to Dr. Gott touching her breasts. Dr. Gott said that he was “checking her respiratory functions.”

c. Student 13's Account

Student 13 enrolled at Hotchkiss in the late 1970s. One day during her lower-mid year, she was injured while playing soccer. The athletic trainer told her to go see Dr. Gott, which she did. During the examination, he told her to stand up and drop her pants. When she complied, he looked at her body and commented that she had lost a lot of weight and told her that it was “very becoming.”

d. Student 14's Account

Student 14 enrolled at Hotchkiss in the mid-1980s. She went to see Dr. Gott because she had a skin rash. Dr. Gott instructed her to remove all of her clothing, including her bra and underpants. He then sat on the examination table beside her and rubbed his hands all over her body. Dr. Gott then told Student 14, “You have beautiful skin.”

e. Student 15's Account

Student 15 was at Hotchkiss in the early 1990s. She reported that no matter the reason for her visit to Dr. Gott he would perform an “abdominal exam” where his hands went so low that they were in her pubic hair. During one visit, Dr. Gott told Student 15 to remove her pants so he could have a “little peek” to see if the antibiotics that she was taking were causing any issues “down below.” Student 15 refused and asked that a nurse come into the examination with her in the future. Dr. Gott backed off and said he did not have to look.

f. Other Reports

We received reports from additional graduates and faculty that Dr. Gott abused his position by requiring female students to unnecessarily remove articles of clothing or undergo “gynecological” examinations. Former faculty recalled their female students complaining of having to go see Dr. Gott. Several people reported an old “joke” that if you went to Dr. Gott for any reason, he would ask you to remove your shirt.

2. *Report to Arthur White*

When Arthur White was Head of School, a student came to him to complain that she had received one of these unnecessary “gynecological” examinations from Dr. Gott. White told the student that he would speak with Dr. Gott. When White questioned Dr. Gott about this incident, Dr. Gott said that it was proper medical procedure. White accepted this explanation but told him to make sure he had a female nurse present if he was going to conduct such exams in the future. White then went back to the student and said that Dr. Gott had explained that it was proper medical procedure. White did not otherwise follow up on this complaint.

**E. Albert Sly**

Albert “Al” Sly was a member of the Hotchkiss faculty from 1950 to 1970, and primarily taught music during that time. He also taught at the school for one semester in 2008. Sly is deceased.

1. *Student 16’s Experience*

Faculty-Witness 4 reported that after he had been hired in the winter of 1970 he heard a story involving Sly and Student 16—namely that Sly repeatedly propositioned Student 16 for sex, and that Student 16 subsequently spoke with an unidentified faculty member about it. That faculty member reported Sly’s behavior to Olsen, who terminated Sly during the 1969-1970 school year.

After reading a positive article about Sly in the winter 2014 issue of Hotchkiss Magazine, Faculty-Witness 4 contacted Head of School Kevin Hicks about what he knew of Sly’s dismissal from Hotchkiss. Hicks subsequently wrote to Sly, who regularly returned to campus, to tell him that he was not to return. Several days later, Hicks met with Sly at his home to discuss the allegations against him and Sly acknowledged that he raped Student 16, telling Hicks, “[The] student was with [my wife and me], I guess I drank too much, they said I raped him, whatever, I guess I raped him.” Following that meeting, Hicks hand-delivered a letter to Sly, reiterating that he was not to return to the Hotchkiss campus. In addition to Sly’s confession, we have received several reports regarding Sly’s inappropriate behavior towards Student 16. After leaving Hotchkiss, Sly worked in several roles that allowed for contact with children. Student 16 is deceased.

## 2. *Other Report*

We also received an account from a student who graduated in the 1960s who reported that his parents had asked Sly to stop teaching organ to his little brother who was also a student at Hotchkiss, after an “uncomfortable and improper” incident that transpired between Sly and his brother.

### **F. Ronald Carlson**

Ronald Carlson taught English at Hotchkiss from 1971 to 1981. He also was involved with several club sports during his time at the school. Several years after leaving Hotchkiss, Carlson began teaching at the collegiate level. Carlson, through counsel, declined to be interviewed for this report.

#### 1. *Student 17's Account*

Student 17 enrolled at Hotchkiss as a lower-mid in the mid-1970s and Carlson was her dorm parent that year. Student 17 found him charismatic and viewed him as a sort of father figure. Student 17 was enrolled in Carlson’s advanced English class during her upper-mid year.

One evening around this time, Carlson left a note for Student 17 in her school mailbox inviting her to tea in his dormitory apartment. Student 17 went to Carlson’s apartment during study hall that evening. The two sat and talked in his study, which was directly off of the dormitory hall. When the bell signifying the end of study hall rang, Carlson moved over to Student 17 and kissed her on the lips. Carlson then left the study and went into his interior apartment, leaving Student 17 to return to her dorm room.

Student 17 was confused by Carlson’s behavior and avoided him for several days. Eventually Carlson tracked her down. After a brief conversation in the foyer outside the dining hall the two kissed in a nearby stairwell. For the remainder of the school year, Carlson often kissed and fondled Student 17 when they were alone. Student 17 reported that one incident in particular stuck out to her. One day she was in Carlson’s interior apartment, lying on his floor, and Carlson digitally penetrated her vagina. There was a knock on the apartment door, Student 17 and Carlson straightened themselves up, and Carlson let the faculty member at the door into the apartment. Carlson made an excuse about Student 17’s presence and the faculty member did not seem to question it, according to Student 17.

In the winter of the same year, Carlson became ill and Student 17 did not see him for an extended period of time. Worried, she wrote him a letter in which she expressed her concern. After Carlson recovered, he encountered Student 17 and informed her that his wife had read the letter she had sent him. Student 17 asked Carlson what she should do and Carlson told her that she should speak to his wife and “tell her the truth.” This confounded and bewildered Student 17, who spent the rest of the year “terrified” about what Carlson’s wife might do.

Carlson was on sabbatical during Student 17’s senior year and the two did not have any encounters during that time.

Years after Student 17 graduated, she met with Carlson and confronted him about his sexual misconduct towards her. According to Student 17, Carlson did not deny that he had abused her and instead appeared to blame his behavior on drinking.

a. Faculty-Witness 5

Faculty-Witness 5 reported that several years after she had graduated, Student 17, who was his advisee, told him that Carlson had given her an unwanted kiss when she was a student.

2. *Other Witnesses*

A friend of Student 17 reported that Student 17 told her at least ten years prior to the start of this investigation that Carlson had committed sexual misconduct against her while she was enrolled at Hotchkiss. In addition, many of Student 17's classmates noted the closeness and "special relationship" between her and Carlson, and referred to rumors that there was sexual misconduct occurring. One former student, who has not spoken to Student 17 in at least two decades, reported that Carlson paid "unusual attention" to Student 17 and that the two were "extremely close." This student also reported that it was both "spoken and unspoken" that Carlson committed sexual misconduct against Student 17.

**G. Damon White**

Damon White is the son of long-time faculty member and Head of School Arthur White and a 1971 Hotchkiss graduate. He joined the Hotchkiss faculty in 1983 and was dismissed from it in 2012. Prior to becoming a full-time faculty member, he was a part-time teacher at the school and also taught at two other private schools. While at Hotchkiss he was a member of the English department and was a coach on the boys' hockey and football teams.

1. *Student 12's Account*

White committed sexual misconduct against Student 12, who enrolled at Hotchkiss in the early 1980s. This misconduct began during the latter half of Student 12's senior year, after White invited her to his apartment. White made sexual comments and provided her with alcohol. The interactions became sexual shortly thereafter. Student 12 would go to White's apartment on a frequent basis during study hall and he would ply her with alcohol and pressure her to perform oral sex on him, which she did. White also repeatedly pressured Student 12 to have intercourse but she refused. Student 12 first alerted Hotchkiss about White's sexual misconduct towards her in December 2010 via an email she sent to various teachers and administrators, including Head of School Malcolm McKenzie.

In response to that email, the school retained the law firm Cowdery, Ecker & Murphy, LLC to conduct an independent investigation of Student 12's allegations. That investigation produced the Cowdery Report, which concluded that White committed sexual misconduct against Student 12 during the spring of her senior year at Hotchkiss. In addition to reviewing the Cowdery Report, we spoke with Student 12 about her interactions with White.



Through counsel, White declined to be interviewed for our report. White's counsel indicated that White denied that anything sexual occurred between himself and Student 12 prior to her graduation. White did admit, however, that he kissed Student 12 "for about a minute" shortly after graduation.

The Cowdery Report was issued in April 2012. White was permitted to resign at the end of that school year. Although he subsequently taught for several years at a private school in Florida, we found no indication that Hotchkiss assisted him in obtaining this position.

## **V. Unsubstantiated Reports of Sexual Misconduct**

We received reports that, for various reasons, did not meet the criteria for naming the individuals against whom we received allegations. We found the accounts highly credible, however, and have included them in this section with all parties anonymized.

### **A. Faculty 1**

Student 18 enrolled in Hotchkiss in the late 1980s. Faculty 1, who taught at the school for more than twenty years, was her advisor, teacher, and coach. Faculty 1 asked Student 18 to come to his classroom for extra help. Faculty 1 would ask Student 18 to sit on his lap and tried to kiss her on the cheek. In a subsequent visit to Faculty 1's classroom, he put his hand up Student 18's skirt. Student 18 stopped visiting Faculty 1 after this incident, and eventually requested a new advisor. While in college, Student 18 wrote a letter to the Dean of Faculty detailing her allegations against Faculty 1.

Faculty 1 was interviewed by the Dean of Faculty regarding Student 18's letter. Faculty 1 admitted to the dean that he often hugged his students and discussed items of a personal nature with them. The dean indicated that this practice needed to stop and documented this conversation with a note in Faculty 1's personnel file.

Faculty 1 was interviewed in the course of this investigation. He remembered Student 18 and recalled the letter she sent to the school, but denied that the "specific instances she mentioned" ever happened.

### **B. Faculty 2**

Faculty 2 taught at Hotchkiss in the late 1970s until he was forced to resign at the conclusion of a school year in the early 1980s.<sup>12</sup>

Student 13 enrolled at Hotchkiss as a lower-mid in the 1970s. She met Faculty 2 through the school's drama program. During the fall of her senior year, she was cast in the school play. On opening night of the play, Faculty 2 showed up at her dorm room with a rose for her. Student 13 reported that this gesture felt intimate and made her uncomfortable. Faculty 2 began to invite Student 13 to his apartment and eventually seduced her. The two had sexual intercourse and oral sex on multiple occasions throughout her senior year.

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<sup>12</sup> Faculty 2's forced resignation had nothing to do with allegations regarding sexual misconduct.

In an interview that was part of this investigation, Faculty 2 acknowledged that Student 13 frequently was in his apartment but denied that he committed sexual misconduct against her. We did not find Faculty 2's account to be credible. Most strikingly, Faculty 2 denied being forced to resign from the school, but his personnel file contains a letter from Head of School Olsen confirming that Faculty 2 had, in fact, been forced to resign.

### **C. Adult 1**

Adult 1 was the spouse of Faculty-Witness 6, a long-time Hotchkiss faculty member. We have received multiple reports that Adult 1 behaved inappropriately towards Student 19, including from Faculty-Witness 6. Faculty-Witness 6 reported that she discovered this when she saw Adult 1 and Student 19 "in places they shouldn't have been." According to Faculty-Witness 6, "everyone on that campus knew" about Adult 1's behavior towards Student 19. Many reports stated that Adult 1 was committing sexual misconduct against Student 19.

Arthur White, who was Head of School during Student 19's time at Hotchkiss, confirmed that he knew about Adult 1's behavior, but said that he did not know it was sexual. He recalled Faculty-Witness 6 coming to him to say that she found Student 19 sitting on Adult 1's lap. White also remembered having lunch with Student 19's stepfather, with whom he went to college, to discuss the situation. Ultimately, White said that he banned Adult 1 from campus.

## **VI. Other Reports**

We also received a number of reports that are not described in the above sections. These reports included accounts of misconduct that we found credible but decided not to include in Sections IV or V after considering the criteria outlined in Section III.<sup>13</sup>

- A graduate reported that in the 1980s a faculty member repeatedly committed sexual misconduct against her friend, a fellow student. We were unable to substantiate this report. The faculty member did, however, acknowledge that he kissed the friend during her senior year but insisted that it was in a non-sexual way.
- A graduate reported that on two occasions in the 1960s, a faculty member pinned him against the sink in his apartment and touched his genitals over his pants during tutoring sessions.
- A faculty member reported that another teacher smoked marijuana, drank alcohol, and engaged in sexual misconduct with male students during the 1980s.
- A faculty member in the 2010s repeatedly approached two male students in ways that made them uncomfortable, including entering their dorm rooms late at night and speaking to them about his sexuality. This faculty member was terminated for this behavior.

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<sup>13</sup> Not every account listed below represents a unique faculty member.

- A faculty member in the 2010s corresponded inappropriately with a student over email. The student alerted another faculty member who in turn alerted the administration. After an investigation, the faculty member was terminated.
- A graduate reported that in the 1980s, a faculty member with whom she was close kissed her in a sexual way and sent her inappropriate letters.
- Two graduates, who attended Hotchkiss more than a decade apart, reported that they each had a profoundly uncomfortable experience with a long-time faculty member. These encounters occurred in the dormitory apartment of the faculty member, who began teaching at Hotchkiss in the 1970s.
- We received several reports that during at least the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, students were photographed naked as part of a science teacher's "posture study." These photographs appear to have been part of "somatotype" research, which was common at universities in the mid-20th century but has since largely been debunked. We understand that the photographs of Hotchkiss students have been destroyed.
- Multiple graduates reported that a faculty member, who performed athletic training duties, would touch students in inappropriate ways that were unrelated to treatment.
- Several graduates reported that a sex education class that was offered in the 1970s, after the school went co-ed, involved graphic films and frank discussions of sex. The investigation into this class convinced us that, although it may have involved some aspects that could be deemed inappropriate today, it was within the range of acceptable teaching methods at the time, as evidenced by the fact that the films, which generally were produced and distributed by the San Francisco-based National Sex Forum and Multi-Media Resource Center, were used by other educators.
- According to multiple graduates, a male faculty member who served as an athletic trainer during the 1970s and 1980s would set up his training table in the girls' locker room while girls were showering.
- A graduate reported that in the 1990s, a faculty member showed her a pornographic photo that he had received in his mailbox. The student told her mother about the incident and the mother called the school. According to the student, the school told the mother that a note would be placed in the faculty member's file. We did not find such a note in our review of that faculty member's file.
- A graduate from the 1980s reported that when she was a student a faculty member would sneak up behind her, press against her, and whisper in her ear, "What I would do to you if I was 16."
- A graduate reported that in the 1990s, he and a group of students were watching a pornographic film in the common room of a dorm when a faculty member entered the

room. The faculty member sat down and watched about an hour of the film with the students.

- The parent of a graduate reported that a faculty member's odd behavior so "creeped out" his son that he quit the sports team that the faculty member coached.

In addition to the accounts described above, we received numerous reports of faculty members crossing boundaries with students and engaging in conduct that made the students uncomfortable. These instances, included, for example, inappropriate—but not explicitly sexual—touching, such as massages or lingering hugs; faculty asking students for photographs of themselves; and faculty inquiring about students' dating and sex lives. Although not included in this report, we shared this information separately with the school unless we knew that the school was already aware of the conduct.

In more recent years, social media has provided a platform where certain faculty members have crossed appropriate boundaries with students or former students. Examples of this sort of behavior include faculty posting suggestive pictures to a student's social media account and contacting students or very recent graduates on social media in the middle of the night for no apparent reason. Here, too, although not included in this report, we have shared this information separately with the school unless we knew that the school was already aware of the conduct.

## **VII. Conclusion**

In light of the above, it is clear that Hotchkiss missed several key opportunities to protect the student body. Although not all sexual misconduct was reported contemporaneously, there were multiple reports made by survivors, other students, and faculty at or near the time of the abuse that should have spurred the school to action. Regarding Thorne-Thomsen in particular, the volume of reports received during this investigation suggests that there were clear warning signs that he was abusing students. Looking back on this investigation, it appears that the school inadequately responded to sexual misconduct by faculty members for a variety of reasons, including: (a) a failure to be aware, and sensitive to, sexual misconduct generally; (b) a lack of awareness of the sexual misconduct that can occur on a co-educational campus; (c) a failure to document reports of troubling behavior and the failure to share this information from one head of school to the next; (d) a prioritization of the school's reputation and that of its faculty above the well-being of the individual students; and (e) the lack of resources and support for both concerned faculty and students who observed or experienced sexual misconduct.

We thank all those graduates, faculty, and administrators who participated in this investigation. We especially want to extend a deep thanks to those graduates who shared their account of the sexual misconduct they experienced as students. Many members of the school community, both past and present, have expressed their hope that the issuance of this report will mark a turning point in the school's handling of such issues.

We recognize that there are almost certainly reports regarding faculty-student sexual misconduct that have not yet been reported to us. Accordingly, our email address

(hotchkissinvestigation@lockelord.com) and phone number ((800) 403-7138) will remain active, and we are prepared to investigate any additional claims of sexual misconduct.

### **VIII. Resources for Those Affected by Sexual Misconduct**

Discussion of past trauma is a difficult undertaking. We were impressed with commitment that many expressed to participating in this investigation in order to bring healing and strengthen the future of Hotchkiss. Nevertheless, we recognize that both participating in and reading this report may be difficult for many. Hotchkiss has put in place resources for those who would like to seek counseling related to their experiences with sexual misconduct at the school and also for those who may not have yet come forward, but would now like to make a report.

Hotchkiss has partnered with RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) to provide graduates who experienced sexual misconduct committed by adults at Hotchkiss with crisis counseling. RAINN will also assist with the provision of funds from Hotchkiss to reimburse certain costs of therapy for those who are interested. Where there was inquiry or where it was otherwise appropriate, we informed those with whom we spoke of RAINN's engagement with school. Those alumni who have not yet reached out about retaining services, reimbursement, or funding may contact RAINN directly at a Hotchkiss-dedicated phone number (866-827-4029). Immediate crisis intervention, information, and resources are available 24/7 through RAINN at (800) 656-4673 or [online.rainn.org](http://online.rainn.org). RAINN can also provide referrals for support in your area.

## APPENDIX A – OUTREACH DETAILS

- Hotchkiss announced on June 3, 2016 that it had retained Carlton Fields to undertake an investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct. The communication to the Hotchkiss community was posted on Hotchkiss’s website. It also was emailed to 10,678 people including alumni, current and former faculty and staff, parents, grandparents, non-alumni donors, and students.
- On May 26, 2017, Hotchkiss posted a second letter to the community discussing the progress of the independent investigation. This letter was emailed to 9,622 people, including alumni, current and former faculty and staff, parents, grandparents, non-alumni donors, and students. It provided the contact information for the investigators at Carlton Fields for those who wished to share information.
- On October 30, 2017, Hotchkiss sent a follow up letter updating the community on the investigation and further encouraging any faculty, staff, parents, or alumni with information to reach out to Carlton Fields. Contact information for the expanded Carlton Fields team was included. The letter was mailed to 11,536 people including alumni, current parents and others (*e.g.*, grandparents, past parents, and non-alumni trustees). In addition, a second letter was mailed to 1,133 current and former faculty and staff that contained an additional paragraph stating that the investigator from Carlton Fields would be on campus in a discreet location in order meet in person with anyone who wished to share information.
- On February 15, 2018, Hotchkiss announced that Locke Lord would conduct an expanded investigation. The announcement was posted on Hotchkiss’s website on its page dedicated to “Preventing and Responding to Sexual Misconduct” and included a phone number and email address for contacting Locke Lord’s investigative team. Hotchkiss also emailed the announcement to 8,491 community members, including alumni, current parents, current employees and spouses, former employees (including faculty), trustees (current, and past) and others (*e.g.*, current grandparents, past parents who donate to the school, and volunteers). A link to the webpage announcement was included.
- Locke Lord created a 1-800 number and an investigation email address in order for alumni living in the United States and abroad to participate.
- On February 16, 2018, an updated version of the letter to the community was posted in the “Recent Correspondence” section on the “Preventing and Responding to Sexual Misconduct” webpage.
- On February 23, 2018, a hard copy of the community letter with Locke Lord’s contact information was sent by mail to 10,982 people, including all 8,491 recipients of the February 15 email plus additional community members for whom Hotchkiss does not have an email address.

- On March 30, 2018, the school's monthly newsletter, Hotchkiss Happenings, was mailed to 7,720 alumni. The newsletter included a notice of the ongoing investigation and contact information for the investigative team.
- A follow-up notice reminding alumni about the ongoing investigation and providing contact information for Locke Lord was sent out on May 16, 2018. This email was sent to all 6,738 alumni for whom the school has an email address.
- In late June/early July of 2018, the most recent volume of Hotchkiss Magazine was mailed to 12,083 people. The magazine included an update on the investigation as well as contact information for the investigative team at Locke Lord.
- At our request, Hotchkiss reviewed the number of its alumni it reaches through its U.S. mail and email lists. Hotchkiss estimated that it is able to reach 90% of living alumni through regular mail and approximately 69% of living alumni through email.
- Members of HAFRAH undertook to spread awareness about this investigation among the Hotchkiss community to ensure the information reached those alumni who were no longer in contact with the school.

## APPENDIX B – HEADS OF SCHOOL

There have been fifteen Heads of School at Hotchkiss. The Heads of School relevant to this investigation are:

Albert William “Bill” Olsen.....	1960-1981
Timothy Callard.....	1981-1983
Arthur White.....	1983-1989
Robert A. Oden, Jr.....	1989-1995
John R. “Rusty” Chandler, Jr. (interim).....	1995-1996
Robert H. “Skip” Mattoon, Jr.....	1996-2007
Malcolm McKenzie.....	2007-2013
Kevin Hicks.....	2013-2015
Peter O’Neill (interim).....	2015-2016
Craig Bradley.....	2016-present



**APPENDIX C – OLSEN'S MAY 1980 LETTER TO THORNE-THOMSEN**

THE HOTCHKISS SCHOOL  
LAKEVILLE, CONNECTICUT 06039

ALBERT WILLIAM OLSEN, JR.  
HEADMASTER

May 7, 1980

Dear Leif,

As we continue our planning for the next academic year, I am mindful that you have been on a leave of absence for most of this year. I am sensitive to the fact that you must be thinking about next year also. Like you, we are eager to avoid any repetition of the trauma resulting from events of last summer and fall and to defuse the occasional harassment that has continued intermittently since. With this in mind, I am going to set down some guidelines within which I will expect you to operate if you are to return. I present them for your protection as well as for ours.

Let me start by placing these matters in a context set by the special style you have developed over your years as a teacher, a style that evolved through sometimes harsh experience and rough going during your first years at Hotchkiss. It is a style that will require continuing evolution as a result of the perhaps even harsher experience of recent months. Because I have been a supportive witness to most of your experiences at Hotchkiss, I believe I am in a good position to comment.

It is fair to say that no teacher in my acquaintance has invested as much of himself in his students as you have, going way beyond the normally expected call of duty to provide friendship and moral support. In many cases, if not in most cases, you have adopted the "ugly ducklings", the youngsters who have not fitted comfortably into the Hotchkiss mold. Probably the best examples of your unselfish devotion were the many disadvantaged youngsters who were taken under your wing in the middle 60's and early 70's. Most of them would not have survived the culture shock of Hotchkiss without your support. It is no discredit to you that on many occasions they took advantage of your good will. Over the years you have been equally solicitous of economically over-advantaged ugly ducklings. Your special efforts involved long counselling sessions in your classroom and in your office, visits in the dormitories during the afternoons or evenings, occasional overnight weekend stays with you and Sara in Lime Rock, the use of students as baby-sitters when you and Sara were away from home. More often than not the youngsters who were working with you most closely were also part of the Wood Squad and in recent years the cycling team as well. For someone who did not know any better it would be easy to talk of a Thorne-Thomsen clique. It was also easy for the fine line between teacher and student, between adult and adolescent, to become blurred, for you and these youngsters to look on each other primarily as friends. The lines have become even fuzzier where the contacts continued into the vacations and into the periods immediately beyond graduation.

Because you never had anything except the most honorable and most open intentions, it has been difficult for you to believe that others could suspect you of anything else. Your own honesty and naiveté have perhaps blinded you to the importance of appearances, to the fact that what people think may be happening can sometimes be even more damaging than the truth. Too often the truth is impossible to substantiate. A tightly-packed school community is particularly susceptible to suspicion and innuendo.

As you and I have agreed on several occasions in the past, your real troubles began when Hotchkiss ceased to be an all-boys school. Teaching styles that were and are above reproach and beyond suspicion with boys often raise eyebrows when applied to girls. Visiting in dormitories even for the most innocent form of academic special help causes problems. Long counselling sessions behind closed doors cause problems. Using Hotchkiss girls as babysitters, especially during the years since Sara enrolled at Brown and therefore was absent from home, causes problems. Camping out in motel rooms "the way the bikeys do" causes no problem when all the bikeys are boys. When one of those bikeys happens to be a girl and especially when there are no other bikeys on the premises, there is a first-class mess.

In the last analysis, Leif, the central issue throughout this lengthy disquisition is good judgment, the sensitivity to know that for teachers at Hotchkiss we must expect behavior that will keep them above suspicion. No matter how much we may dream that it is otherwise, the special relationship between a teacher and a student always gives the teacher a preponderate advantage.

All the investigations I have pursued since last summer convince me that you have not been guilty of morally improper actions or advances with any Hotchkiss students and that of course includes . I have your assurance of that and I have the assurance of all the students I have asked, most of whom are in a position to know. You have substantial support from the parents of those students, even from the parents of one student about whom there were real concerns because of your attentiveness. You also have substantial support from your colleagues here, though many have been critical of what they would agree was bad judgment on your part in placing yourself in compromising positions. There is widespread confidence in your good will, in your integrity, and in the unselfishness of your intentions. There is also agreement that we do not need and cannot afford more grief like the grief we had this fall. I have many questions about the tactics pursued by in trying to bring his daughter to heel, but I have to admit that he would have had no place to start had it not been for your own actions.

So much for the background music. I have gone on at such length because the success of your return to your full range of duties at the school depends on your complete understanding and acceptance of the sensitive relationship between teacher and student to which I have alluded specifically above and about which much of this letter is concerned. Specific restrictions or guidelines are inadequate beyond a very limited scope. Judgment must be learned; it cannot be ordered. I am going to ask that you stop using Hotchkiss girls as babysitters, that you not take Hotchkiss girls to your home in Lime Rock except as part of a group of students, that you not be a part of any co-ed rooming situation for any group that has anything to do with the school. I am also going to remind you that male faculty visiting in a dormitory for girls can be disquieting for residents in that building. Beyond that I must rely on your common sense and on your willingness to seek advice when in doubt. If you do not grasp fully by now the basic reasons for the near disaster of the fall and for some of the questions raised in the past, there is not much more I can say.

This letter is intended as a preamble to any offer to have you return to your full status as a teacher in September. Before making that offer, I believe I owe it to you and to the school to satisfy myself that you understand the conditions of your return, conditions which essentially involve an instinctive understanding of where things have

gone wrong in the past, a willingness to admit that you were the architect of such problems as did develop, and a determination that you wish to avoid the mistakes of the past. I hope this letter can serve as an invitation to address any questions, if they remain. Can we get together soon for a follow-up discussion?

Sincerely yours,



A. William Olsen, Jr.  
Headmaster  
The Hotchkiss School

Mr. Leif Thorne-Thomsen, Jr.  
Lime Rock  
Connecticut

AWO/ews