

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 7

Witness Name: HIA 7

## THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

## WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 7

I, HIA 7 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] My maiden name is [REDACTED] I was placed in care from 1969 until 1979. [REDACTED] Only the five youngest were put in care - two boys and three girls – [REDACTED] HIA 8 HIA 35 [REDACTED] and me. I am the youngest. We were put in care by Rose Black, social worker from Derry County Borough Welfare.

St Joseph's Children's Home, Termonbacca

2. I was in St Joseph's from 25<sup>th</sup> March 1969 until 1971. I was 6 years old. I remember being taken from school in a car by members of our family to Termonbacca. Before we went we were taken to the hairdressers. I had very long red hair and it was chopped up short. When we arrived the boys and the girls were split up.
3. In Termonbacca there was a main building which was the convent where the nuns lived. The baby end was in a building to the left of the convent. In the baby end there was a dining area, a living room and a small kitchen. The dining area was just tables then there was a large table at the top where we

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sat, and then next to that would have been the playroom. I remember there were some toys in the playroom. Someone had made an ice cream van from wood and you could open it, and go into it. On the right hand side of the corridor there were the toilets and I remember pictures of animals on the walls with zebra's and other animals.

4. There was a large dormitory. On the right hand side there was a bedroom and it had a glass window and a door and that's where I slept with my eldest sister **HIA 8** My other sister [REDACTED] who is a year older than me slept out in a dorm on her own. Next door to that was a bath and next door to that were the toilets. In the first dorm there were a lot of cots, in the second dorm it was only my sister and she slept in the very end bed near the window. There were a lot of empty beds in the dorm and sometimes families would come and go from the home.
5. In a normal morning we were woken up, then we had to make our bed, get dressed and then we went to Mass between 6 and 7am. The chapel was in the convent building. When we came back my sisters and I had to go up to the dormitory and get all the children washed, dressed, put on potties and then bring them down to the dining area and get them seated. We then had to give them their breakfast and when they had eaten theirs we were allowed to go and eat. I was only a 6 year old girl. It was always lumpy porridge and I was actually forced to eat it. I would gag because you weren't allowed to be sick. If you were you would have got hit. The children were taken into the play area and we had to go to school. There were about twenty babies and toddlers living in the baby end.
6. [REDACTED] In school there was a nun called **SR 18?** **SR 18?** and she was very violent and I used to get hit every day with a bamboo stick across the back of my legs. We were picked on in school because we were in care.
7. After school we would come in and nobody ever asked had we homework to do or did we need help. They didn't help us to read or write. I couldn't read or spell

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because I was going from the home to the school and it was just going from one institution to another as it was run by nuns as well. You came in from school and did the same thing again and again – get the children's tea. It wasn't much of a tea. They made sausages or something like that. I was always hungry.

8. After the evening meal we had to take the children up the stairs, pottied them, put nappies on, put them in their cots and put them to bed. The children were babies and toddlers. There was one lady called **SND 59** and she was an angel. She worked in Termonbacca and I am still in contact with her. **SND 59** had many arguments with the nuns over us. She was trying to do her best for us. **SND 59** used to let us stay up and watch 'On the Buses' on a Sunday night behind **SR 3** back. **SR 3** was in charge of the baby end. **SND 59** is now in her seventies and does not want to be involved with the Inquiry.
9. At the weekend we would have been in the play area with the children. We went to Mass and benedictions. Early on a Saturday morning I collected little mats, about twenty or more and I went down the yard to where the boiler house used to be and I had to beat the mats and bring them back upstairs and lay them all beside each cot or each bed.
10. I had a visit from the man I thought was my father. Shortly after that my mother came but then the visits stopped. When I was 16 I found out that I had a different father to my siblings. After a long time we were allowed to go to our sister **[REDACTED]** house on a Sunday to visit.
11. During the school holidays I was fostered out a few times. I was first fostered out to **[REDACTED]** and **[REDACTED]**. He passed away a few years ago. **[REDACTED]** told me he and **[REDACTED]** wanted to adopt me but there was an issue as my mother wouldn't give permission and they never saw me again. I was also fostered out to a couple called **[REDACTED]** and **[REDACTED]**.  
**[REDACTED]**  
They took me at Christmas and I remember getting a doll. The next time they took both me and my sister **[REDACTED]**. This went on through the Easter and

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summer holidays but all of a sudden the fostering stopped. I was not given any explanation as to why I was not returned to foster care. [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED] would have bought or made me clothes. I remember being brought back to the home by [REDACTED] and he gave me 50p. Every time I came back to the home [REDACTED] SR 3 took me into a room and took all the clothes and money off me.

12. [REDACTED] SR 3 wasn't very nice. When I went in my hair was short and they let my hair grow long. When I couldn't remember what I had done with the elastics for my hair I got hit over the head with the glass hair brush almost everyday. I did not receive any injuries or receive medical treatment as a result of this.
13. I remember one time I was doing a play in school and [REDACTED] SR 3 came to the school and said I had to leave because Termonbacca had organised a day out. I wouldn't go because I wanted to be in the play on the stage. Sister [REDACTED] SR 3 gave me the biggest beating of my life. She hit me with the back of her hand and she always went for my hair. She hit me on my arms, shoulders and back.
14. I remember wetting the bed. When this happened I got beaten. I had to strip the bed. Unfortunately one of my sisters had a kidney problem. If we wet the bed sometimes our older sister used to change our bed and get rid of the sheets so we wouldn't get hit. She was caught doing this and she took a beating for us. I remember [REDACTED] SR 3 giving my sister [REDACTED] HIA 8 a black eye.
15. Two sisters [REDACTED] came to the home. I do not remember their names. The nuns took my sister [REDACTED] HIA 8 out of the room we shared and put one of the girls in the room with me. My sister was put in the dorm with my other sister [REDACTED]. The girl came over to my bed and touched my private parts. She also made me touch her. I didn't want to do it but I was too scared to refuse. This continued every night for a couple of months. My big sister wasn't there to protect me or to stop it.

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16. There was a worker in Termonbacca called **SND 58**. She made us do her job for her and she ordered us about. She pretended to be this great person but didn't tell the truth - that the children were doing her job and were getting frequent beatings by the nuns. **SND 58** was a bully when **SND 59** wasn't about. You would not be addressed by your first name - you were addressed as **SND 58**. We felt there was no point in complaining as **SND 58** was very close to **SR 3** and our complaints would not be acted upon. **SND 58**
17. I never tried to run away as I was frightened. If you ran away you would have been killed.
18. Rose Black was the social worker who came to the home. When outsiders were coming, for example for fostering, everything was polished and cleaned and everyone was looking spick and span. When we were getting picked for fostering, we were put in the play area and I used to be picked because I had long red hair and two big pink dimples.
19. We only saw our brothers when we were at Mass or on Sunday nights, not every week, they used to show a film up in the boys' end and they would've taken the three of us up to watch the film. I remember it was the first time I ever saw Tom Thumb.
20. On one occasion after I had a bath I was sitting on one of the beds biting my toenails because my toenails weren't cut. I had no clothes on. I remember a man and woman standing watching, looking down at me and I had worms and these worms were crawling out of me. I do not know who they were or why they were there. I did not receive any medical treatment for my condition.
21. Christmas was just a show. People from outside the home were invited to fancy parties in Termonbacca and they had a feast while we were upstairs starving. I was always hungry. I used to love getting dinner in school because I knew I was going to get a potato or something.

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22. I was afraid to mix with people or to do games. I was always afraid because if I knew if I did something the wrong way I was going to get hit with the back end of **SR 3** hand or I was going to get roared at.
23. I don't remember seeing the doctor or the dentist. I was never shown how to brush my teeth and I never received a tube of toothpaste to clean my teeth.
24. My older sister got hit more than me and my other sister because she was taking beatings for us. But when **SR 3** could get her hands on us we got it. Every morning I got hit going out the door. I was always getting hit on the back of my head.
25. The only thing we didn't do in Termonbacca was cook, but we cleaned up and looked after the other children even though we were only children. We were getting beaten for nothing. You knew you couldn't tell anybody because nobody was going to believe you.

**Good Shepherd Convent and Magdalene Laundry, Derry**

26. In 1976 I was sent to Good Shepherd when I was 14 years old. It was a Magdalene Laundry. My mother wanted me put in there because I was talking to a British soldier. She was worried I was going to turn out like her. I was put in by a welfare officer. I was taken to the doctor and I was stripped to see if I had lost my virginity. Every time you went in and out you were checked by the doctor. The doctor was called Dr Keith Monroe. This was requested by my mother.
27. Good Shepherd was just like being in jail. You needed a key to open each door. **SR 49** was very nice **SR 49**. She got me working in the kitchen as I didn't like the laundry because all the girls were older than me and some of them were bullies. Some of the girls told me that **SR 49** made positive changes to Good Shepherd.

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28. The accommodation was made up of small cubicles. Each cubicle had two beds and a door. I shared a cubicle with a lady called [REDACTED] when I first went in. She was terrible. She woke everybody up at 6 o'clock in the morning with a bell. We got dressed, washed, made our bed and went to Mass. Then we went for breakfast which wouldn't have been very much. Afterwards I went to school. I kept it secret that I was in Good Shepherd.
29. At the weekend the laundry was closed down. All the women stayed in a big room which had a TV. We just sat around and passed the day.
30. My mother would have kept me in Good Shepherd for say three months, took me out for a couple of weeks and then put me back in again. This was ongoing. This went on for two years. I didn't like Good Shepherd as it was very institutionalised. I was only a child and I should never have been there as I was too young to be in this institution.

#### Coneywarren Children's Home, Omagh

31. I went to Coneywarren on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1978 when I turned 16 years old. I loved it there. It was heaven. [REDACTED] was in charge and Gerry McKenna was my Social Worker. It was Gerry's and [REDACTED] SR 49 decision to put me in Coneywarren to try to keep me away from my mother because every time I was settling my mother would take me out. Coneywarren was a holiday camp, it was lovely. I had my own room and it was mixed, Catholics and Protestants. There were boys and girls of all ages. The minibus took me to school in Omagh and the girls in school treated me as an equal. On a Sunday [REDACTED] always took us away on a minibus to a picnic or swimming.
32. I was able to work in the baby end and in the kitchen. I would work with the little ones at night, putting them to bed which I enjoyed, and I really enjoyed working in the kitchen for the chef. It was the first time I ever got an allowance to buy clothes and my friend [REDACTED] and I were allowed to walk into Omagh. I had a lot of freedom and it was the happiest time of my life.

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33. I remember one night in Coneywarren there was a [REDACTED] who was in his forties or fifties. He was no longer employed by the home [REDACTED] [REDACTED] came into my room and he tried to kiss me but I put my hand up and nothing happened. He tried but I wouldn't let him. I don't know why he was in the home that night or how he had access to my room. But I loved it in Coneywarren.

**Life after care**

34. Termonbacca was a nightmare. It's a nightmare that I have tried to put away. I try not to think about it but then a smell like soap or disinfectant or something you see in a newspaper just triggers it off again. To me Termonbacca took my childhood away. They took that 6 year old child and I had to become an adult. The physical, mental and sexual abuse and degrading treatment that I suffered in Termonbacca and how I felt in Good Shepherd that is my issue.
35. Being in care was like a judge sentencing me to jail for 10 years. You weren't fed right, you weren't clothed right, you weren't loved. As a result of this abuse I can't get close to my daughter and I have relationships with my sons of sorts. I walked out of my marriage because of it. I don't let people in emotionally. I take anti-depressants and I have had three years of counselling.
36. As far as I know [REDACTED] SR 3 [REDACTED] is alive. I haven't reported any of what happened to me to the police.

**Statement of Truth**

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed

**HIA 7**

Dated

23/4/13.

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Christian Name	Where Born	Date of Birth	Where Baptised	Parents' Names	Occupation	Recommended
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Rose Black Ch Officer to Borough Borough
HIA 8						Rose Black C Borough Rose Black Ch
HIA 35						Rose Black Ch Borough Rose Black Ch
[REDACTED]						Rose Black Ch Borough
HIA 7						Rose Black C Borough

Occupation	Recommended by	Received	Died	Left	Observations	No.
[REDACTED]	Rose Black Children's Officer to Borough Welfare Borough	26 March 69		13 <sup>th</sup> March 1971	Taken by their Mother.	994
[REDACTED]	Rose Black Children's Borough Welfare Rose Black Children's Officer	26 March 69 26 March 69		13 <sup>th</sup> March 1971 13 <sup>th</sup> March 1971	" " " "	995 996
[REDACTED]	Rose Black Children's Officer Borough Welfare	26 March 69		13 <sup>th</sup> March 1971	" " " "	997
[REDACTED]	Rose Black C. Officer Borough Welfare	26 March 69		13 <sup>th</sup> March 1971	" " " "	998

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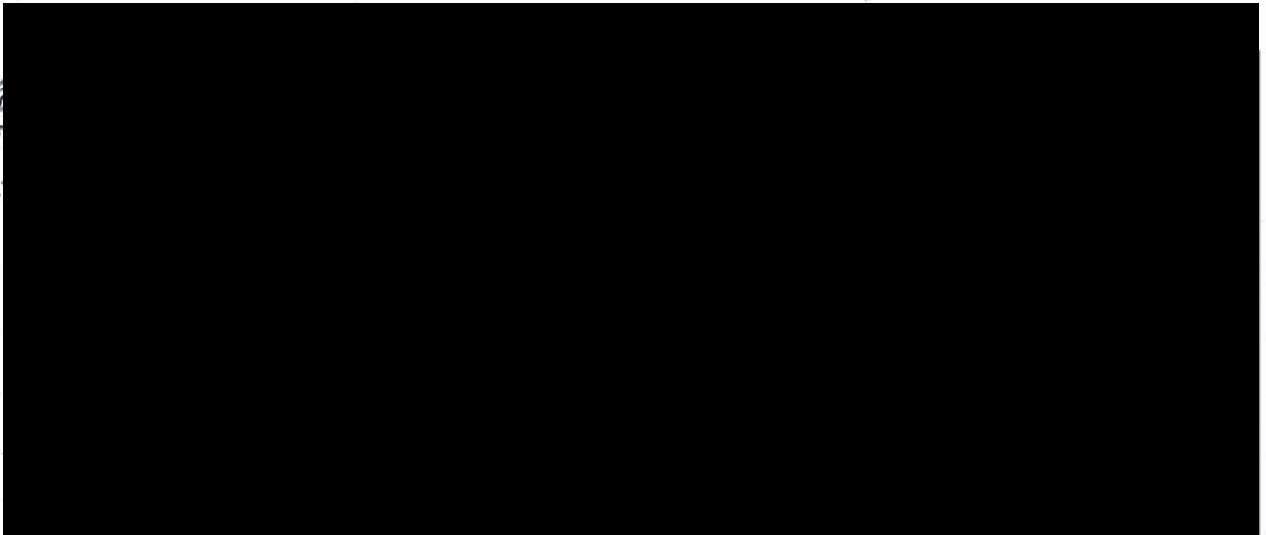
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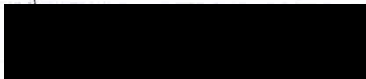
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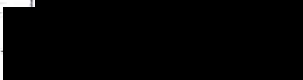
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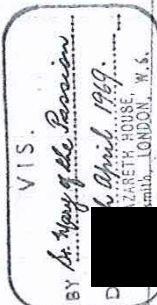
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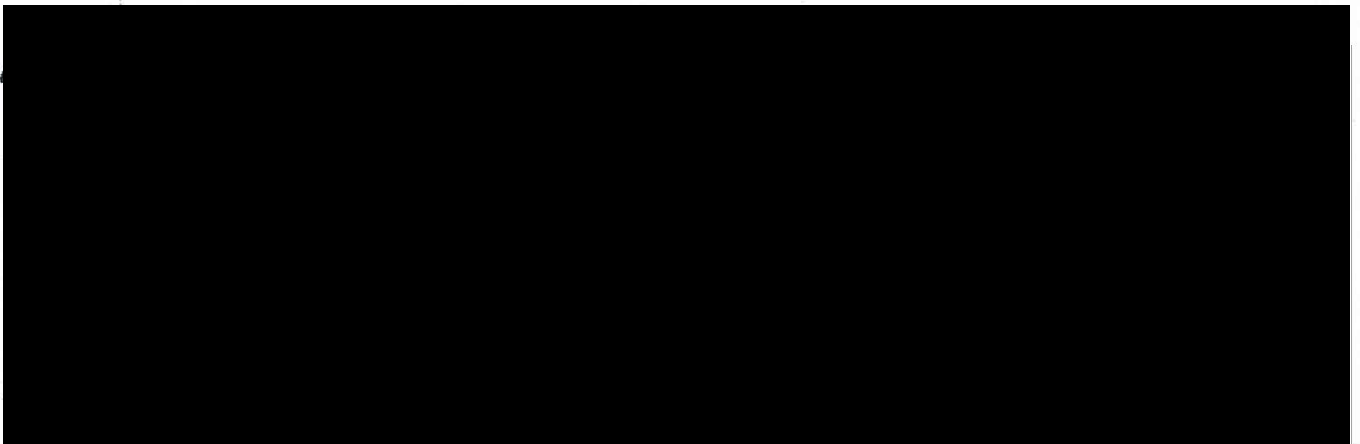
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HIA 7



Miss Rose Black recommended this Family. The Father is constantly drinking he abuses the Children. The Mother has a history of lo-habiting and at present living [redacted]. There are

Children in this Family. admitted. 26/3/69



Name;	HIA 7
Date of Birth :	
Baptised ;	
Parents Names:	&
Occupation;	
Recommended by :	Rose Black , Derry Co Borough Welfare
Date of Admission;	26 March 1969
First Confession;	4 April 1970
Date of Confirmation;	18 April 1970
Place of Confirmation :	St Columba's Long Tower Derry
Date of Discharge :	13 March 1971 taken by their mother

**Written in observation book:** Miss Rose Black recommended this fa  
The father is constantly drinking / he abuses the children. The mother  
a history of co-habiting and at present is living in No:   
There are children in this family. Admitted 26 March 1969

HIA REF:

Witness Name: SR 3

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

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WITNESS STATEMENT OF SR 3

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1. I, SR 3, say as follows –
2. This statement is provided by me in response to a request from the Inquiry and in response to the various complaints and allegations set out with that request.

**Personal Background**

3. I was born SR 3. I was the second eldest of seven siblings although two twin brothers died very young and my eldest sister died in her early twenties.

4.

**Time in Derry Generally**

5. I spent two periods in Termonbacca working with the older boys in the first period and then in the nursery unit in the second period.
6. The older boys unit was basically split into two groups. The juniors were aged about 7-11 and the seniors were about 12-16. The ages are approximate as I cannot remember exactly the age of the boys. In the time I spent with the older boys I remember there being two sisters in the older boys group. I was there for two years and remember Sr SR 37 (was only there for a very short time), SR 11 and SR 1. They have all died.

7. My recollection is that there were about 60 boys in total between the senior and junior sections. I do not recall there being any lay staff to help us at that time. There were two sisters for the 60 boys. I remember an elderly sister who did sewing and made and repaired clothes (I think her name was **SR 94** **SR 8** who worked in the kitchen) and **SR 13** the superior).
8. My second period in Termonbacca followed my training as a nursery nurse **[REDACTED]**. I am not sure exactly when I returned. In the nursery I looked after boys from newborn to about 5/6 years. Again I do not recall lay staff at the early part of my time there.
9. I was almost always with boys as Termonbacca did not take girls until the very latter years. We started taking family groups of boys and then took full families including girls at a later stage.
10. I do not have any memory of a child being abused in any way. Children may have been shouted at or deprived of some treat like tv if they were misbehaving but I do not recall any physical punishment at all. Boys being boys had their fights and rows and did misbehave. We did not resort to physical punishment and the removal of privileges was usually a severe enough punishment.
11. My own memories of Termonbacca are all of a happy time. I truly loved my time there and was heartbroken when I eventually left. I remember an incident when we had two twin girls left with us. I could not figure out how I would remember how to tell them apart the next day and so wrote their names on a piece of sticking plaster and stuck it to their wrists. They were adopted very soon after they came to us as newborns.

**HIA 7**

12. I have seen the statement from this lady. I do not remember her or her sister **HIA 8** (who has also provided a statement) at all. I have looked at the names of the other siblings and they do not bring back any memories for me of this girl or her family at all.
13. As far as her statement goes I did work in the younger end of the home and I did work with a lady called **SND 59** I am still in touch with her and we exchange Christmas cards every year.
14. I do not recall there being rugs or mats around. I definitely do not recall the children having to collect and beat them..
15. I do not know why **HIA 7** would say that I took money or anything else off her. I do not recall ever removing sweets, toys, clothes or money from a child. It is possible a child may have had sweets refused to them on an occasion as a punishment for misbehaviour as we used removal of privileges as a punishment. However the picture of habitually removing gifts when a child returned from a visit to a local family is not

something I accept. I must repeat that I do not remember this girl personally so this is a general statement about any child.

16. I do not recall there ever being a glass or similar hairbrush in the house. I have never struck a child with a hair brush of any kind and deny this allegation completely. The children would have brushed their own hair mainly as we would not have had the time to brush the hair of all the children in person.
17. I have never been inside any school in Derry. I was not inside the school in Bishop Street where the sisters worked and have never been in any other school. I did not remove any child from a school for a day trip nor would I remove a child from performing in a play. I did not do this. I definitely would not have beaten a child for wanting to be in a play and deny that this happened. It is unlikely that a child would have been at school if they were going on a day trip. the children would not have been on many trips and these would have been organised for periods when they were not in school.
18. I do recall a small room off the main dormitory. I do not recall this being specifically for families nor do I recall sisters being in the room. I do recall one occasion when a traveller family were placed with us for a short time and they were in that room. Other than that I cannot recall any incident such as that described. I was never aware of or informed about any situation such as that described.
19. It is possible that the older sister was in the smaller room and was then moved into the dormitory area as she got older to make room for younger girls. this is only a suggestion on my part as I have no memory of this happening.
20. I did work with a girl called **SND 58** She was a volunteer and her family were very good to the sisters and regularly helped us out. I recall them making gifts of blankets for the beds and cots. Her surname was not **SND 58** though. If this is the same girl I do not recognise the description of her. She was a generous and hard working girl nothing about her or her relationship to the children ever gave me a cause for concern.
21. I do not think the children all had social workers or that there were lots of social workers visiting at this time. I do recall Rose Black though.
22. The description of an incident in a bath where people seemed to be observing her and some condition with worms is something I cannot comment upon. It does not resemble any incident I was ever aware of in my time at Termonbacca or anywhere else.
23. I do not recognise the description of Christmas at all. The Christmas dinner was not what we think of now but the children all had a good dinner at Christmas and I recall Christmas pudding was served. We would have had visits from Saint Vincent de Paul (who were always very generous to the children at Christmas) and others such as the

Bishop. If the Bishop visited there may have been a dinner for him but the children were not hidden away upstairs. The reason for the visit was for the Bishop to see the children. They may well have performed music or dancing for him. There were never parties of any sort where the children were not included and even then the parties were not lavish affairs as we did not have the money to do such a thing.

24. I did not hit this girl or any girl. Punishments may have involved a child being shouted at or deprived of a treat of some sort but the children were not beaten.

25.

26.

27.

28.

29.

HIA 8

30. I have already discussed of this material in the earlier section concerning HIA 7 HIA 7 I note HIA 8 is the sister of HIA 7 but her statement does not assist me in remembering either of them, nor any other member of their family.

31. I deny that I hit either of these girls and definitely would not have hit her for trying to help her sister if she had wet the bed. While the causes of bed wetting were not understood as clearly as they are now I would not have beaten a child for wetting the bed.

32. I did not give any child a black eye. I also do not accept that a child attending school with a black eye would not have created some sort of query. Even a brief mention to someone.
33. I was never involved in any meeting with a child and the Mother Superior concerning an allegation of any sort.
34. I was mainly responsible for the younger children. I would have been up most nights doing night feeds and nappy changes for a baby. Most of my time there included very young children and the whole process of feeding and changing. I did not ever have one of the children come in and do the babies changes in the morning or any other time. I may have had help from the older girls if they were free but this was not a job they were given or expected to do. Older girls did love the babies. The girls were also not responsible for putting the children to bed.
35. HIA 8 says she did all the changes, changing beds and washing nappies before Mass on a daily basis. I do not believe the children went to Mass on a daily basis. The sisters would go but the children did not. The children would have had "chores" to do but these would have been the sort of thing they would do at home. The reference to brushing or mopping floors and dusting does sound like the sort of chores they would have done.
36. I do not accept the description of me. I did not hit the children and I did not beat the girls at night for comforting another child.
37. I cannot comment on the issue of [REDACTED] as it does not sound familiar to me. I find it difficult to accept that this happened. I am sure any child in the city would have had access to medical treatment but I do not recall any incident like that described occurring in the home.
38. I do not recall pocket money being given to the children and that is probably because the babies, who I spent most time with, would not have had pocket money. I believe the description of not being allowed into town on a Saturday as a punishment sounds like the sort of thing that was done. Children lost privileges for misbehaviour. The children may have been given chores to do as part of that but I cannot comment on the incident alleged by HIA 8 as I cannot recall such an incident.
39. There was no room full of toys in the convent. This description is not something I accept or recognise.
40. I am upset that this girl and her sister feel they had a bad time or that I abused them. I do not accept their memories of their time as accurate and I do not recognise the place they describe. I always loved the children especially the babies and tried to shelter and protect them.