

HIA REF 46

Witness Name HIA 46

## THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

## WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 46

HIA 46 will say as follows:-

Personal Details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] in Co. Donegal.
2. My father, [REDACTED] was a very intelligent man but entirely dysfunctional as a father. He was violent towards my mother and some of my siblings and did not take proper care of his children. I found this out in later life. My mother tried to leave him but this was discouraged by the parish priest at the time as married Catholic couples stayed together.
3. I have many siblings. I don't know all their names and I don't even know how many siblings there were in total as some of them are dead now and I have not been able to get the correct information. We were kept two and two in different institutions. There were two girls in Bishop Street ([REDACTED] and [REDACTED]), two boys in Termonbacca (HIA 121 and I), and two boys with the Nazareth nuns in Sligo. I think I was placed initially in Fahan in Donegal and then moved from Fahan to Termonbacca. I do not know who placed me in care or why I was placed in care.

30. I reported the incident to PSNI as this was my attempt to give that little bit of information that could assist in establishing how this person operated over time in Termonbacca. I understand the police cannot perform miracles but at least it is on record because I feel this was a very dangerous person.

Statement of Truth

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

Sig  HIA 46

Dated 2013-10-09

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HIA 46

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admitted 28<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1955.

Recommended by Rev. Mother Ignatius  
Father delicate and mother out  
working. Donegal County Council pay £1 weekly  
towards his upkeep.

boys to go. My brother did not go in the end and we were both eventually moved to another institution in the South of Ireland.

11. During the Christmas period at Termonbacca we were often invited by the British Army to a party at their base in Ballykelly. I considered there to be at times an anti Protestant environment in the home and I couldn't get my head around the fact that we were supposed to hate the Army when they were showing us such acts of kindness. It is difficult to understand when you are seven or eight and you don't have role models to explain these things to you and help you to understand. Jews, Russians, gypsies, all were viewed with suspicion. I found myself confused by the teachings of the nuns, by their actions and at times by their silence. There was an absence of educated people at Termonbacca, I can see that now. Planting intolerance in children's mind kicks in on society later on so I hope we learn things from all of this and this information translates into a living document that can operate to benefit children in the future.

12. **HIA 121** and I were in Termonbacca and our sisters were in care nearby in Nazareth House, Bishop Street but we were never in contact with each other as a family. My brother and I do not have any contact now. Unfortunately he is in bad condition, one of the fallouts from Termonbacca. It had a monumental lifelong affect on the children, their quality of life and also their ability to build relationships. My brother visited me a few years ago as I live abroad but he only stayed a few days and returned home. He could not handle the encounter emotionally. We reminded each other of all the hard times we went through as children so it was too difficult to form a bond. One of my sisters developed a mental health problem throughout her life due to her time in care and she died a few years ago. My other sister **[REDACTED]** committed suicide by taking an overdose of tablets. The collapse of our family is permanent.

13. My mother and father took me out of the home on one occasion only. It was during the summer of 1957 or 1958 and I returned home to live with them



during the summer for two months but it was never repeated. I got an insight into my father's true personality during this summer vacation. He was a very violent man and did not treat my mother well. The nuns did not really want my parents visiting me in the home.

14. I left Termonbacca in/around 1960 or 1961. I was ten years in the home but I don't know how or why I was released as no-one will answer my questions. I was just shipped out with my brother **HIA 121** by a female social worker from Termonbacca in the back seat of a Volkswagen car on a summer day. I was taken to Salthill in Galway and got six more years of the same. I did not know where I was going as the social worker did not tell us. She lied to me all the way down as she obviously knew where she was taking us.
15. I went to Bridge Street School during my time in Termonbacca and I was then sent to an industrial school in Galway where I was taught by the Christian Brothers.
16. I was sent from Salthill to work on a farm in Galway, seven days a week, more abuse. I was seriously contemplating killing myself as a solution to the whole thing. I had sixteen years of it and one more year as well on a farm where they just had me as a slave. I never got paid for the work I did, the brothers collected the money directly from the farmer. I thought suicide was a very logical and rational solution. I wandered about more or less in that state for a year and to get myself sorted out I had to leave Ireland and I did that as quickly as possible after that.
17. Termonbacca did represent a certain degree of security, a certain degree of care. There was a balance between sexual abuse and emotional abuse by some but in my child's brain there was a degree of hope because there were people who represented other things. The picture wasn't all black, it had some black parts but some lighter. So I have this in me to help me cope with what I was going through that even with the bad there was hope. That is how Termonbacca contrasted to the other jurisdiction which I was transported to and where the lights went out completely for six years. At least in Northern

Ireland there was an attempt to do something for kids. We were given milk in crates, an apple and orange juice. There were teachers who were qualified in Bishop Street and there was a head master of a local school who showed me kindness. Individuals mattered and played a role bigger than they would ever believe, they're gone now.

18. We were not criminals; we were just people from families that didn't work out. We didn't do anything wrong, we were innocent children completely without criminal records, but the consequences were huge and for me. It meant great psychological damage but I have now got on top of it through hard work. It was a painful process but you must face yourself and I wouldn't be here today if I had not done that.

#### Life after care

19. I currently work with young offenders in the court system in Sweden. I am a social worker and have been doing that type of work for almost forty years now. My way of thinking has been informed from that work because I meet people like me now in other countries. These people will always be with us, young people who have made mistakes, young people who are from homes that are dysfunctional but it's how we handle them that makes the big difference. I have learned from them and I hope they have learned from me that life is possible even if it is very dark at times. This is about prevention, how to prevent things happening in the first place.

20. I ran **SR 2** in Termonbacca many years ago to find out why I was placed in care and who was responsible for this decision. I also wanted to know who was responsible for the decision to move me to Salthill in Galway where I was subjected to further abuse by a notorious paedophile. Sister **SR 2** closed down discussions with me and I got the impression she did not want to engage with my concerns as it would be detrimental to the Order.

St Joseph's Childrens Home, Termonbacca, Derry (1951 – 1960/1961)

4. I was placed in Termonbacca when I was a few weeks or months old, I don't know the exact date. I have small memories as a baby of a certain toy or a design in the nursery. I can recall playing outdoors with the other children when I was a little older. Termonbacca was at that time a good place for me. I knew nothing else; I had nothing to compare it with so it felt okay. The nursery was an innocent world and it should be for children who are innocent in their thinking.
  
5. However, when I was five or six I recall being wakened, taken out of my bed at night and sexually abused in the bathroom by a woman. I remember it happened in the toilets in a cubicle that was partitioned off. I cannot recall if this woman was a nun or a civilian member of staff but she sat on the toilet seat and used me for her own sexual gratification. I cannot recall any of her physical characteristics as it was night time and it was dark. I recall that she was bleeding during this incident so she must have been menstruating at the time. She tried to make me penetrate her but that is all I can recall. That is when my world shattered and broke down. I can't say that I was shocked but I was in another world when this was happening. It was a huge shift in my way of being, almost as if someone had done something which made me someone else and changed me very much.
  
6. I was put back in bed and I got back to sleep but there is no doubt that I was used for her sexual gratification. The realisation of this of course comes with adolescence and teenage years and it had a huge effect on me then, it shifted my ground from safety to danger so I became a different person.
  
7. I think that was the only time where sexual abuse arose during my time in Termonbacca. The realisation kicked in that if this happened to me did it happen to other boys? Was a serial predator abuser active in that environment over time with so many children, could that be possible? Shortly afterwards I was moved over to the senior side so that could have prevented