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HIA REF: 126

Witness Name HIA 126

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 126

HIA 126 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED]. There are [REDACTED] in my family, [REDACTED] girls and [REDACTED] boys. There were ^{SND 37} [REDACTED] siblings older than me. We lived with our parents in [REDACTED]. My mother was there all the time but dad was an alcoholic. Every time my mother got pregnant she couldn't cope so we were put into care and then brought out again after so long and then returned to care.
2. [REDACTED] of us were in care in Termonbacca [REDACTED] HIA 113 [REDACTED] HIA 126, [REDACTED] SND 197, [REDACTED] HIA 127 and [REDACTED] HIA 233 and we were in and out of Termonbacca from we were about six months old. I was the [REDACTED] of the [REDACTED] children who were placed in care. We were all split up. My oldest sister [REDACTED] was adopted by a couple in [REDACTED]. My brother [REDACTED] was adopted by a couple in [REDACTED] and my sister [REDACTED] was adopted by my [REDACTED] sister. They were the lucky ones.

St Joseph's, Termonbacca, Derry (In/around 1969 – December 1979)

3. I think my first memory of being in Termonbacca is when I was three years old. I was stripped down and bathed with the others and then put straight to bed. If they had no bed for you, you had to share it and they didn't care who you shared

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it with as long as you had somewhere to sleep. My sisters **HIA 113** and **SND 197** were also there and we were put into one bed. There were about ten children in the nursery, two groups of fifteen in the junior dormitory and two groups of fifteen in the senior dormitory and these were mixed groups. I saw my sisters a lot when I was in the home but my parents never visited me when I was in Termonbacca.

4. We got porridge for breakfast, it was lumpy, if you didn't eat it for your breakfast they forced it down you. I recall one nun **SR 6** and a civilian member of staff **SND 57** made me eat it by forcing the spoon and the food into my mouth even though I kept my mouth closed at the time. If you didn't eat it they would have left it there for you and you had to eat it when you came back from school. If you didn't eat it then you would get nothing until the next morning.
5. We got up at 7am, got ready for school and went down to the dining room for breakfast. I do not recall going to mass every day but we went to mass every Sunday. You had to get down and clean the floors, brush them, scrub them and then you had to get ready for school.
6. I went to **[REDACTED]** Primary School which was not run by nuns and there were no nuns, brothers or religious personnel on the staff. It was several miles away and quite a walk when you were four or five years old. It would take an hour each way to walk to school. **SR 6** drove her favourites to school on the bus and the rest of us had to walk. She had a twenty seater mini bus and she selected who would get a lift to school. She picked the children she could manipulate and who would tell her things. My sisters **SND 197** **HIA 113** and I were always together and I never told her anything so we were never selected.
7. I used to wet myself and **SND 57** used to check me every day to see if I had wet myself. I would then go straight to my room and **SR 6** would come round and she would hit you with her knuckles because she had a **[REDACTED]** and she used to crack your head with the **[REDACTED]** I recall one night when my sister **HIA 113** **SND 197** and I went to the chapel and

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SR 6 beat the hell out of us. She would beat you on your legs, your arms or your back. She beat us because we had gone in to the chapel when there was no service on and we were playing about and pretending we were the priest, an altar boy and a member of the congregation. HIA 113 told Sister SR 6 what we had been doing because she was trying to get into her "good books".

8. My sister HIA 113/SND 197 and I stuck together and stayed in our own little group. SR 6 would hit you with a curtain rod or that of hers every chance she got. SR 6 and SND 57 were the worst. SND 57 is still alive and lives in the . She would be well into her 50's or 60's now. SR 6 is deceased. She was one evil nun. They never told you anything at all. It was just "oh you're getting fed, you're getting a roof over your head, your mother and father didn't want you, you would have been God knows where, out in the street". That is the way they made you feel and I just hated the place.
9. They would take you to a big house in Greencastle near Moville on holiday. You stayed there for about a month every summer and you did have good times going to the beach and you were able to run around with no-one asking if you had wet yourself. Greencastle and the beach were the only good things about the place.
10. We had a social worker, , and she came to see us sometimes and took my sister SND 197 and I out for the day sometimes to her own house when we were in care. I would see the social worker every 6-8 months. I do not know if she is still alive. There was another civilian staff member SND 198 and she was also good to me and took me out for the day from the home. SND 198 is still alive and living in Derry. I never told , SND 198 about the abuse I suffered as I did not want to ruin our days out by complaining and I did not want to get thrown out of care and break up our family unit. We had nowhere else to go where we could be together.

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11. We then went in to foster care in/around [REDACTED] for [REDACTED] years from Termonbacca. [SND 37] and [SND 36] fostered [REDACTED] of us, they fostered the [REDACTED] girls first then my [REDACTED] brothers and then they fostered my sister when she was only a baby. Our time in foster care broke down after about two and a half to three years because my foster father interfered with me and my sister [SND 197]. It started with him asking us to sit on his knee when we were watching TV and he would put a blanket over me and grope me and he did the same thing to [SND 197]. He was a [REDACTED] for [REDACTED] and he would take me on trips with him if I was off school and when the people left [REDACTED] for twenty minutes or more that is when he would have sex with me on [REDACTED]. This went on for a couple of years until my older sister [HIA 113] found out and had an argument with him about it. I never told anyone as I was petrified that I would break up the family home. His wife [SND 37] then asked me if it was true and I told her the truth and she then reported it to social services. I don't think the police were involved. I was never questioned by the police and we heard nothing further about it. My sister and I were not examined by any medical personnel following the abuse by our foster father, there was no follow up with the police and we did not receive any counselling. I still see him on occasion in town but I no longer have any contact with him. We were all taken out of foster care and placed in Nazareth House.

Nazareth House, Bishop Street, Derry (In/around July 1985)

12. Nazareth House was not as bad as Termonbacca. Termonbacca was the worst of all. There were staff there that got you your tea. You would get up for breakfast, go to school, return and do your homework and they let you out if you asked to get out for an hour or so but if you did anything wrong you were grounded. I went to school in [REDACTED] when I was in Nazareth House. I got in to a lot of trouble at school in order to get attention. I did not get any qualifications at this school because I just played up that much. I could not motivate myself.

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13. I ran away from Nazareth House. I ran back to my mother's house but my father was drunk and abusive so I went to my foster parents because I knew [REDACTED] SND 37 would be good to me but I was taken back to Nazareth House.

14. In the summer of 1985 when I was fifteen I was sent to [REDACTED] through the school for six weeks with some of the other students. This scheme was called "Project Children" and it was arranged by [REDACTED] who was a social worker in Strabane. When I came back they had my bags packed and Sister SR 22 told me that I was being moved to Fort James, another children's home. It is not linked in any way to the Sisters of Nazareth.

Fort James Children's Home, Derry (In/around September 1985)

15. I was at Fort James from I was [REDACTED] until I was [REDACTED] almost three years. The food was great in Fort James. They were more on your level there. They were trying to get me ready to go out into the community. They had small flats on site and they put me in to one of these flats. I met a guy and I got pregnant in there and they got me a house elsewhere. They helped you budget your money to prepare you to go out and live in the world. They gave you a lot more freedom.

Life after care

16. I stayed with the guy I met at Fort James and we have been married now for [REDACTED] years. I have told him everything about my time in care. We have [REDACTED] children of our own, [REDACTED] girls and [REDACTED] boys and we have [REDACTED] granddaughters. We also foster [REDACTED] children. We have had them since they were very young and they are [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] now.

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17. Our past troubled my sister **SND 197** so badly that she had to put her own children in care and she has really dwelled on it but I have just left it all in the past and struggled on. I am not going to let what happened to me happen to them.
18. My mother is deceased and my father is still alive but I do not speak to him. Two of my brothers are now deceased () and I have not maintained contact with () since he was adopted. However, I have maintained contact with the remainder of my brothers and sisters. All we knew was being in care all our lives until I was almost eighteen.
19. I never reported the sexual or physical abuse I suffered to the police.
20. I have an ongoing civil claim and my solicitor is John MacManus of John Fahy & Co Solicitors.

Statement of Truth

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

Signature **HIA 126** _____

Dated 27/9/13. _____

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WESTERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD

Please use this Reference in your reply

Our Ref: PIN/JT

Your Ref:

Date 4th February 1985

15 GRANSHA PARK
CLOONEY ROAD
LONDONDERRY BT47 ITG
NORTHERN IRELAND
PHONE 0504 860086 (11 Lines)

CONFIDENTIAL

Mrs D.A. Brown, ^{258/2}
Principal Officer,
Child Care Branch,
Department of Health and Social Services,
Dundonald House,
Upper Newtownards Road,
BELFAST
BT4 3SF

Dear Mrs Brown,

ALLEGATIONS MADE BY FOSTER-CHILD. HIA 133 DOB [REDACTED]

I am writing to advise you of a situation which has developed regarding the above named child.

Since 1980, Mr & Mrs X. have acted as foster-parents for the SND 362 children. There have been periods of home-on-trial involving some of the older children, and by December 1984, SND 197 (dob [REDACTED]) had been home since September 1983. It was intended that HIA 133 (dob [REDACTED]) and HIA 126 (dob [REDACTED]) would be returning home at Easter 1985. There were no immediate plans for the return of the three youngest children. SND 283 (dob [REDACTED]), HIA 127 (dob [REDACTED]) and HIA 233 (dob [REDACTED]).

On 26th December 1984, Mr X contacted the Stand-by social worker requesting a visit the following day. At that visit, Mr & Mrs X advised that in the course of a disagreement, HIA 133 had alleged that Mr X had "molested" HIA 126 and SND 197 some 18 months earlier. HIA 126 had immediately denied this, but had apparently later spoken to Mrs X on her own, saying that Mr. X had touched her around her breasts and genital area without disarranging any clothing. The allegations were emphatically denied by Mr X.

Both HIA 133 and HIA 126 were interviewed separately by the social worker. HIA 133 repeated her allegation but HIA 126 refused to discuss the matter. It is worth noting that there had over the previous month been some tensions within the home relating to school attendance and adolescent behaviour, and the girls were aware of their planned return home at Easter. In view of the increasingly strained nature of the relationships following HIA 133's allegations, arrangements were made for the removal of HIA 133 and HIA 126 to a children's home on the following day, 28th December 1984.

SND 197 was interviewed at her home and she denied that Mr X had ever interfered with her, and she said that, to her knowledge, nothing like that had ever happened to HIA 126 either. Having heard this, Mrs SND 362's reaction to the allegation was that Mr X must be innocent.

.../ As far as

Mrs D.A. Brown

4th February 1985

As far as the three youngest children were concerned, they had been with Mr & Mrs X for over 4 years, and anything as deeply traumatic as a sudden removal could only be considered if there were adequate grounds for such a distressing course of action. On the basis of the information available, it seemed that an unsubstantiated allegation, firmly denied by one of the children, relating to 18 months earlier could not justify such a move. However, in view of the nature of the allegation, the R.U.C. were informed in order that the matter could be investigated, recognising that it would also be in Mr X's own interests if it were to be cleared in this way. The outcome of the police investigation is awaited.

Mr X's solicitor has now written to the Board expressing Mr X's annoyance and distress that the matter was referred to the R.U.C., and this is now the subject of correspondence with Central Services Agency.

Yours sincerely,



T.J. FRAWLEY
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

REPORT FOR REVIEW HELD AT NAZARETH HOUSE11th November '86.

Subject:

HIA 126

HIA 126 is [redacted] years old, she was readmitted to Nazareth House in September '85 at her own request because of her alleged unhappiness at home. She is the oldest child in this Unit, and the second longest in it. The Group comprises of three younger members of her own family and five other children.

Since my arrival here in late August I have found **HIA 126** to be a very disruptive influence in the group, she has totally rejected my coming here, she has openly challenged any change or improvement I have tried to make, she has undermined my authority by telling the children, and especially her own siblings not to do as I ask or suggest. She will shout abuse when checked or challenged for her misbehavior in front of the other children, and this causes terrible tension and a very bad atmosphere in the Unit.

I have spoken with Pat Gilchrist her social worker about these problems, and also with Martin McCaul from the I.T.Group which she attends. With their co-operation a 'contract' was drawn up with **HIA 126** approval and consent, and this has been looked at on a weekly basis. With this input I noted some areas of improvement and **HIA 126** was encouraged with her efforts. However this pressure has become too much for **HIA 126** and this week she has totally rejected the constraints of the contract, and has become more abusive than ever saying such things as: when I asked to have a certain chair " dont give it to her, its not hers, she didnt pay for it, we are here longer than her". When asked to alternate visits with her friend [redacted] "I will bring her here whenever I like, you wont stop me, God we cant bring a friend here now etc etc".

This is always in front of the other children which is very distressing and causes terrible tensions.

At this point in time I feel **HIA 126** is out of my control, we are not able to meet her needs here, and she is not gaining anything by staying here.

SR 22*Housemother 11/11/86.***HIA 126**