

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 112

Witness Name: HIA 112

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 112

HIA 112, will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on the [REDACTED]. I have four brothers and three sisters. [REDACTED]. We all lived at home with my mother and father at [REDACTED]. My mother looked after all of us. I know my father loved me but he would not have told me that he did.
2. I was always getting into mischief. I can recall a police officer bringing me home. I was stealing from shops. I was a gullible child. If someone asked me to put my hand in the fire I would have done it. A court order was obtained on the 4th August 1965 and I was sent to Williamson House.

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Bawnmore 1965-1966

4. There were boys aged 11 upwards in Bawnmore. BM 3 was the officer in charge. There were 6 boys in the bedroom that I slept in. The room was at the front of the building. It was an old building and it was a very cold place. Some of the staff would stay overnight. There were house fathers. There was a lady who also worked there, called BM 2. BM 2 was a comical woman. She was the She would have given you a cuddle. She was always bubbly, she had a and
5. Each morning we got up at 7.00 am. We got washed, said our prayers and went to breakfast. The tables were all laid out for breakfast each morning. I can remember that we got cereal and toast. The table was laid out for us at each meal time. We then went to school. I attended Primary School. We wore short trousers and they set us apart from the other boys as they wore long trousers. I remember it snowed and I was very cold. The other children called us 'home boys'. We stayed in school at lunch time. Attending school was a relief for me. It was a chance to get away from the home. Even though I was verbally abused by the other boys in school I didn't care as I was still getting out of the home. The odd time I would run away but I was not sure where I was. I cannot remember if I was in the home for Christmas.
6. When we returned from school each day we had to change out of our uniform. We did not have any chores to do. There was a common room down stairs. This is where we played after school. You completed your home work if you had any. Each evening we were in bed for 8.00 pm. The staff would leave us alone when we were playing in the common room. They would only come in if there was a fight. The older boys would take over the games when we played. My mum brought me a pair of jeans and one of the older boys took them from me. I felt that I couldn't say anything. The staff turned a blind eye unless there was a particularly serious fight and in that instance they would intervene. There was a bit of bullying going on. It was not a homely environment.

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7. There was a man called **BM 1**. He was a house father. I can remember the bathroom, it was painted yellow. He used to come into the room while you were in the bathroom. He used to start rubbing me in the bath as if he was washing me. He would touch me down below and he just kept rubbing me. He was masturbating me. When I got out of the bath he would dry me. He then put my pyjamas on me. He then brought me down to his room, put his penis between my legs and pulled me backward and forward. The smell of his body odour has remained with me to this day. He said that no one would believe me. He told me I was a 'dirty wee boy'. He told me that he owned me. This happened more than once. This happened on a weekly basis in the evening.
8. **BM 3**, the officer in charge used to take me to his house, which was on the grounds of the home. It was a 1960's style house and I had never seen anything like that. He held me and gave me cuddles. He made me suck his penis. He told me that I was a good boy and that he was my daddy now. I think that he was married. He was sly. He said that I was not allowed to tell anyone. He called me a 'dirty wee taig'. I did not know the meaning of the word 'taig'. I was warned not to tell my mother. I was threatened that if I said anything, everything that I owned would be taken off me.
9. I remember when my mother came to visit we used to go to a room downstairs. She used to visit me once a month. During my time at the home I never got to go back to my family for a day or a weekend. I could not tell my mother. Mr **BM 1** was always looking at me. There was always a member of staff in the room when my mother visited, it. I felt like I was being watched. I was frightened and embarrassed.
10. There was a male member of staff who subjected me to physical abuse. I think his name was **BM 4**. He was a **██████████** I can recall the time that I wet the bed and he rubbed my face in the sheet. He then brought me to the bathroom, stripped me naked and put me in a cold bath. On more than one occasion he grabbed me by the collar, squeezed me and called me a 'dirty, dirty boy'. He also spat on my face and grabbed me by the hair on the side of my head. He also called me a 'dirty wee taig'. There was another boy who came into the

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home, he was called BM 5. He was a shy boy and I am sure that he was being abused too.

11. I hung around with other children but they were not really my friends as such. I do not recall any inspectors or social workers checking up on me. I might have had a social worker but I cannot recall their name. I do not remember being brought to the Doctor or a Doctor visiting the home during my time at Bawnmore. I cannot recall weekends in the home. There were good times in the home as well but I mostly recall the bad times. Even when BM 2 was being affectionate towards one of us there was always someone watching this in the background.
12. I can remember leaving the home. I didn't know if I was going home for day or for good. My mother came to collect me. I can recall walking down the lane holding my mum's hand. We got the bus home and I was sick. We had to get another bus and my mother was shouting at me. I think that my time was up in the home and that is why I was allowed home.

Life after care

13. When I returned home I was very lonely. I couldn't sleep with my bedroom door closed and I still can't until this day. I was worried that they would come back and take me away again. I then went to secondary school on the. I left when I was 15 years of age. The troubles started and we had to leave our home. We went to live with my aunt on the. I can remember going down the Crumlin Road and hiding behind the Mater hospital in order to avoid the shooting.
14. Through the years I have had various jobs. I worked in a stitching company in. I then worked in a few different hospitals. I went to England to live with a family friend when I was 17 years of age because of the troubles. I worked in a club at night and in an engineering company during the day. I returned home for my father's funeral in 1979. I went back to England but I came home again as my mother was ill; she had a heart operation and the family

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were called. My mum survived and I remained at home. She died in 1989 of cancer. She was 69 years old.

15. Through the years, I have had different jobs. I have lost a few jobs as I was drinking and taking drugs throughout the 1990's. I was on a really dark road for a while. I remember once having a party in my house. I left the party in the early hours of Sunday morning and I walked to the Queen Elizabeth Bridge. There was nobody around and I was going to jump off it. I then heard someone say don't do it, but there was no one there. I think that it was my mum telling me to wise up. I turned around and went home. I asked everyone at the party to leave my house. I then went to my doctor and I told him that I was abused. My doctor was going to refer me to counselling but nothing has ever come from this. I was on prozac for a while but I was taking too many of them. I have continued to have suicidal thoughts.

16. I cannot have a relationship with anyone. I have lived alone with my dog and he has recently passed away as he had heart problems. I wish that I had done better out of life. I am happy now and all the thoughts of suicide have gone. I have told some of my family that I was abused. I told my sister in England as she rings me every day. I also told my sister who lives in [REDACTED]. Both of my sisters were shocked when I told them. I only met my sister from [REDACTED] three years ago. I also I see my brothers occasionally. I only told one of my brothers that I was abused but he brushed it under the carpet. I should have told my mother that I was abused.

17. I am not a dirty person. The one thing that remains with me is the smell of the men that abused me. I have not contacted the police about the abuse I suffered in Bawnmore. I feel like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders now that I have spoken to the Inquiry about my past. After speaking out I walked away feeling ten feet tall.

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed HIA 112

Dated 27/9/15

I, **BM 1** totally refute the allegation of any sexual misconduct carried out by me at Bawnmore Children's Home. At all times during my employment there I fully adhered to child protection procedures, as laid down by the Belfast Welfare Authority.

BM 1

30/5/16

HIA REF: []

NAME: []

DATE: []

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

Witness Statement of

BM 4

I was appointed as Assistant Superintendent on two occasions to Bawnmore in 1966/67 and a period in 1968, exact dates unknown to me.

BM 4

will say as follows: - I am saddened and distressed to read of the allegation by **HIA 112** that, and I quote, 'a male member of staff who subjected me to physical abuse, I think his name was **BM 4**', unquote.

1. I have no recollection of the name or person **HIA 112**

I refute the statement that I physically abused the above named person

2. I have never put a child in a cold bath as punishment for wetting the bed

I have never addressed a child as "dirty, dirty boy" or "dirty wee taig",

3. the latter term is foreign to me.

I have never spit on the face of a child or grabbed them by the hair

As Asst. Superintendent my duties were supervisory with responsibilities for the older boys - the House mothers / Fathers would work with the younger

Statement of Truth

boys in nursing, bathing when necessary, dressing and preparation for school etc. I have had experience in collaborating with the work of Mrs Vincent Belfast City Hospital Enuresis program and

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. and therefore fully aware of

the stigma and trauma of bed wetting.

Signed

BM 4

Dated 19th May 2016.