

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 399

Witness Name:

HIA 399

## THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 399

I, HIA 399 will say as follows:

**Personal Details**

1. I was born on [REDACTED]
2. My parents split up two years before I went to live in Belfast. I was living in Limerick and we were in a Children's Homes in [REDACTED]. About two and a half years later my parents got back together again. They had been living in England for a while and then my father got a job in Belfast so we moved to Belfast in/around July 1958. They split up and reunited a couple of times over the next couple of years but eventually I was placed in care in 1960.
3. Although I was taken with my brother HIA 261 to Nazareth Lodge initially they said they could not keep my brother and I there and we would have a short term stay only. My brother HIA 261 was ten years old at the time and I am three years older than him. I think we remained there about three or four months. The nuns said we would have to go to Rubane House, Kircubbin. My three sisters remained in Nazareth House, Belfast at the time.
4. I think my father came and took us out to the pictures a couple of times during that time but we never went home, we just went from there to Rubane House.

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Rubane House, Kircubbin (16 March 1960 – 2 July 1962)

5. I have been shown a document stating that I was admitted to Rubane House on 16 March 1960. I had thought that I had stayed at Nazareth Lodge over the summer months and moved to Rubane House nearer to Autumn but it was a long time ago and I could be mistaken.
6. I recall being transported from Nazareth Lodge to Rubane House because it was dark and someone came up from Rubane House in a car and drove us there in/around 1960. I think it was **BR 17** who drove us to Rubane House.
7. We stayed in a section of the home that they used to call the Old School, it was a separate building from the main building about a couple of hundred yards away. We were there for about two or three months and then all of a sudden my brother and I were moved up to the main house. That is when the problems started. I was thirteen at the time.
8. **BR 17** started interfering with me in all sorts of different places, his office, his car, a workman's hut in the middle of a field on one occasion and also he would take me to his room at night. I recall there was linoleum covering on the floors in the room where I slept and he used to come in wearing his pyjamas and a pair of socks. He wouldn't make any noise on the floor and he would just pick me up and take me into his room. I didn't know what the hell was going on at first. I just had no idea what he was doing and I used to cry but it didn't make any difference to him. He would start playing with my private parts with his hand and putting my penis in his mouth as well. I used to cry a lot as I had no idea what was going on. I had no sexual experience of any kind so I really didn't even know what an erection was and I was wondering what he was doing playing with it all the time. This was a regular occurrence. It happened about once or twice a week for the duration of my stay at Rubane

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House. Sometimes he used to try and get me to do things to him as well. He would put my hand on his penis but I would never do anything with it.

9. **BR 17** would take me out of the grounds of Rubane on quite a few occasions. If he was going to Belfast for some reason in the car he would take me with him. He would rarely take anyone else with him on these trips but he did take **HIA 261** and I to Dublin on one occasion. I think it was in/around 1960 or 1961 when the Irish Army went to the Congo because I recall seeing them parading through Dublin. We visited my grandmother and she offered to put **BR 17** in the front room and she would put **HIA 261** and I upstairs but he said it would be alright and that I could sleep with him in the front room. I wondered what my grandmother would think of that proposal but she allowed me to stay with him and he interfered with me that night. I recall I had no pyjamas with me that night so I had to wear my grandfathers nightshirt and **BR 17** masturbated me that night. My uncle was living with my grandmother at the time and he was eleven years older than me. He was my father's youngest brother but he is now deceased.
10. **BR 17** did things for my family. For example, he gave my father forty pounds at one stage when he was out of work and needed money. That was the equivalent of a month's wages now. My father had written to him requesting money to repay some debts and for his fare home to Belfast. It was a lot of money at the time.
11. One strange thing that happened whilst **HIA 261** and I were at Rubane House was that **BR 17** arranged for us to go and live at his father's home which was in fact a pub in **██████████**. His brother and his brother's wife were also living there. I thought they were going to adopt us or that we were going to stay there for a while because we actually attended a new school in **██████████** at the time for a few weeks. His brother's wife was pregnant and had the baby when we were there and I think she just could not cope with all of us so we had to return to Rubane House again. **HIA 261** and I were never given any explanation as to what was happening during this brief move to **██████████**. **BR 17** told us when we had to return to Rubane House that we were to tell anyone who asked

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that we had been staying with our parents but they had broken up again and we had to return to the home.

12. **DL 416** slept in the bed opposite me and he told me that **BR 17** **BR 17** had also interfered with him on one occasion during the summer holidays. This happened in/around the time that **HIA 261** and I had been taken away to stay with the family of **BR 17**. I am not entirely sure where the summer holiday took place but Cushendall rings a bell.
13. **BR 17** used to buy me presents all the time. He bought me binoculars, a concertina, a radio, a drum kit and a bicycle. I could not keep the bike at Rubane House so I left it with my father and the other presents I kept in a spare room in the building so that anyone could play with them. I never said these items belonged to me and I never told anyone that **BR 17** had bought them for me. **BR 17** told me that if anyone asked I should say that my father had bought them for me. I obviously had mixed feelings towards **BR 17** as I knew that he was buying me gifts to keep me sweet but I hated what he was doing to me and did not feel that I could talk to anyone about it.
14. I saw my brother **HIA 261** often when I was at Rubane House. We were together all the time. He slept in the bed next to mine. There were about ten of us in this big room and there were another couple of brothers up at the far end of the room. The other boys were close in age to **HIA 261** and myself. The accommodation I suppose was comfortable and plain enough.
15. My recollection is that we used to get school meals brought in during the week and I think they had a cook there who used to cook our meals at the weekend. I think the food was alright and I wasn't starved. Food and clothing and accommodation were all basic but alright.
16. We only had a shower once a week. We couldn't even have a shower if we came back from playing football, we just had to strip down to our waists and have a wash. We used to have to line up in the yard somehow and the Brothers would come and check if you had washed yourself properly. They

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would check your hands and the back of your neck and make sure you had a wash that morning.

17. If we were outside playing and it rained we used to go into the school building. They had some old farm buildings that were done up and we had a TV room, snooker room and a games room there so that's where we used to go if it was raining but otherwise we just played out in the yard or played down in the football pitch.
18. I was quite well behaved when I was younger but there were a few boys who would run away. I saw one boy in particular who kept running away getting about ten belts of the cane in front of everyone in a big classroom. I cannot recall his name. **BR 17** was the head Brother and I saw him beating quite a few of the boys really hard with a big cane. I recall the sweat was pouring off him as he was doing this and he looked like he was enjoying it too much.
19. We got up at about seven o'clock. We went to mass first of all before we had our breakfast and straight after mass we all had jobs to do. Some boys had to clean the toilets, the showers, the bedrooms, the hall, the landing. We all had our own jobs to do. My particular task was to look after the priest's house with another boy. The priest had a small house down beside the old school. We used to go down and make his bed, sweep out the place, prepare the fire for lighting, clean it out so all he had to do was put a match to it. He had a little kitchen there as well and we used to clean up the kitchen and wash. We then went to school.
20. We had school each morning, then lunch and back to school again. If the weather was good in the afternoon we used to go to the bottom of the field and play football or just run around. There were some allotments there as well. I had a little allotment and I used to grow radishes.
21. My mother and my sister came once to visit me during my stay at Rubane House. I think I had been there for quite some time when they came to visit. Normally if anybody had visitors like their parents they would sit in the

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classroom if it was raining and speak to them but when my mother and sister came [REDACTED] BR 17 told me to take them up to the Brother's sitting room in the main building. That sitting room was rarely used and he allowed me to stay in there with my brother, my mother and my sister from about midday until six o'clock one Sunday. I think we even had food brought in to us, tea and biscuits or something like that but we went down to the kitchen for our main meal at about five o'clock. When we came back and I knocked at the door, [REDACTED] BR 15 [REDACTED] BR 15 and [REDACTED] BR 13 were sitting in there. I apologised for the intrusion and even though I explained that [REDACTED] BR 17 had given me permission to be there [REDACTED] BR 15 still told me I should not be in that room. He was a bit of an oddball. I recall my brother telling me once about [REDACTED] BR 15 bringing a boy who had been accused of stealing sweets down to the open air swimming pool and he threw him in the pool even though he could not swim. The boy was shouting at him "please, please I can't swim don't throw me in again I'll give you all my pocket money".

22. We used to pick potatoes for three weeks and the Brothers gave us about a shilling each day to buy sweets and other treats.
23. I don't think my parents ever made a contribution to my upkeep during my time in care.
24. I don't recall ever receiving a visit from anyone in Social Services.
25. I stayed in one class all the time. They had three teachers who just taught the boys but did not look after them in the home. [REDACTED] DL 6 was the [REDACTED] teacher. He had his own little hut away from the main classroom, we used to call it the [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] DL 6 was a civilian teacher and he was very quick tempered. He would throw anything at you in the classroom including pieces of wood. I think he was from [REDACTED]
26. The standard of education was poor. In my view my education stopped when I was only thirteen years old. I didn't learn anything after I went to Rubane House. In fact I went to [REDACTED] School before I went to Rubane House and

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the headmaster sent for my father once and told him that I was hard to teach as I was about two years ahead of everyone else. He suggested that he find me a better school but my father was a bit of a drunk and a womaniser and he just went off on the beer and did nothing about it. I have educated myself a lot since then.

### Life after care

27. HIA 261 and I left Rubane House on 2 July 1962 and went to live with our mother in Belfast. She had separated from my father again at that stage.
28. I met a guy in town who used to be a cook at Rubane House. He told me that BR 17 had left Rubane House. I had never returned there at any stage but when I heard that BR 17 had gone I went back to visit. I spent about two hours there and I never got a chance to talk to any of the boys at all because BR 15 and BR 13 kept me talking for the full two hours. I only saw the lads coming up from the football pitch and going down for their tea and did not get a chance to speak with them. I don't think the Brothers wanted me to have an opportunity to speak to the boys. I had my suspicions that they were aware of my reasons for not returning to Rubane House until BR 17 had gone and that was their reason for keeping me from catching up with the other residents.
29. I completed nine years in the British army. I joined in 1966 but never served in Northern Ireland. I was in the [REDACTED] even met two lads who had been in Rubane House at the same time as me and they were also in the [REDACTED] enjoyed my time in the army especially during the first few years when completing my training. I always volunteered for any classes that were going in the army be it English, Maths or anything that raised my interest. I used to read a lot as well.
30. I didn't drink very much at that time because I was always busy but after that when things got a bit slack and I wasn't that busy I started to drink a bit heavier

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than I should. I have always enjoyed a drink and I can control it now but I couldn't when I was younger.

31. I got married when I was in the army. I was [REDACTED] years old at the time. I think I was in the army six years whilst I was married but when I came out of the army my marriage only lasted another three years. When we had to live together full time we just couldn't do it. I am not saying anyone was at fault but I accept that I drank a lot when I came out of the army. I have two grown up children and I now have grandchildren and great grandchildren. My children were very young when I got divorced. I went to see them every other weekend and took them away camping and did all sorts of activities with them until their teenage years when they discovered boys and they no longer wanted to come and see their dad any more. They live in [REDACTED] and I keep in regular contact with them. I have had a partner now for twenty years and although we do not live together we get on well and we go over to [REDACTED] to visit the children and my ex wife as we all get on well together.
32. I did a heavy goods driving course on a resettlement from the army, the army paid for it so I obtained a heavy goods licence. I didn't start driving immediately as my brother worked in demolition and I worked with him for a while. I could get more money that way than driving a lorry so I spent most of my life in the building trade and on an odd occasion I did drive for about twelve months and I was a courier driver for about two years. I have worked mainly in the building trade, flagging, fencing, walling, labouring and bricklaying.
33. I have never spoken about this to anyone. My brother and I did not even talk about it to each other until about three or four years ago.

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed **HIA 399**

Dated 26-3-14

## THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

Re HIA [REDACTED] — HIA 399

Response by De La Salle Order

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> June 2014

I, Br Francis Manning, will say as follows;

1. HIA 399 born [REDACTED] was admitted to Rubane House on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1960 and was discharged to the care of his mother on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1962 – see **Exhibit 1**.
2. In respect of paragraph 8: Br. BR 17 is deceased. The Order have made admissions in respect of Br BR 17 in a separate statement. It is with much regret and sadness that the Order has learned in the last 10 years that Br BR 17 abused boys in his care at Rubane House.
3. In respect of paragraph 9 & 11: Br. BR 17 would have travelled by car to Belfast on business. Br BR 17 was born in Dundalk. It is accepted that the accounts of travelling to Dublin and Dundalk are accurate. It is possible that an adoption, fostering or boarding out arrangement was being considered.
4. In respect of paragraph 10: It is accepted that forty pounds was a lot of money. The Order is unable to comment further.
5. In respect of paragraph 12: The Order has not, to my knowledge, ever received any complaint from DL 416 DL 416 was in Rubane from 8.8.1959 to 8.7.1963 and is a brother of [REDACTED] who was a resident from 15.8.62 until 25.5.66, and whom surviving Brothers have met at social functions through the years.
6. In respect of paragraph 13: The Order notes the comment and the implication. It is unable to comment further. Surviving Brothers cannot recall a spare room.
7. In respect of paragraph 14: The Order notes the concession that there was no attempt to separate siblings.
8. In respect of paragraph 15: The Order notes that HIA 399 was satisfied with food and clothing. HIA 399 is correct when he says they got school meals from Monday to Friday and the cook made the meals at weekends.
9. In respect of paragraph 16: The account of a shower once a week and the description of washing after games is accurate. The Order notes the absence of allegations pertaining to shower times as recounted by other applicants.
10. In respect of paragraph 17: This is substantially correct.

11. In respect of paragraph 18: Corporal punishment was allowed but not physical abuse. It is noted that the punishment described occurred in the classroom and accordingly should have been administered in accordance with Education Regulations.
12. In respect of paragraph 19: This is believed to be substantially correct.
13. In respect of paragraph 20: The boys had allotments down at the field where they could grow things and have chicken huts and cats.
14. In respect of paragraph 21: Parents and visitors were brought to the parlour in the House for privacy and were given light refreshments. The Order notes HIA 399's account in this regard as it equates with surviving Brothers memories of what would have happened in later years but is at odds with the accounts of some other applicants. He may have gone into the Brothers' reading room by mistake. The boys were not allowed into the reading room.
15. In respect of paragraph 22: The boys picked potatoes for local farmers for two weeks each year. It is difficult to get a consensus on whether the boys were paid or the money received by the Brothers used to by treats or fund trips. It may have varied from year to year.
16. In respect of paragraph 23-24: It was intended that the parents of 'voluntary boys' would pay maintenance to the Home but it is accepted that on many occasions this did not happen. Given what HIA 399 implies about his parents financial position it is unlikely that his parents contributed to his maintenance. As a Voluntary boy HIA 399 would not have has a state Social Worker. It is possible, that Mr **DL 367**, of the Nazareth Lodge After-Care Committee may have met with HIA 399 but if it was known to the Brothers that he was always likely to return to his mother, as opposed to moving to employment there would have been no reason for Mr **DL 367** to interview HIA 399.
17. In respect of paragraph 25: This is possible. He must have been in the senior class for the two years. The teaching Brothers were Br **BR 3**, Br **BR 63** and Br **BR 17**. The Order notes the repetition of the allegation against Mr **DL 6**.
18. In respect of paragraph 26: The standard of education was the best that could be provided at the time. Many of the boys who were admitted to the Home had a neglected early education and they found it difficult to reach their full potential in a short period of time. Many of them lacked motivation to learn. It was difficult for the brighter children to achieve. If HIA had been in Rosario school before coming to the Home he should have done the 11 plus exam. The Ministry of Education, through their inspections, would have been well aware of the nature and standard of the education provision.
19. In respect of paragraph 28: Br **BR 17** left Rubane on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1962. The Order notes the complaint about not talking to the boys. There may have been an innocent explanation. It is surprising that he never got talking to the boys. The Brothers would have been aware that the 'old boys' would meet regularly in Belfast.

20. It is noted that there is no allegation against Br **BR 12** Br **BR 13** Br **BR 15** Br **BR 14**  
or Br **BR 3** Brothers about whom other applicants have complained.

Signed: *Br Francis Manning*  
Date: *12 June 2014*

HIA REF: [261]

NAME: **HIA 261**

DATE: [ 25 September 2014 ]

**THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995**

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**Witness Statement of the Health and Social Care Board**

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Marian Hall, Children's Services Project Manager, assisted in the drafting of this statement.

The Health and Social Care Board will say as follows: -

1. **HIA 261**, born [REDACTED] was admitted to Rubane House on 16 March 1960 and discharged on 2 July 1962 (care of his mother), see exhibit 1, De LaSalle Order statement (RUB 2033). The Board also notes that in paragraph 25 of the Applicant's statement, the Applicant recalls his mother taking him out of Rubane when he was almost twelve years old. The Board also notes from exhibit 1 of the Order's statement that no local authority is named as being responsible for his maintenance.
2. On the basis of the Applicant's statement and the aforementioned exhibit 1 filed by the Order, the Board believes that the Applicant was placed in Rubane House by way of a private arrangement and that he remained a privately placed child for the duration of his stay in Rubane.
3. The Board notes that in paragraph 5 of the Applicant's statement, he says that he was taken to Nazareth Lodge initially and the Nuns said he would have to move to Rubane House. This suggests that the Applicant was under the care and control of the religious orders rather than any Welfare Authority. Other cases

have reflected such arrangements being made between the religious orders of the two voluntary homes, namely Nazareth Lodge and Rubane House.

4. The Board notes that in paragraph 13 of the Applicant's statement the Applicant does not recall any visits from Social Services. This is in keeping with the Board's view that his was a private placement in Rubane.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed Jane Hall

Dated 25 September 2014