

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 195

Witness Name: HIA 195

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 195

I, HIA 195 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] in Belfast. I was the fifth child out of seven. I have three sisters, NHB 8 NHB 9 and NHB 11 and three brothers, DL 247 [REDACTED] and DL 59 however [REDACTED] died from cot death.
2. I was very young when my mother and father parted ways. My father had been abusing me and my sister. I was also abused by my paternal grandfather and uncles. My mother was bringing us up by herself but I remember her sleeping a lot and the neighbours would come in and look after us. We were put into Nazareth House several times during our childhood so my mother must have been having problems. [REDACTED]
3. [REDACTED] Social Worker, took us to Nazareth House where we stayed until our mother's funeral. Our granny took us out for the funeral, and tried to keep us living with her after that. My uncle started to abuse us while we were living there and my sister NHB 8 told the Social Worker to get us out of there so

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four of us were put back in Nazareth House. My granny kept ^{DL 247} because he was the oldest and my aunt took ^{NHB 11} to live with her because ^{NHB 11} was only a baby. ^{NHB 11} wanted to take all of us, but my father wouldn't agree to this.

Nazareth House, Belfast, [REDACTED]

4. When we first went in to Nazareth House, all four of us, ^{NHB 8} ^{NHB 9} ^{DL 59} and myself were put into the same unit. Over time however we were gradually relocated. ^{SR 31} sent ^{NHB 9} and ^{NHB 8} over to the Good Shepherd, Belfast, leaving just me and ^{DL 59} in Nazareth House. Subsequently one of my sisters was moved from Good Shepherd to Middletown, and ^{DL 59} was sent to Kircubbin. We were all eventually separated completely, and we didn't really have much contact with each other. The family just drifted apart. I was in Nazareth House from the age of five until the age of fourteen years.
5. Being in Nazareth House was a nightmare. There were three groups and I was in Our Lady's of which ^{SR 31} was in charge. I could never do anything right. I was sure to get a slap every day. ^{SR 31} had her favourites, but I was her punch bag. When I was there, I felt like I was the only one getting picked on, but now I realise that she was probably like that to other children as well.
6. When I first went in to Nazareth House we slept in large dormitories, however they were soon divided up into smaller bedrooms. I shared a bedroom with ^{DL 59}. We had to get up every day at 6.00am. When ^{SR 31} wasn't wearing her habit, she wore something like a dishcloth over her head, and she would come along at 6.00am, and shout at us to get up and say our prayers. My brother ^{DL 59} got battered by ^{SR 31} every morning because he wet the bed. Because I was older I had to strip his bed and take his bed sheets to the laundry. I was terrified of the two women who worked in there. I recall one was called [REDACTED] I would throw the sheets in the door and run away as fast as I could.

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7. We went to bed at 6.00pm. The food in Nazareth House was alright, but if we misbehaved we didn't get any. We never got pocket money or sweets. Sister **SR 31** used to make me wear hand me downs, when everybody else was getting new dresses. When I went to Middletown the staff were shocked at what I was wearing and had to take me out and buy me new clothes. I thought it was great.
8. I went to the school that was in Nazareth House, until the new school was built on the Ravenhill Road. **SR 31** was in charge of both schools. I was beaten by **SR 31** for being left-handed. She would hit me on the head in front of all of the classes and tell everyone I was a dunce. When she was hitting me on the head with her keys, I used to think it was no wonder I had no brain. She would also tell the other children not to play with me, so I was always left on my own unless one of the other girls from the home played with me. I had no friends in primary school. I would always try to go into the gym or the hall, to get out of **SR 31** way as she was always marching around the playground, and she would just hit me for nothing. I don't remember ever doing any homework in Nazareth House.
9. Every Friday, I was made to get down on my hands and knees in the three classrooms to scrub, wax and polish the floors. I had to take the wax off the floor with a knife. I was only aged six years at the time. I wasn't allowed to eat or go to bed until all three classrooms were scrubbed, waxed and polished. I had to do this by myself every week. **SR 31** would come in and hit me on the head with her keys while I was on my knees.
10. If I was bad, **SR 31** used to make me kneel outside her cell door at night and pray. I was there from one day until the next. I wasn't given any food and I wasn't allowed to go to bed. I wasn't even allowed to sleep. I had to kneel and pray the entire night. There was a window with a curtain which she would look through to check on me. If I had fallen asleep, she would bang the window and shout **HIA 195** get up". Then she would come out and batter me across the head with a large bunch of keys that she always carried around

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with her. I was always terrified because it was cold and dark. If I had to pray all night, I would fall asleep the next day in the classroom and then Sister **SR 31** would hit me on the head again in front of the whole class.

11. At one stage I developed psoriasis on my scalp. **SR 31** took me down to the bathroom where she emptied a tin of Jeyes fluid into a sink of water. She started cutting my hair off with scissors. When she couldn't cut any more, she took a razor and shaved my entire head until I was completely bald. She put rubber gloves on and got a scrubbing brush, the type that you would normally use to scrub the floor. She put my head in the sink and started to scrub my head with the brush. My head was bleeding, and I screamed with the pain. **SR 31** then started to hit me on the top of the head with the brush, telling me to shut up. The more I screamed, the more I got battered. When she stopped, she gave me a hat to wear and I was told not to take it off. Because I was screaming and crying, **SR 31** made me kneel outside her cell all night again. The following day, **SR 31** arranged to have my two sisters, **NHB 8** and **NHB 9** transferred to a home in Middletown.

12. We never celebrated any birthdays in Nazareth House. I only found out the date of my birthday in later years, after I asked **SJM 11** in Middletown to help me get my birth certificate. I believe that the nuns in Nazareth House recorded the wrong date of birth for me as well. I don't remember any special celebrations at Christmas time.

13. I started going to ballet classes on the Ormeau Road on Tuesday evenings. There were three of us who were allowed to go. I loved going to anything that would get me away from **SR 31**. I loved my ballet teacher **[REDACTED]**. She was very good to me, but I never told her about being beaten by Sister **SR 31**. She would take me away for the weekend or out to her house and would buy me my pumps and outfits. I think she took me out because she knew what was going on in the home.

14. A priest called Brendan Smyth started to visit Nazareth House when I was aged approximately six years of age. The first time I met him, **SR 31**

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brought me and **DL 59** into a room with him, and left us on our own with him. At the start he was nice to us. He played with us and gave us sweets and money, although **SR 31** took this off us. He asked about our mother and then he asked if we did any sports or dancing. I told him that I went to ballet classes on Tuesdays from 4.00pm until 6.00pm. Shortly after, Sister **SR 31** came to get us and took us back upstairs.

15. The following Tuesday, Brendan Smyth arrived whilst I was at ballet. He was given a room, and **DL 59** was brought down to him and left alone in the room. When I got back from ballet it was my turn. **SR 31** grabbed me by the arm and brought me to the room where Brendan Smyth was and left me alone with him. He made me walk up and down the room, but kept saying "don't look at me". He told me to pull my skirt up and asked what colour of underwear I was wearing. He told me to sit on his knee. I was terrified. I had already been abused by that stage and I knew what he was doing was wrong. Brendan Smyth told me "this is the finger of God that is touching you", whilst he rubbed up and down my leg, into my underwear, and then inserted his finger into my vagina and my back passage. When I turned to look at him, he said "don't look at me". He gave me sweets and money, and then Sister **SR 31** came to get me and took me upstairs and took the money off me. I told **SR 31** that I was bleeding and I told her what Brendan Smyth had done to me. She told me that I was an evil child and the devil's work. She said that I was a liar, and that Brendan Smyth was a man of God. She nearly killed me. She grabbed me by the hair and trailed me up three flights of stairs, punched me on the head and hit me over the head with her keys. She made me kneel outside her cell all night and pray for forgiveness. **SR 31** shifted my brother to Kircubbin a few days after I told her about the abuse. I believe she moved him because she was scared of the truth coming out about Brendan Smyth. I was left on my own in Nazareth House, with nobody to speak to or turn to.

16. Every Tuesday **SR 31** would bring me down by the hand to that room where Brendan Smyth would be waiting. She would go out and close the door. I would be petrified because I knew what I was going to have to go

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through for the next hour in that room. Brendan Smyth would leave and I would have to walk upstairs to my room crying. SR 31 knew exactly what was going on in that room, but she continued to let me suffer every Tuesday. That was the worst bit. It went on for at least eight years.

17. SR 31 wouldn't let me do the 11+ exam because she said I was a dunce. I was sent to St Monica's to do a test, to see what class I would be put into. I got top marks in the exam and was going to be put into the top class, but SR 31 told me that I wasn't going to that school because it was too good for me. I was sent to school, for children with special needs. I got battered there because I was a Catholic. Whilst my mother was Protestant, we were all brought up as Catholics, and I felt that SR 31 resented the fact that I was born from a mixed marriage. So I got battered at school and then when I went home I got battered again. I didn't learn anything at I was given tasks that I had been doing in primary school, and the headmaster would say "I don't know what you're doing in this school pet". At one stage I started to hide under the bed in the mornings after SR 31 went out to school and I managed to get out of school for about three months before the headmaster rang to find out where I was. I believe that if I had have been educated properly, I could have gone to college and become a nurse, something I have always dreamed of.

18. Between what was going on with SR 31 and Brendan Smyth and hating school, my life was in turmoil. I had no one to turn to. was my Social Worker when I was young. I went through a lot of Social Workers. They were always very good to us, but when they visited us in Nazareth House, we weren't allowed to tell them anything. SR 31 sat in the room while we were speaking to them. SR 31 was the only adult in our unit for a while and then a girl called was brought in to help her. She was aged about twenty one years. and I became good friends but I never told her what was going on.

19. I was fed up with the beating and the abuse and because I had no one to turn to, I started to run away. Sometimes I would run to house. Anytime I

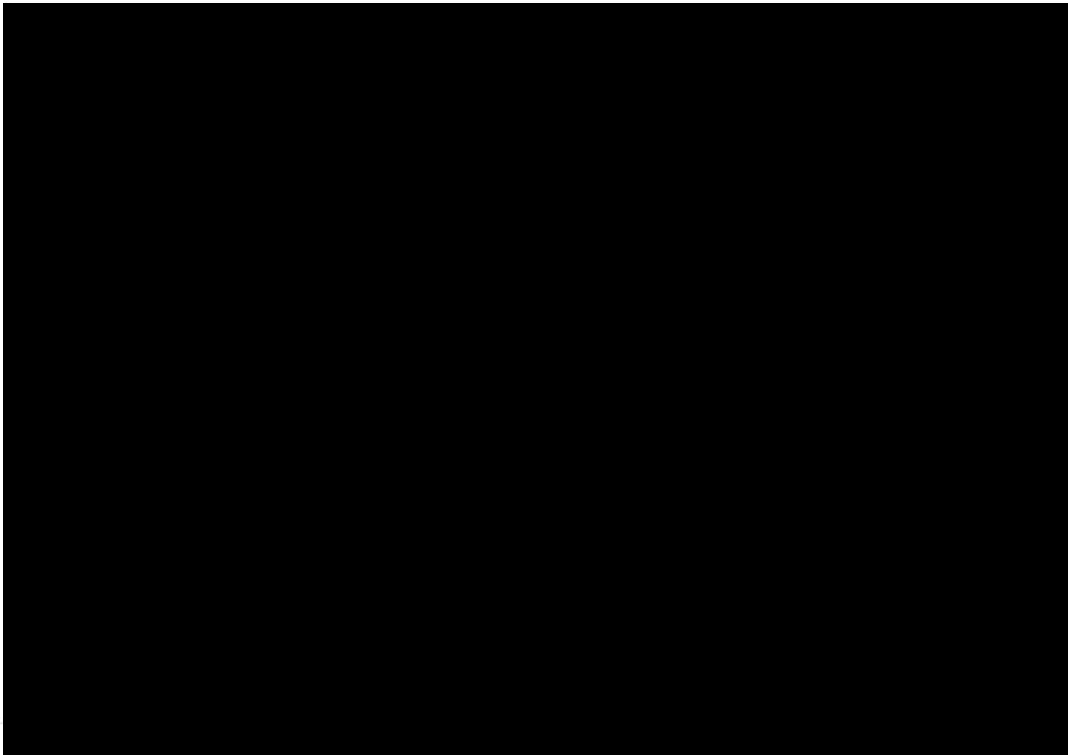
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was asked about why I ran away, I always just told lies. My sister **NHB 9** would run away from the Good Shepherd and come over and get me and the two of us would go on the run together. We were always caught and brought back.

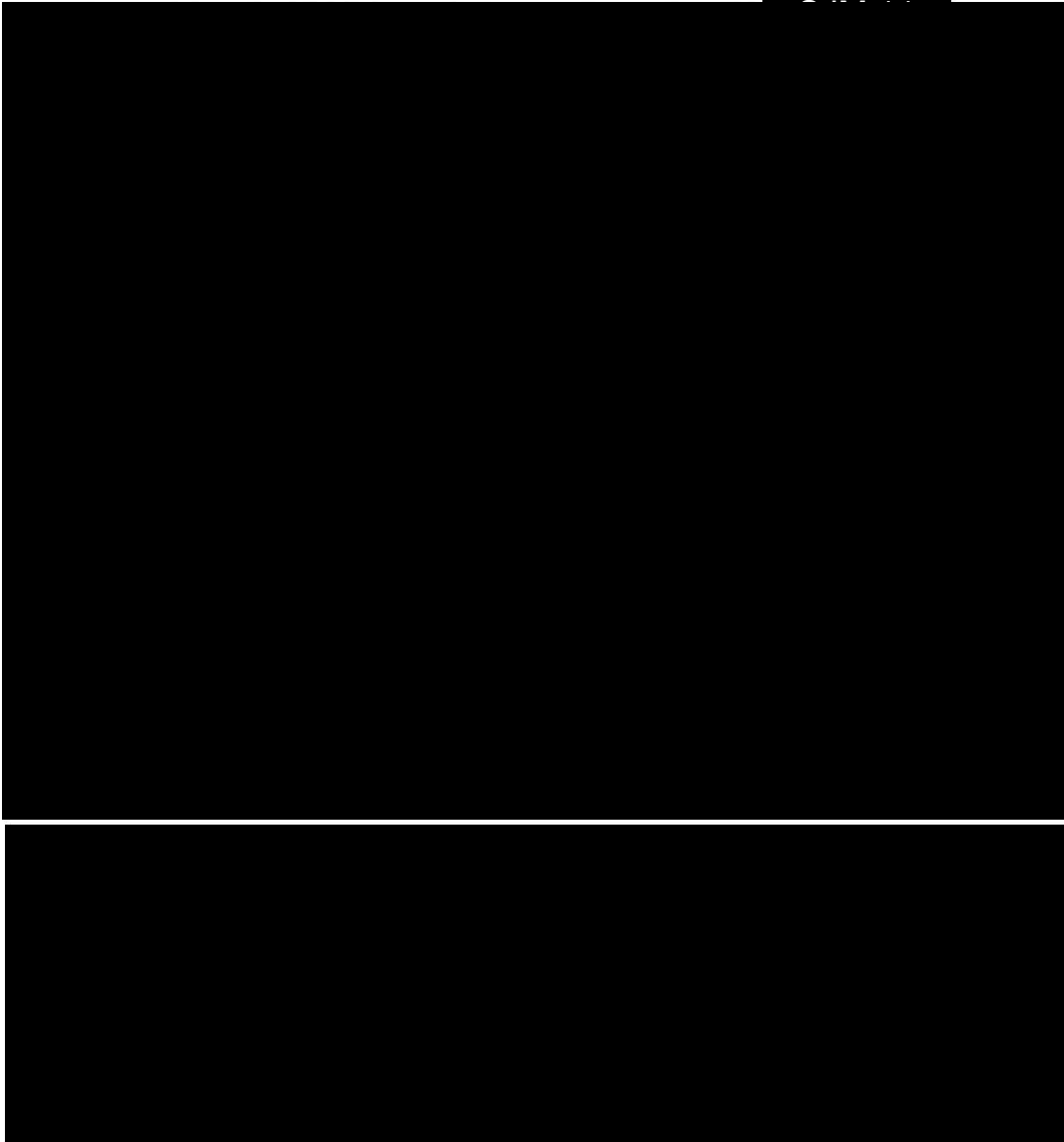
SR 31 would stand chatting nicely to the police, and as soon as they left, she would grab me and start beating me, and again I would be told to kneel and pray outside her cell all night.

20. On one occasion, when I was aged about fourteen or fifteen years, my sister **NHB 9** ran away from Middletown and came to see me in Nazareth House. We ran away together, and made it to **[REDACTED]**, where we stayed with a friend of **NHB 9** for a few days. This girl's mother however rang the police **[REDACTED]**

We were arrested and kept in **[REDACTED]** police station until a Social Worker arrived. They were going to take me back to Nazareth House but I begged them not to. I told them that if they took me back there, I would just keep running away. The Social Worker had to take me to Court in Belfast to get a Court Order stating that I was to go to Middletown.



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Life after care

25. Shortly after I left care I discovered I was pregnant. I went to a home in Dublin for unmarried mothers, and was then transferred to the Good Shepherd home in Newry. It reminded me a lot of Nazareth House. We had to pray morning, noon and night. There was mass every night. We didn't see our income support payments ever as the nuns took our book off us. After my son [REDACTED] was born, the nuns told me I had to give him up for adoption, but I refused. I stayed in the Good Shepherd until I was able to find accommodation of my own.

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26. I now have four sons. My sons have kept me alive. I have had several breakdowns. I have suffered from depression and developed a dependency on alcohol. Approximately ten years ago, I was an inpatient for six weeks to deal with my alcoholism. I don't pray anymore and I won't go to mass. I have been writing down all my experiences to help me deal with them. I've had counselling from Nexus, and I have recently been referred to see a psychologist. I have to keep myself occupied. I can't sit about the house. I live in [REDACTED] presently. I was determined to get out of Belfast, as far away from [REDACTED] SR 31 and Brendan Smyth as possible. I believe that Sister [REDACTED] SR 31 has passed away now.

27. My youngest brother [REDACTED] DL 59 went through an awful time in Kircubbin. Brendan Smyth followed him to Kircubbin in the same way he followed the rest of us to Middletown. At one stage the police kept raiding my home and they eventually arrested [REDACTED] DL 59 [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] He drinks and takes drugs. I visited him in England in 2008 and in the middle of the night he tried to touch me. I haven't spoken to him since. My sister [REDACTED] NHB 9 was also abused by Brendan Smyth. She went on to have seven children. [REDACTED] My sister [REDACTED] NHB 8 has experienced mental health difficulties since being in Middletown, and I don't maintain any contact with her.

28. One day I saw Brendan Smyth on the TV, and that's when I decided to tell the police. I rang a police officer in [REDACTED] Police Station. I told them that he molested me as a child, and my brother as well. He was sentenced to three years imprisonment for abusing me. I was shocked at how light his sentence was after he ruined my childhood.

29. I would love to have had the opportunity to see [REDACTED] SR 31 face to face to tell her what I think of her now. The Catholic Church stole my childhood. I was beaten by [REDACTED] SR 31 from the age of six until the age of fifteen, and I was abused by Brendan Smyth from the age of six until the age of fifteen.

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed **HIA 195**

Dated 17.6.2014

Name	Born	Admitted	Left	Taken	Remarks.
[REDACTED]					
DL 59	[REDACTED]	29. 3. 1969	4. 4. 1969		Belfast. Welfare
X HIA 195	[REDACTED]	"			Mother dead.
NHB 11	[REDACTED]	"			
NHB 9	[REDACTED]	"			
[REDACTED]					

[REDACTED]

I hereby Certify that I have Received my

children

NHB 8

NHB 9

HIA 195

DL 59

from under the care of the Sisters of Nazareth, Nazareth
House, Ballynaseigh; in a Perfect State of Health and
Cleanliness.

Signed, *Mrs* [REDACTED]

Witness

[REDACTED]

20th September 1964.

I hereby Certify that I have Received my

children

NHB 9

HIA 195

DL 59

from under the care of the Sisters of Nazareth, Nazareth
House, Ballynaseigh; in a Perfect State of Health and
Cleanliness.

Signed, *ms*

19th October 1964

I hereby Certify that I have Received my

children

HIA 195

NHB 8

NHB 9

from under the care of the Sisters of Nazareth, Nazareth
House, Ballynaseigh; in a Perfect State of Health and
Cleanliness.

Signed, *Mrs*

Witness

1969
BY *St. Anthony's Joseph*
DATE *30 Sept. 1969*
HAZARETH HOUSE,

*4772-75

HIA 195

Admitted

Application by Mr. Bunting
of the Belfast Welfare Authority.

These children have been in care
previous to this; see 4757-4760.

Their maternal grandmother is no
longer able to cope with the children
due to ill health.

R.

VIS.

10 March 1971

HIA 195

The above named girl was admitted to the Howard Home under Section 91 of the Children and Young Persons Act.

HIA 195 is a dull girl but functions to her capacity. She is lively, extroverted, attractive has good manual skills all of which compensate for HIA 195's academic deficiencies.

HIA 195 has a long history of Residential Care and is the third member of the family we have had. The family suffered severe home deprivation and the scars of this deprivation are evident to a more or lesser degree in all the family. HIA 195 shows some of the traits of other members of the family in her attention seeking behaviour, over dependence on an institution and indeed all the common signs of severe institutionalization. There are no overt signs of maladjustment. She has been seen by the Psychiatrist who reported that there were no signs of any psychiatric illness. The particular incident, that of taking the baby seems to be an isolated incident rather than a pattern of bizarre behaviour.

HIA 195 is one of the tragedies of a broken family and indeed to a degree broken Care. She is very insecure and needs love, care and security. The fact that HIA 195 is such an institutionalized child makes us loathe to recommend another form of institutional Care but in the circumstances there seems to be no alternative.

REPORT

Initial
of
Officer

with Mrs [REDACTED] as she is the only link Jane has with Jane relatives but we did worried about the area in which the [REDACTED] lives and the attitude of the people towards [REDACTED] NHB 9. Decided that we would try this arrangement for a while longer but goes [REDACTED]

She visited [REDACTED] HIA 195 on the 24th. She starts back to school at Oakleigh on Monday 3rd September and is looking forward to this.

While on holiday in Killybeggs [REDACTED] HIA 195 picked up some sort of head infection and this is still bothering her since she later [REDACTED] SR 119 is treating this with daily and [REDACTED] HIA 195 has taken the whole thing extremely well, especially since she has had to have her hair cut short on top.

[REDACTED] SR 119 is pleased with [REDACTED] HIA 195 although she is always very nervous about how she may change when she is twelve or thirteen. I find [REDACTED] HIA 195 an easy and co-operative child to work with and feel [REDACTED] SR 119's prognosis is unfounded. [REDACTED]

Date	REPORT	Initials of Officer
23.1.58	<p>Visited NHB 9 and HIA 195 in Nazareth House and had a joint interview with the three girls. The girls were in a dejected mood and were pleased that I had visited, mainly because they have no other outside contact.</p> <p>NHB 9 and HIA 195 are concerned about the way SR 119 had been treating them. They felt that she continually picked actions in front of the group and they also expressed fear of being violent towards them. Again it is difficult to know whether the children are exaggerating or if they have developed a persecution complex that SR 119 is against them. She has always looked to us about the girls' well-being although she implies that they have to be looked after the times as they tend to be the instigators in group arguments etc.</p> <p>HIA 195, whose daughter is in the same class as HIA 195, has shown an interest in HIA 195 and would like to have her out at the weekends for an afternoon and mainly for several days during the holidays. She lives in [redacted] which is very near Nazareth House.</p> <p>HIA 195 is not a very bright child and identified with SR 119. He knows of her attending St. Monica's SR 119 feels that HIA 195 is not material for a special school and is determined that he should be allowed to leave St. Monica's to see how he progresses.</p> <p>As always, was very interested and she seems to like school and has been spending a good deal of time in the nursery (Nursery) in connection with voluntary work organized by the school. At the moment there does not appear to be much of a chance of NHB 9 having any contact with anybody outside Nazareth.</p>	J. Harvey

xx 522262

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 PH/HC

17 December 1984

SR 47

Nazareth House
 352 Ormeau Road
 BELFAST BT7 2JH

Dear SR 47

RE: HIA 195 d.o.b. [REDACTED]

HIA 195 was admitted to Nazareth House on [REDACTED] along with other members of her family. HIA 195's siblings were NHB 8, DL 247, NHB 9, DL 59 and NHB 11. HIA 195 remained in Nazareth House until she was transferred to St Josephs Training School Middletown in 1976.

HIA 195 now has two children of her own, [REDACTED] (3½) and [REDACTED] (20 months). At the present time she has irregular contact by telephone with [REDACTED] who is working in London. Within the local community in Armagh, HIA 195 is somewhat isolated as she has no relatives here nor any shared past experience.

I have discussed with HIA 195 the compilation of a life-story book as she has very little information about herself and would like to be able to share her past with her own two children as they get older. Although I have obtained the [REDACTED] file from North and West Belfast, the information mainly pertains to NHB 9. There is very little about HIA 195 herself.

HIA 195 has no photographs of herself as a child or of the other members of her family. I would be grateful if you could help me by providing any information relating to HIA 195 and her family and also if there are any photographs in existence.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED] (Mrs)
 Social Worker