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HIA REF: 37

Witness Name: HIA 37

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 37

I, HIA 37 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] England.
2. I am the eldest of ten children but two died in childhood. My younger siblings are called NL 106 NHB 72 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] drowned when he was 26.
3. I was placed in Nazareth House Belfast in 1956 when I was seven and a half years old with my younger sister NHB 72 who was five. My brother NL 106 was placed in Nazareth Lodge. He was six and a half. I vividly remember the day I went in. My dad had taken us on the train from [REDACTED] and I remember him being very distressed and crying. I was confused and curious as to why he was so upset because he told us we were going on holidays. He had bought us new dresses with petticoats and I remember being annoyed I was dressed the same as my sister.
4. My mother had been out of the home a few months at that stage and I took on the role of mother figure to my younger siblings. I remember dropping the younger ones off to school and then coming home to help my father round the house. I rarely went to school myself. I used to cook things like scrambled eggs and pancakes. We had a good home life before we went into Nazareth

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House. I distinctly remember a woman from the Welfare and a priest being at our house that day. Looking back, I think they had a big influence on the decision to put us in Nazareth House. My father wasn't coping. The youngest [REDACTED] was only three months old and I was seven and a half.

Nazareth House, Belfast ([REDACTED])

5. When we went into Nazareth House, I remember the nun taking our particulars and my dad got my birthday wrong. He said it was 12th December and it was recorded as that until I had to get my birth certificate when I was sitting my O Levels. That first day NHB 72 and I went in, all the other children crowded around us in the playground. I felt utterly confused and overwhelmed. That night it really sank in. NHB 72 was crying a lot so the nuns pushed our two beds together. After a night or two though one of the nuns came along and smacked NHB 72 and said that was enough. We were put into the big dormitory then and they separated us. The nuns put NHB 72 in the farthest corner of the dormitory. I was in the first row and she was in the fourth row; we couldn't have been further apart. NHB 72 was hit by the nuns for crying for me and I used to sneak up to her and tell her stories to reassure her.
6. Nazareth House was a bleak, dark place. I suffered physical and mental abuse on a daily basis during the nine years I was kept there. This amounted to thousands of incidents. I remember I used to just lie in bed and think this is a nightmare. I thought that someday my daddy is going to come and take us out. I wrote letters to him, I always remembered our home address. I gave them to the nuns but obviously they were never sent. I later received letters from my father but they were always open when I got them. He used to say he was going to get a house in [REDACTED] and take us all out of the home. I believed this until I was about fourteen. We had to give our replies to the nuns to read before sending. This ensured we were not retelling any of the abuse we were suffering.
7. It was tough knowing you had family and wondering where they were, you were never told. I had been taken away from a stable family home which was

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all I had ever known. I had no contact with my mummy and daddy and that was tough. My brother **NL 106** was only five minutes down the road in Nazareth Lodge but I only saw him once or twice a year when all the children would go down for a supervised visit. This was organised for all the children whether they had brothers in the Lodge or not. It was like a day out. **NHB 72** and I got to spend time with **NL 106** during these visits but that was just a coincidence; the nuns made no effort to encourage contact between us. We only went on these day trips five or six times in the five years **NL 106** was in the Lodge. This had a severe psychological effect on me because we had been very close as siblings before going into care. **NL 106** was all alone and **NHB 72** and I were so close by.

8. My mother only ever visited us once. She took us down to the Lodge to visit **NL 106** as well. Apparently, **NL 106** was going to be fostered but my mother refused to let this happen.
9. There were three groups in Nazareth House. I was in St. Anne's group which **SR 116** was in charge of. **NHB 72** was in the same group. The daily routine in Nazareth House was you got up really early in the morning and knelt by your bed to say your prayers. It was probably about 5.30am or 6.30am. Then you got yourself dressed and went to Mass. Religion was a big part of life in the home. A few of the younger ones would faint at Mass because they were so tired and hungry. If you fell asleep or dozed off in Mass the nuns would physically assault you by flicking their fingers at the back of your head and ears or striking you with their knuckles. **SR 134** in particular did this.
10. No matter what age you were you had chores to do in the morning. One of my chores was to clean the bathroom. I was in charge of the upstairs bathroom and it had thirty sinks, four toilets and four baths. I had to make sure these were all clean. Then I went down for breakfast and went to school. I also had the task of taking a wooden box containing soiled sanitary towels down to the furnace and burning them all once a week on a Tuesday. I was only thirteen

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years old at the time. The nuns used to say it was a privilege but if it was why didn't they do it themselves? The other girls and I were treated like slaves.

11. Every Friday night, we had to scrub the long corridors after school. The floors were made of stone and we worked in pairs on our hands and knees with a scrubbing brush and soap. We used to chant "left, right, Peggy's right". We wore a pinafore over our clothes and our pinafore, shoes and socks would be saturated. Our hands would be red and raw. On a Saturday we had to do the same to the floors in the chapel. We had to shine them until you could see your face in the floor. I never once saw the nuns do any physical work, it was always the children.

12. We had to work in the laundry sometimes as well. It was hard, severe work for a child but I didn't really mind because it broke the monotony. The standard the nuns expected of us children was exceptional. A nun would always be standing over you watching you and if you didn't do your chores to their standards, you had to do them again. This very much depended on the mood of the nuns on a particular day. They used to go out collecting on a Saturday and if they had a bad day they would take it out on us when they got back. They used to tell us they would be spat on and verbally abused while out collecting for us.

13. The food in Nazareth House wasn't great but food wasn't top of my list. It didn't bother me to be hungry. I remember going to bed hungry. In the morning we would get porridge and sometimes it would have big lumps in it and you wouldn't want to eat it but you had to eat what was on your plate. A nun and a couple of the older girls did the cooking. Mealtimes were in silence and the supervising nun would single out me and other girls who were whispering. We would have been taken to the front of the dining room and slapped with a cane, ruler, spoon or strap.

14. On one occasion before we were due to go on holiday to Glenariff, we had mutton stew but the mutton was gone off. The smell was horrendous but the nuns made us eat it. All the girls were vomiting including me but the nuns kept

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saying if everybody didn't eat it, nobody would get to go on holidays. We were literally eating our own vomit; even children as young as five. The stew was eaten in the end but it seemed to go on for hours and hours. If you didn't eat your stew, somebody ate it for you because we all wanted to go on holidays. We went on holiday once a year either to Glenariff or Ballyhornan. Christmas in the home was nothing special. I remember we got a tin of Gibbs toothpaste, an apple and an orange.

15. We got bathed once or twice a week and the nuns made us all strip to the waist and it was embarrassing when you were starting to develop physically. We were all bathed in Jeyes fluid and it was so strong smelling. It stung your skin and itched like mad. When you got up out of the bath you would have a brown ring around your waist from the Jeyes fluid. It clearly said on the tin not to be used on skin. All the girls from the home were brunettes and I used to think it was from the Jeyes fluid because they washed our hair in it as well. The water was never changed or topped up so if you were last in it would be freezing cold. Even if you had your period you still had to get in the same bath and a girl would have to get in after you.

16. At bath time, our underwear would be examined by a nun. You had to line up and show the crotch of your underwear calling out your number. I was number 10 and my sister **NHB 72** was number 9. This was humiliating especially if it was around puberty.

17. When you took your period, you had to go upstairs and ask **SR 116** for a sanitary towel. You had to wait for a quiet, convenient time to ask and she would count how many you used. She would note when she last gave you one and refuse if it had been that morning even if you needed one. I was often sore, chaffed and raw but I was too afraid to ask for more sanitary towels. You never had any privacy in the home. Even when we changed clothes, it was all in one room and **SR 31** would stand on a bench watching us changing in and out of our uniforms. We were all aged between eleven and a half and fifteen years of age.

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18. A doctor came to the home once a week or once a fortnight. I think his name was [REDACTED]. He would examine all the new children who had come in. He was a privately contracted doctor which I don't understand because the NHS was well established then. The nuns were always complaining about money so why would they hire a private doctor? I think it was to keep things hidden. A lot of the new children would have head lice. We used to sit like monkeys doing each other's hair, combing through with the nit comb. I used to like that; it broke the monotony and gave us something to do. The nuns never exposed themselves to risk in any way. The doctor examined me a couple of times because I was prone to chest infections and I had a bad flu or bronchitis once.

19. I remember one nun was nice to me when I was sick. It was [REDACTED] SR 116 and it was just after she arrived in the home. She brought me gruel with sugar in it and would check on me. She used to put Vicks on me and I remember thinking she was trying to touch me up but she wasn't. She was a nice nun to begin with but she soon changed. She was only a novice when she first came in and she took her final vows in the home. She was clearly influenced by the other nuns and became cruel like them. It's true that one bad apple can ruin the barrel.

20. I remember once there was an epidemic of measles or something but I must have been a carrier because I never contracted it. I had to take the trays of food up to a lot of the girls. The nuns never took them up. I was exposed to infection rather than them. [REDACTED] NHB 72 had the measles once and I remember taking her food up. Another girl called [REDACTED] was put in an isolation room because she had jaundice and I had to bring her food and medicine up to her. The nuns kept themselves well guarded.

21. The nuns never showed any compassion or nurturing. When a child is sick, all they want is a hug but we never got any affection from the nuns. They even discouraged affection between families. I would have been quite affectionate to [REDACTED] NHB 72 but we learned quite early on not to show that in public especially if the nuns were around. If she had fallen I wouldn't have been able to give her a hug, I'd have to tell her not to make a fuss.

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22. There was a lack of love and nurturing in the home. I tried to take on the nurturing role for my sister. I was used to having a lot of responsibility at home from a young age, there were always babies around. I got a lot of punishments in Nazareth House for sticking up for **NHB 72** I was always questioning things in general but eventually I learned to keep my mouth shut. When it came to the nuns hitting **NHB 72** though, I would always tell them to leave her alone.
23. One punishment was I had to take my mattress down to the bottom floor and sleep there for the night. That was absolutely terrifying. I was still in primary school at this stage. I was forced to do this on a number of occasions. It was really dark and there was a man who looked after the furnace who was often drunk. The children spread lots of rumours about him and I remember lying on the mattress and hearing him come down. I was petrified thinking what he was going to do to me. He was probably harmless but I remember he came over to me and I could smell the drink on his breath. He didn't do anything to me but I was still terrified.
24. Other punishments in the home were being forced to kneel with our hands on our heads for hours. We would be told to kneel to be caned as this gave extra force to the strikes. The nuns would use both hands for extra strength and cane us until they were exhausted. Our hands would be red, raw, swollen and painful for days and we held them under our arms to try to reduce the pain. We would be punished for looking at our reflection when passing a glass window; we would be accused of vanity.
25. **SR 116** used bamboo canes on us. They were split from being used and were sellotaped together. She also used the side of a wooden ruler to hit me on the wrists, forearms and hands. **SR 134** would use a large metal spoon. I and other girls were made to clench our fist and she hit our knuckles with the spoon. **SR 134** used to grip my forearm and forcefully hit me with my own hands whilst saying "there, you can't say I hit you, you're hitting yourself".

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26. I suffered from lack of sleep as there was an alert machine for bed wetting placed beside my bed. I had to waken children in the middle of the night; take off the wet bottom sheet and put a top sheet over thick reddish brown rubber sheets. This would have happened with several children throughout the night. I still suffer from insomnia because of this. Girls often wet the bed and were humiliated in front of us. They were forced to rinse the sheets and nightwear in freezing cold water before bringing them to the laundry room. If we were on holidays in Glenariff during the summer, girls had to lay the sheets over the hedges and stand beside them until they were dry.

27. For several nights I had no sleep as I was told to stay in one of the classrooms in Nazareth House alone to darn another girl's socks. They were so smelly and hard from being worn that I couldn't darn them. I kept retching and gagging when trying to darn them. At 5am, I would hear the terrifying sound of the nuns' shuffling footsteps and the rattling of rosary beads as they went for their morning prayer. **SR 31** came and checked if I had darned the socks and then I was sent for Mass and daily chores. As punishment for not mending the socks, I was not allowed any socks all winter. I was given a pair of shoes that were two or three sizes too big with holes in the soles. I had to keep putting paper in them to try to make them fit and keep dry.

28. I remember once they got a dog and **NHB 72** was petrified of dogs. The nuns sussed this and said that she would have to feed the dog. **NHB 72** tried to go out and feed it but she was terrified and couldn't do it. I knew she was going to get slapped so I told the nuns to leave her alone; that she was afraid of dogs. Another time, **NHB 72** was late getting into her line before dinner and **SR 134** called her over. I shouted at her to leave her alone and **SR 134** said 'oh we don't hit the **HIA 37** - **SR 134** She gave me that nickname then and it stuck but I quite liked it.

29. It was almost as painful listening to the screams and cries of the other girls getting beaten as it was being hit yourself. On one occasion, a nun flogged

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three or four girls on the stage in the big recreation room. I can't remember who it was; it might have been **SR 134** or **SR 59** who was there before **SR 116**. I don't know what the girls had done but the nun made them take their pants down and bend over the stage. Then she went at them and whipped them with a cane over and over. They did this in front of everybody else and listening to the screams of the girls was terrible.

30. I remember the same nun did this over a long wooden bench in the bathroom.

She made the girls bend over, take down their pants and then caned them with a stick. On another occasion we were forced to watch a girl called **NHB 51** being forced to kneel when being caned when she was about thirteen. We counted each slap and I remember stopping at 100 because it was so distressing.

31. You were known by a number in the home. I was number 10 and my sister

NHB 72 was number 9. Sometimes you were called by your surname but never by your Christian name. You couldn't do right in the home. If you didn't look at the nuns when they spoke to you they would say 'look me in the eye when I'm speaking to you' but if you did look them in the eye they called you defiant and said the devil was in you. There was a wall with glass and barbed wire all around the home. I used to think it was to keep people out but now I think it was to keep us in.

32. **SR 31** was so sarcastic. She was always saying 'we never asked you to come in here'. I was always getting slapped for saying 'is it alright if I go then'. I said that naïvely but after being whacked half a dozen times I realised I wasn't saying the right thing. I used to get one hell of a hiding for answering back. She used to pick on certain families as well and say 'you know we don't get any money for you, we are keeping you for nothing'. She would say that about us **HIA 37** and it really stuck with me.

33. **SR 31** would tell me not to get on my high horse because she was keeping me for free. She always said it out publically in front of other children and it was so humiliating. I believe I was treated worse than others in the

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home who had family contact or who the nuns received financial contribution for. It made you angry towards your parents as well; never mind the fact they dumped you here for a holiday and left you there nine years.

34. I went to primary school onsite in Nazareth House and I enjoyed it. When I first went into the home, I was illiterate and I could only sign my name but I soon caught up. I read a lot and studied hard. To me, reading and learning was an escape. We were easily identified in school as the girls from the home as we had to wear shirts that were made by the older girls in Nazareth House. These were handmade from poor quality material that was discoloured so it looked yellow rather than white with misshapen collars. This was humiliating as we were subjected to nasty, hurtful comments and made to feel different from our peers.

35. We were only given clean socks twice a week so we used to hand wash our socks and skirts at night and leave them under the mattress to dry. We often went to school with wet socks. I loved drama as well. We used to put on plays for the Mother Superior and I got a lot of the main parts. It was a form of escapism for me to get on the stage.

36. I went to secondary school in St. Monica's and I remember my first day walking there I met a woman and she asked me where I was going. I told her it was my first day at school and I was going to work really hard and make something of myself. When I arrived at school, I realised the woman was my form teacher [REDACTED] I was mortified. [REDACTED] made me sub prefect then which was unusual because normally we voted for our prefect and sub prefect. I wasn't very good at disciplining the other students though because they all knew I was from the home so they didn't listen to me. I was the only one from the home in the class because I had moved up to the A stream which was the top class.

37. I did quite well from a young age and I was awarded a scholarship to a grammar school called [REDACTED] The nuns never told me I was going to a different school because I had done well. They just said one

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day I was going to get fitted for a uniform because I was changing schools. I didn't want to move schools as I had made friends in St. Monica's. I had been very happy there and was achieving well. I had been a Prefect and could have done my O Levels there.

38. It was a really long bus ride to [REDACTED] and when I got back to Nazareth House in the evening I was really hungry as I hadn't eaten since 1pm. I was told it was too late for food as the top kitchen was closed. Another girl from the home got a scholarship as well. Her name was [REDACTED] and she was older than me and a lot more streetwise. She wanted to leave school and the home and get a job. One day she said we were not going back to [REDACTED] and we mitched school for a few days. I was very much influenced by [REDACTED] and I didn't want to go to [REDACTED] without her; I hated the thought of travelling from Belfast to [REDACTED] on my own. When we went back to the home we were told we had to go to the store room. You knew you were in trouble when you were told to go there.

39. [REDACTED] **SR 31** [REDACTED] was waiting in the store room for us. She couldn't stand me anyway and she always made life difficult for me. [REDACTED] went in to the store room first and when she came out she just winked at me and I felt relieved. [REDACTED] **SR 31** [REDACTED] was very fond of [REDACTED] because she was in her group. As soon as I went in, [REDACTED] **SR 31** [REDACTED] told me to put out my hand. I was fourteen at this stage and I said no because I knew [REDACTED] hadn't been chastised.

40. [REDACTED] **SR 31** [REDACTED] went hell for leather then with a bamboo cane. I can still remember the sound of it swishing through the air. She went absolutely mental; she had lost the plot. She was hitting me everywhere, on the back of my head, my arms, everywhere. I had welts all over. I ran for the door but she had locked it. I got a shock then; I realised she had calculated what she was going to do to me. She had locked that door so nobody could get in and I couldn't get out.

41. I really thought she was going to kill me so I knocked her over and she fell over a sewing machine. I saw a window pole then which I grabbed. While she

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was on the ground, I put my foot on her chest and I had the pole in my hand. I said to her "give me the keys because you know you're going to kill me". She couldn't get up, she was trapped by the sewing machine and I think she was in shock as well. She gave me the key and I locked her in and threw the key out of the window. I don't know how she ended up getting out.

42. I borrowed money from my friend [REDACTED] to get the bus to [REDACTED]. She was a resident who worked in the parlour and her mother lived in the Good Shepherd across the road. [REDACTED] always had money. I had an aunt and uncle there who I traced when I was fourteen. We used to go out and spend the odd weekend with them and we loved it. It was nice to feel like you belonged somewhere. My aunt thought I was just up for a visit but when I took my cardigan off she saw all the dried blood and seeping welts on my skin and she went ballistic.

43. My uncle [REDACTED] was my dad's brother and he was working in the [REDACTED] but my aunt sent for him and said "look what they've done to this child". [REDACTED] was a quiet, unassuming man who didn't like any fuss but she made him bring me to the police station in [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was very upset. They had a big family of their own and they didn't have much money so they couldn't take us out permanently. My dad never forgave his family, especially his parents for not taking us out of the home.

44. When I went to the police station, I was put in a room on my own. I remember one policeman came in and said I could have caused the injuries myself. I asked him how I could get round to my back and he said I could have done it against a door. I was trying to convince him that it really happened. I remember another policeman with sandy hair coming in and asking me what had happened. When I told him it was a nun, he said he couldn't believe that and there were tears in his eyes.

45. I was examined by a doctor called [REDACTED] **NHB 73** and he told me he had three daughters at [REDACTED] and they were paying fees. He said it was a very good school and I should make the most of my opportunity there. I felt very let

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down by the police and the doctor for making me go back to Nazareth House after this incident. [SR 31] and the Mother Superior came and picked me up in a taxi from [REDACTED] I later found out from [REDACTED] that [NHB 73] had told him that he had enough on his plate already with his own family. I felt very hurt and betrayed by this. [REDACTED] later told me that there was a meeting about [SR 31] and she was disciplined for her behaviour. Apparently she was not allowed to be promoted but I'm not sure if that's true.

46. I found out where [SR 31] was living in 1999 and I wrote to her challenging her about the beating she gave me. Her replies were so patronising; she just said what a great girl I was and that she only 'corrected' me because she thought grammar school was a great opportunity for me. She said the reason she didn't punish [REDACTED] was because she was still under the care of her parents and that's why we got different treatment. The nuns had to be careful with children like [REDACTED] because their parents still came in to visit them. To this day, I hate [SR 31] for making me feel this way. I think she is the most evil person I have ever come across in my life.

47. I don't recall anybody from Welfare ever coming to inspect the home. My only recollection is of benefactors coming to visit. That was a humiliating experience. We would all be sitting watching television like clones and the nuns made sure we were all clean and dressed nicely. The nun would then tell us all to stand up and we would have to stand for these people and their children. We were told to stand and greet them by name and smile at them. We had to remain standing until they left. They just looked at us like we were in a cattle mart. I resented having to stand for those children just because their parents gave money to the home.

48. I remember the summer after the beating, [SR 31] said to me I had nine weeks to kill and I could paint all the beds. This was a punishment for not going to school. [REDACTED] was still in the home and she received no punishment. We had a maintenance man named [NHB 102] who did all the odd jobs. He was a great character. I helped him paint all that summer. I had to paint all the big pipes and radiators and nearly one hundred beds but I loved

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it, it was great. NHB 102 was a great singer and I loved his company. He used to tell me to be careful SR 31 didn't see I was enjoying the painting because it was supposed to be a punishment. I had to look sullen whenever she came around or she would have stopped me doing it if she thought I liked it.

49. I didn't go back to [REDACTED] after the incident with SR 31. When I was fifteen, I did my O-Levels in St. Monica's. I did six O-Levels and got an 'A' in Religious Education, a 'B' in English Literature, a 'B' in history and a 'C' in Biology. My two best subjects were English Language and Art but I failed both of them. After that, I was sent to work in different parts of Nazareth House. I worked in the old people's home and the nursery. I loved the nursery but you couldn't show you liked it or they would have moved you. After I had left school, St. Monica's asked me to go down and take some classes when a teacher was out sick. The nuns weren't happy about this. I was offered the chance to go to England to do my A-Levels and possibly train to be a teacher but I turned it down because I had a younger sister in the home and by this time NL 106 was out of the Lodge and living in [REDACTED]

50. I left Nazareth House on 24th October 1965 when I was almost sixteen. Out of the blue, a girl came up to me and said I was leaving and she had to take me on the bus. It was really dark and she had a little case for me. I had a job at the time in the [REDACTED]. She brought me to this house on the Antrim Road and there were two nuns running it. There were all old women staying there. There was one 25 year old but the next youngest was 56. To me they seemed ancient so I said I wasn't going to live with old women. I went and got digs with a woman named [REDACTED] who was my sponsor at confirmation. She was brought up in the home so she took a few of us in as lodgers.

Life after care

51. My brother NL 106 had gotten a job in a [REDACTED] and a family called the [REDACTED] took him under their wing. They could see he was a hard worker

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and he had potential. The mother [REDACTED] was very fond of him and she helped us to get a house because we were under 18 at the time. We bought the house and she acted as guarantor for us because we were so young. The [REDACTED] became like foster parents to us and I named my son [REDACTED] after Mr [REDACTED]. My children still call [REDACTED] 'Nanny'.

52. NHB 72 was about fourteen at this stage and I used to go down to Nazareth House on a Friday and take her out for the weekend which she loved. Then SR 31 started saying I could only collect her on a Saturday, then on a Sunday and then once a fortnight. NHB 72 gave me a really hard time about that, she didn't blame the nuns; she blamed me.

53. When NL 106 and I were living in Lisburn we got a letter from our mother out of the blue. She said we were of working age now and maybe we should go over to her in England. NL 106 and I had a huge row about it. I was still writing to my dad but NL 106 had no sympathy for him. He put our mother on a pedestal. We talked about it and made a deal that if I burned all the letters from my father we would burn the letter from our mum. I didn't write to my dad after that and we didn't write back to our mum.

54. When NHB 72 was old enough to get out, I got her employment and went to collect her from the home. SR 31 was very hostile and tried to intimidate NHB 72 to stay. She told us we owed them as they never received any money for us and that NHB 72 should stay and work at the home to pay them back. NHB 72 was still very influenced and afraid of the nuns and I had to be really brave and assertive telling NHB 72 not to look at SR 31 to look at me and asking her did she want to come with me or stay at the home.

55. I told SR 31 that I would pay them back by sending money every week as I was still naïve enough to believe I did owe them money but there was no way I was leaving NHB 72 with them. She sent for the Mother Superior then, SR 176 and they drew up a disclaimer for me to sign saying I was taking full responsibility for NHB 72. It was very formal and once I had read it SR 31 said "what do you think of that Miss" but I just told her to give

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me a pen and I signed it. NHB 72 came and lived with NL 106 and me then in [REDACTED]

56. Later on when NL 106 NHB 72 and I were all married, we traced our brothers who had been fostered in [REDACTED] and met up with them. NHB 72 was always afraid to go back up to Nazareth House by herself. Even when she was getting married in 1972 and she needed her baptismal lines, eight of us had to go up with her - we brought several well built male friends. She kept saying they might keep her in like the last time and I would have to be there in case I had to sign another form. This was when she was in her 20's but she was just terrified. It may sound humorous but it was a genuine fear at the time.

57. The nuns didn't prepare you for life on the outside at all. We knew nothing about paying bills or getting on buses or buying food. I used to go to the local shop and ask for five pounds of cheese because I didn't know any better.

58. I got married and had three children, two girls and a boy - [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. My husband and I are no longer together but I have a great relationship with all my children. I went back to train as a nurse when the two girls were young and I had a thirty-two year career in nursing. My husband was a bricklayer and money was always tight in winter so I wanted to do something to contribute and to give us security as a family. I loved nursing. A lot of the girls from the home went into the caring profession or cleaning.

59. I eventually went and met my mother in 2000 with my brother [REDACTED] but I didn't like her at all. She was hard work. She wasn't a bad person but I had only met her five minutes when she asked me for money. She was full of self-pity. I got in touch with my dad as well and brought him over from England to [REDACTED]. He had a lot of family in [REDACTED] but he broke all ties with them when he left for England. He was very bitter towards his family for not having taken us in.

60. I bonded with my dad but I did challenge him about how he left us. He used to tell funny stories about his life and I said to him while he was having a good time, his children were suffering terribly. I brought him to tears but I was glad

PRIVATE

because for years I cried myself to sleep every night and I wanted him to understand that. He apologised and I eventually got over the initial resentment and ended up forming a very close relationship with him. I loved him and we had some great times together. My father died nine years ago and my mother died two months later.

61. I write poems and stories about my time in the home to help me cope. I inject a bit of humour into it as that's how I deal with it. An example of one of my poems is:

"Holy Mary, mother of God,
 Sure they didn't know how to spare the rod.
 You couldn't do right for doing wrong,
 Shouldn't be laughing or singing a song.
 Holy Mary, mother of God,
 Sometimes I wish I had been born a Prod.
 For messengers couldn't be half as bad,
 To ill treat little children and make them so sad".

62. I reported the abuse I suffered to police but they told me **SR 31**
SR 31 died in Derry in January 2012. They had questioned her but the criminal case dies with her now.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed **HIA 37** _____

Dated 19/6/14

T.H.J.

Nazarth House,
Westwood Road,

Bexhill-on-Sea

TN40 2ND.

21st July '99.

Dear **HIA 37**

I deeply regret the anxiety you have sustained over the years. My memory of you is that of a highly intelligent child.

The opportunity of having a grammar school education was, I felt, ideal for you. Hence my disappointment that you should not avail of it. In my foolishness I thought that correction might persuade you to change your mind.

The other girl was not directly in my care - her parents could deal with her

My main concern, **HIA 37** was
that you should map out a
worthwhile career for yourself and
do well in life. You had all the
potential to do just that.

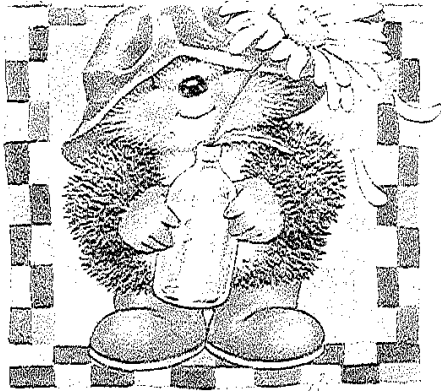
Now I think of you **HIA 37**
I remember our search for
accommodation for you. Eventually
it was suggested that you should
share with twenty-five year olds.

To my amusement you weren't
having any of it - you weren't
moving in with old women!

It is good to hear from you **HIA 37**
Once again my sincere sorrow for any
pain I have caused,

Yours sincerely,

SR 31



Thank You

HIA 37 for your little note. I can
travelling believe that your daughter is
preparing for her final reading in Oct.
That was my dream for you ^{**HIA 37**} and with
the minimum of effort you would have
read your way through Quivers. Now it
is your daughter's turn and I know
she (name) will emerge with flying colours.
It's always so good to know that families of
past pupils are doing well.
Which course is taking? There are

so many new developments in Education -
whether for better or otherwise only time
will tell.

Regarding addresses **HIA 37** - it would
be more effective to put an advert
in a Belfast ^{news} paper. The addresses I
have are from Belfast and the
surrounding areas apart from those
abroad and those would not be
likely to travel.

Wishing you **HIA 37** and your
co-workers every success in this venture
at beautiful Glencruff. May you
have a very joyful and peaceful
week-end.

Love and God bless,

Yours sincerely,

SR 31



I hereby Certify that I have Received my

sister,

NHB 72

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

Witness

Signed,

HIA 37

8th July 1866.

Mothers **NL 229** Mother.

With Birth and Baptismal Certificates
 Post Office Savings Books &c.
 Medical Records: Photographs
 Clean Bill of Health
 Darning Records.

HIA41

NL 30

HIA 141

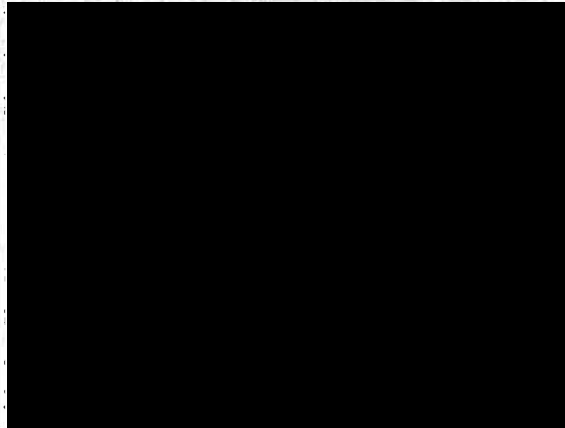
NL 68

LARNE AND GARRICKFERGUS DISTRICT

SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

REPORT RE:[REDACTED] FAMILY,
[REDACTED][REDACTED] CHILDREN ADMITTED TO NAZARETH LODGE ON [REDACTED] - PLACE OF SAFETY ORDERS.COURT. [REDACTED] - F.P.O. OBTAINED.

Mother:
 Son:
 Daughter:
 Son:
 Daughter:
 Daughter:
 Son:
 Daughter:
 Son:
 Daughter:



This report is set out under the following headings:-

- (1) Documenting all incidents at Nazareth Lodge.
- (2) Totality of care for [REDACTED] children at home and in care.
- (3) Soup Kitchen.
- (4) Mother's attitude.

REPORT RE: INCIDENTS INVOLVING THE [REDACTED] CHILDREN.

13th April, 1977. 1st Incident. HIA 141 (1 year old).

It was alleged that HIA 141, left in the care of NL 228, S.R.N., had pulled a pot of tea over her head and face. The member of staff had taken immediate action holding the child's head and face under the cold tap. She was then rushed to the Outpatients' Department of the City Hospital where Dr. Dowey gave his assurance that there would be no scarring. She was not detained in hospital but attended daily for treatment. Her face cleared up remarkably quickly and she does not appear to have suffered from this experience.

(See reports on this incident dated 26th April 1977, and 23rd May 1977).

13th May, 1977. 2nd Incident. NL 109 ([REDACTED]).

NL 109 fell from the Fire Escape and as a consequence suffered injuries to his right arm. He was described to be in an adventurous and high spirited mood on the evening of the 13th May. When he and some pals were swinging and leaning backward and forward on the bars NL 109 fell from approximately 10 feet up. He was rushed immediately to hospital where the doctor diagnosed a Displaced Upper Humeral Epiphysis and the arm was put in plaster. Next day the Senior Orthopaedic Surgeon was consulted and NL 109 was given an anaesthetic in an attempt to reduce the Displaced Head. He attended hospital regularly for

x-rays and dressings. His arm has fully recovered.

(See letter from Nazareth Lodge dated 23rd May, 1977).

21st May, 1977. 3rd Incident. NL 30 ().

SR 29 telephoned to say that NL 30 had fallen off a swing and suffered a laceration under her chin. She was taken immediately to the City Hospital where she had eight stitches. She suffered no ill effects and no scarring.

(See letter from Nazareth Lodge dated 30th June, 1977).

19th September, 1977. 4th Incident. NL 30 ().

On the particular evening of this incident NL 30 and two younger children were permitted to go out to play after tea which was at 6 p.m., and were to return to the play-room at 6.30 p.m. The field in which they were playing is very close to the kitchen where the staff were clearing up the dishes.

A man approached the children throwing them an apple; they left the play area to retrieve the apple. This person took the little girls by the hand and the boy wandered off. He apparently had two hypodermic syringes with him and showed them to the children but did not try to inject them in any way. Before NL 30 could get away from him he apparently put his hand between her legs. NL 30 was very distressed and was sick but eventually calmed down, and when the police were called she was able to give them a very good description of this person whom the staff recognised to be the man who had been given a meal earlier that day, and had also been given a meal three weeks earlier.

Dr. Krossavi was not called until next day, but on examination found nothing wrong with the child. She seems to have suffered no ill effects.

(See report re incident dated 28th September, 1977).

TOTALITY OF CARE:

I feel that the overall care at 'Nazareth' is good although I feel that when incidents happen they are sometimes slow to notify our department and a little vague about the procedure to take, although they have been advised about this on several occasions.

The building is extremely extensive, which must make the actual running of the home very difficult.

The grounds are very widespread and open and it would therefore be virtually impossible to have control over persons passing through the grounds.

The tennis courts which are beside the play area are let to a local R.C. Church and its members, thus affording all sorts of people access to the grounds.

THE SOUP KITCHEN:

I was not aware that a Soup Kitchen existed until the incident involving NL 30

On enquiry I was informed that a hatch leading from the kitchen to a hut outside the building is used to serve free meals to the poor. While I appreciate that this is a service which the Sisters feel they should offer to the poor in the community I think that it increases the need for strict supervision of the children while they are playing outside the building. The last incident in which Sharon was interfered with has emphasised the importance of this to the Sisters and has reminded them how quickly an incident like this can occur.

(7)

**NORTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD
LARNE / CARRICKFERGUS DISTRICT - SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

To: District Social Services Officer, LARNE. **From: NL 234 S.S.W., CARRICKFERGUS.**
For the attention of Mr. T. McCaffrey, P.S.W. Date: 19th October, 1977.

Re: [REDACTED] Family,
[REDACTED]

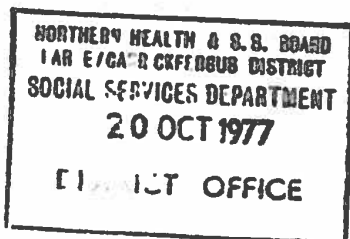
I enclose a report on the above family as requested. I have also attached copies of all the previous letters and reports involving these children in case any of these are missing from your files.

I hope that the report covers all the necessary points. We are all very concerned about these children, especially in view of the incidents which have occurred in Nazareth Lodge. The Sisters have done a great deal to help these children but there are difficulties in running a home of this size and some of the younger staff are untrained and need a lot of supervision.

Should there be any further points you wish us to cover please let me know.

Thank you for your help with this family.

LF/MS.



NL 234

Senior Social Worker

NORTHERN IRELAND AND SOCIAL SERVICES BOARDCASE DISCUSSION RECORD..

To be completed by P.S.W. responsible for the child's care

HIA 141 12.3.1976

NAME OF CHILD NL 109 [REDACTED] HIA 93 NL 33 NL 68 NL 30 NL 97

DATE OF BIRTH [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

NAME OF HOME/~~WORKER/RESIDENT~~ Nazareth Lodge,

ADDRESS 516 Ravenhill Road, Belfast.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS NAME NL 229

ADDRESS [REDACTED]

SCHOOL/EMPLOYMENT

SECTION OF C & Y P ACT Pit Person Order

DATE OF LAST REVIEW 13.6.1977

RECOMMENDATIONS OF LAST REVIEW 1. No change until next review.

2. Social Worker NL 232 to counsel Mother regarding the condition relevant to the restoration of the children i.e. Acceptance of a Mother's Aid, and the restoration of one or more of the older children first. Any restoration of the younger children shall depend on NL 229 demonstration of her good care of the older children.
3. NL 232 Social Worker to pursue the possibility of [REDACTED] being transferred to the Adolescent Unit at the Good Shepherd Convent.
4. The House Parent at Nazareth responsible for NL 30 - to send a Report on NL 30's accident to District Social Services Officer - 95c Main Street, Larne.

ACTION TAKEN

1. Children continue to visit Mother for short periods at weekends but no restoration envisaged at present.
2. Mother continues to be difficult and often causes considerable trouble in the Ur
She may be moving house but information on this topic is confusing.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION (Names of persons responsible for work)

1. Situation to remain as it is.
2. Mother to be encouraged to think of providing a meal on occasions.
3. Some thought to be given to future plans for NL 109 particularly with regard employment and accommodation.

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW

PROGRESS REPORT ON CHILD IN CARE

Parental Rights Order
Yes/No: Date: _____

EASTERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD

PROGRESS REPORT ON CHILD IN CARE

Child's Name: **HIA 141** d.o.b. **[REDACTED]**

Home Address: **[REDACTED]** Section admitted/committed to care: **99**

Date: **[REDACTED]**

Parental Rights Order
 No: **[REDACTED]** Date: **[REDACTED]**

Previous placements in care:

Order	Placement	date	Reason for leaving				date
			Planned move	Break-down	Dis-charge	Other	
1 95	Nazareth Lodge	[REDACTED]				Court	[REDACTED]
2 99	Nazareth Lodge	[REDACTED]					
3							
4							
5							

Present Placement: *Children's Home/Foster Home/Home on Trial. (*Delete as appropriate)

Address:
 (Include Name of Nazareth Lodge,
 Foster Parents) RAVENHILL ROAD, BOWLETT.

Date Placed: **[REDACTED]**

Dates of visits since last report. Identify to whom the visit was made, e.g. child, parents, and underline those on which the child was seen.

<u>6.3.80</u>	<u>7.3.80</u>	<u>14.3.80</u>	SOCIAL WORKER ON HOLIDAY				29.4.80	<u>8.5.80</u>
<u>19.5.80</u>	<u>27.5.80</u>	<u>10.6.80</u>	<u>11.6.80</u>	<u>14.6.80</u>	<u>20.6.80</u>	<u>3.7.80</u>	<u>18.7.80</u>	<u>21.7.80</u>
<u>29.7.80</u>	<u>30.7.80</u>	<u>1.8.80</u>	<u>8.8.80</u>	<u>11.8.80</u>	<u>13.8.80</u>	<u>15.8.80</u>	<u>26.8.80</u>	<u>27.8.80</u>
<u>29.8.80</u>								

Name: [REDACTED] SR 29

Date: 7th November 2014

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

Witness Statement of [REDACTED] SR 29

I, [REDACTED] SR 29 will say as follows: -

1. I worked in Nazareth Lodge from [REDACTED] until [REDACTED] and was formerly known as [REDACTED]
2. HIA 141 and her sister NL 231, known as NL 231 were in my unit. NL 231 looked after HIA 141 like a little mother. Their mother visited me on a regular basis. She spent time with her children in each unit. HIA 141's Social Worker also visited regularly.
3. There were no restrictions on siblings visiting from other units. HIA 141's brothers and sisters were very fond of her and protective over her.
4. With regard to paragraph 4, presents given to the children by Santa were never taken away.
5. With regard to paragraph 5, I do not recall leaving HIA 141 outside the door without support or help. Rather, the children would have been brought to school by a member of staff.
6. With regard to paragraph 6, I have no recollection of HIA 141 being force-fed. Some children would have took longer to finish their meal and would be left at the table until they had done so. I also would not have cut the hair of any child; cutting hair was not one of my skills so a member of staff usually did it. Sometimes relatives took children to the local hairdressers.
7. With regard to paragraph 7, I never put a child across my knee or used a leather strap. I do not remember HIA 141 standing on a tin bucket but she may have helped with the washing up. A lot of the children would help with the dishes and HIA 141

PERSON INTERVIEWED:

SR 29

Recording Number and
Recording Times:*Question asked about slapping for bedwetting.***SR 29** again states Never continually.

5.30

*She states that HIA 141 was not like a child that you would smack.**Questions asked about being forced fed and the repercussions of not eating the food given to them.*

5.45

SR 29 states the children would have been encouraged to eat because there was not a large degree of food but never grabbed by their hair or force fed. She states she does not remember HIA 141 being physically sick and gagging over her habit. She states that HIA 141 mother would of raised such issues if they had of happened. She states that physical punishment would not have been used on children and that children would never have been locked in a room. She states that Social Workers would have known about such behaviour if it had of happened.

7.30

Questions asked about Social Workers and the degree of contact the children had with them and also if the children were able to see the Social Workers privately.

SR 29 states Social Workers were available to the children and could avail of them privately. She states Social Workers would have attended fortnightly.

8.10

Question asked about recording the attendance of Social Workers at Nazareth.

SR 29 states this would have been recorded in the Log Books and the Social Workers would have kept their own notes.

8.50

Questions asked about hitting HIA 141 frequently.

SR 29 states no she didn't do such things and also wanted to point out that there were too many people and staff around and this would have been noted and reported.

9.10

Question asked about pulling down HIA 141 trousers and underwear and slapping her on the bottom.

SR 29 states Never, Never and she never saw it be done.

9.35

Question asked about cutting HIA 141 hair.

SR 29 states she can't remember if she cut her hair. She goes onto state that HIA 141's mother was always in and out of Nazareth and her authorisation would have been sought on occasions.

RESTRICTED (when complete)

Statement of Witness

Statement of: **HIA 141**Age of Witness: Over 18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18')

I declare that this statement consisting of 2 page/s, each signed by me is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence at a preliminary enquiry or at the trial of any person, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Signature of Witness: **HIA 141**Date: 28.2.10

Service/Staff # if police/staff

Signature witnessed by: _____
(Appropriate Adult)Signature of Member: **Paul McConnell**Date: 28.2.10by whom statement was
recorded or received

Service/Staff # if police/staff

I was born on [REDACTED] and was taken by Social Services from my mother along with my other brothers and sisters. Apparently she couldn't cope with all the children. I stayed at St Joseph's Babies Home, Belfast, this is part of Nazareth Lodge based on the Ravenhill Road, Belfast. My first memories of life start from here. From lying in a cot for hours upon end, having no one to speak to me or any love shown to me. When I was about 3 years of age I was transferred to the main unit. I was placed with **SR 29**'s group. I would describe her as being a young nun in her thirties, thin, always wearing a [REDACTED]. She had no distinguishing features. I slept on the first room at the top of the stairs and shared with a girl called [REDACTED] - I think. She told me not to look at her and every night I had to face the wall so I couldn't see her. I recall I was in the kitchen with a girl called **NL 254** (I think she was something like a care assistant) and **SR 29**. I was very young at the time. I was placed on the kitchen work bench and they both left the kitchen. I was near a kettle which was boiling. I heard the kettle 'click' to signify it had boiled. I then reached over to the kettle. I lifted it up and poured it over my face and neck. **NL 21** and **SR 29** found me. I don't know if I went to hospital or was treated at the home. I was continually told by **SR 29** that I was evil. At nights when we were put to bed the doors were locked so we were trapped. If I needed to go to the toilet I just wet myself. As punishment for wetting the bed I was slapped. I had a bed wetting problem and got no help with it, I just got continually slapped around the head, face, back or any part of my body that **SR 29** could reach. I recall Sunday dinners. I regularly told **SR 29** that I had finished my food. However, I was told that I had to eat

Signature of witness:

Signature witnessed by:
(Appropriate Adult)

PERSON INTERVIEWED:

SR 29

Recording Number and
Recording Times:

not remember any of the Social Workers names. Discussion about feeding the children, states this would be the responsibility of the Sisters.

18m 02

Discussion about the medical care. States that Doctors would be called into Nazareth if needed but no allocated Doctor. Can't remember any of the Doctors names which came to the home.

21m 20

Q Does she recall seeing anyone being slapped in the home by a member of staff

A States she doesn't recall. States any contact would have been gentle, no pushing or knocking or hurting them.

Q Does she recall any verbal abuse to the children

A Not in her unit but sometimes heard voices raised but didn't hear detail

23m 00

Q Asked if she had ever assaulted any child

A Of course not

Discussion about the layout of Nazareth and where she and her unit slept. States that at night the doors to sleeping areas were shut but not locked.

Discussion about Daily log books. States they were kept and when finished were given to Mother Superior. Visits out and visits made into Nazareth were recorded.

26m 00

States that children went out of the home to Foster parents and this would have been recorded by the Social Workers. Asked to remember the names of Foster parents but can't recall. States that she was not aware of how the families were chosen.

27m 40

She goes onto state that she was aware of a boy that was abused whilst with Foster parents, this was [REDACTED] DL 56 States she was aware of this afterwards, whilst in England, through police.

29.40

Asked about this family that had abused [REDACTED] DL 56 and finds it difficult to recall.

Discussion about the Priests mentioned earlier in the interview.

Solicitor – He Explains the Orders of Catholic Church and hierarchy.

32.00

Questions asked about canning children, she states they didn't have one and nor did she see anyone use one.

RESTRICTED

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Police Identification Mark GMC16

SUMMARY OF AUDIO RECORDED INTERVIEW

RECORDING REF NO: PERSON INTERVIEWED: **SR 29**

ADDRESS: [REDACTED]

Master Copy DOB: [REDACTED]

Seal Number(s): PLACE OF INTERVIEW: [REDACTED]

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 11/09/2012

TIME COMMENCED: 1451 HOURS TIME TERMINATED: 1515 HOURS

INTERVIEWING OFFICERS: OTHER PERSON(S) PRESENT:

1	CONSTABLE CHRIS HUTTON	1	FINTAN CANAVAN
2	DETECTIVE CONSTABLE GAIL MCILWAINE	2	
3		3	

MADE BY: D/C Gail McIlwaine

Recording Number and
Recording Times:

Reminded she is still under caution.

*She is reminded of where the previous interview left off, which was the statement of complaint made by **HIA 141***

SR 29 states she remembers her because she was a beautiful child and that she came from a big family, which were all at Nazareth. She states she thinks **HIA 141** was in her unit.

3.30

The Statement of **HIA 141** is read to **SR 29**

Questions are asked about the Incident in the Kitchen.

4.26

SR 29 states she does not remember any such incident. She also states that she does not know **NL 254** the civilian member of staff.

Question asked if she continually told **HIA 141** that she was evil.

SR 29 exclaims Never repeatedly.

Question asked about **HIA 141** bed wetting and the locking of doors.

5.04

SR 29 states that the doors to the dorms were never locked and that there was a toilet near by.

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HIA Ref: 363

Witness Name: HIA 363

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 363

I, HIA 363, will say as follows:

1. I have been shown a copy of my draft witness statement compiled by the Inquiry team. I have not signed a copy of this witness statement as I am seeking legal advice in relation to aspects of that statement and there are legal proceedings ongoing in relation to that. This witness statement will therefore address the allegations which have been suggested to relate to me that have been made by a HIA 141.
2. I have been shown a redacted copy of HIA 141 statement, and in particular her description of an older girl called HIA 363 who had been helping her with her homework hitting her.
3. This description does not include a surname, and no incident of this nature occurred involving me. I do not remember a HIA 141 and do not believe I ever heard of anyone of that name.
4. I do not know what date this was alleged to have happened, but I believe that SR29 left when I was around 8 or 9 years old.

HIA 363

PRIVATE