

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 154

Witness Name: HIA 154

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

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**WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 154**

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I, HIA 154 will say as follows:-

**Personal details**

1. I was born on [REDACTED] There were six children in my family and I was the second youngest. I have two older brothers called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and three sisters called NL 54 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] died in 2001 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I went into care at the age of three. My father was an abusive alcoholic and my mother couldn't cope. My father didn't work – he was just a drunk. There was domestic violence in our house and my dad would end up giving my mum a broken leg, a busted nose or a black eye. The children were also beaten but I was never hit because I was too young. My mother is still alive and my father died when he was 41. We were all taken into care when I was three years old.

**Nazareth Lodge (9<sup>th</sup> April 1973 – 15<sup>th</sup> November 1975)**

2. My brothers and sisters all went into Nazareth Lodge together but we were split up into different groups. My older siblings were kept separate from me and my younger baby sister [REDACTED] was put into the nursery. I wouldn't have seen much of my siblings in the home; I would maybe see them at Mass. We didn't have mealtimes together. The nuns didn't make an effort to maintain contact between my siblings and I – they didn't care. I remember being very

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frightened there. I had horrific nightmares, especially after leaving Nazareth Lodge. They got even worse after I left and went to another children's home called Marmion House.

3. It all started in Nazareth Lodge with Brendan Smyth coming up to me in his car. The boot of his car was filled with sweets. If he liked you, you got the pick of his sweets. As children in care, we never had sweets or anything like that. I suppose that was part of his manipulation and him trying to control you but I thought nothing of it at the time. He took me into the toilets round the back of the kitchens, showed his private parts to me and then got me to touch him. he touched me as well. I was around five years old when this started. It escalated from there.
4. Brendan Smyth was a frequent visitor to Nazareth Lodge and I think he said Mass there. He didn't wear vestments when he abused me; he would just be wearing a cardigan and his collar. He used to walk with me innocently and walk me up to the dormitory. I tried to tell the Mother Superior what was happening but she just hit me round the back of the head and told me to stop giving lip. Then I would have to go up to him. I tried to say something like "he's hurting me" but because he was a man of the cloth they thought he was God. The Mother Superior told me not to be talking about priests like that. I don't remember her name but I think she is dead now. They held him in such high esteem. The abuse developed until Brendan Smyth raped me. The first time happened somewhere upstairs near the dormitory; I think it might have been the nun's room. Brendan Smyth would also force me to give him oral sex. I vaguely remember being taken out in his car with other boys but I can't remember their names.
5. A man called **HIA 135** was a **[REDACTED]** there and I think he must have known all about it because he was abusing me too. The abuse was just like it was with Brendan Smith. **HIA 135** would give me sweets, touch himself, and get me to touch myself in front of him. He then raped me. I used to see him around the grounds and he took me to the outside toilets and round the back. This was on the ground floor behind the kitchens. He never brought me

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to the dormitory. I have been made aware that **HIA 135** has **[REDACTED]** now. My memory of him was that he had dark hair and he is probably in his sixties now.

6. There was only one nice nun in the place called **SR 157** but she was only there for a year or two and then she left. She was different to the other nuns. She talked to me and hugged me. I can't remember the names of any other nuns. They all just looked the same to me because they were all wearing the same thing. I think there were lay staff who worked in the kitchen but it was just nuns looking after the children. I was in **SR 157** group but I never mentioned the abuse to her. I had told the Mother Superior and I got hit for it. I was sexually abused in various ways between twenty and thirty times over a period of two and a half years. I was subjected to oral sex, anal sex and having to touch myself. I also suffered physical abuse from the nuns such as getting a slap by a hand or a bunch of keys across the back of the head. **SR 157** never hit me.
7. I didn't go to a primary school outside of Nazareth Lodge. The nuns started teaching me when I was young. The food in the home was ok and I just ate what was in front of me. I remember getting the same food a few days in a row because if you didn't eat your food one day it would be given to you again the next day until you ate it. You always got hand me downs and charity stuff that was brought in. I was never taken out to get new clothes. I never saw my mother when I was in Nazareth Lodge – I only ever saw my father once or twice. My parents had split up and my mother had started another relationship. When he came to visit he would see all us children together in the sitting room in Nazareth Lodge.
8. My oldest sister **NL 54** was in Nazareth Lodge as well and she went to talk to a social worker when I was about six years old. She was trying to get us out of the Lodge. I don't remember ever seeing a social worker or any inspectors in Nazareth Lodge. As a result of my sister's efforts, we were all made wards of court in 1975. We then moved to Marmion House Children's Home in Holywood and I stayed there until I was 18.

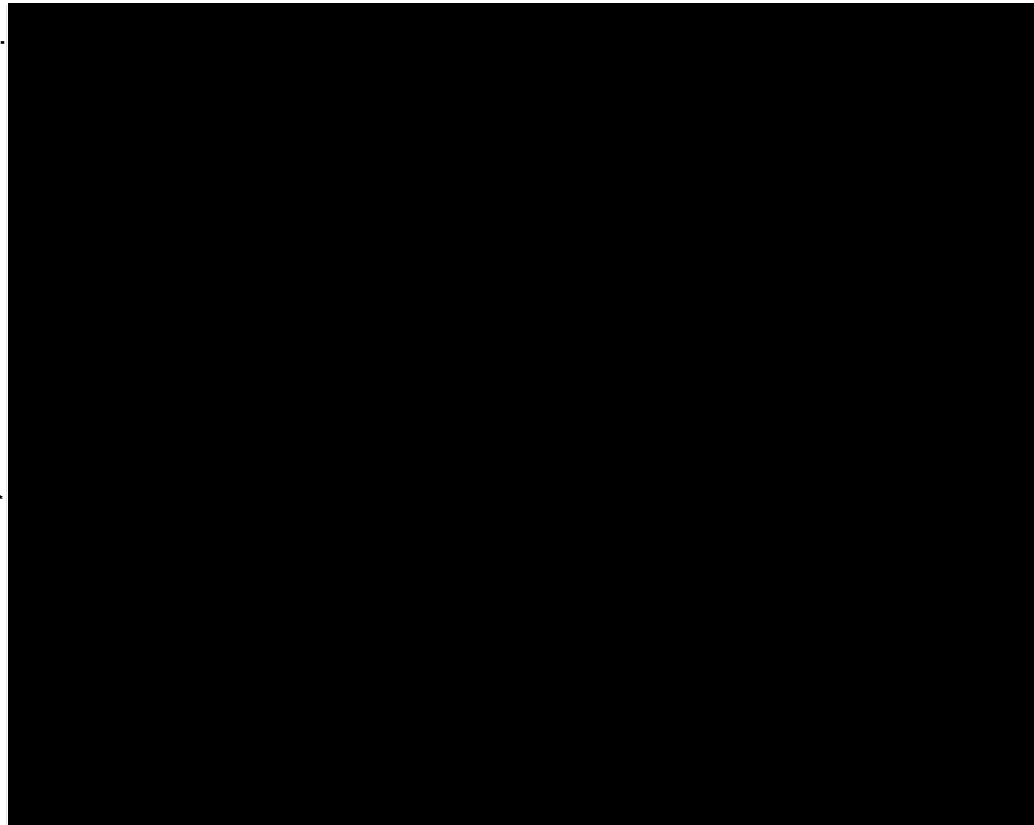
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9. Christmas and birthdays weren't celebrated in Nazareth Lodge. I didn't know what Christmas or my birthday was until I went to Marmion. I never went on any holidays or out to families the entire time I was in Nazareth Lodge.

Marmion House, Holywood, Co. Down (15<sup>th</sup> November 1975 – 1987 approximately)

10.

11.



Life after care

12. I left Marmion at eighteen and got a job as a plasterer. You had to leave the care system at 18 so I got a flat in Holywood. There was no aftercare or anyone looking after me; I was on my own. I had lots of different social workers while I was in Marmion but I had so many I can't remember any of their names. Once you were 18 that was it. I got married when I was 21 and was divorced at 22. I had a daughter and she is now 24 but I just have no bond with her. I had no contact with her growing up. I just didn't want to bother

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with her and I feel really bad about that. She lives in Hollywood and I know that she's alright. I have never been able to hold any relationships down. It's always been a pattern - every time I try to let people get close to me I walk away.

13. I have had a number of psychiatric admissions for my addiction issues. I think I have been an alcoholic since I was about twenty. It all started after I left the care system. From an early age I got addicted to drugs and alcohol. I was in St Luke's recently for two weeks after a breakdown. They wanted to send me to Bluestone Mental Health Unit in Craigavon but I was adamant I wasn't going there so they just gave me home treatment on my discharge.

14. I went to live in [REDACTED] at one stage but that wasn't very good for my addictions. The only reason I came back was because my sister died. Addiction affected all of my family when they left care. I take a lot of medication, about twelve tablets a day. My psychiatrist said that I am suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I am clean now but I had to do a home detox and it was so difficult. I felt suicidal at the time. I go to Nexus and they won't see you if you're not clean. Everything is hard but I am doing good now. I have a Housing Executive apartment.

15. I have told my mum, and my brothers and sisters except for the youngest one about what happened to me in care. None of my brothers or sisters was singled out for abuse like I was. They were very angry with the nuns and even me for not speaking up. It was actually my mother who said I should go to the police again. I get on okay with my mum now; I don't hold anything against her. She still bears the scars physically and mentally. I tried to forget about the abuse for a long long time but as I got older, I realised I shouldn't be held responsible for somebody else's actions. I just wish it hadn't happened to me. I want people to know what happened in Nazareth Lodge and I don't want it to happen again to other children in the future.

16. I made a statement to the police in 1991. They got in touch with me about Brendan Smyth and brought me to Strand Road Police Station to make a

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statement. I went to the police again in 2012 and I gave a statement at Grosvenor Road Police Station. A police officer named Gillian contacted me to say that **HIA 135** could not be prosecuted because he had Alzheimer's.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed **HIA 154** \_\_\_\_\_

Dated 17.4.15 \_\_\_\_\_

No. on Register	Name	Date of Admission	Date of Discharge	Age on Discharge
1975 - 1976				
	Transferred to Harrison House, Co. Down.			
Req. Nos.			15.	11.
3310				75
3311			"	
3312	NL 54		"	
3313			"	
* 3314	HIA 154		"	
				HIA 154
2981				
3101				
3067				
3269				
3210				
3199				
* 3108				
* 3238				
3200				
3162				
3168				
3107				

(not on master sheet)

NAZARETH LODGE - BETHLEHEM NURSERY  
DISCHARGE BOOK

NAZARETH LODGE - BETHLEHEM NURSERY  
DISCHARGE BOOK

HIA 154

Date 16.11.75

This is to certify that I have received my child **NL 54** HIA 154

in a clean, healthy condition and free from infection.

Signed.....

**NL 264**

(Signature).....

Witness

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C11  
AP 2

**EASTERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD**

**PROGRESS REPORT ON CHILD IN CARE**

Child's Name: **HIA 154**  
Home Address: **Marmion Children's Home,  
Holywood,  
Co. Down.**

J.O.B. **[REDACTED]**  
Section admitted/  
submitted to care: **103**  
Date: **9.4.73.**  
Parental Rights Order  
Yes/No Date: **23.5.1977**

**Previous placements in care:**

Order	Placement	date	Reason for leaving				date
			Planned move	Break-down	Dis-charge	Other	
1	Nazareth Lodge, Ravenhill Rd., Belfast	[REDACTED]	✓				[REDACTED]
2	Marmion Children's Home, Holywood	[REDACTED]					
3							
4							
5							

Present Placement: \*Children's Home/~~Foster Home~~/~~House~~/~~Res.~~ (\*Delete as appropriate)

Address:  
(Include Name of **Marmion Children's Home,**  
Foster Parents) **Holywood.**

Date Placed: **November, 1975.**

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>10.9.86.</u>	<u>25.9.86.</u>						