

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 24

Witness Name: HIA 24

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 24

I, HIA 24 will say as follows:-

Personal Details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] in Union Hospital, Downpatrick.
2. Before I was born, my mother [REDACTED] lived in the workhouse in [REDACTED]. She used to work in the mills. Then she lived in [REDACTED].
3. I never met my father. His name was [REDACTED] and he was a labourer. My mother and he eloped to Belfast to get married in 1932. It was a mixed marriage; she was Catholic and he was Protestant.
4. I have three older siblings NL 36, NHB 20 and NL 38 and five younger siblings NL 37, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
5. My younger brother NL 37 was in Nazareth Lodge at the same time as me but I never saw him because he was four or five years younger than me and we were kept in different groups.
6. My older brother NL 36 was in Nazareth Lodge before me but not at the same time I was in.

PRIVATE

7. My older sister **NHB 20** was in Nazareth House and then she went to **[REDACTED]** to become a nun. She has since left the nunnery, got married and had three daughters and grandchildren.

Nazareth Lodge, Belfast (21st December 1945 – 24th September 1953)

8. I was placed in Nazareth Lodge when I was four years old. I had been living in a caravan in Co. Tyrone with my mother and my older brother **NL 38**. One day, I was out playing with my brother and he told me to run. I saw two policemen chasing me so I ran into the caravan and hid in a blanket box. The policemen found me and lifted me out by the arms. They put me in a car and drove me somewhere to put me in care. I was kicking, screaming and crying. The reason **NL 38** and I were on our own was because my mother was at work in the airport base at the time.
9. The records state that I was placed in Nazareth Lodge in December 1945 but I dispute this as I would not have been playing outside in December. I also remember my brother **NL 37** being brought into the home in February 1946 and at that stage I had been in Nazareth Lodge for much longer than two months – it was closer to nine months or a year.
10. I was never given any explanation for why I was taken to Nazareth Lodge. I have since found out that my records state the NSPCC Belfast recommended my placement. I have written to the NSPCC but they have no record of me. They said they only have records of cases where they gave evidence in court. My mother was on the run from my father at the time as they had a troubled marriage. My father was a violent alcoholic.
11. My older brother **NL 38** did not get taken to Nazareth Lodge with me that day. I never understood that. It was like they were targeting me. **NL 38** remained living with my mother. None of my four youngest siblings after **NL 37** were put in care either.

PRIVATE

12. In Nazareth Lodge, we slept in big dormitories. There were about twenty boys in each dormitory. We were grouped by age but there would be older boys in the dormitory as well. When the nuns would go to evening prayers and evening meals, they would delegate responsibility to the older boys. They were in charge of us more often than not. While we were in bed, the older boys would come round with a big stick and beat us. This went on continuously but nobody ever said anything. A nun would sleep in a small wooden cubicle in the dormitory but it had no windows so the nun never knew what was going on outside. You learned to keep your head under the blanket and not make any noise.
13. Later on at night, your blanket would go back and one of the older boys would take you out of your bed and bring you to his. There were a few older boys who did this to me. I remember one of the boys' names was **NL 46** but I don't know his first name. Another boy called **NL 39** also used to sexually abuse me in the Lodge. They would make me perform sexual acts on them. They forced me to masturbate them and would try to push my head down to give them oral sex but I resisted that.
14. I would have been about six years old and they would have been up to fourteen. It wasn't until 1951 that older boys were transferred to Rubane so that is why there were boys of fourteen in the Lodge. Sometimes when we were in the toilets, we would get attacked by older boys. They would always try to get you on your own when nobody else was around. They would be trying to rape us and if you weren't quick enough that was bad luck. I was never fully raped but **NL 39** tried to rape me on a couple of occasions.
15. The routine in Nazareth Lodge was we got up at about 7am, got dressed and went down for breakfast which was toast or something. On Fridays you'd get a boiled egg and a little thing of butter. The food was very poor but it was just after the war. After breakfast we went to school which was onsite. The school was very basic. I learned Latin because I was an altar boy. They sent three or four of us to the **██████████** on the Falls Road but the younger boys didn't like it and started crying so they took us out again. As an altar boy, I served Mass

PRIVATE

and benedictions and marched at the front of holy parades. I was also in the choir until one day we all had to sing by ourselves and I got thrown out. I think my voice was breaking at the time. This upset me because the choir had been promised sweets at Easter and sweets were a rarity in the Lodge.

16. We wore shorts all the time with an orange jacket. The bedding was just blankets and sheets and I don't think we had pyjamas. It was quite warm in bed because they had central heating with big radiators. After school we would go to a big common room where there was a gramophone and a radio. Outside, there was a big field and when I got older, we had our own gardening section where we grew gooseberries and things like that.

17. On bath nights, we all had to strip naked and get into a queue. There would be two nuns, one on each side of the bath. The nuns I remember are Sister **SR 118** **SR 36** **SR 100** and the Reverend Mother. They would bathe two boys at a time. The nuns washed us with carbolic soap and their hands. If you were messing around in the queue, you would get a good dunking in the bath. I never saw them change the water or add hot water but it was warmish. We would stand and wait to be dried then. We got bathed every Saturday evening for Sunday Mass and we always got a bath before feast days.

18. We used to have to clean the dormitories with this thing they called a bumper. It was extremely heavy and if you weren't getting on well with it, you'd get a dig or a clout from one of the older boys. You were brutalised. As I got older, they started sending the older boys to Rubane, so there wasn't as much of an age gap in the dormitories. They sent the first group of older boys to Rubane in 1951 when I was ten. The older boys were sent to Rubane at twelve so we didn't have it as bad. At least then there weren't fourteen year old boys in the dormitory with six year olds.

19. The nuns were also violent with us sometimes. When I was nine we went for Confirmation. It was the 13th March 1951. I was sitting there in the church with the other boys when all of a sudden I was dragged out by the ear. I can't

PRIVATE

remember her name but a nun dragged me down the aisle and slapped me on the back of the head, saying 'you're not baptised'. How was I supposed to know I hadn't been baptised? They were really angry about that though because I had been an altar boy and had received Communion. It upset them to think they had a pagan in the community.

20. They were also angry because this all happened while the Bishop Dr Mageean was there. I ended up getting baptised and confirmed on that same day in March 1951. My records from Nazareth Lodge state that I was baptised in St. Brigid's Church, Belfast but that is wrong – it was Holy Rosary Church on the Ormeau Road. They also got my date of birth wrong on my records.

21. My mother came up to visit me a few times in Nazareth Lodge but not that often because she was living outside Belfast and travelling was difficult in those times. Before these visits, the nuns told me to be careful what I said. I knew what they meant – not to be saying anything derogatory. During the visit, we would just sit out in the field and talk for about an hour. Even though my brother **NL 37** was in the nursery in Nazareth Lodge, he was never brought on these visits with my mother. I never saw him after he was brought in. When he was brought in, they took me over to the nursery and said this is your brother but that was the last I ever saw of him.

22. I never saw anybody from the Welfare or anyone coming to inspect Nazareth Lodge while I was there. The nit-nurse and the dentist used to come out.

23. I was sent out for weekends a few times to different families, I remember one of them was a doctor. I also went out to visit my mother a couple of times. She was living in an army hut on the **[REDACTED]** at that stage.

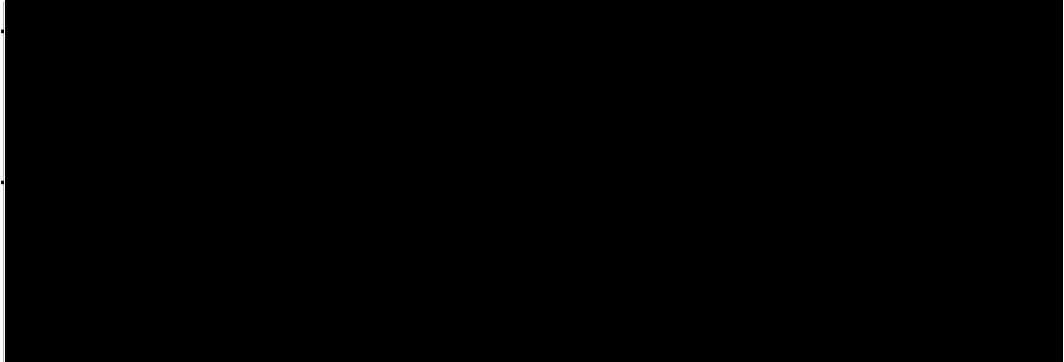
24. At Christmas we used to go to Mackies for a party. We would get an apple, an orange and a couple of nuts in a bag.

25. When the time came for me to leave Nazareth Lodge, I was just told one day to get on the bus and we were driven to Rubane. All we had was the clothes on our backs.

PRIVATE

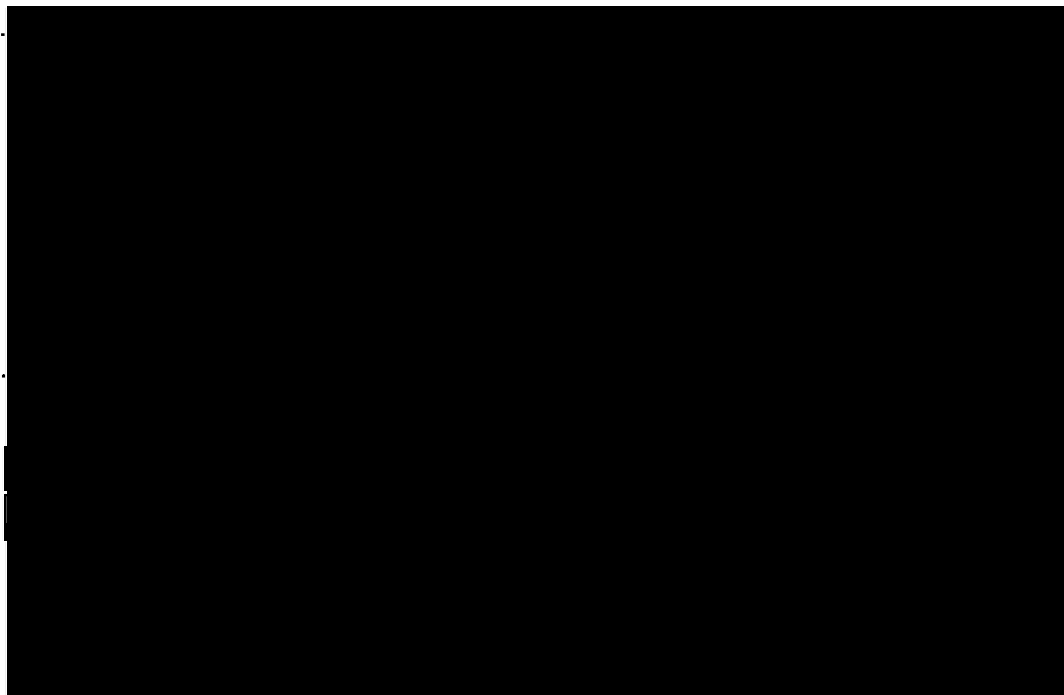
Rubane House, Kircubbin (24th September 1953 – 9th September 1955)

26.



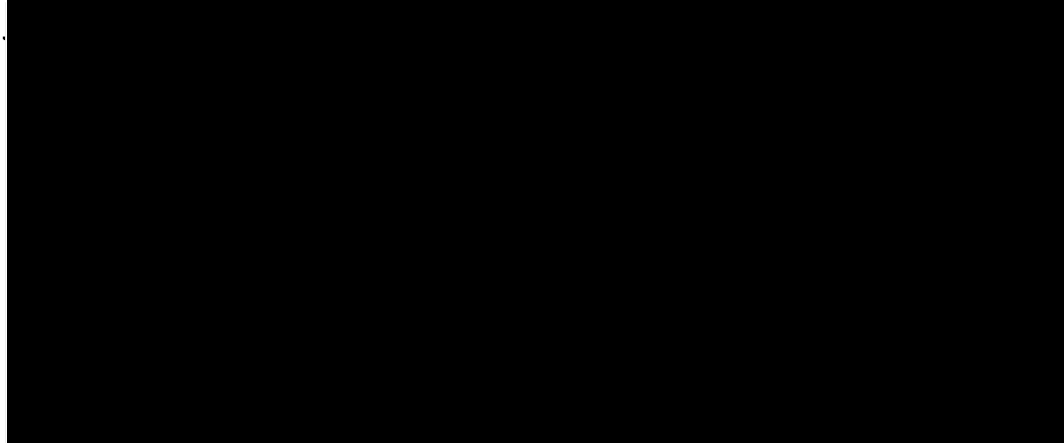
27.

28.



29.

30.



PRIVATE

31



32

33



34

35

36



PRIVATE

Life after care

37. When I left Rubane, Mr Murphy got me a job in a motel where I lived in. I would work all day and then they would lock me in at night. I wasn't long out of Rubane at this stage; I was about 14 or 15. One day, there was nobody around and the door was open so I ran away. I started getting my own jobs then. Mostly, I did labouring because I had no skills.

38. I worked in the mills and then I worked in [REDACTED] Quarries for three or four years. My cousin [REDACTED] got me a job there. He was a reserve in the British Army so I joined up and I did a few stints in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I was in the Army for three years from [REDACTED]. I was medically discharged after [REDACTED]. I moved to [REDACTED] then with a former Army colleague of mine from the Shankill called [REDACTED]. He was in the [REDACTED] with me.

39. I don't have a close relationship with any of my siblings. The ones that were in the home never really settled and we lost that family link. I never felt like I belonged to a family because a family grows up together. My eldest brother [REDACTED] NL 36 joined the [REDACTED] and then the [REDACTED] and stayed in it most of his life. My brother [REDACTED] NL 37 comes over from Belfast to visit now and again.

40. I met my wife [REDACTED] in 1967 and we moved to [REDACTED]. We've stayed here ever since. We've been together almost 47 years. We have two grown daughters, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I have a close relationship with them and my four grandchildren.

41. However, I have never told anyone about the abuse I suffered until the Inquiry. My wife only found out about my background recently and she still doesn't know the extent of the abuse I suffered. My daughter only found all this out when I came to the Inquiry. I kept it all to myself because I didn't want other people to be bothered by it. I love my kids and grandkids but I find it

PRIVATE

hard to show it. My daughter says she knew I loved her growing up but I never said it and I was never affectionate. It's only in the last five years I've started to give them a little cuddle or a peck on the cheek every now and then.

42. My memories of the home have never left me. They're still with me today. Sometimes I go to bed at night and it's still rushing through my head. I have never been for counselling and I don't think I would want to go. My faith has long gone by the wayside. I didn't baptise my kids because of my experiences growing up. I left it to them to decide if they wanted to follow a faith.

43. I have never reported the abuse I suffered to the police. Growing up, you were scared of the police, you were scared of the priests, and you were scared of anyone in authority. You learned to stay clear of them.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

HIA 24

Dated

27-2-2014

ITS FUNNY THAT A MOVIE HAS JUST BEEN
RELEASSED THIS YEAR.

12 YEARS A SLAVE

THIS IS WHAT I THINK OF MY TIME IN
HOMES

HIA 24

1 time in Nazareth Lodge?

2 **A. Yes, I will.**

3 Q. Thank you. So if we could just go then straight to
4 paragraph 26. It is on page 451. Sorry. Can you just
5 go to page 450, which is the preceding page? Just the
6 last paragraph of the preceding page, please. Just that
7 paragraph 25. If you scroll right down to the bottom of
8 that page. It is page 5 of the statement that you have,
9 HIA24.

10 **A. Pardon?**

11 Q. It should be page 5 there. There's a little number 5 at
12 the bottom of the page.

13 **A. Yes, I've got that now.**

14 Q. You see there at paragraph 25 --

15 **A. Yes.**

16 Q. -- it just says:

17 "When the time came for me to leave Nazareth Lodge,
18 I was just told one day to get on the bus and we were
19 driven to Rubane. All we had was the clothes on our
20 backs."

21 **A. That's true.**

22 Q. Did you know where you were going?

23 **A. No. I didn't even know anything called Rubane. We
24 called it Kircubbin.**

25 Q. And you were -- this was -- if you scroll down to the

Name: [REDACTED] HIA 24

Address: [REDACTED], Belfast

Date of Birth:

Date of Admission: September 24th. 1953

Circumstances of Entry:

Date of Leaving:

Transferred from Nazareth Lodge with age group of II+

DATE		SOURCE OF INFORMATION
<p><u>21.12.45</u></p>	<p>Arrived at Nazareth Lodge. Sent in by the N.S.P.C.C. of Belfast. A younger brother [REDACTED] NL 37 is also in Nazareth Lodge, while a sister, [REDACTED] NHB 20 is a nun in a convent in France. Mother's maiden name was [REDACTED]. The family resided in [REDACTED] previous to going to Belfast. Father ??? [REDACTED] HIA 24 is of average ability and was in VI Standard while in Nazareth Lodge. Health good.</p> <p><u>Baptised: 13.3.51</u> <u>Confirmed: 13.3.51</u></p> <p>Certificates Herewith</p>	<p><u>Nazareth Lodge</u></p>
<p><u>24.9.53</u></p>	<p>Transferred to Rubane House.</p>	