

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 247

Witness Name: HIA 247

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 247

I, HIA 247 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] I lived in Belfast initially and moved to [REDACTED] when I was about nine or ten years old.
2. I lived with my mother and five siblings in [REDACTED] until my father said that some of us would have to go back to Belfast. My brother NL 64 my sister [REDACTED] and I volunteered to come back and we went to live with my grandfather in the [REDACTED] My uncle [REDACTED] and his wife and children lived with my grandfather at the time and he did not feel there was enough room for us all. I am not really sure who decided to put us in care but a man who I think was called [REDACTED] from Social Services or NSPCC came and told my brother NL 64 and I that we had to go and live in Nazareth Lodge. I was about nine or ten at the time and NL 64 is three years younger than me. My sister [REDACTED] went to live with my paternal aunt.

Nazareth Lodge (1956/1957 – 15 August 1959)

3. The first week I was there was very upsetting. I felt that I was being punished for something I had done that was wrong. NL 64 and I tried to run away but we were caught by SR 34 who was the head sister and she beat us with

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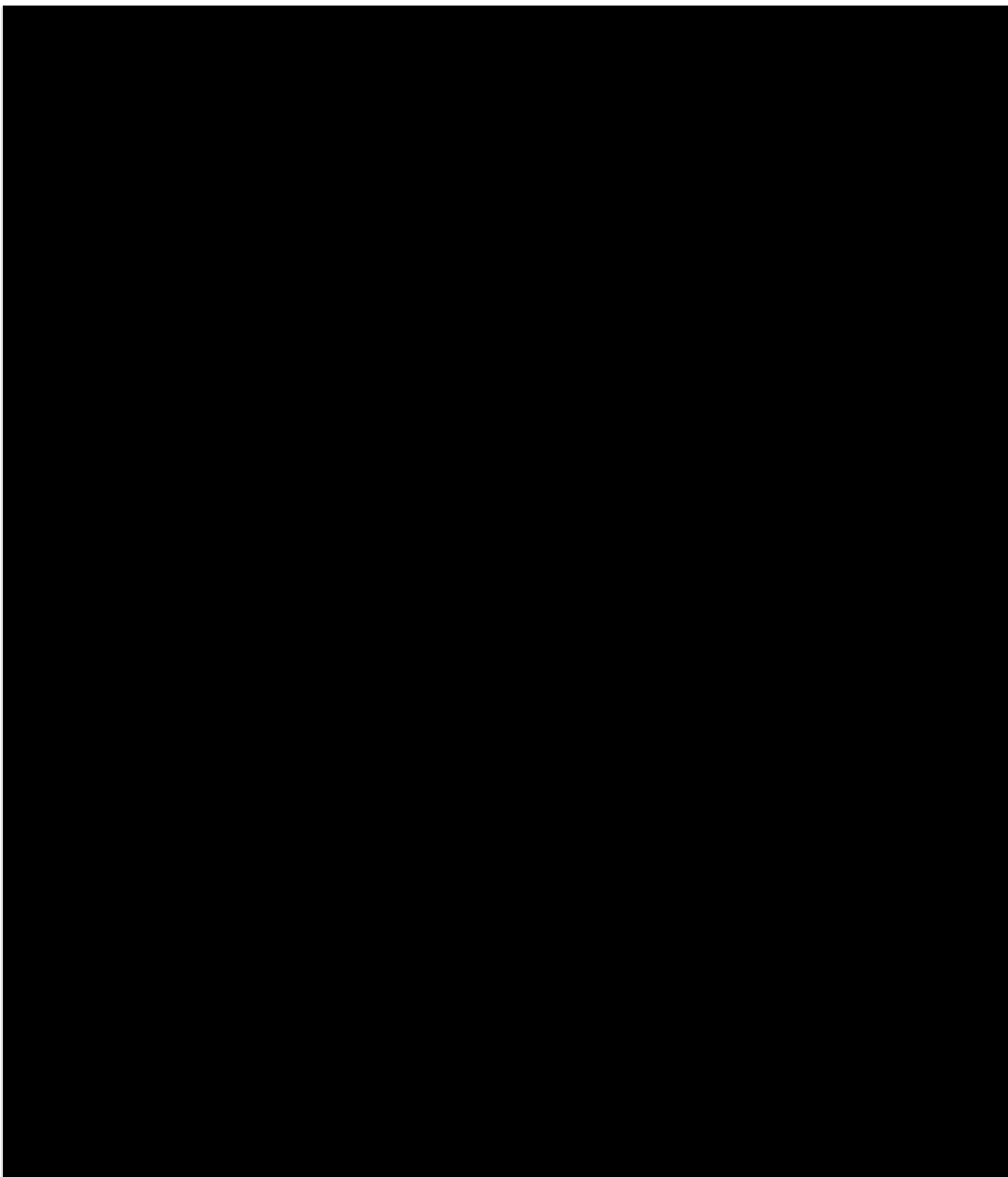
a strap. I never tried to run away again. If you did something wrong you always got beaten with a strap.

4. We slept in dormitories in Nazareth Lodge. My brother **NL 64** used to wet the bed and he used to get beaten for this by the nun in charge of his dormitory. I cannot recall her name. I would just stand there and watch. This was hard for me and it went on for some time. I think there were four dormitories in Nazareth Lodge. The helper in charge of our group was called **[REDACTED]** The nuns would beat you with a strap, especially **SR 34** if they thought you had done something wrong or misbehaved. It was a tough regime. My time in Nazareth Lodge was not all bad. We had sports activities to keep us occupied. I also did Irish dancing.
5. The only visit I ever received was from **[REDACTED]** my sister. My grandfather or my Uncle **[REDACTED]** never came to visit. I went to school in Nazareth Lodge. My teacher was **NL 65** but sometimes **SR 34** or the other nuns taught us.
6. During the summer we went to **NL 65** farm in **[REDACTED]** for two weeks. I had a great time there and they had an old bicycle which I used to cycle to Warrenpoint and back. I remember **NL 65** brother and his girlfriend used to take us to the beach and it was a fantastic time. I got in touch with **NL 65** a number of years ago when I was over in Ireland on a visit to my relatives. I did not speak to him about me negative experiences in care but it was good to catch up with him and he was glad to hear about how I was getting on in life.
7. We got up at the same time every morning, had a shower in the wash room and then went to mass. I used to serve mass as an altar boy and I sang in the choir. We had chores to do and we had to polish the hallway wooden floor. We used to put rags on our feet and dance up and down to polish the floor. At Christmas time the local firemen and one of the doctors at the top of the Ravenhill Road would have parties for us and we would get spoiled with cakes and sweets.
8. I was never sexually abused at Nazareth Lodge.

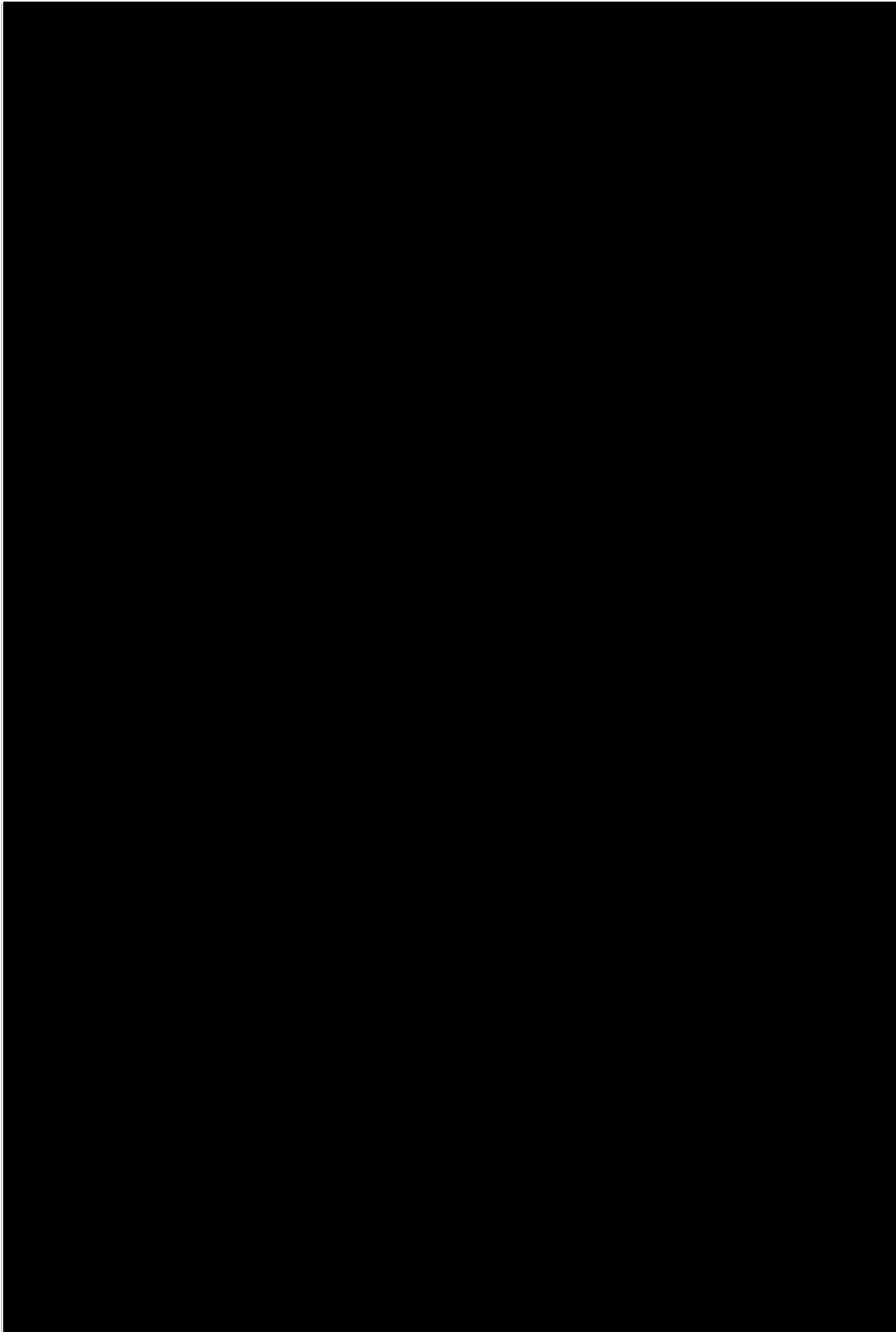
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9. The food at Nazareth Lodge was not great. I wanted to ask for more but I didn't dare. **SR 34** was very strict. I remember wearing shorts but can't remember much more about the clothes we were given. It was not an official school uniform that we wore but all the boys wore shorts and similar tops.

Rubane House, Kircubbin (15 August 1959- 27 August 1960)



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Life after care

20. My brother **NL 64** was fostered, he returned home in June 1962 and in later years he came to [REDACTED] but life in care was harder for **NL 64** as he was a little younger and treated badly as a result of his bedwetting. He now lives in a hostel and has poor health. He never married and has never been able to hold down a job. His life has been extremely adversely affected by being in care. He does not feel able to participate in this Inquiry process but that is his decision. The hardest thing for me throughout my time in care was to witness the nuns at Nazareth Lodge being physically abusive to **NL 64** and the fact that I always felt powerless to help him.

21. I stayed in [REDACTED] throughout my adult life. I finished school there, got married and I have now have two children and five grandchildren. I worked for [REDACTED] in a number of different jobs until they closed. I have had a good life and I spoil my grandchildren. I have been with my wife for many years but I never mentioned the sexual or physical abuse I suffered whilst in care to her until I met with the Acknowledgement Forum as part of this Inquiry process. I was just too embarrassed and ashamed to discuss it with my wife or my family.

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed **HIA 247** _____

Dated 25/3/2014 _____

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Date	REPORT	Initials of Officer
14/4/59.	<p>I visited [redacted] and found her at home. She has a housing trust house, comfortable enough but a bit rough and ready. [redacted] is in the R.A.F. and is stationed in Scotland and [redacted] expects him home on leave at Whitsun. There are two children a little girl of about 7 and a little boy about 4. [redacted] is now working as a stitcher in a firm in town.</p> <p>I told [redacted] about HIA 247 sitting his Technical Exam and also that he would have to move to Kirkcubbin in the summer. [redacted] said she had the boys out at Easter and she knew that HIA 247 would have to move and if he passes his exam she would like him to have his chance and she wouldn't stand in his way. However, [redacted] did not feel like making any promises without her husband's knowledge and she thought he would be quite willing for him to take HIA 247 if he were approached in the right way and [redacted] would like me to call at about Whitsun and see her husband.</p> <p>[redacted] hears from the [redacted] through [redacted] and she said they really are quite anxious to have the boys but the housing situation is difficult in [redacted]</p>	W.F.N.
27/4/59.	<p>Inspector McLelland N.S.P.C.C. telephoned to say that he has had a report back from the N.S.P.C.C. in [redacted] regarding the [redacted]. Apparently, their chances of getting a house are remote and with their present accommodation they could not take HIA 247 and [redacted] to live with them. Inspector McLelland will forward a copy of his report to us.</p>	A.M.I.T.
12/5/59.	<p>Visited [redacted] no reply.</p>	W.M.M.
21/5/59.	<p>I visited [redacted] and found [redacted] at home with one of the children. [redacted] is home on leave from the R.A.F. until next Tuesday. I told [redacted] why I had called and he told me [redacted] was named after him and in his opinion [redacted] is the best of the bunch and he would never stand in the boy's way. I said I had not heard yet whether HIA 247 had passed his Technical Exam but I gathered Mr. Magee would be agreeable to HIA 247 going to live there.</p> <p>[redacted] is now trying to go to her mother and the [redacted] are pretty fed-up about this as they think she will only be used as a drudge. [redacted] who used to live with the [redacted] is now working in England and is in trouble with the police for stealing a watch at work. [redacted] has a very poor opinion of the [redacted]</p> <p>I said I would call back again and see [redacted]</p>	W.M.M.
22/5/59.	<p>I telephoned SR 34 to enquire whether NL 287 and HIA 247 had passed the Technical Exam and SR 34 said they had not reached the required standard though she knew she could get HIA 247 in and she thought he would benefit from this type of education and that he would be able to keep up with the rest of the class. SR 34 said a great uncle and great aunt of HIA 247 had been visited in [redacted] and they had said [redacted] would definitely not take HIA 247</p> <p>I said I believed differently but SR 34 always thinks she knows best.</p>	W.M.M.
11/6/59.	<p>[redacted] called for advice. [redacted] has written to [redacted] asking her to make arrangements to come over to [redacted] where there is a good job awaiting her at £6.10.0. p.w. [redacted] is consequently very unsettled and thinks she will go over at the July holidays when she will have her holiday pay but [redacted] is doubtful if she should let her go. I agreed that she should be cautious about it and told her we had received a letter from [redacted] saying she hoped to obtain other accommodation at end of June and proposed to take the boys then. I suggested that we would write to Children's Officer, [redacted] and inform them of the proposal and request an investigation. Mrs. [redacted] was agreeable to this.</p>	R.R.D.B.

HISTORY SHEET

REPORT

Initials
of
Officer

Date

3/6/59.

I telephoned [redacted] and read him the letter received from [redacted] and I asked [redacted] if an N.H.P.C. Officer in [redacted] would call with [redacted] and urge her to keep her promise of looking after the boys at the end of June. [redacted] said he had made out his report on the [redacted] family for me and he would send it soon.

W.M.M.

2/1/59.

I called at Nazareth Lodge as requested to discuss some of the older boys with [redacted] SR 34. The u/m boys are due to be transferred to Kircubbin about 12th August and I promised to let [redacted] SR 34 know if any other arrangement was made for them meanwhile.

E.E.D.B.

[redacted] and [redacted] HIA 247 SR 34 would very much like to see a fostering arrangement made for [redacted] HIA 247 - one says he is an exceptionally nice boy and very helpful and co-operative and a good mixer. [redacted] HIA 247 has received a letter from his mother saying she can't take them at present as their father has left her.

E.E.D.B.

9/10/59.

Visited Nazareth Lodge. [redacted] told me his sister had gone over to [redacted] this morning. I do think it a dreadful shame the way these boys have been treated by their family. (In the whole the boys looked very well and I was quite pleased by their appearance.)

W.M.M.

12/1/60.

Visited Nazareth Lodge. [redacted] NL 64 looks well. He is quite a lively little boy and seems fairly cheerful. He told me [redacted] his sister, came over from [redacted] at Christmas and took him out. She also went down to Kircubbin to see [redacted] HIA 247 and she has now returned to [redacted] NL 64 gets no visitors.

The children all seemed in good heart and enjoyed their Christmas entertainments. They were very proud of a new T.V. set they showed me.

W.M.M.

9/3/60.

I telephoned [redacted] SR 34 and told her about [redacted] NL 285 and my plans for [redacted] NL 64. I requested permission for Michael to visit [redacted] NL 285 this Sunday. [redacted] SR 34 told me [redacted] NL 64 is to be confirmed on Monday next so I suggested his outing should be postponed to the following Sunday.

W.M.

10/3/60.

I later visited [redacted] NL 285 but could get no reply. I visited the Pet Shop and found [redacted] NL 285 [redacted] and [redacted] NL 286 all there. I gave them a brief outline of [redacted] NL 64 circumstances and [redacted] NL 285 at once offered a home to [redacted] SR 34 as well. I suggested they should bring [redacted] NL 64 home for tea on Sunday 20th March and [redacted] NL 286 thought it would be rather an ordeal for [redacted] NL 64 to come out right away with complete strangers and asked if they could call up at Nazareth Lodge during the week and meet [redacted] NL 64. I was quite pleased with [redacted] NL 286 that she thought of this herself and said I was sure [redacted] SR 34 would have no objection.

I left them [redacted] NL 64 name and the address of Nazareth Lodge and said I would call back after [redacted] NL 64 had been out with them.

[redacted] is beginning to know me and she looked very neat and cute and was most friendly.

W.M.M.

1/3/60.

I visited [redacted] NL 285 to talk to her about taking one of our boys from Nazareth Lodge [redacted] NL 64 [redacted] NL 285 was quite willing to take a boy but I feel she is inclined to be impulsive so I arranged to call back on Friday morning and go into the matter more thoroughly.

This is a house of contrasts but I think any wee lad who was keen on animals would be very happy here.

W.M.M.

2/3/60.

I telephoned Father [redacted] about [redacted] NL 285 and [redacted] NL 286. Father [redacted] said he did not know these people at all but he would make enquiries [redacted]

W.M.