

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 422

Witness Name:

HIA 422

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 422

I, **HIA 422** will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born **HIA 422** on the
2. My mother died in 1960 when I was about three. My father was an alcoholic and my mum was ill so she put us into care as she was dying. There were six children in my family, three boys and three girls I was the youngest. One of my brothers was in the home and my three sisters were in Nazareth House.

St Josephs Baby Home 1960-1963

3. My memory of my time in the baby home is vague as I was too young at that stage.

Nazareth Lodge 1963-1969

4. I was moved up to Nazareth Lodge when I was about four or five years of age. I was placed into the Our Lady's group **SR 47** was in charge. There were several different groups including St. Joseph's, The Marion's and St Patrick's. Each group had a different coloured cup in the canteen and I think ours was red.

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5. I remember that the floors in the dormitories were wooden and we would constantly get skelps on our feet. We never got treated for them and eventually they put in plastic tiles.
6. .The bully boys were older they caned and whipped us with plastic bats.
7. The Sisters had a big stick and if you were bad they would whack you over the knuckles put you in the corridor, open the windows and get you to kneel in the corridor until your knees were sore. The stick was about half an inch thick. **SR 47** did this to me on a regular basis during my time in the home.
8. The food in the home was awful. We got cornflakes in a block with no milk I think they may have put water in it. The spaghetti also came in a block. Supper was bread and they would get a big pot of fat that was nearly cold and dip the bread into it then throw it on our plates.
9. I was always hungry in the home. There was a bin yard out the back and I used to take bread from the bins to eat it. There would sometimes be a fire lit to burn rubbish and I would toast the bread and eat it.
10. We always had chores to do and once I got thrown into a big boiler room with a chimney and I was told to clean it inside. I was probably only nine or ten at the time. It was all soot and I was given a wire brush to clean I imagine that my lungs were probably black from all the work. I wasn't given a mask or protective gear I was just told to clean.
11. On a Saturday we would have to polish the floors. They would put the wax down maybe about half an inch thick and you had to take your shoes off and put dusters on your feet. Each child had a certain part of the floor to do and we had to keep going until we could nearly see our faces in the floor. The nuns would stand over us supervising.

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12. The bully boys always told us to keep our heads under the blankets and when you'd put your head under you would sweat. It was difficult to breathe and I felt as though we were suffocating. If you peeped your head out you would get beaten. We all shared the same dormitory I think two of the boys were called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who was shot during the troubles.
13. There were Charge Girls in the home and they came and went. They didn't live in the home. I know one of them was known as [REDACTED] I recall getting caught out of my bed one night and a charge girl came up and said to me what are you doing? The next thing she had her shoe off and whacked me over the head opening my head and making it bleed. Sister **SR 47** came up and the girl told her I had fallen on the bed. She put a plaster on me and told me to get into bed.
14. There was a charge girl called **NL 4** who was a bit of a bully. I always remember her being wicked if she caught you out of bed. One time we were in Ballyhornan and she picked on me to brush the floor in the dinner hall, I remember throwing the brush down and running to my dorm. I think one of the nuns may have said something to reprimand her.
15. After that incident **NL 4** was nice to me. I used to go to the [REDACTED] family for a few weeks each year and they owned a mill. When I would come back to the home I'd have a shoebox full of money and **NL 4** would ask me for some to get her hair done. I think she was only nice because she wanted money.
16. We did not get bathed on a regular basis. I remember that there was a square shower in the home that was used on a Saturday I think. We got up at seven o'clock and went to bed at six o'clock. It didn't matter if it was summer or winter. I remember there being a field outside and you could see the farmer doing the hay in the summer. I would watch him and wish I was out there.

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17. We went to school on site and there was one nun called **SR 34** she used to grab us by the side locks and pull us up then she would swing us round and then we got beaten. I don't remember much about the education we used to draw things but we never had homework.
18. Our uniforms were corduroy brown and we had short trousers. The nuns used to whip us around the legs with a cane both in school and at home. It would usually be one of the nuns who taught us who would be doing the whipping and it was a regular occurrence when we misbehaved.
19. One day I left the home to go out to the shop and I got lost. I remember stopping a bus on the Ormeau Road, I didn't know where I was and I when I got back to the home the head nun came out and she pulled off her belt, a black belt and beat the crap out of me. This only happened once but the beatings and knuckle sticks went on for a few years.
20. The older boys in the home used to cane us as well. There was a resident called **NL 28** **[REDACTED]** He was cared for by a staff member called **NL 5** **[REDACTED]** He would walk over to us and lift our hand to his hand and then hit it a slap. He would immediately start crying and **NL 5** would beat the shit out of us for hitting him. **NL 5** would have beaten us regularly.
21. In the summer we would be taken to Ballyhorman. There were wires coming out of the walls and we were always getting electric shocks. The place was coming down with ear wigs and was very unsafe.
22. In the home I did not get to see my brothers or sisters I didn't even know they were there. My sister **[REDACTED]** would come up when she was released from care and bring me to my father's house. As a result of our time in care my family are not close and it has affected our relationship.

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23. My father did not come to visit us in Nazareth Lodge and any time I went to visit him he would be lying in bed. I used to think he was sick but he was lying in bed drunk.
24. I left the home when I was eleven or twelve and went to live with my father in [REDACTED]. I sometimes wished that I had stayed in care like my brothers who went to Kircubbin. Four of us went back to live with my father but when he was drinking he was a wicked man. He would beat you and put pokers in the fire and then he would start on us. He would put the hot poker up towards our faces. Without alcohol he was the nicest wee man.
25. The Welfare came to Nazareth Lodge and I was always at the front of the queue to see them. They would talk to us. I don't remember them coming to my father's house when I would have really needed them. I do not recall any other inspections in the home. However, I remember on one occasion coming down the steps into the dining room and the tables were all set with new crockery, there must have been somebody visiting as it was only used the once.
26. I do not recall seeing a doctor in the home but I know that I was admitted to hospital and I think I had my appendix removed. I remember a dentist coming to the home because he may have been Indian and wore a turban. I remember it because a tube got stuck to my tooth. A barber came to the home on a regular basis and we had no choice in what they did it was a short, back and sides.
27. We were never taken out but at Christmas we got taken to a factory I think it was called Mackie's. We met Santa Claus and would be given presents to take back. In the home we would get sweets on our birthday. I don't know if they were from the nuns or if my sister left them for me.
28. I have some fond memories of [REDACTED] SR 150 [REDACTED] who worked in the linen room. I used to help her out by brushing up the scraps and all that. There was another lady called [REDACTED] who used to take me to

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██████████ to her farm. It only had one cow and some chickens, I often thought how good it would have been if ██████████ adopted me.

29. I was an altar boy in the home but I don't remember there being any incidents.

30. We got a lollipop on a Friday and in later years we were given two bob probably the equivalent to ten pence.

31. When I was back living with my father I went to ██████████ in ██████████ and then onto ██████████ where we got canned regularly. I was always very far behind the others in my class.

Life after Care

32. From the age of fourteen or fifteen I became alcohol dependent. I was really heavy on it and would have drunk up alleys, in the house anywhere and usually on my own. I still drink now but it's much more controlled.

33. After leaving school I always had work and eventually I worked for twelve years in welding for a man that lived off the ██████████ I worked there up until 1982.

34. I have not worked since 1982 and my health has deteriorated. I have a bad back and suffer from depression both of which I take medication for. I also take tablets for my thyroid. I have not attended a counsellor in relation to my time in care.

35. I reside alone in Housing Executive accommodation.

36. I believe that an apology should come from both the religious Orders and the State who both played a part in the care I received both during my time in Nazareth Lodge and when I went back to my father. There was no

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support mechanism and nobody to look after me; I never had any guidance and struggle with life as a result.

37. I feel that a support service would allow me to speak with others and get some assistance when I feel I need it.

Statement of Truth

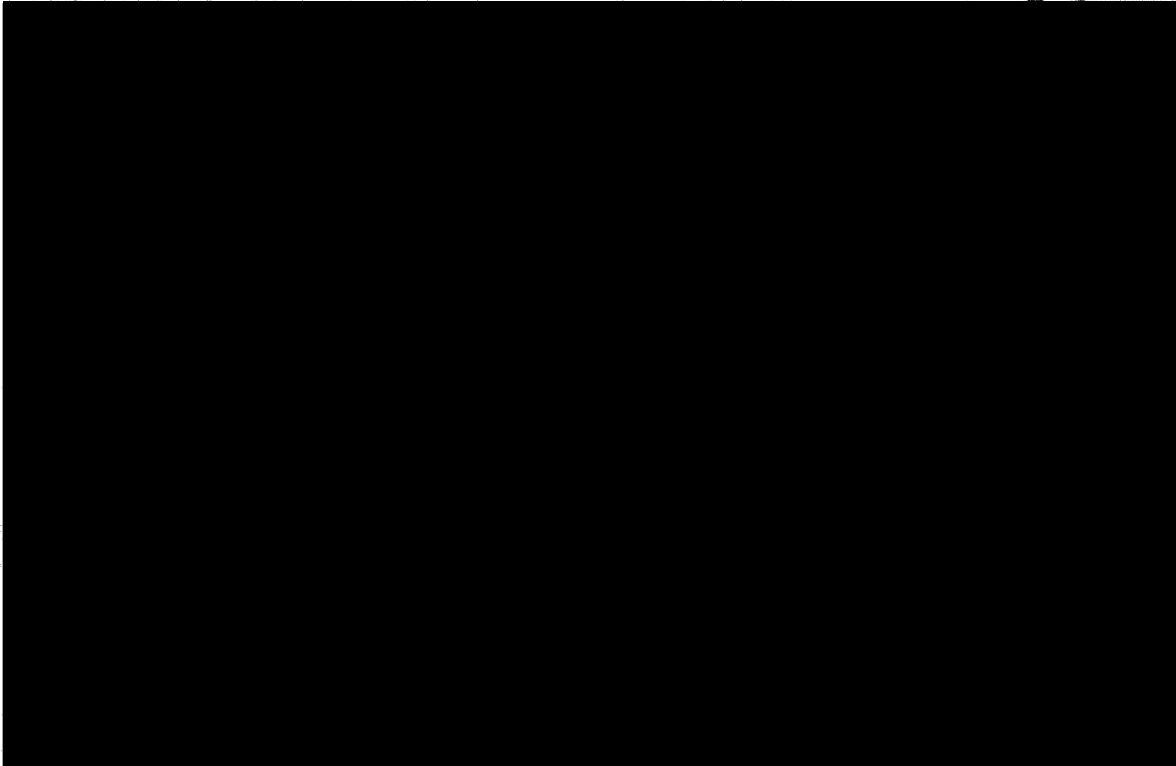
I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed

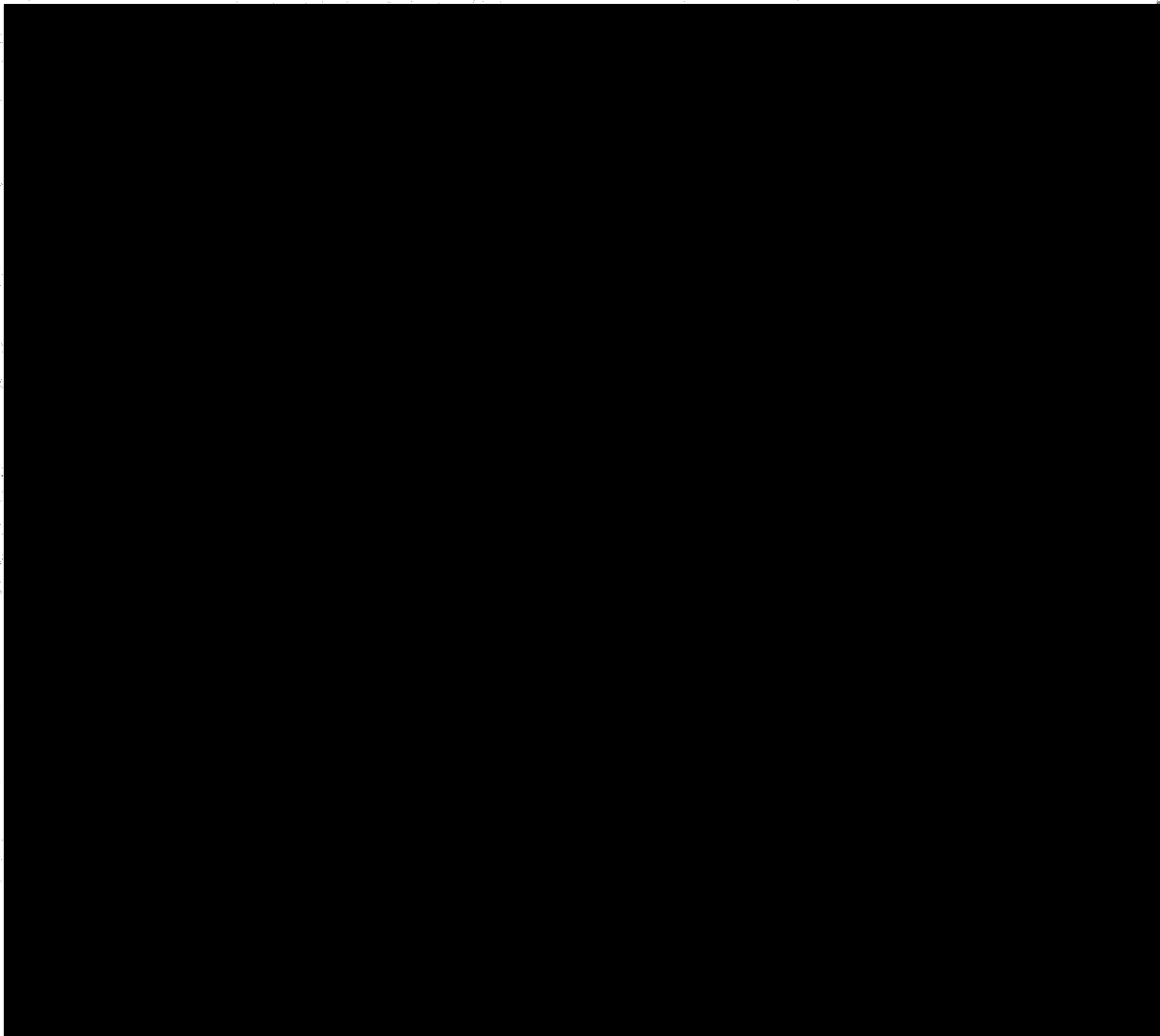
HIA 422

Dated

11/7/14



(n) To report that [redacted] HIA 422 [redacted] c/o. [redacted]
[redacted] was admitted to the Ulster Hospital on
20th July.



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