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HIA REF: 104

Witness Name: HIA 104

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 104

I, HIA 104 will say as follows:-

Personal Details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] My mother was from a small town called [REDACTED] in County Tyrone. She worked in the canteen at the [REDACTED] My mother was about forty years old when she got pregnant but she was not married. I was born in Downe Hospital in Downpatrick. I was placed as soon as I was born in the baby wing of Nazareth Lodge, Belfast. I think it was called St Joseph's. My mother came to see me all the time when I was in the home.

Nazareth Lodge (May 1963 – 29 August 1974)

2. As I got older I was moved to [REDACTED] NL 5 group at Nazareth Lodge. I had been in another group before that. I cannot recall the name of that group but I remember being content up until I was moved to [REDACTED] NL 5 group when I was about five or six years old. [REDACTED] SR 34 was the nun in charge of this group and [REDACTED] NL 5 was a civilian employee. [REDACTED] NL 5 was extremely strict.

PRIVATE

3. **SR 34** was also the principal of the primary school in Nazareth Lodge. She was good to me most of the time and took me under her wing in a way. She put me in charge of the tuck shop which was like a red flag to a bull as I started to steal the sweets. One day **SR 34** called me into a room and asked if I had stolen anything. I denied any theft and she said she would give me one more chance to tell the truth but I denied it and then she made me empty out the sweets from my pockets. She gave me a really bad beating that day because I had let her down. I ended up crawling under the table and she was grabbing me out from underneath the table. She lost it completely and she was kicking me with her feet and boots and hitting me with her hands. I was about seven or eight at the time and I felt really bad about this incident.
4. On another occasion I was supposed to be an altar boy when someone was visiting the home but I stayed outside and played football. When I eventually came in **NL 5** took me into a small room and gave me a serious beating which I remember to this day. She had slapped me before this incident but never with the same severity. She beat me with her hands and kicked me with her feet. I was about eight or nine years old at the time. I am still not great with authority even now.
5. On another occasion after school I was playing in the old school dining room. The school was part of the home. Although it was in a different building it was part of the same complex. The school was separate from the home but the dining facilities were in the home and the nuns bedrooms were in the same building, all on ground floor level. We were taking off the rubber ends that were used to keep chairs from scraping the floor and we started playing football with them, making noise and throwing them around. I cannot remember which one caught us but either **SR 34** or **NL 5** came in and grabbed me and took me into her bedroom and gave me another beating which lasted between five and ten minutes and which I considered to be a bit excessive. I no longer recall the nature of my injuries nor do I recall receiving any medical treatment following this incident.

PRIVATE

6. On another occasion **NL 5** was making the bed and I think we were messing about and when she turned her back someone just pulled my sheet out a bit as a prank. She came back and saw what had happened and she slapped me with her hand again. **NL 4** was her side kick and she came in and she started to beat me as well. I had not had any problems with **NL 4** prior to this incident. I think I was between eight and ten years old at the time. I remember **NL 5** was called outside at the time and came back in to tell **NL 4** that her father had died. I recall thinking that was her punishment for having hit me. I did not see much of **NL 4** after that incident. She was another civilian employee.
7. We were definitely in the strictest group. We were always put to bed long before everyone else and in the summer you could hear them all out playing and we would be lying in bed from about 6pm in the evening, bright as a bell. It was bad in winter as well because **NL 5** would wake you up before the end of her shift and line you up outside the bedroom in the hallway to make sure everyone went to the toilet. The toilets were straight across the hallway. She lined up everyone in the dormitory every night and there were about twelve or thirteen of us in one dormitory. You were left standing there in the freezing cold in a t-shirt or vest and a pair of pants in the middle of winter.
8. **NL 5** did not like you drooling on the sheets. She would put a towel under you to protect the pillow but if it went through the towel and onto the pristine clean white pillow cases there was hell to pay for it. You would wake up every morning and check everything. At times **NL 5** would stand you up and just come behind you and pull at your underwear and check them to make sure there were no marks or anything on the back of them which was humiliating.
9. When I was in **NL 5** group we were always up early and we had our chores to do before mass and then we went to school. I had to clean the floor before breakfast with cloths attached to my feet. I think I left that group when I was about eleven years old.

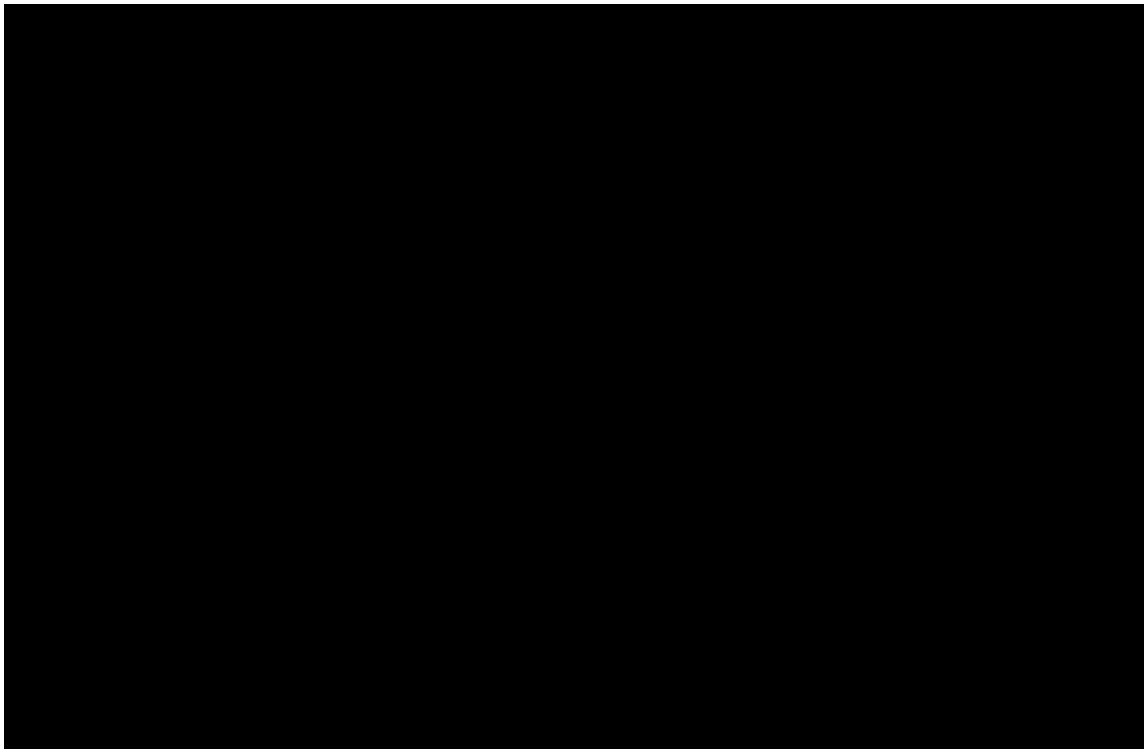
PRIVATE

10. I had no complaints about the food in the home.

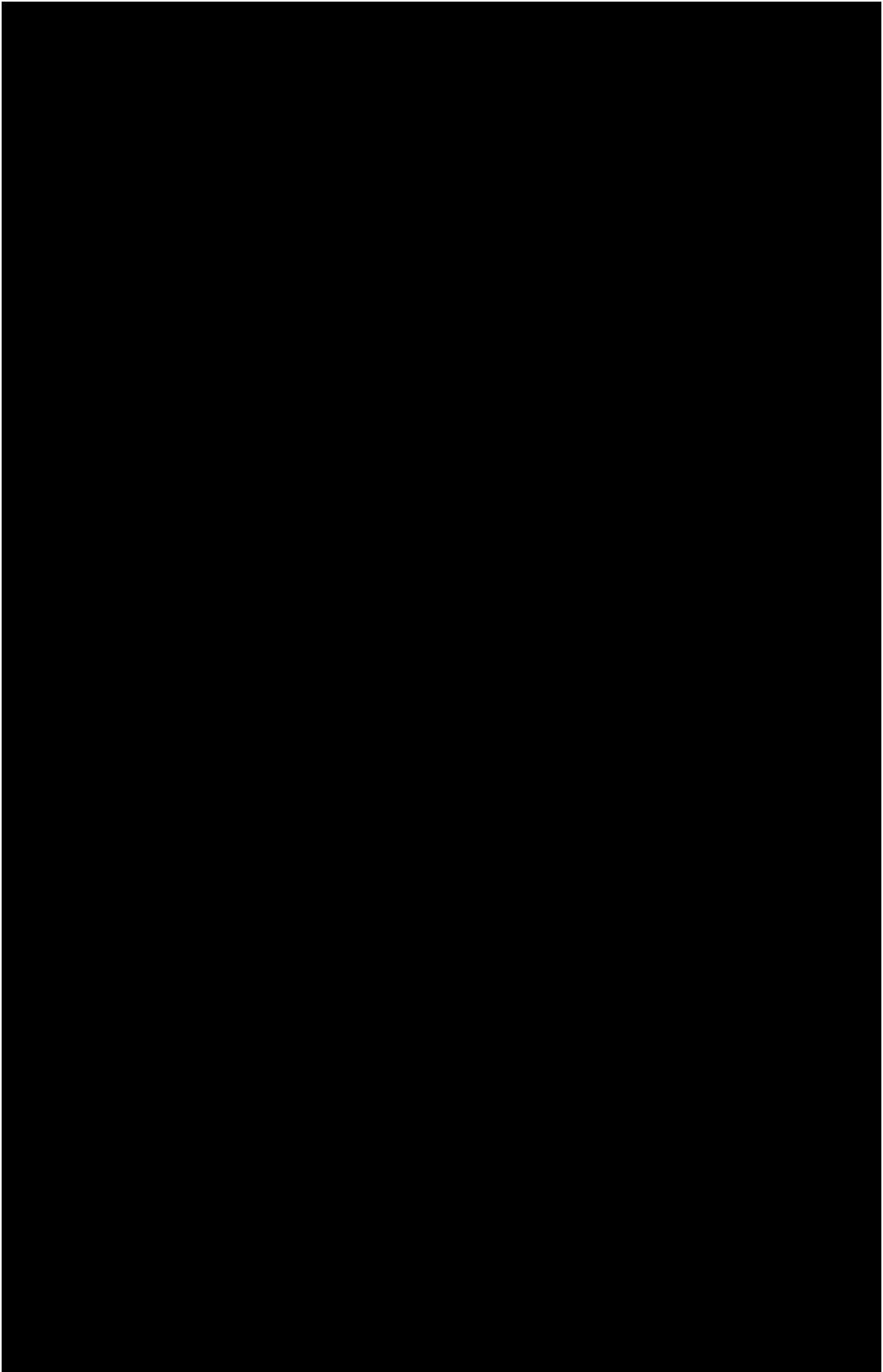
11. I went to school in the grounds. I do not recall having any problems at primary school.

12. My mother would visit about once a month and I would spend an hour or an hour and a half with her. We would usually just sit and talk to each other in the staff room but I remember a couple of times we went out to the park. **NL 5** would sometimes threaten that if I did not do something she asked she would ring my mother and not let her come to visit me. She would play those sorts of mind games with you. I never told my mother about being beaten in the home because you were too afraid to tell anyone.

13. I stayed in the Lodge until I was eleven and then I went to Rubane House, Kircubbin.



PRIVATE



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[REDACTED] I thought Rubane House was better than Nazareth Lodge.

[REDACTED]

19. During the holiday period at Nazareth Lodge we used to go to Ballyhornan every summer for a few weeks and then when we were in Rubane House we went to a big house in Glenariff. A lot of the boys in the home would go home for the summer but all those remaining went to Glenariff. Also, sometimes they would fix you up with people and you could go and stay with them for a while. I never stayed with my mother for holidays or weekends. I stayed with a number of different families. I stayed with a great family called [REDACTED] when I was in Nazareth Lodge. They lived in [REDACTED] I recall staying there one Christmas. I kept in contact with them even after I went to college and still stayed with them at weekends. They also did voluntary work for St Vincent de Paul but the mother, [REDACTED] is now deceased. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

PRIVATE

Life after care

21. I got a couple of CSE's then I left school and went to the College [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and got my catering exams and then I became a chef. Leaving the home was arranged by the brothers. There was a civilian member of staff called [REDACTED] DL 81 [REDACTED] and it was arranged that I would stay with his aunt for a while and they had arranged a training placement for me as a kitchen porter in a bar/restaurant in [REDACTED] called [REDACTED] but that only lasted for six months. I then got a job in the [REDACTED] A college lecturer who lived in [REDACTED] was a friend of the lady that I lived with so when I applied to go to college although I was refused initially he rang to advise that he had found a place on the course for me. I had a brilliant life after that. I studied at college for two years, worked in [REDACTED] Hotels and then I moved to [REDACTED] and worked in the [REDACTED] for about twenty years.

22. About four years ago I took a stroke so I had to come back home because there are better facilities at home. I can no longer work as it is too risky for me in my current condition to work in a kitchen.

23. My mother died about eleven or twelve years ago and I went to the funeral but I did not know any of her family or relatives. I lost their contact numbers and never kept in contact with any of them.

24. I don't know anything about my father. I never met him and my mother never told me about him.

25. I never married but I had a daughter with a girl when I was about twenty three or twenty four. We tried to make it work between us but it didn't work out so I went to [REDACTED] to work but I kept in contact with my daughter [REDACTED] I used to bring her over to [REDACTED] in the summers for a few weeks and I saved up all year to give her money at Christmas. She has turned out really well and she

PRIVATE

has three children so I am a grandfather. She lives nearby so I see her and my grandchildren every day. Things have worked out well.

26. Being in an institution is the only life I had so it's the only life I knew. Everything has to be a laugh with me just to cover up my shyness. I think it's just a veil really so I can hide the insecurities I feel. When I was younger I would never talk about the home. I used to be embarrassed to say I was in a home. I recall we went on a course when I started college and they wanted the class to get to know one another by telling a little about themselves but I said I had nothing to tell. The course tutor told the class about my background when I was not present and when I found out that he had told them I cracked up with him. In my view it was not up to him to tell them such personal information about my background. I wouldn't tell people until I really got to know them well but the more I started talking about it and telling people the easier it was to talk about it.

27. Some of the stuff that went on in the homes was not right. I don't think it is as bad now. It might have been the times as well. The early 1960's and the 1970's were just harder generations but definitely it should never have happened to the extent that some of it did. As you get older you do get a bit more mature and you do think of it differently. You think it was your life, there's nothing you can do about it, it's been done, it is now done and dusted.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

HIA 104

Dated

25/02/2014

HIA 104

PRIVATE

Date/Time	Details
13/03/12 17:15	Interview NL 5 at [REDACTED] Solicitor Savage Article 3 (a) and 3 PACE rights given in relation to Complaint of Child Cruelty: Reply "OK."
	1st Allegate - HIA 19 in 1963 hit him.
Reply	1 Know him 2nd Allegate HIA 16 - 1963 Hit him
	3rd Allegate HIA 104 1970 Kick & punch
Reply	Reply 1 Know him 4th Allegate HIA 152 - Slapped him and put a pillow over face in 1961
Reply	Not at all, those [REDACTED] weren't even in my group - I saw him at a funeral not that long ago.
Q.	Do you recall any of the assaults as described?
A.	Not at all I never assaulted any children in my time there and I can say that with a clear conscience. There were 4 Sisters there and 4 staff. It wasn't the staffs place to have to lift you hand - I never had to run to the runs in general the children were good. They were lovely children and there are quite a few of them in contact with me. I would guess I hit a child. I

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Date/Time	Details
	my hand to a child the whole time It was there - I wouldn't do it anyway.
Q	Allegation of HIA 152 readout.
A	Do you recall that?
A	Not at all, there was always a Sister there, patrolling at night. The other sisters went to recreation.
Q	Did you never have to patrol?
A	We would have been about, but not patrolling - I would have checked on we would have been coming & leaving the Sally room.
Q	Did you ever be in contact with the other groups.
A	In my room with Sister and Sister.
Q	Would you have checked on the children in the other groups at night?
A	No each staff looked after their own groups. I could say before you with a clear conscience that I have no recollection of anything like that happening. He wasn't even in my group. I don't know where they are getting the Stones from.
Q	Allegation of HIA 104 to NL 5
A	HIA 104 was in my group the brother John older than him.
Q	Did you hit him for not taking beds

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Date/Time	Details
A.	properly. I never let my little ones make the bed, because I was so perfect. I did them myself. In that group in particular there was only about 7 boys. Not at all I never hit a child. They wouldn't take the beds the way I wanted.
Q.	Did you punch and kick for that guy to sleep. HIA 104
A.	Not at all. I don't even remember him seeing Mass. I wouldn't do that and god you wouldn't do that.
Q.	Did you wake the boys to go to the toilet?
A.	If they had a problem I would have lifted the air taken them to the toilet. I would never have let them lie in wet pyjamas or shorts.
Q.	Did you slap them if they couldn't go.
A.	Not at all - ridiculous.
Q.	If you checked the pillow and it was wet, did you hit him on the head.
A.	Not at all. I threw the pillow out. I remember one child disabled and I put a wet cloth on the pillow and took it off in the morning and washed it. Don't remember if it was him.

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old, between 1971 and 1973. He alleges that he was in the dormitory and [NL 5] was making the bed and slapped him. He described me as her side kick and that I then came in and started to beat him as well.

39. I worked with a different group from [NL 5] and it would be unusual for me to be working alongside or close to her in the morning time. I believe I was living and working in [redacted] for most of the period between 1971 and 1973 but, I accept I was working in Nazareth Lodge when my mother died in 1974.

This is confirmed in the reference from [SR 47] which is dated 18th November 1975. I believe I obtained this reference before going to work in [redacted]

40. [HIA 104] made a statement to the police about this alleged incident on 25th November 2010 but he described it in a slightly different way. In his police account he alleged I was the person assaulting him in the dormitory when in the middle of this [NL 5] [NL 5] came into the room and told me something which resulted in me leaving the room in tears. He alleges he later found out that I had been told that my mother had died whereas in his statement to the HIA Inquiry, he claims I had been told it was my father who had died.

41. I do not recall [HIA 104] I have no recollection of hitting him. I have a clear memory that it was [SR 34] who told me that my mother had died. My mother died on [redacted] My recollection is she died on a Tuesday night and I was told this first thing the following morning by [SR 34] My brother had come up to Nazareth Lodge to tell me and as soon as I heard I went straight home with my brother.

I cannot think the nuns would have told [NL 5] first of all and then asked her to tell me. I therefore believe the allegation made by [HIA 104] could not possibly be true.

