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HIA REF: 225

Witness Name: HIA 225

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 225

I, HIA 225 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED]
2. I was the third of seven children. I had two older siblings called NHB 21 and DL 136 and four younger siblings called NHB 22, NL 60, NHB 23 and NL 3. When my mother had the younger children I was placed in Brethany Nursery twice and Williamson House Children's Home on the Antrim Road twice. We lived in the [REDACTED] of Belfast. We had a two bedroom house. My father was an alcoholic and I think he was domestically violent towards my mother. When I was about five or six my mother left home and never returned. I never saw her again. I understand that she moved to [REDACTED] for a while. I am not sure where she went after that. I think she has now passed away.
3. On the evening before I was placed in Nazareth Lodge my father set the house on fire by breaking a gas pipe in the kitchen when he was drunk. I do not know what woke me up but I came down the stairs and saw the fire and was able to wake everyone up so we all got out of the house safely. We stayed at a neighbour's house that night and we were all placed in care the next day. The boys were placed in Nazareth Lodge and the girls were placed in Nazareth House. NL 3 was initially placed in the nursery and then came to the main part

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of Nazareth House Lodge when he was older. I was eight when we were all placed in care in 1965.

4. We were taken into care by a social worker called **NL 179**. He told us we were going on holiday for a week to a big house like a castle and our house would be fixed by the time we got back. At the end of the week I was standing waiting for him to come back for us to take us home but he never came. I do not remember ever seeing him again while I was in care. That was my first memory of a social worker and his dishonesty has remained with me. In 1982 when I was an adult and [REDACTED] I met **NL 179** again while I was [REDACTED]. I spoke to him about what he had said. He apologised to me and justified his comments by saying "that's what we did in those days."

Nazareth Lodge Children's Home, Belfast (13/01/1965 - 20/08/1968)

5. I was first admitted to Nazareth Lodge on 13th January 1965 when I was eight years old. My sisters were taken to Nazareth House. **DL 136** and I were placed in Nazareth Lodge and **NL 3** was taken to the nursery to begin with. I did not see **NL 3** for some time after he was taken to the nursery.
6. I remember the first thing the nuns did was to put us in the bath and scrub us clean. My clothes were taken and I was given new ones. Every child that was in Nazareth Lodge was placed in a group. There were different groups and a nun and a civilian member of staff were in charge of each group. **DL 136** and I were placed in the Sacred Heart group. **SR 156** was in charge of our group. She was kind and I remember her knitting me a jumper once. She was only there for about a year.
7. We made our own beds, we cleaned, we cleaned the baths, and we polished the corridors and floors with an orange wax using bits of blanket.
8. **DL 136** started to run away a lot. Boys were normally moved to Rubane House when they were eleven but he was moved to Rubane prematurely because he

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kept running away. I did not know he was leaving and I did not see him for three years after he was moved.

9. A number of months after I was placed in Nazareth Lodge I remember having athletes foot and being given cream to treat it. My feet were so painful it made me cry and I remember being beaten by **SR 34** with a wooden bat because I was crying. She was very harsh and I remember her beating other children for messing around or talking after lights out.
10. I remember a couple of times when we were having baths there was a member of staff whose name I cannot remember who would pull our towels off and laugh at the size of our penises. She also used to flick us with a towel. She also used to encourage older boys to do it too. It was very painful, especially if the towels were damp.
11. I remember being force fed turnip by the same member of staff when I was about nine. I did not want the turnip but this person pushed it into my mouth and hit me around the face and made me swallow it. This made me vomit and she then made me eat the vomit.
12. I remember having to go **[REDACTED]** with my father. I assume it was in relation to the **[REDACTED]**. **[REDACTED]** I remember he then started to come to visit us and take us out on Sundays. We had not seen him in maybe a year. He took us up to Nazareth House to see my sisters. This was a standing arrangement which was put in place when I was in the Sacred Heart group.
13. After a while I decided that I wanted out of the Sacred Heart group as it was too tough. I worried about how **NL 3** would cope if he was subjected to the bullying from other boys, nuns and members of staff that I had both experienced and witnessed. I wanted to try and protect him. When **NL 3** moved up from the nursery the both of us were moved to the Marion group.
14. There was a woman in the Marion group called **NL 4** My first memory of her was that she was nice. She gave us sweets and we thought she was

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lovely. However, that image changed when I realised she was actually a frightening woman. There was a boy called **DL 157** who had a problem with wetting the bed. Looking back with adult hindsight I think he might have had a learning disability. **NL 4**'s way of dealing with bed wetting was to shove a flannel into his mouth and severely beat him in front of everyone in the dormitory. She told us not to tell or she would do the same to us.

15. I remember one Sunday my father had come to collect me as had been arranged when I was in the Sacred Heart group. I went to change before we went to see my sisters. **NL 4** called me down to the refectory and asked me who told me I could change. She was obviously annoyed that she had not been asked if the Sunday visits with my father could still take place after I had moved into her group. She punched me, pulled me by the collar and threw me about. She told me to go and change again. My father asked me what had happened and I would not tell him. He insisted and eventually I told him. I am told that he went in to the refectory, confronted her and knocked her over. **NL 4** left me alone for a while after that.

16. I do not know how but my father got a **[REDACTED]** so I would have seen him quite often. When I was ten he left and I never saw him again. He moved to England. I knew he had planned to go but I didn't know when he was going. He wrote to me when I was in Nazareth Lodge and Rubane House but I never saw him again. He has since passed away. After my father left **NL 4** reverted back to form. If she considered that you had stepped out of line, for example not making your bed to her satisfaction or if she thought you were being cheeky, she would hit you. If you did not suck up to her by saying "I really like you **NL 4**" or "you are really kind **NL 4**" she would hit you.

17. We used to go to Ballyhornan during the summer. There was a shop nearby which had a yard behind it where there were empty lemonade bottles. Some of us, myself, **HIA 21**, **DL 95** and two other boys, worked out that if you took the empty lemonade bottles back to the shop they would give you 1p. However the shopkeeper must have worked out what we were doing and told on us. **NL 4** went mad and shouted at everyone. Later that night when

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we were all in bed and she had worked out who the culprits were she went round to the culprits' beds and hit them with a small wooden bat while they were in their beds. She started with the other boys so I could hear them screaming and knew what was coming. I was terrified. She was extremely angry with me as I was the only culprit from her group. We slept in Nissan huts and the nuns slept somewhere else but I do not understand how the nuns did not hear the commotion.

18. I learned that the only way to survive was to not bring attention to myself.
19. The first Christmas I was in Nazareth Lodge I stayed with **NL 62** and **NL 61** **NL 61** I do not know how I was introduced to them. It was my only experience of real family life. They were lovely. I spent every Christmas after that with them. They are probably the reason I survived my time in care and they encouraged me after I left care. They had adopted four children from St Joseph's Baby Home. They wanted to adopt me but my father would not allow it. He would not even allow them to foster me. They befriended me and I remained close to them until they died. They attended my wedding and my daughter's christening. I think they knew that things were difficult for me in Nazareth Lodge but I would not tell them anything as I was too frightened.
20. When I was about ten I remember being on a television show called "Tommy's Toy Shop" with another boy from Nazareth Lodge. I was allowed to choose a toy from "Tommy's Toy Shop" and I choose a scalextric set. The other boy chose a big plastic truck. When we got back to Nazareth Lodge **NL 4** took my scalextric set off me and gave it to the other child and gave me the plastic truck. I felt that I was too old for the plastic truck so I gave it to **NL 3**
21. I was in the choir as I could sing. **SR 30** played the organ. There were four of us from the choir - myself, **HIA 132** **DL 94** and **HIA 56** **HIA 56** - who were invited to sing on a tea time television show called "Tea Time with Tommy". It was aired on television over Christmas when I was staying with **NL 61 / NL 62** so I got to see them watching me on television which was really

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nice. I remember they bought me a racing set that Christmas to make up for the scalextric set which **NL 4** had taken from me.

22. I did alright at school when I was in Nazareth Lodge. There was a teacher called **NL 63** who encouraged me. In school they would have used a bamboo cane or a strap but he only caned you or strapped you if you had done something wrong. I remember he wrote a sum on the board once and said he was going to leave the room for ten minutes so we could work out the answer. When he left the room I worked out the answer on my jotter. Before he came back the class were discussing the answer and I realised my answer was different to everyone else's so I rubbed it out and wrote down the same answer as everyone else. When he came back and worked out the sum with us I realised that my first answer was actually the right answer. He asked me to wait behind after class and said he was surprised that I had not got the right answer. He asked me to show him my jotter and he saw that I had got the right answer and had rubbed it out. He gave me six of the best which would have been the normal punishment at that time. I suppose that taught me a lesson about copying.

23. I did the 11+ but no-one properly helped us to prepare for it. All I was given was two encyclopaedias a few days before the exam. I did the exam and then forgot about it. When the results came out **NL 4** gathered our group together and said she had something to tell everyone. She said we have a stupid person amongst us and told everyone that I had failed to 11+. She said to me "I was right, you are stupid after all". Calling me stupid hurt me more than any beating she could have given me.

24. When I did not pass the 11+ I knew that I would be going to Rubane. If you passed the 11+ you got to stay at Nazareth Lodge and go to grammar school in Belfast. My brother **NL 3** passed the 11+ and stayed in Nazareth Lodge until he was 16.

De La Salle Boys' Home, Rubane House, Kircubbin (20/08/1968 – 17/04/1972)

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25. [REDACTED]

26. [REDACTED]

27. [REDACTED]

28. [REDACTED]

29. [REDACTED]

30. [REDACTED]

31. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

32. [REDACTED]

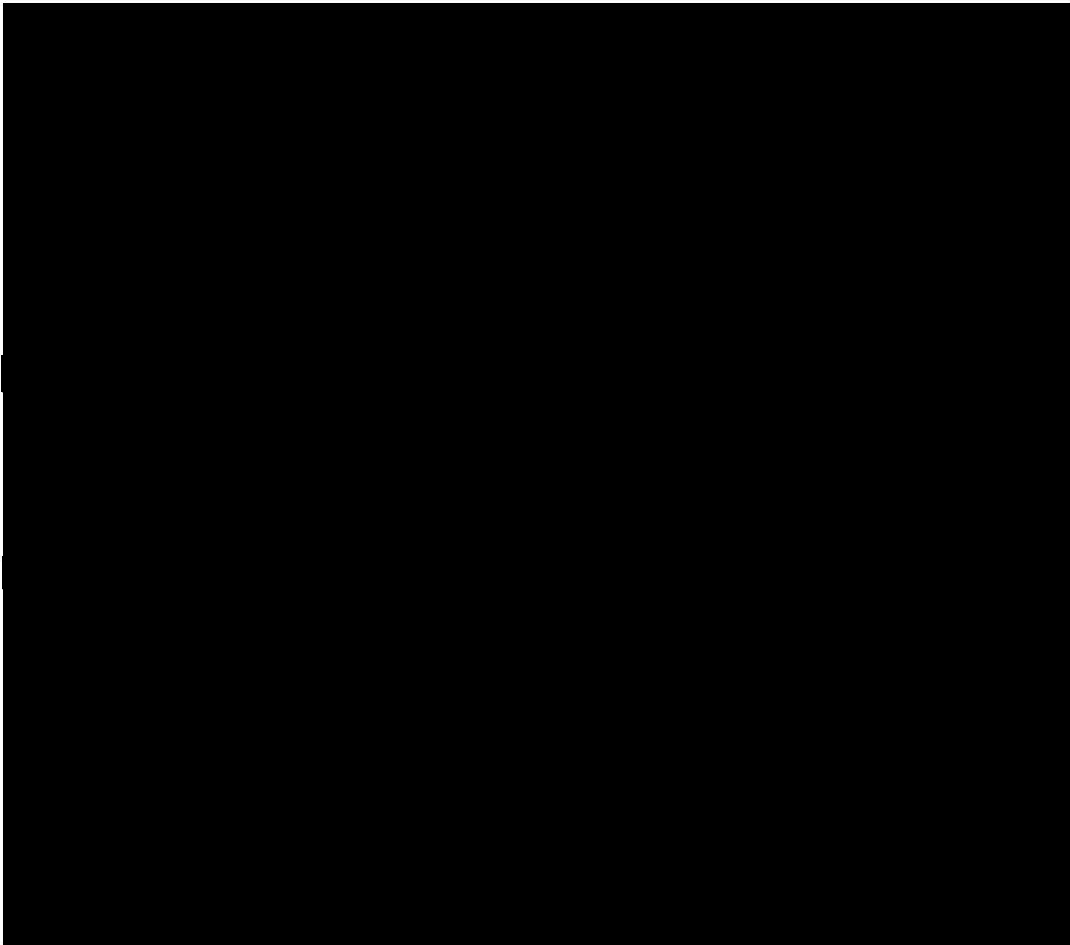
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34. [REDACTED]

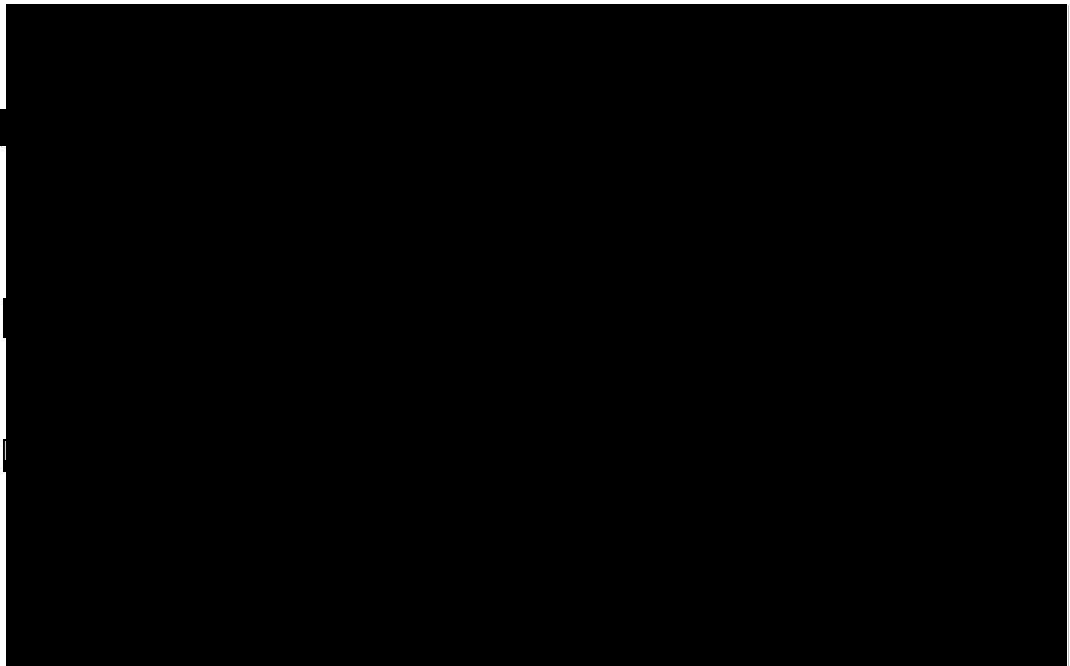
35. [REDACTED]

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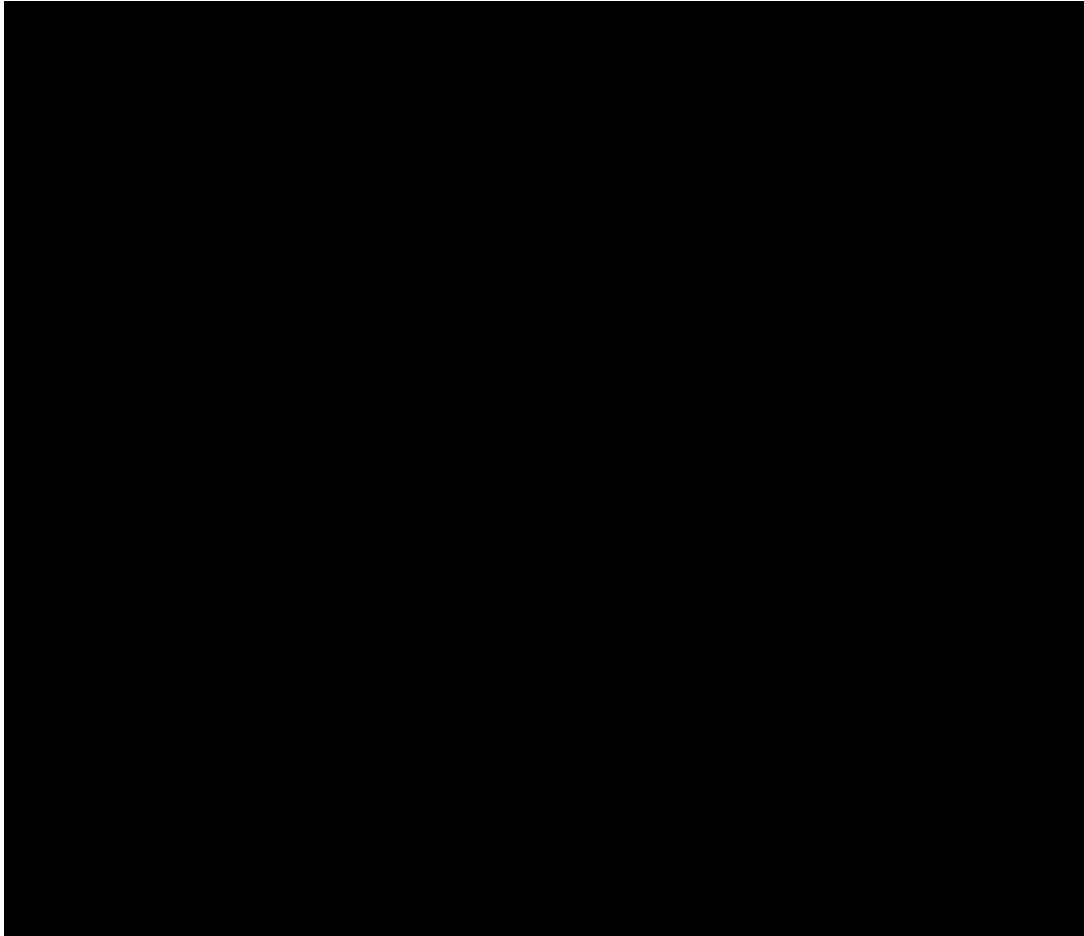
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Life After Care

40. Around Easter 1972, when I was fifteen and a half years old, I left Rubane.

Before I left, my brother DL 136 was visiting me in Rubane and I was visiting him in Kincora. I thought that I was going to Kincora because that is where DL 136 was and that we would be together again. Since I was placed in care, the thought of us all being together again as a family was what kept me going so I was initially angry when I found out that I was not going to Kincora. I had no idea where I was going as nobody had told me. There was no preparation and there was no aftercare. I did not know how to look after myself. I was placed in digs at [REDACTED]. This is where I met DL 137. He came into my room one afternoon and sexually assaulted me. He held me down and tried to masturbate me. I realised I had to try and survive here as well. DL 136 came back and stayed for a while. I did not tell DL 136 what was happening but DL 137 left me alone while DL 136 was there. After I left

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care and moved to a flat I ended up having to ask **DL 136** to leave my flat for stealing my money when I was about seventeen or eighteen. I have not seen him since.

41. When I was in Rubane it was arranged for me to a training course in a government training centre on the [REDACTED] to be an apprentice [REDACTED]. However they told me that class was full so I did an [REDACTED] course instead which lasted 3-6 months. I then went to work for [REDACTED].

42. When I was seventeen I went back to college and got five "O"-Levels. I worked in [REDACTED] and I then worked in a [REDACTED]. I think I did well to get my exams but I still thought I was stupid. After a childhood in care I found it overwhelming to make decisions.

43. When I thought back to my childhood I thought that there has to be a better way for people to treat each other. I decided I would like to give something back to [REDACTED]. That is when I decided to become a [REDACTED]. I applied for a post as a [REDACTED] with the [REDACTED] when I was twenty one. One of the women on the interview panel, [REDACTED], told me that if I wanted to work as a [REDACTED] to go and get a year's experience and come back if I was still interested. I phoned **BR 2** and told him about the experience I needed so he invited me to come to work in Rubane on alternate weekends. I assisted with Chalet 3 and I helped supervise activities and make the boys' tea. I then applied for a job with the [REDACTED] and I was given a job in a [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] as an [REDACTED]. I trained and qualified as a [REDACTED] and have had various [REDACTED] jobs since. I have progressed to be a [REDACTED]. I think I wanted to be a [REDACTED] to show [REDACTED].

44. The girls seemed to have an equally difficult time in Nazareth House and have had long term issues. My eldest sister **NHB 21** has mental health problems. She

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is bi-polar. NHB 22 got married and went to live in [REDACTED]. She is anorexic and an alcoholic. NL 60 suffers from depression and her grandchild is in care. NHB 23 also had mental health problems and she committed suicide when she was forty six. NL 3 was the brains of the family. He passed the eleven plus. He moved to [REDACTED] with NHB 21 and her husband. He joined the [REDACTED] and was engaged to be married however he committed suicide when he was twenty six. I have not seen DL 136 since the incident in the flat after I left Rubane.

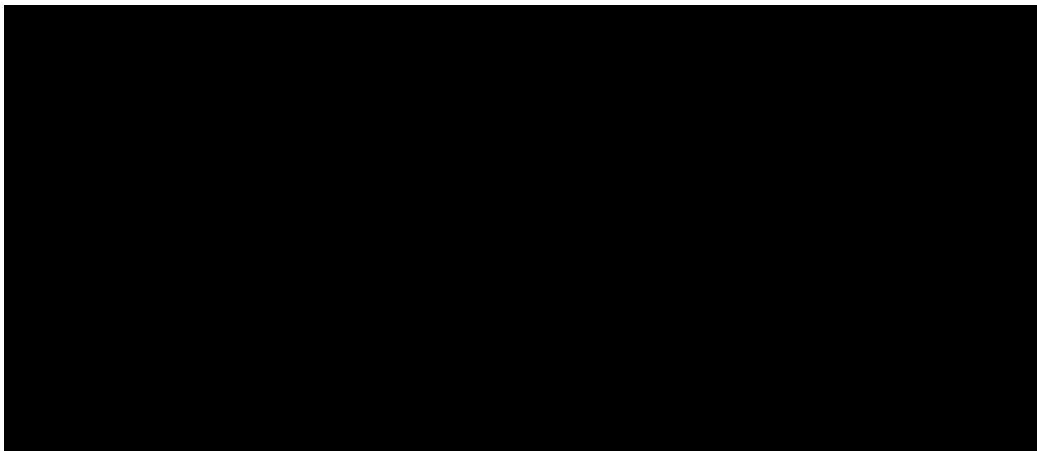
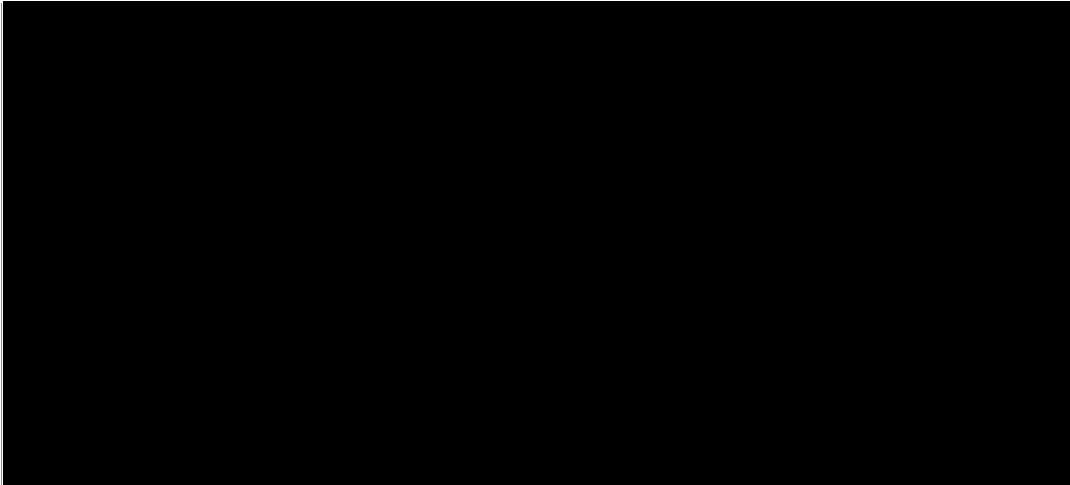
45. In reflecting about my childhood experiences and contrasting it with life after care I do not see myself as a victim I see myself as a survivor.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed HIA 225

Dated 10-3-14



HIA 225 – HIA reference 225

45. **HIA 225** has made a statement to the HIA Inquiry which is dated 10th March 2014. In it he says he was in Nazareth Lodge between 1965 and 1968. As his date of birth is [REDACTED] it would appear he was placed there when he was 9 years old. I do not recall **HIA 225**. He has claimed he observed me shoving a flannel into the mouth of another boy called **DL 157** who wet the bed and that I beat him in front of everyone in the dormitory. I deny this completely. I do remember **DL 157**. **DL 157** Sometimes I would have taken him or some other child out of the Home and brought him by bus to my mother's house for the day and then I would have brought him back with me that evening. It was like a day out. I recall **DL 157** was one of the children and I took him to my parent's house a few times. I was quite fond of the child. There is no way I would have pushed a flannel into his mouth as **HIA 225** has alleged.

46. He also claims I punched him and that he told his father who then attacked me and knocked me over. This did not happen. I do not recall his father or if he got a job painting around the Home. He alleges I attacked a number of boys when on holidays at Ballyhornan during the summer. He alleges I hit the boys with a small wooden bat. I deny this completely. I never used a wooden bat to hit anybody. I did sometimes use a

small wooden ruler to slap children for misbehaviour. However he has said I went round the boys in bed who were in a different group and attacked them before I did the same to him. I would never have gone to another group as he alleges as I had no responsibility for them. I am sure there would have been a nun or other lay worker supervising this other group and I could not have simply gone into another Nissan Hut and beat these boys without another adult noticing. I do not recall what HIA 225 has alleged in paragraph 23 of his HIA statement. I do not believe I would ever have insulted a child because they had failed an exam such as the Eleven plus. In paragraph 20 he refers to a television show called "Tommy's Toy Shop", in fact I believe he means the TV show "Tea Time With Tommy". I recall going to the television studio with SR 47 NL 5 and four boys who sang a song. I cannot recall if HIA 225 was one of them. I also do not remember if the four boys were given toys afterwards but if they were I do not accept I would have taken the toys away afterwards.

47. In addition to the HIA participants, I have been provided with details of other allegations made against me.

