

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 64

Witness Name: HIA 64

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 64

I, HIA 64 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] in Belfast. I am the eldest of four children. I have two younger brothers HIA 152 and HIA 19 and one younger sister NHB 12 who has since passed away.
2. Until I was six years old, I lived with my parents and my siblings on the [REDACTED]. My parents weren't married as far as I know. My grandmother told me that my siblings and I were taken into care by the cruelty people – she may have meant the NSPCC. She told me we were taken away by two men called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
3. My brother NHB 152 and I were placed in Nazareth Lodge, Belfast. My youngest brother HIA 19 was placed in St. Joseph's Baby Home, which was part of Nazareth Lodge. My sister NHB 12 was placed in Nazareth House, Belfast.

Nazareth Lodge, Belfast (26th February 1958 – 15th August 1963)

4. I was placed in Nazareth Lodge when I was seven years old and I remained there until I was twelve. I was put in Our Lady's group along with my brother

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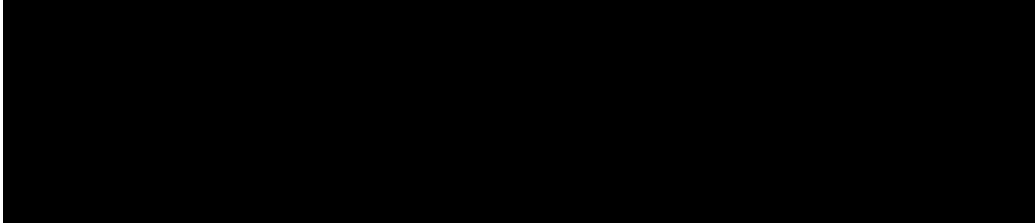
HIA 152 Sister SR 47 was in charge of my group. She was ok. Sister SR 71 was a lovely nun; I think she was in charge of the Marion group.

5. Sister SR 34 was in charge of St. Joseph's group and she was a bad one. She was the worst nun. If you did something wrong, she would take you by your sideburns, lift you up off the floor, drop you and then kick you. She was a woman. She weighed about and we were only six or seven years old.
6. NL 5 was a civilian staff member who worked alongside Sister SR 34 in St. Joseph's group. At times she was alright, but other times she was a terror. She thought nothing of thumping you.
7. We slept in dormitories with about twenty to twenty-five boys in each dorm. An older boy called a charge hand was in charge of each dorm. The charge hand in my dormitory was called but I cannot recall his first name. When you were younger you were bullied until you learned to stand up for yourself. You had to fight or you got bullied. Even when we were seven years old, we were fighting amongst ourselves.
8. On wet Saturdays we couldn't get out to play so the charge hands would pick younger boys to fight each other for their amusement. They would put you with someone who was a bit bigger. We could fight up to six or seven fights in one day until you were beaten or blood was drawn.
9. Day to day life in Nazareth Lodge wasn't too bad. We got up at about 7am and did our chores before we went down to breakfast. These chores involved cleaning our dormitory and making our beds. The food in the Lodge was bog standard, it was nothing special but if you didn't eat it you starved. There was plenty of food. It wasn't the best but we didn't go hungry. After breakfast we had more chores to do like cleaning the kitchen and the dining room.
10. I went to school onsite in Nazareth Lodge. The education was bog standard and when I left I couldn't read or write. I can't remember the names of any of the teachers in the school. We would often be punished in school. In the

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winter, the teacher would make you put your hands out the window ledge until they were blue with cold. Then they would hit you across the knuckles with a ruler until your knuckles were so swollen you couldn't even hold a pencil. This happened to me a few times.

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12. I never remember anybody from Welfare or Social Services visiting the home. I remember the children who were under the Welfare would get little presents and things at their birthdays and throughout the year. I never got anything. At Christmas, we would get a few sweets but that was it.

13. I never saw a doctor in the Lodge. If you were sick, the nuns took you to hospital. I was in hospital once while I was there but I have no idea why.

14. When I made my Confirmation in 1960, the nuns arranged a sponsor for me. My sponsor gave me a big Bible and new clothes but they were taken off me and I never saw them again. I don't know who took them from me. Sister **SR 47** was in charge of my group so it may have been her.

15. I got to see my sister **NHB 12** every once in a while. I was an altar server so I got the opportunity to go up to Nazareth House then. I became an altar server after Sister **SR 47** told me one evening I was going to serve Mass in Latin. I was shocked as I knew no Latin. Every evening that week, I had to kneel on the hard floor while Sister **SR 47** read out in Latin. I had to repeat everything she said and by the following Sunday I was serving Mass in Latin.

16. I was put up for adoption when I was in Nazareth Lodge but I ran away twice to get out of it. My attitude was if my mother didn't want me, nobody would.

17. I was never sexually abused in Nazareth Lodge and nobody ever tried to abuse me. I wasn't aware of any sexual abuse going on in the Lodge but if

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there was, I put my head down and carried on. I did what I had to do to get on with it.

18. I was sent to Rubane House when I was twelve years old in 1963. I was expecting it because I had seen older boys moving to Rubane before.

Rubane House, Kircubbin (15th August 1963 – 13th January 1966)

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Life after care

32. The Brothers found me digs on [REDACTED] with a woman named [REDACTED] I spent four years there with a boy called [REDACTED] who is dead now. My brother [REDACTED] HIA 152 also moved in when he left Rubane. I had to find my own job so I became a painter and decorator. I did this for four years until I was twenty. I moved to England then for seven years where I

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worked with [REDACTED] for a year and a half. Then I worked in the [REDACTED] outside Liverpool for five years. When I left there I was a semi-skilled panel operator.

33. I met my wife [REDACTED] when I was nineteen and we have been married for forty-two years. We have two grown-up sons and one grandson [REDACTED] who is seventeen. We moved back to Belfast about thirty years ago. I worked at painting and in [REDACTED]. Then I worked for twenty years in the [REDACTED] on the [REDACTED]. When it closed down, I got a job doing security for [REDACTED]. I've been there four years now and I am a key holder.

34. I have a great relationship with my wife, I am lucky to have her. Before I met her, I was a bit wild and aggressive when I first came out of Rubane. I used to go drinking on a Friday evening and not stop until Monday morning. I settled down when I met her and now I only have a few drinks at the weekend.

35. I have a good relationship with my brothers [REDACTED] HIA 152 and [REDACTED] HIA 19 [REDACTED] HIA 152 [REDACTED] lives with his partner in [REDACTED]. We all get on well and meet up regularly. I tried to keep in touch with my sister [REDACTED] NHB 12 after she came out of Nazareth House. She married [REDACTED] and moved to England and she died when she was thirty-four. I was talking to her three days before she passed away. I couldn't get time off work to attend her funeral so [REDACTED] HIA 152 and I clubbed together to send [REDACTED] HIA 19 as our representative.

36. I have never made any attempt to find my mother. As far as I'm concerned, I let her go when I was fifteen. [REDACTED] NHB 12 was trying to find her before she died and [REDACTED] HIA 19 wants to but I have no interest.

37. I am still in touch with some of the boys from Rubane and I meet up with them at reunions now and again.

38. I lost my faith for a long time but I have been going to Mass every week for the past twenty-five years. I am a Eucharistic Minister and my wife is a reader.

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39. Although it was hard growing up in the home, I do not suffer from depression or anything like that. I just get on with things because life is too short.

40. I have reported the abuse I suffered to the police.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed_  HIA 64

Dated 25.11.13,

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Continuation of Statement of: **HIA 64**

[REDACTED]

have our own wardrobe or bedside cabinet because we didn't actually have any personal belongings. **SR 47** ran my group and would hand out our clothes from a communal wardrobe each morning. I left Nazareth Lodge when I was 11 years old to go to Rubane House, Kircubbin which was run by the De La Salle Order. I recall life at Nazareth Lodge being hard and the charge boy would have been very strict on us all. The charge boy would have put you out of the dorm at night if you did not go to sleep or even if you didn't have your head completely covered by the blanket. I even remember being put out for snoring. You had to wait in the corridor for the Sister to arrive, who would then give you some type of physical punishment for having been put out. You could end up standing in the corridor for hours, just waiting for the Sister to arrive to dish out the punishment. We normally went to bed around 7pm and you could still be waiting in the corridor by 9pm. **SR 34** was in charge of the 'St Joseph's' group and would take turns with **SR 47** to give out the punishment at night. **SR 34** was the worst when it came to punishment. **SR 34** was a **[REDACTED]** woman who would have been in her early 40s at this time. She wore a long black habit with rosary beads wrapped around her waist with a silver crucifix attached at the end. At punishment time **SR 34** would often grab me by my locks or my cheeks and use such force that it actually lifted me off both feet. The pain was excruciating and I vividly recall being very frightened by this. It is hard to quantify how often this would've happened but it was frequent. On average I would have been put out for punishment at least 2 or 3 times a month and over the years **SR 34** would have abused me in this manner many, many times. Whenever **SR 34** lifted me off my feet in this manner I would often fall to the ground and curl into a ball because she would always then kick me with her feet and punch me all over with both fists. **SR 34** would continue punching and kicking me until she thought that I had had enough. The other

Certified a true copy of an original signed document

[REDACTED]	HIA 64
Signature witnessed by: (Appropriate Adult)	

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Continuation of Statement of: **HIA 64**

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boys put out into the corridor with me for punishment would have witnessed this abuse as I witnessed theirs if she dealt with them ahead of me. I can't remember specific names but they would all have been resident with me in Our Lady's. I never received any medical treatment following this abuse, even though I was left with bruises all over my body on several occasions. Sometimes, although not that often, **SR 34** would swing the crucifix attached to her rosary beads at me when I was getting to my feet and if connected it really hurt. Whenever **SR 47** took punishment in the evening, she was never as severe on me as **SR 34** was, often only telling me off or at worst just slapping me on the back of my head with her palm. **SR 47** kept a 2 foot stick in her habit pocket and I recall it being as thick as my thumb. I do not recall ever being hit with this stick at evening punishment but do recall being hit with it whenever I misbehaved during the day. This punishment would not have been frequent because you only got it if you misbehaved. At most I would have been hit with this stick a couple of times a year and then it was usually a rap on the hands with the odd smack on the back of the legs or bottom over my trousers. On other occasions **SR 47** would make you kneel on the wooden floor and learn Mass verbatim in Latin and I recall this being very painful on my knees. I think **SR 34** is dead now but I'm not sure if **SR 47** is still alive. I give the police permission to obtain my medical notes.

Certified a true copy of an original signed document

Signature of witness:	HIA 64
Signature witnessed by: (Appropriate Adult)	