

HIA REF: 5

Witness Name: HIA5

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA5

I, HIA5 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] I lived with my family in [REDACTED] Belfast. My family life was very bad. My mother and father were both severe alcoholics and they were always fighting with each other. My father gave us serious beatings. We were punched, kicked and on one occasion he stuck a dart in my hand. Around 1982 my two brothers NL 100 and NL 101 my sister NL 102 and I were taken by social services into care. I am the second eldest in the family. I was six years old when I was placed in care.

Nazareth Lodge (23/04/82 – 26/06/1985)

2. All four of us were brought to Nazareth Lodge on 23rd April 1982 by a social worker. I was six years old. I don't remember the social workers name but she was small with blonde curly hair. She told us to get in her car as she was taking us on a trip to visit horses. She reassured us that our mother and father said it was alright. My brother NL 100 and I stayed in the Lodge for about four years until 1986. NL 101 and NL 102 stayed in Nazareth Lodge for about a year and then they were fostered. On our first day a nun took us in and showed us our room. I think the nun was called SR45 I remember the room was very dark and the blankets were like a military green colour. There was hardly any light in the place.

3. NL 100 and I were put into a room with two other boys who I think were called NL12 and NL13. I think there were about twenty rooms with four boys in each. NL was put in a separate room and NL 102 was with the other girls who were in separate rooms down the corridor. I think there was around 10 girls in the Lodge when I was there. I was very sad at being parted from NL and NL 102. I kept saying to myself 'what is going on, why are these people doing this?'. There was no explanation given as to why we were split up and if we asked any questions we were told to shut up by the nuns SR45 and SR46. SR45 was taller than SR46 and she wore glasses.
4. SR46 was in charge of the Lodge and she was in charge of my group. She was elderly and [REDACTED]. She wore steel rosary beads. She was very aggressive and nasty. I cried a lot when I was in the Lodge because I was constantly terrified and I just wanted to go home. When I was crying she nipped me in the arms and the thighs. She used to stick her fingers in me and tell me to shut up and to stop crying. When I had stopped crying but was still whimpering she used to take her walking stick to me. She beat me across the back of the legs with her stick and she had an aggressive tone in her voice and she said 'I'll shut you up, I'll keep you quiet. There'll be no tears in this home'. She also said 'you'll learn'. I had bruises and cuts on my legs as a result. I never received any medical treatment. I saw the same aggressiveness in SR46 as my father had when he was drunk. The police have told me that SR46 is now [REDACTED] years old.
5. SR46 room was beside ours. If she heard us talking she banged on the wall with her stick and shouted 'go to bed you wee b****ds, how dare you keep me awake'. Sometimes she came to the door of the room and looked at me and scowled. She terrified me. On some occasions during the night a nun was beside my bed praying over me with a bible in her hand whilst I was trying to sleep.

6. Dinner was in a big dining hall and we sat on wooden benches. The nuns' attitude was 'you will eat whatever we put in front of you'. We usually got dry potatoes and hard mince. They used to tell us that is all they could afford. If you refused to eat your dinner or you started crying or looking round the dining room or trying to talk to someone else [REDACTED] SR46 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] SR45 [REDACTED] would come to your side of the table and lift you up by both ears. Then the nun would take you out of the dining room and walk you up and down the corridors holding you by one ear saying that 'you will obey us and you will do what we tell you to do'. This was one of their forms of punishment. My ear would sting as a result.
7. Sometimes the nuns used to force feed you if you refused to eat the food we were given. I used to pick at the food because I hated it. [REDACTED] SR46 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] SR45 [REDACTED] used to say 'we can't have any fussiness here'. [REDACTED] SR46 [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] SR45 [REDACTED] would sit beside you on the bench and they mashed up the food with a fork. Then they grabbed your hair to force your head back and force the food in your mouth. If you spat it out they scraped it back into your mouth again. On one occasion I was sick after being force fed and I was made to clean up the mess. I saw other children being force fed in the dining hall.
8. As we were children we wanted to do children's things but we weren't allowed to in Nazareth Lodge. You had to do what the nuns told you to do. There was a playroom but I can only remember a tricycle which we all had to share.
9. I remember one of the nuns saying to me that 'you will never see your mother or father again'. This left me extremely distressed. For about the first three months I had no contact at all from my parents. My mother and father said that they did write letters to us but we didn't get any letters. I think that the nuns read the letters and destroyed them. My parents later told me that they phoned the Lodge to speak to [REDACTED] NL 100 [REDACTED] and I but the nuns told them that we were out playing or too busy to come to the phone. I feel the nuns did not want us to have any contact with our families.
10. I believe my parents were kept away. When I was nineteen, I ran into the cook from the Lodge. I think her name was [REDACTED] She told me that she felt sorry for

the children in the Lodge but was told by the nuns to keep her mouth shut. I am sure she must have witnessed some of the abuse. She also told me that the nuns weren't contacting any parents. They were telling social services to inform parents that everything was fine and not to come to the Lodge.

11. My parents visited the Lodge after about three months. I was so happy to see them because my family was back together again and it was a nice feeling. We took photographs of our day together. I think my parents only visited the Lodge on a few occasions.
12. In the year that [NL] and [NL 102] were in the Lodge I only saw them in the dining room but we were not allowed to communicate with each other. We were kept like prisoners on the other side of the table with the nuns watching every move we made. We just gave quick glances to each other. Their faces were sad like mine. A week after they left the Lodge I found out that [NL 101] and [NL 102] had been fostered. [NL14] the caretaker told me. It made me cry as I didn't get a chance to say goodbye.
13. When we were in bed we were made to sleep on our backs with our arms folded over our chests. [SR45] used to say this was 'to get us ready for God'. If we moved during the night a nun would put you back in the proper position. In the morning when you woke up [SR46] and sometimes [SR45] came into your room and brought you down to the chapel about 7am. In the chapel they held you by the side or shoulder and forced you down on your knees. [SR46] and [SR45] made a point of turning round and saying to us that we were all sinners. They stood behind us in the small chapel and listened to us saying our prayers. If you made one mistake they hit the back of our heads with their knuckles. Sometimes they put their hands in a fist and they would smack the back of your head. I saw this happen to other children too.
14. After chapel we went for breakfast which was dry porridge and sometimes we got a glass of orange juice. The nuns were sadistic people. If we were slow to get out of bed we were beaten by [SR46] and [SR45] We were

constantly nipped and I remember seeing a young boy on the corridor being slapped in the face, punched in the head and kicked in the ribs by a nun. I cannot remember the name of the nun that did this. SR46 and Sister SR45 were bad but there were also younger nuns and ordinary staff members who were just as sadistic as the older nuns. SR29 was a decent nun and she never assaulted children. She was pleasant and the only kind nun in the Lodge. I am sure she must have seen the abuse that went on but she didn't do anything about it.

15. Now and again as a treat if you said your prayers correctly you would get a bar of chocolate like snickers or a mars under your pillow. It was a reward. I never received one as I never said my prayers correctly.
16. Whilst there was a school on the site I don't remember attending it. They never sent you to school. The nuns brought you up in the Christian faith and the story of Jesus. When I went to secondary school I didn't know how to do maths, because I wasn't taught. I feel our education was neglected.
17. I found out from a priest in [REDACTED] years later that Father Brendan Smyth was in the chapel while I was in it. I cannot remember the priest's name but he told me he saw me in the chapel at the same time as Brendan Smyth. This priest has since passed away. Brendan Smyth said Sunday mass and after mass he heard confessions. I didn't know who he was at the time but I remember he was small with sunken eyes and a soft voice.
18. As a punishment for talking back to nuns and on one occasion for telling Sister SR45 to 'fu*k you' I was put in a room known as 'the dark room' on my own and the door was locked. These rooms were designed to teach children a lesson. I was put in the dark room about ten to twelve times over the years by different nuns. You were left in the room for about four to five hours. I remember I was hysterical and I started to hear voices in the dark. What I felt was beyond despair. I saw other children being put there too. The room was near the chapel beside an old lift. When I was allowed out I couldn't see for a long time and I

saw lights dancing in my eyes. I feel that my eyesight was damaged each time I was put in the dark room.

19. The baths in the Lodge were horrific. Bath time was every night around 8pm or 9pm. The bathroom was quite small and had one window. The nuns lined the children up outside the door of the bathroom on the top floor of Nazareth Lodge. They asked the children to strip naked. I had never seen my brother naked before. There were even girls right behind us who had no clothes on. There was a nun wearing an apron and a staff member called **NL15** in the room. They put me and my brother in the same bath which had no water. **NL15** had her legs in the bath at the taps and she held me down by my shoulders in the empty bath while the nun held my legs. Then another nun came in with a bucket and threw the contents of the bucket round us. It was cold water and Jeyes Fluid. **NL15** had blonde spiky hair and she was strong and she wore rings on every finger. Her rings used to put dents into my skin as she held me down. As the Jeyes Fluid hit our skin and we squealed she would laugh. Then they washed us with carbolic soap. They said 'stay still little children, we are here to wash the sin out of you. You are sinners, open wide'. They put the soap in our mouths to wash our souls clean. I recall **SR46** and **NL15** **NL15** doing this. I have never had a bath since I left the Lodge.

20. On one occasion during a bath I jumped out of the bathroom window which was open to let steam out. I wanted to escape from the Lodge. I fell onto a ledge and then hit the pavement below. It was in November and I think I sprained my ankle. I had no clothes on when I jumped and I was in pain and I was crying. **SR45** ran out the back door and grabbed me and forced me back into the Lodge by the arm and said 'get in here you little b*****d'. She kept smacking the back of my head. The beating ended when I curled up crying inside my blanket in my bed. My ankle wasn't tended to and it was left to bruise. I never received medical attention while in Nazareth Lodge. I did not see any social workers visiting the Lodge.

21. The only people that came to Nazareth Lodge were UTV in 1984. They were trying to do a programme about how good the nuns were. They lined us up in

the corridors in Nazareth Lodge and they dressed us all up in suits. It was all for show.

22. One day I pleaded with the caretaker **NL14** to help me because I was being physically and mentally abused but he said he 'didn't know what to believe'. I felt hopeless. I think **NL14** died last year.
23. At Christmas time the nuns used to bring in a Priest who dressed up as Santa and he used to give us toys. However they weren't like ordinary toys, they were symbols of Christianity like statues of Jesus. I do recall getting a plastic sword, helmet and shield one year. I don't remember taking them home when I left the Lodge so they may have been taken off me.
24. The nuns did not like noise and football or games with sticks were not allowed. The only thing you heard in Nazareth Lodge was praying.
25. Over the years the beatings got worse. My brother and I were waking up with welts on our legs and arms. Now and again a Priest would come to ask how the children in the Lodge were doing. I don't know the name of the priest. **NL 100** and I were never allowed to speak to him. The nuns were probably afraid we would tell him about the abuse. One time he saw me across the room and commented on the marks on my body and the nuns put it down as sunburn. They used to cover the bruises with Vaseline and sun lotion as a disguise.
26. I was going to bed with my head, hands, knees and legs in agony. The green blanket used to irritate me because it was itchy and it stuck to my cuts and bruises.
27. A social worker called **NL 185** came and took me and **NL 100** home from Nazareth Lodge on 26th June 1985 when I was nearly ten years old. I burst into tears when he told me I was going home. I cried in shock that I was escaping. Unfortunately when I went back home my mother and father were drinking again. They were constantly fighting with each other and my father was beating us worse than ever before. My mother had had two more babies that I did not know

about until I got home. They were called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] NL 100 and I were very withdrawn as a result of the situation at home.

28. NL 100 and I were beat so much that we just lost our will for life. We were two shells that left the Lodge. I blanked the world out and lost all sense of normality. All I had was hatred, abuse and violence inside my head. When we got home we didn't know what freedom was because we never had freedom. After about two weeks of being at home I went to the Spar and bought sweets with money my granny gave me. [REDACTED]

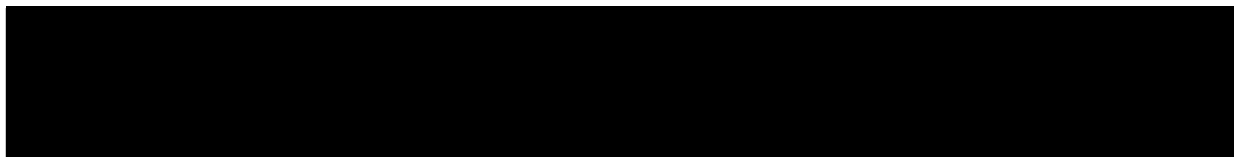
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The nuns turned me into a psychopath as an eleven year old boy.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Life after care

33. I'm thirty seven years of age and the memories of the abuse have never left me. The memories are always in the back of my head. I feel like I am tortured and whilst I am an adult I feel that there is a child inside me crying to get out.
34. The abusers have messed up my life. I can't have a proper relationship because I do not know what love is. Love and affection were taken away from me as a child. I am extremely angry and I carry so much hatred with me. I am engaged and my fiancée knows what I have suffered in the past.
35. I have attended counselling but I did not find it useful. I am on medication for depression (Mirtazapine) and to calm me down (Atarax). The medication puts me to sleep but even in my sleep I'm haunted by nightmares of me running down the corridor squealing in Nazareth Lodge. I hate the nuns for what they put me through. It was four years of pure terror and hell. I am sickened that my childhood was taken away by people I was told would care for me.
36. I am a recovering alcoholic. I used to work as a landscape gardener but I am currently unemployed. I have a previous conviction for assaulting a police officer

which is alcohol related. I have tried to commit suicide seven times. The last time I attempted suicide was on the 9th February when I tried to jump off the [REDACTED]. After about two hours I came off the [REDACTED]. I have been suffering from depression for years. The abuse is constantly in my head. I can't get it out of my head. The wicked faces of my abusers, [REDACTED] SR46 and [REDACTED] SR45 will never leave me. It still hurts to think about my past.

37. I have forgiven my parents for what they did to me. It took me a long time.
38. My solicitor is Ciaran McAteer & Company. On the advice of my solicitor I made a statement to Constable Gail McIlwaine in Musgrave Street police station in the last twelve months.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed [REDACTED] HIA5

Dated 3/8/2013

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July 1982 because of depression. He attended the Royal Victoria Hospital on a fairly regular basis and was prescribed sedatives and anti-depressants. He now feels there is little point in going to the psychiatrist as he takes the tablets when he needs them and appreciates that he cannot do without them all the time.

██████████ maintains a low profile and at times appears apathetic and disinterested in what is going on around her. This may in part be due to her gynaecological problems which have recurred over the past year and caused her much discomfort and lack of energy.

Since the last review in November 1982 regular contact has been maintained with ██████████ and NL 100 and HIA 5. They have visited Nazareth Lodge regularly and maintain a keen interest in the boys' welfare. The boys have started going home on every second Saturday and everyone seems to benefit from these visits. NL 100 and HIA 5 have settled well in Nazareth Lodge, despite a change over from SR 46 to SR 205 unit. HIA 5 appears less nervous and shy and is becoming more outgoing. NL 100 remains his lively, enthusiastic self and is presenting no management problems at the moment. He still enjoys Cedar Lodge School though his work is not up to standard as he still tends to lack concentration.

The home situation has been relatively stable; ██████████ still tends to 'get down' and worries about financial stresses which occur from time to time. His wife has not been keeping very well, physically, and this has added extra pressure on ██████████. However, their relationship is good and they are supportive to one another. NL 101 year at the local primary school has been satisfactory and he is due to go into Primary Two in September. He is doing well at home and his parents show him considerable love and affection. NL 102 has had numerous colds and chest infections over the winter - she is a constant worry to the ██████████ who are extremely protective of her. They have had no contact from the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children as to a date for her heart operation and feel that this delay is not helping NL 102 development and general health.

In conclusion, over the past six months the ██████████ family have stabilized relatively well. They maintain their link with NL 100 and HIA 5 but are not urging for their return home. While ██████████ is generally in a better frame of mind, he still tends to get depressed and anxious over small upsets; he has not changed sufficiently to consider the possibility of the boys returning home on a permanent basis.

May 1983
██████████

NL 184

Social Worker

Reveiw November 83.

Name of Establishment.Nazareth Lodge Childrens Home.Name of Child.Date of Birth.Date of Admission.Social Worker and Dept.

HIA 5

3.6.82.

NL 184

E.H. & S.S.B.

Pen picture of Child.

NL 184 is an attractive boy with blue eyes, [REDACTED] hair and a pale but healthy complexion, although he wears a worried expression at times. He is of average height and build for his age.

School attended.

Greenwood House Assessment Centre.

Contact with school.

Phone calls.

School progress.

[REDACTED] seems to be very pleased with HIA 5 progress and said that he is much more settled and confident in himself.

Contact with Family.

See NL 100 report.

Medically Examined.

31.5.83.

Treatment.

Nil.

General state of health.

Good.

Hospital admissions.

None.

Any physical defects.

None.

Accidents since last Reveiw.

None.

Physical Development.

Normal physical development. HIA 5 has a small appetite. He sleeps well, sometimes calls out in his sleep and wears a worried expression, he sleeps with his head covered and his body curled up. Unlike NL 100 he is generally good humoured when awakened in the morning. He can do everyday things for himself, although he still has problems tying his laces.

Interests and Hobbies.

Only likes active moving-about simple games. Enjoys going to the disco and watching childrens TV.

Attitude to Adults, staff etc.

HIA 5 accepts and gives affection freely and is always 'coming for love.' Is easily upset if not noticed. He is friendly and natural, normally talkative, may open conversation. Does what he is asked to do and is always willing to help. He is honest with things, tells lies mainly to avoid rebuke.

Attitude to other children.

Is a good mixer, makes up to new children. Always looks out for NL 100 He is good natured and is always willing to share. Seamus is well liked by the other children and can stand up for himself.