

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 132

Witness Name: HIA 132

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 132

I, HIA 132 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] I was the youngest of four children. The eldest was NL 133 who was born around 1951, NL 134 was born around 1952, and NL 135 was born around 1955. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] We lived in [REDACTED] I do not know the details of how I ended up in care but I understand from my grandmother that my mother just took us to Belfast one day and placed the girls in Nazareth Lodge and the boys in Nazareth Lodge. I was about three years old. I don't know much about my parents but I believe that my father was an alcoholic and used to be violent to my mother and I think they just couldn't cope with us. I believe that they were together up until we were placed in care and separated shortly after.

Nazareth Lodge Children's Home, Belfast (15/11/1960 – 20/08/1968)

2. I was placed in Nazareth Lodge, Belfast with my older brother NL 133 on [REDACTED] November 1960. My mother had no contact with us after she left us in care.
3. NL 133 was placed in the Marion group under SR 47. I was in the St. Joseph's group under SR 34. She was assisted by NL 5 who was a civilian worker. I suffered physical abuse from both of these women.

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They both would have hit us with a stick for not doing as we were told. Sister **SR 34** was a very angry person.

4. I shared a dormitory with about twenty other boys. When we were going to bed at night **NL 5** forced us to line up and show her our underpants to see if they were clean or not and if they weren't clean we were beaten with a stick. We went to bed about 6pm every evening and we could hear the children from the other groups still out playing in the yard. We weren't allowed to go out because **NL 5** would not allow us. Our group were called the "dainties" as **NL 5** **NL 5** always had us washed and cleaned and didn't want us to get dirty. We were forced to lie in bed with the blanket and sheet over our heads. I could never understand why. We were sweating under those blankets and it must affect your breathing over the years. I have always had bad coughs and I suffer from asthma and I wonder whether that is why. If we didn't keep the blanket and sheet over our heads or we made any sound we were hit on the head with a stick by **SR 34** or **NL 5** who were walking around supervising us all. It never seemed right to me. It was cruel and it was scary. I was only about five or six.
5. **SR 34** also taught us at school, which was in the Lodge. When she asked a question in class we would put our hand up to answer it. The first time you put your hand up and answered a question correctly it was OK but if you put your hand up again to answer another question, regardless of whether you got it right or wrong, she would shout you down and tell you to put your hand down and stop showing off. You would be sent to the corner and told to face the wall until the end of the class. Also, if I got sums wrong **SR 34** would smack me on the face and then put me in the corner for the rest of the class. **SR 34** would also have pulled me up by the hair and pulled my cheeks. This happened on more than one occasion. It was so cruel and I felt it was a terrible upbringing.
6. There was another teacher, **NL 63**, who was very fond of the strap. He would hit me with the strap about four times per week. **SR 34** He would pull you up by the hair if you got anything wrong. I did not

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complain. I didn't know how to complain and there would have been no-one to complain to. You would have suffered the consequences if you complained.

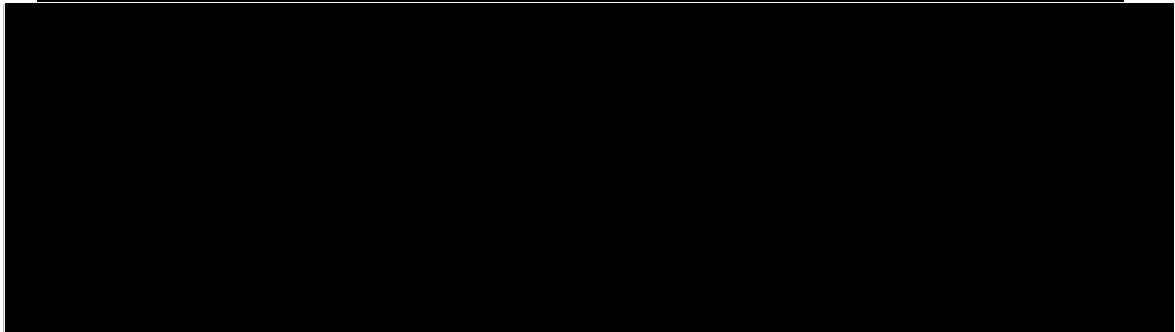
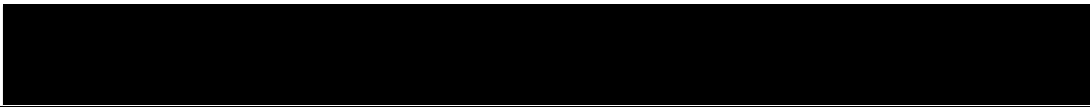
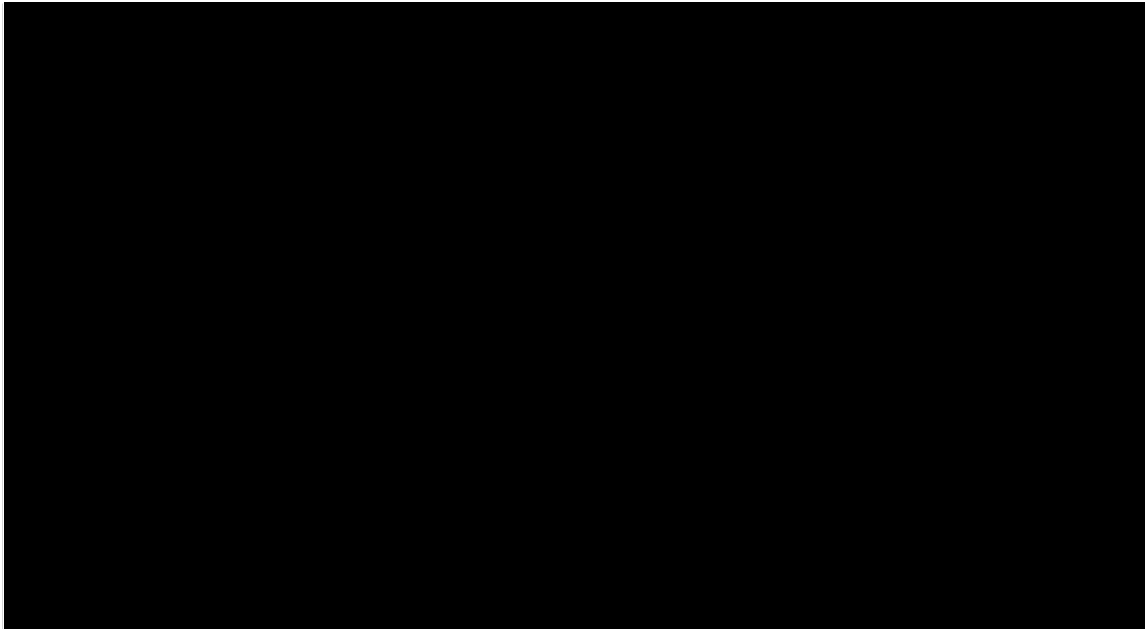
7. The education was bad. They didn't treat you well because they thought we were orphans and wouldn't get anywhere in life anyway. They were right. Without an education you can't get anywhere and you end up in low paid jobs and it's hard to sell yourself. I never had the opportunity to educate myself when I was older as I could not afford to.
8. The routine was to get up, go to school, come back for dinner, then up to the dormitory and in to bed for 6pm, even in the summer. There was very little food. It was mainly dipped bread. We were forced to go to mass and we had chores to do which was usually polishing the floors in the hall. There was little opportunity to play. We had chores to do every day which included cleaning the bathroom and the corridors. There was no affection or warmth from the nuns.
SR 34 would have threatened to give us six of the best if we cried.
9. I had very little family contact. I never saw my mother after I was put in care. I have no memories of my father. I wasn't allowed to go and see my sisters even though Nazareth House was located close to the Lodge. My older brother, NL 133 was in Nazareth Lodge with me until he was adopted when he was eight or nine [REDACTED] I haven't seen him since he was adopted. I don't even remember getting to say goodbye to him. I have always missed him terribly as he was a protector to me when we were in Nazareth Lodge. Although I did not see him very often when we were in the home as we were in different groups it was comforting just to know he was there. When he left I was on my own.
10. I was allowed to visit my granny and aunt [REDACTED] both on my mother's side, in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for about six weeks in the summer. My granny came [REDACTED] and collected us. When I returned the nuns would fire questions at me like "did you go to mass?". I said I did and they asked "what was the priest like?". When I tried to describe him they said "no, that was the

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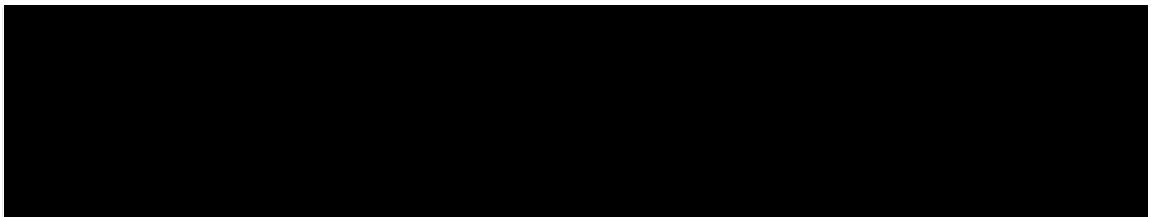
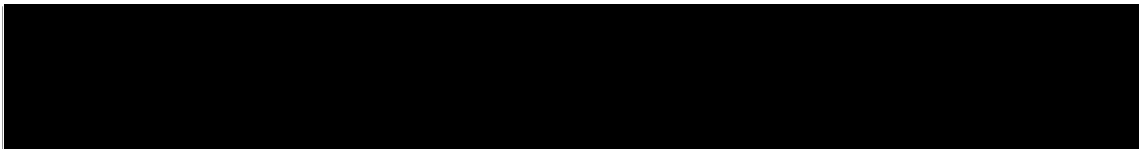
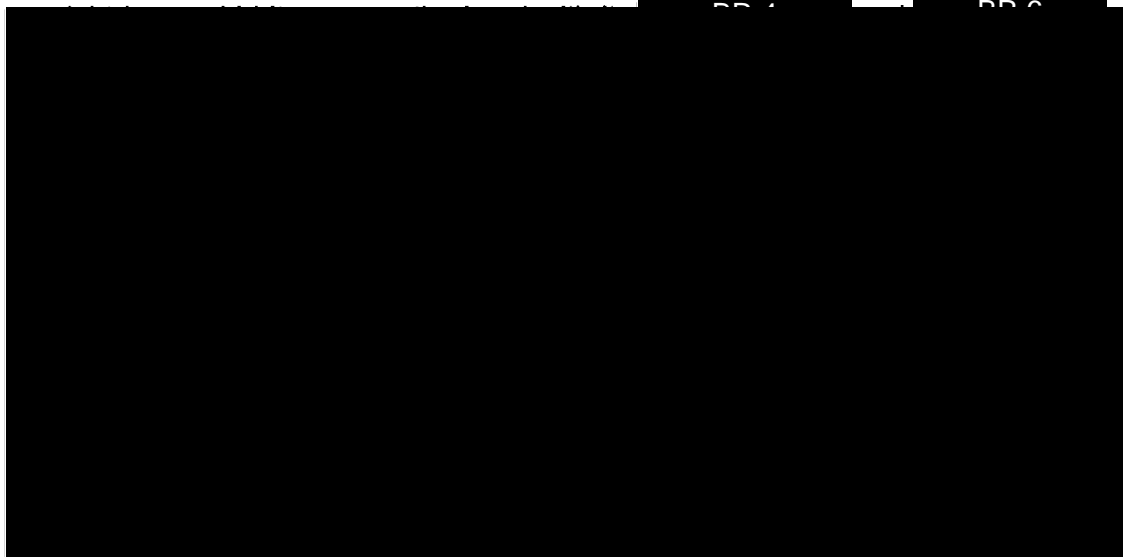
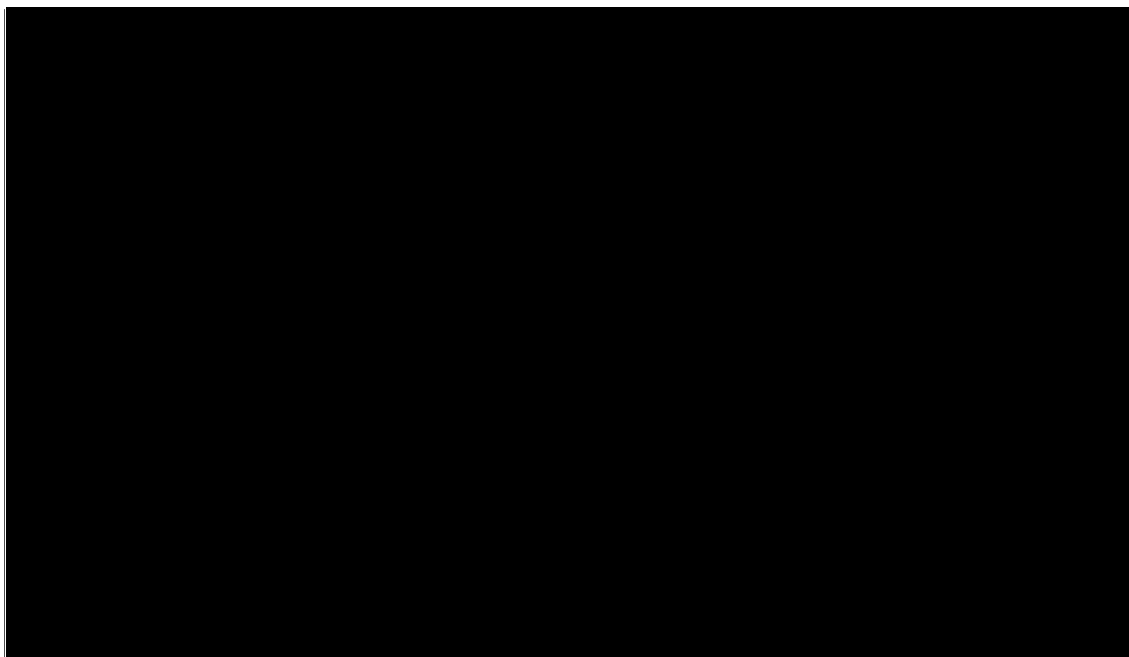
minister, you're not going back again". After that they stopped me from going [REDACTED] for a year because I wasn't being taken to the Roman Catholic Church.

11. My Aunt told me they wanted to adopt me but my mother wouldn't give permission. I would have been happy there and had a great start in life and had a family bond. It broke both our hearts when I had to go back. The only good memories I have of my time in care are my holidays .

12. That is all the memories I have of Nazareth Lodge. I'd say there are a lot of other things that happened but I have blanked a lot of things out. The emotional and physical punishment has stayed with me.



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Life After Care

23. When I left care I was placed in a damp room in a lady's house on the [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. No-one ever came to check up on me.

24. As I was living back in Belfast I went to Nazareth House to find [NL 135] Apart from the visits to [REDACTED] I had not seen her since we were placed in care. I visited her in Nazareth House and our relationship developed. She now [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is in a care home in [REDACTED]. We still keep in touch but it is difficult to talk to her on the phone as her speech is so bad. [NL 134] had already left Nazareth House and was living in London. I have never built a relationship with her. I haven't seen my brother [NL 133] since he was adopted. My sisters tried to find him but were unable to. I never saw my mother after she put us in care apart from seeing her once in [REDACTED] in the 1990s when I went to visit her. In the past year she has started to ring me but she is a stranger to me. She calls me son but I can't call her mother. She wasn't there when I needed her. I have no memories of my father.

25. I initially worked as a waiter in [REDACTED] Hotel and then I went to the [REDACTED] Hotel. I also worked as a van driver on the [REDACTED] and then I got into sales and was a sales representative. It has always been a struggle to get a job as I did not have a proper education. I also felt that I was disadvantaged when companies saw I had grown up in care. I had to give up work five years ago to become my wife's full-time carer [REDACTED].

26. I got married when I was 18 as I was desperately looking for security and a stable home. We have been married nearly thirty seven years and we have

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three boys and four grandchildren. I feel I was good with my own children. I probably let them off with a lot and was very lenient. They have turned out well but I feel I could have done more for them if I had had a better job and been able to help them more financially.

27. I have always envied people who have their parents. I'm glad to see my sons are happily married with children. They have support and I envy that, I should have had that.
28. I believe my life ended when I came into the world. I didn't have a family upbringing. I was robbed of proper care and an education. I have persevered but life has been a struggle. I suffer from stress and have been receiving treatment since 1989.
29. I have never spoken to anyone about my experiences before, not even my wife. I'm glad I have been given this opportunity to tell what happened to me.
30. I would like to see the nuns and brothers who looked after us held to account for the way they treated us and for them to take responsibility for how the failings in our upbringing shaped us as adults. I would like to receive an apology from the orders and from the state. I also think we should be helped financially in some way to make amends for how the lack of education has affected our prospects as adults.

Statement of Truth

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

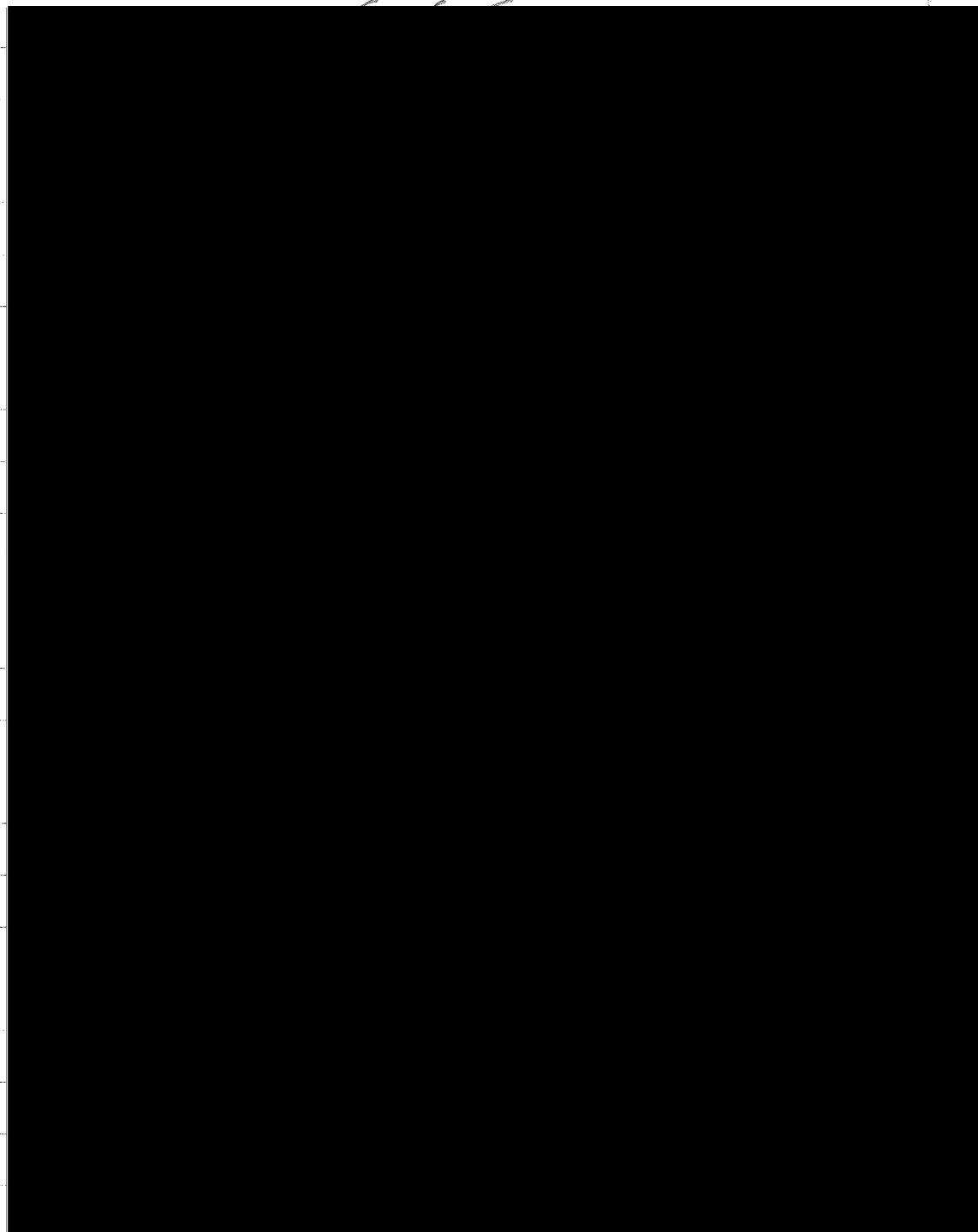
Signed

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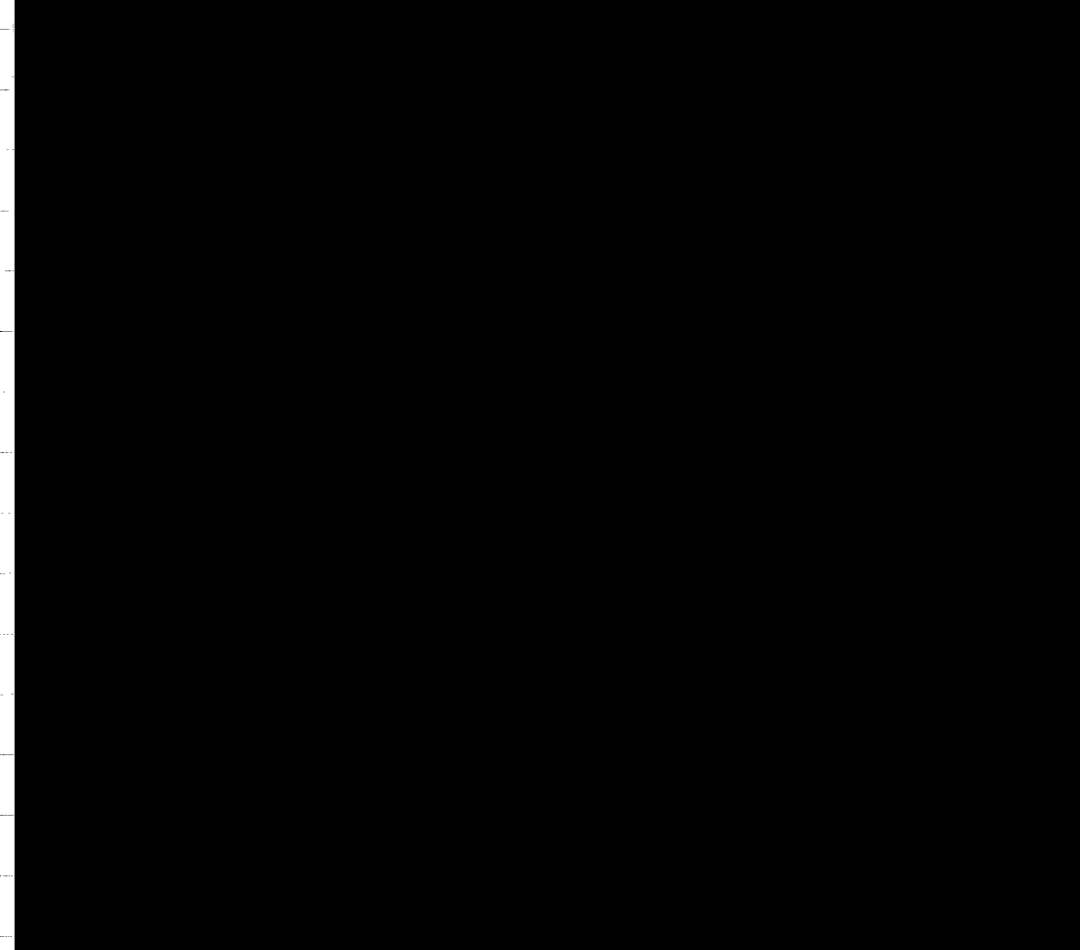
Dated

10th / 3 / 2014


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SR 34

Born - Kilnamartyra, Co. Cork. 
 Entered Religion _____ December 8th 1929
 Professed _____ November 21st 1932
 Religious Name _____
 Came to Usareth Lodge _____
 Left on the _____

SR 34

46. In the summer months when the nights were lightest outside we were not in Nazareth as alleged by [REDACTED] as we went to Ballyhorgan for the whole time from the end of June until the end of August and so again I think [REDACTED] is either mistaken about this or is making this up. It was nearly 9 o'clock or later when the children went to bed in the summer as all the staff enjoyed a lie in.
47. Of the longer nights in the spring the children's bedtime did not change but this is because the routine during the school year was necessary for the orderly running of the home. It is of course also possible that [REDACTED] heard other groups making noise as they got ready for, and went, to bed and that they were not playing outside.
48. I do not recall [REDACTED] father or mother dying although I do remember when her brother died and I most certainly never informed personally her of a family bereavement. This would absolutely have been done by the nuns.
49. I did put a cloth on [REDACTED] pillow at night as he drooled or dribbled a lot in his sleep – he seemed to have a lot of phlegm and to make it more pleasant for him I would put a dry cloth on his pillow. He is the only boy who had this problem and so the only one I treated this way. It was not done to all my boys and it was to both make it more comfortable for the child and protect the pillow. This was certainly not intended as a punishment – but exactly the opposite.
50. I do not deny that I would often gently waken some of the children to take them to the bathroom at night. These would have been the ones who maybe had wet the bed before. I would carry the younger ones and I most certainly did not line them up in the cold corridor or half dressed to do this. I would consider it cruelty to let a child lie in a wet bed or in wet pyjamas.
51. I did not work a “shift” as suggested instead I went to bed after all my work with the children and other chores were done.
52. I deny that I checked children's underwear as alleged. The children took their school clothes off after school and put their play clothes on. At wash-time any soiled underwear would be collected and taken to the laundry.
53. Mass was not a daily occurrence in mine or any group as it was only the nuns who went every day. My group had no chores as I was fussy about the beds being made properly and preferred to make them myself. I have read that [REDACTED] group cleaned floors but my group did not.
54. I deny that I ever threatened to tell [REDACTED] mother not to come to visit him – in fact I don't even remember [REDACTED] ever having his mother visit him.

when he was in my group. He seemed to enjoy coming back and spending time in the kitchen with us.

74. He would also come at weekends and the weekend cook [REDACTED] was also very good to him. I recall that he even spent time at her home.
75. The accusations made by [REDACTED] are untrue. I never physically abused him as alleged or at all and I did not see him being abused by [REDACTED] SR 34
76. I did meet another boy [REDACTED] NL 14 and he told me that he'd met [REDACTED] HIA 132. [REDACTED] NL 14 said he was disgusted with him. He told me [REDACTED] HIA 132 had said "Have you put your claim in yet" meaning about his time in care. [REDACTED] NL 14 knows there was no ill treatment. I hope the Inquiry are going to hear from people like him also.
77. I note that he says our boys in [REDACTED] SR 34 group and mine were called "the dainties" - this is true. I had heard this. This was because my group were always well dressed and well behaved. I was proud of my group and tried to instil in them a sense of moral character and to behave properly. I taught them manners and kept them clean. Not all the boys were as well behaved as my group. I achieved this through encouragement and praising the boys and making them feel a sense of self worth. I think scaring a child is terrible and I do not believe I instilled fear in my boys.
78. I deny that I made any child lie covered with a blanket as alleged. It did not happen. I have now been told that some of the boys allege that it was the older boys who bullied them and made them do this. If I had witnessed or been told of older boys bullying younger ones I would have told [REDACTED] SR 34
79. All of the children went to bed early and whilst they may all complain now it was necessary for the orderly running of the home to have the children all fed and washed and in bed early as we all had an early start to the day.
80. I deny that the children I cared for were ever beaten with a stick. And I deny that either [REDACTED] SR 34 or I walked around the dorm with a stick supervising the children. We had much work to do when the children went to bed and hadn't time to do the kind of patrolling suggested.
81. [REDACTED] HIA 132 would be a boy I would have found it hard to believe would lie about his treatment and his lies have hurt me deeply. Apart from this claim business I don't know why [REDACTED] HIA 132 would make this up.
- [REDACTED]