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HIA REF: 33

Witness Name: HIA 33

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 33

I, HIA 33 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] My mother, [REDACTED] was not married so I was placed in the baby section of Nazareth Lodge on 1st June 1938. I found out when I was older that later that month I was fostered by a lady called [REDACTED] who lived in [REDACTED] I was then transferred to another foster mother called [REDACTED] who lived in [REDACTED] Co. Down. [REDACTED] remarried and became [REDACTED] She also fostered another boy called [REDACTED]
2. I had a very happy childhood growing up in [REDACTED] However, on [REDACTED] February 1951 when I was twelve years old our foster mother died and we were returned to care. [REDACTED] went a bit crazy after our foster mother died and he was unable to look after us. The welfare man, whose name I cannot remember, and [REDACTED] the parish priest, came to take [REDACTED] and I out of school to tell us the news. I remember coming home and throwing my school bag over the chair. We were told to change out of our school clothes and put our good clothes on. [REDACTED] then drove us to Nazareth Lodge.

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Nazareth Lodge, Belfast (09/03/1951 – May 1953)

3. I was admitted to Nazareth Lodge along with [REDACTED] on 9th March 1951 when I was twelve years old. Our good clothes were taken off us and I never saw mine again. We were placed in [REDACTED] SR 118 [REDACTED] group. When she met us she asked me why I was crying and I said because my mother had just died. She gave me a slap round the head and told me not to mention her again. We worshipped our foster mother. I cried every night for about two years after losing her. When we arrived we were given sofa beds in the attic as the home was over crowded. There were children sleeping two to a bed. [REDACTED] SR 118 [REDACTED] group were divided between the attic and the floor below. After about six or seven months the numbers reduced and the whole group were moved on to the floor below. I think the numbers reduced because boys were sent to Australia and Rubane House in Kircubbin had opened.
4. We were given clothes to wear which had numbers sewn into them. My number was 128 and [REDACTED] SR 118 [REDACTED] said that I have that number from now on. I was occasionally called [REDACTED] but I was usually called by my surname. I was never called by my Christian name. We were given shorts to wear. We never had long trousers. She also told us we better behave or we would be sent to Milltown.
5. We got up at 6 o'clock in the morning and we kneeled by our bed to say prayers. We then went to mass. Every morning before breakfast we had to polish the long corridors on our hands and knees. We used to do it in lines of five. Five would put the polish on, five would rub the polish in, five would give the first shine and five would give the final polish. The class boys would supervise and if you stopped for any reason they would hit you. The class boys were other residents who were put in charge. They had sticks and were free to hit you anytime. If they did not hit us when the nuns thought they should have they were punished by the nuns for not showing their authority.
6. In my first week there I wet the bed. I was beaten by [REDACTED] SR 118 [REDACTED] and then taken to the bathroom and bathed in Jeyes fluid. When you wet the bed you had to kneel beside the bed the following night so you did not wet it. The nun slept in a cell at the end of the dormitory so she could look out every so often and make

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sure you were still kneeling there. One of the class boys also had to keep an eye on you to make sure you were still kneeling. When you thought everyone was asleep you could get back into bed.

7. We were made to sleep with our arms crossed over our chests. We did not have pyjamas, we slept in our underwear. If anyone made a noise at night time the Sister would make them kneel in the corridor in their underwear with their hands above their heads. The class boys would supervise and if anyone dropped their hands they would hit your fingers and the nuns would hit you with their belt. I was regularly subjected to this type of ill treatment.
8. For breakfast we had porridge and a round of dripping bread and a cup of tea. We would have got a bottle of milk at school in the morning. We did not get anything to eat until our lunch. I do not remember getting very much for our tea. It was maybe bread and jam or something like that. I lost a lot of weight when I was in Nazareth Lodge.
9. After breakfast **SR 118** would shout out the names of boys who had been bad. There were various "crimes" that we could have committed that resulted in punishment by the nuns, such as being cheeky. The worst "crime" was coughing in church. The nuns thought that was being disrespectful. If you had been bad you had to kneel in a line in front of **SR 118** with your hands up in front of everyone else. **SR 118** would hit you with a spindle from the back of a chair on the hands. Sometimes blood would run out of your hands. I was subjected to this type of punishment two or three times a week. I was always being punished for coughing in church. I had a tickly throat and the nuns would not believe me that I was coughing unintentionally.
10. On a Friday night we had a bath. There were five baths for about forty boys. The ones at the back of the queue got a dirty, cold bath. I was always nearer the back of the queue than the front. Jeyes fluid was put in the bath and carbolic soap was used. I never had a toothbrush. I never saw the dentist or a doctor the whole time I was in Nazareth Lodge. If you were sick they held your nose and gave you a spoonful of castor oil. I remember during bathtime once **SR 118**

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SR 118 and another nun told me to hold one of the young boys who had spots while they squeezed them. I do not know why he had those spots. I will never forget his screams while they squeezed the spots.

11. I remember one day we were playing football in the playing fields and I had to go to retrieve the ball from the fence which ran along the Ravenhill Road. I remember two people standing on the other side of the fence who spoke to me briefly. The class boys noticed this and told **SR 118** as we were not allowed to talk to anyone. That evening **SR 118** made me kneel down while she questioned me about why I had been talking to them and what I was talking to them about. She was preoccupied with what I had said about the home. She hit my two hands.
12. When I had been in Nazareth Lodge for about seven months all the boys were lined up along both sides of the corridors. They called out numbers and told you whether to stand on the right or left hand side of the corridor. The ones on the right hand side were told to go down to the main hall. There were maybe about 60 of them. I was on the left hand side and we were told to go and sit in another room for a while. Eventually we were taken to the front door and saw the other children getting on to buses. I am not sure where they went I think it was either Australia or Kircubbin.
13. I remember one day when I was about fourteen **SR 118** came and told me there was someone there to see me. She told me it was my mother. I thought my mother was dead. I knew nothing about my biological mother as my foster mother never mentioned her. The Sister said I had to give her a big hug and tell her that I loved it in the home. I went up to see my mother and she said she would come and visit me again another time. She came back about six months later and she took me out and bought me some new clothes. I put them under my bed as usual as we had nowhere else to put our clothes. When I got up the next morning somebody had ripped them with a razor blade.
14. I went to school in Nazareth Lodge.. We had to walk across the playing fields to get to the classroom. The classes were separated into older boys and younger

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boys. [REDACTED] taught the younger children. I was taught by SR 118 SR 118 and then [REDACTED]. He was a good man. I was doing well academically. I had received a good primary education before I went in to Nazareth Lodge and was coming top of my class. When I was about fourteen years old SR 118 came over to the school and told me that I was leaving school to work at the front door of the Lodge. I was upset as I was doing well academically and enjoying school. I was taken to SR 157 who told me that my duties would be to scrub the front steps every morning, clean the floors and windows of the corridor which led down to the nursing home and the playing fields, clean round the front door, admit any visitors that came and make them tea. She also told me that I was to go down to the kitchen every morning and get a big pot of soup and keep it warm and feed the tramps that came in to the garden. My work was inspected by the class boys and SR 157. I did that job for a year and did not get paid a penny.

15. I only remember one trip, when we were taken to Ballyhornan for the day and one Christmas when we got to go to the Pantomime. I remember we got presents afterwards but our presents were mixed up with the Nazareth House ones and we all got given girls' presents. I do not remember getting anything special on Christmas Day.

16. I left Nazareth Lodge in or around May 1953 when I was fifteen years old.

Life After Care

17. I lodged at [REDACTED] with a woman called [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] had moved there a couple of months before me as he was about eleven months older than me. I worked for a company called [REDACTED] down at the [REDACTED].

18. There was a crowd of young men who used to gather on [REDACTED] Street which ran along the end of the road I lived on. One of them said to me that I should move as it was not suitable for someone my age to live there. [REDACTED] had been drinking and bringing men back at night. One of the young men gave me

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the address of a woman called [REDACTED] who I lodged with for a while. I then moved to lodgings with a [REDACTED] and then a [REDACTED]

19. While I was lodging with [REDACTED] I went back to visit my old house in [REDACTED] I had not been there in three years. The man next door had a key and let me in. When I went into the house my old school bag was still lying over the back of the chair.
20. One day shortly after I was walking through Belfast I saw a recruiting poster for the [REDACTED] I signed up for the [REDACTED] on 16th September 1954. I was in the [REDACTED] I was moved around a lot, from Colchester to Cyprus and Germany. When I was on leave I used to stay in the [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] as I had nowhere else to go to or to live.
21. I went back to visit [REDACTED] around 1961 and was introduced to a girl from [REDACTED] We got married on my [REDACTED]. We had five daughters and two sons, twenty one grandchildren and one great-grandchild. We lost one of our sons to cancer on Christmas Day 2003 when he was only twenty nine.
22. I had lost touch with my mother as she moved to [REDACTED] and I had joined the [REDACTED] She got in touch with me again after I got married. She moved back to live in [REDACTED] and she lived there until she died when she was in her late eighties. When I was thirty she told me I had a sister. I traced her and found out she was living outside [REDACTED] We have remained in touch since.
23. I left the [REDACTED] on 18th April 1962 and went to work for [REDACTED] for fourteen years and then I worked for [REDACTED] in Portadown for sixteen years until I retired. I only told my children about my time in Nazareth Lodge about four or five years ago.
24. I contacted Nazareth Lodge to get my records but they told me they had no record of me being there. I went to Nazareth Care Village on the Ravenhill Road and they told me they had records of me being in Nazareth Lodge as a baby but

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no records of me returning when I was twelve. I eventually went to the Public Records Office and they found Minutes of a Down County Welfare Committee meeting on the [REDACTED] 1951 which shows that I was in Nazareth Lodge. That is the only record I have been able to get.

25. I believe that there should be a memorial at each home to the residents that suffered abuse in that home. I also believe that the victims of abuse deserve an apology and compensation from the people who ran the home they were in as well as from the state.

26. I made a statement to the PSNI in and around April 2010. I have a civil claim against The Sisters of Nazareth and my solicitor is Ciaran McAteer of McAteer % Co.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

HIA 33

Dated

26TH JUNE 14.

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1256 33
newDOWN COUNTY WELFARE COMMITTEE.

Report of a Meeting of the Children Committee
held on Tuesday, the 13th November, 1951, at
133 Royal Avenue, Belfast, at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mr. S.G. Cupples, presiding.
Mrs. J. Boyd and Mr. W.J. McCoubrey.

APOLOGIES for non-attendance were received from Messrs. A. Adair,
W.J. Bailie, J. Ervine, and F. McKenna.

IN ATTENDANCE: Secretary, County Welfare Officer, Children's Officer,
County Medical Officer of Health, and the
Administrative Assistant.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS ACT (N.I.), 1950.Part IV - Acceptance of Care of Children.

1. (See paragraph 2 of the Report of the Children's Officer, a copy of which is attached).

Part V - Treatment of Children in Care of the Committee.

2. (See paragraph 3 of the Report of the Children's Officer).

3. **HIA 33** — St. Patrick's Catholic Orphan Society wrote on 7/11/51 requesting a grant towards the maintenance of and **HIA 33**. The Society stated that these boys were formerly in the care of the late **HIA 33** and were removed to Nazareth Lodge at the direction of the Divisional Welfare Officer.

The Children's Officer reported that these children were not in the care of the Welfare Committee and were "nursed out" by Nazareth Lodge; they were returned to Nazareth Lodge on the death of the foster mother.

Your Committee in the circumstances recommends that no action be taken.

RESTRICTED (when complete)

Statement of Witness

Statement of: **HIA 33**

Age of Witness: Over 18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18')

I declare that this statement consisting of 4 page/s, each signed by me is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence at a preliminary enquiry or at the trial of any person, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Signature of Witness: **HIA 33** Date: 07/05/10
Service/Staff # if police/staff

Signature witnessed by: _____
(Appropriate Adult)

Signature of Member: L Robinson PW1641 Date: 28/04/10
by whom statement was recorded or received Service/Staff # if police/staff

I was fostered out of the Nazareth Lodge in 1939 when I was one year old and I was brought up near the village of Loughinisland in Co Down. My foster mother died in February 1951 when I was 12 years old and after she died I continued attending school at Loughinisland for a couple of months and I was being looked after by my foster mother's husband. Around May 1951 the Welfare Authorities called at the school and I was bundled into a car and brought to the Nazareth Lodge on the Ravenhill Road in Belfast. I was given the number of 128. The nun whose care I was put was **SR 118**, the first thing she said was I'd better behave otherwise I would be sent to Milltown Christian Brother's Home which was a borstal. My bedroom was in the attic, because of overcrowding two boys had to share one bed, usually brothers. After a few nights I wet the bed and I was made to take a beating and to go through the routine of having to take a bath with Jeyes Fluid added. We were made to sleep on our back with our arms crossed in the form of a cross, this rule had to be strictly administered and on the occasions when I broke this rule I had to kneel by the side of my bed, sometimes for an hour at a time. **SR 118** had nominated 'class boys', these boys were our own age but were free to beat us whenever they felt like it. They also reported any misbehaviour to **SR 118** who would take their word for it and dish out the punishment herself. For talking in the dormitory after lights out (which was

Certified a true copy of an original signed document

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