

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 62

Witness Name: HIA 62

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 62

I, HIA 62 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED]
2. I am the youngest of four children. I have two older sisters HIA 61 and HIA 63 and one older brother NHB 117. My father died from cancer before I was born and my mother died of a brain haemorrhage when I was two. We had been living with my grandparents in [REDACTED] but they couldn't look after us so we were taken into care. My sister remembers a priest coming and saying he was taking us to the park. We were taken to Gambles clothes shop then. My sisters and I went to Nazareth House and my brother NHB 117 went to Nazareth Lodge.

Nazareth House, Belfast (3rd June 1961 – 15th March 1974)

3. I was placed in the nursery in Nazareth House when I was two. I stayed there for thirteen years and left when I was sixteen. My two sisters were put into St. Anne's group initially and then they were moved to the Sacred Heart group. When I eventually moved up I went into the Sacred Heart group too which SR 134 was in charge of.

PRIVATE

4. I don't really remember my first days in the nursery but my sister **HIA 63** has told me that the older children all went away for two weeks and when she came back I ran to her crying. The nursery was separated from the older children's part by railings. On Saturdays we were allowed to stand and I could hold my sisters' hands through the railings for an hour. Then the bell would go and I didn't want to let them go. I remember searching for them in all the faces. To this day, I don't understand why I wasn't allowed mingle with my sisters. I never got to see my brother **NHB 117** even though he was only down the road in Nazareth Lodge. I might have seen him once or twice at a Christmas party when I was in the older children's part but that was just coincidence; that wasn't arranged by the nuns. Children from the nursery didn't go to Christmas parties so I didn't see **NHB 117** for years.

5. One of my earliest memories of being in the nursery is looking out the window and then sneezing into my handkerchief. **SR 180** clouted me over the head and told me to never look at the contents of my handkerchief. My head banged off the radiator and there was darkness. The next thing I remember is waking up in the isolation room so she had clearly knocked me unconscious. I was only three or four at the time.

6. The food in the nursery was horrible – it was meat with lots of grisly fat on it. I couldn't eat it. The nuns would try to make you swallow it and if you didn't you had to go and stand outside and not come in until you had swallowed it. I must have been quite a stubborn child because this was always happening to me. I just couldn't swallow the grisly meat. I remember one day, it must have been a Saturday and all the visitors started to come up while I was standing outside so I was allowed to spit the meat out.

7. I was transferred to the children's part when I was six or seven after I made my First Holy Communion. There were three groups in Nazareth House – Sacred Heart, St. Anne's and Our Lady's. The three nuns in charge were **SR 134**, **SR 116** and **SR 31** respectively. I was in **SR 134** group and she would always nip your neck in the church if you were doing anything wrong like scratching your head. Head lice were common

PRIVATE

in the home especially when new girls came in but the nuns would be shamed if their group had nits and were scratching their heads during Mass. It was like a competition between the nuns. You were so afraid to scratch your head in the church because you knew if you did **SR 134** would grab the skin on your neck and twist it.

8. Religion was a big part of life in the home. Every morning we were woken by **SR 134** saying "In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, Amen" and woe betide you if you weren't out of bed and on your knees by the "Amen". I remember preparing for First Confession and First Holy Communion and trying to think of sins to confess. One time **SR 134** asked what my penance was and I said it was one Hail Mary. She said I must have done more than that and I remember trying to wrack my brain for something to say in Confession. This was constant – every week we were being told to examine our conscience for sins.
9. After prayers, we went down to wash in the communal sinks. We didn't have baths or hot water in those days. There were tin baths out in the backyard where we bathed once a week on a Saturday. Because of the cold water lots of girls didn't want to wash themselves properly. The nuns would come round checking our ears and neck to see if they were washed properly and if they weren't you would be beaten and punished. My sister **HIA 61** sustained a horrendous injury as punishment for not washing properly. I witnessed this happen. **HIA 61** had her head banged against tiles and I remember there was blood all over the white tiles. **HIA 61** has suffered deafness ever since as a result. I saw many girls getting beaten for not washing themselves properly but it didn't happen to me.
10. I distinctly remember the smell of Jeyes fluid when we were bathed in the tin baths. At some stage over the years, they had baths installed indoors. We had to wear starched gowns in the bath and they became buoyant when you stepped into the water. We had to wash ourselves underneath these gowns. The idea was to protect your modesty and keep yourself covered. This experience has really affected my body image as an adult.

PRIVATE

11. On Saturdays we used to have to go down to the workroom to have our underwear changed. We had to queue up and show the gusset of our underwear to **SR 122**. If you had any marks on your underwear, you would get cracked around the head. I always remember when lights went out on Friday night; there would be a lot of scrambling about with girls trying to swap their underwear. The older girls used to bully the younger ones into swapping their underwear with them. When you moved from the nursery to the older girls' part you were assigned a charge who showed you how to make your bed and wash your socks in carbolic soap.
12. We had a lot of chores to do in the home. All the floors were made of herringbone oak and we had to wax and polish these large halls. About fifteen of us would line up and then the nun would throw orange wax on the floor. We had to get down on our knees and polish back and forth until the floor was gleaming. We also had to clean the windows, the pews in the church and the candles. There was a furnace outside the dining room and every so often a girl would be picked to go and sweep the cockroaches off the wall so the handyman **NHB 102** could throw them in the fire. I was petrified of doing that and I used to have nightmares about the cockroaches. **NHB 102** was a lovely, kind man and he would try to cheer the children up.
13. One of the punishments for talking in the dormitory was being forced to kneel on the floor in your nightdress with your nose pushed up against the cold wall. I was talking one night after lights out and **SR 134** came out of her cell and made me do this. She would be looking out of her cell window and if you dared to slump or relax she would knock on the window. She would leave you like that for a long, long time and if you fell asleep she would come out and straighten your face so your nose was touching the wall again. Eventually she would give up and fall asleep and then you could fall asleep but it seemed to go on for ages. The bedding in the dormitories was fine – I was always warm when I was in bed but the mattresses were very thin. There was central heating in the home but the radiators were always only lukewarm and were turned off at night.

PRIVATE

14. There was an old people's section in Nazareth House and once you got to ten or eleven there was an expectation that you'd go down and help out. I remember having to empty these plastic things that they used to spit the catarrh into and rinse them out. This used to make me sick. Whenever one of the old people died, you were expected to go into the morgue and say a prayer at their coffin. This happened quite often and it was really traumatic for me to be exposed to that as a child. I had dreams about dead bodies and the stench of death stayed with me.
15. Girls who wet the bed were humiliated in Nazareth House. I remember one girl in my dormitory wet the bed and [SR 134] came out, pulled the sheet off the bed and put it over the girl's head. [SR 134] made her kneel with the wet sheet over her body. She said "yes you can smell that for the rest of the night" and left her there shivering for hours. I don't remember the girl's name. She would have been about eight years old at the time. The nuns had alarms on the beds of girls who used to wet the bed but I never understood the point of these. They woke everybody up. There was a real stigma attached to bed wetting. If you wet the bed you were called a fish and if you soiled the bed you were called 'messy bum'. That stuck with you until the day you left.
16. I went to primary school onsite in Nazareth House. My teacher was called [REDACTED] and then depending on how you did in her class you either went into [SR 31] class or [SR 134] class. [SR 31] was preparing girls for the 11+ and she had a lot of outside girls in her class whereas [SR 134] [SR 134] took the remedial class. My older sister [HIA 63] was in [SR 31] class and [SR 31] didn't like her because [HIA 63] would challenge the status quo. Because I was [HIA 63] sister, [SR 31] said there was no way I was going in to her class so I ended up in [SR 134] remedial class for two years doing jigsaws.
17. I didn't sit the 11+ as you weren't expected to if you were in [SR 134] class and I had no preparation for it given that I had spent two years in a

PRIVATE

remedial class. I went to St. Monica's Secondary School on the Ravenhill Road. On my first day of secondary school I woke up and there was a brown sticky mess on my sheets. I had no idea what it was; I thought I had soiled myself. I was terrified of being called 'messy bum'. I hid the sheets under the mattress and got dressed for school as normal. On the way to school a woman tapped me on the shoulder and asked if I wanted to come in to her house for a cup of tea. I said no as I was late for school but she insisted. She said "you've had an accident dear" – I was bleeding all down my leg on to my white socks. I had no idea what it was; I thought I was injured. This woman and her husband took me back to the convent then and I was put into the isolation room and given a book to read called 'My Dear Daughter'. I couldn't understand all the big words in it like menstruation.

18. We used to be sent out to people during the school holidays and I was taken out by a family called the [REDACTED] outside Lurgan. I spent the whole summer picking peas and potatoes but I enjoyed it. It was hard work but I liked being out in the sunshine. I went there every summer for three or four years. Apparently the [REDACTED] wanted to adopt me. I found this out later when I was almost 16. I went to visit the [REDACTED] to thank them for taking me out and [REDACTED] told me they had wanted to adopt me but I wouldn't go without my sister.

19. I remember adoption days in the home. Every Sunday, people from outside in fancy clothes would come round the garden, look at all the children and point certain children out. If you were pointed out the nun told you to go wash your face and go up to the parlour. I remember seeing the fruit in the parlour; we never got fruit in the home except an orange at Christmas. There were various efforts made to adopt me out. I would be brought up to the parlour with my sister [HIA 61] and these people would sit there saying they had a television and they wanted us to come live with them. It was a scary thought for me to go somewhere with people I didn't know and even though the home was bad, I didn't know any different. I preferred the home to going somewhere different that could be even worse. Some of the people scared me. There was one woman with a fox head on her fur coat and I remember thinking if she did

PRIVATE

that to a fox what would she do to me. When I came out of the room I would be hit on the head by **SR 134** with a bunch of keys and a crucifix because I would never agree to go away.

20. **HIA 61** and I went out to stay with a woman called **NHB 100** in Newry whose brother was a monk called **NHB 75**. He wore a long brown robe and **NHB 100** used to take us to visit him in the monastery. She would then leave us with him and go off somewhere. We used to go walking in the fields with him hand in hand. **HIA 61** says he used to feel my leg but I don't remember that. I don't know if he touched me anywhere else. As a child starved of love and affection I doubt I'd have even known if I was being abused. Apparently it was in the papers that **NHB 75** was convicted of paedophilia.

21. Then I went out to a family called **██████████** on **██████████**. They had eighteen children – the mother was very devout and didn't believe in contraception. They were lovely people. I went there for about three or four years and it was a great experience for me. It was an escape from life in the home.

22. When I was out with the **██████████** during holidays, the mother used to send me and her daughter **██████████** to the shop. She would give us empty glass coke bottles to take back so I knew these bottles were of value. About a year later when I was back in the home, there were workmen in Nazareth House and they left a few coke bottles behind. I said to my friend **██████████** that if we took those bottles to the shop we could get sweets for them. We climbed over the wall and brought the bottles to a post office. We got loads of penny sweets and chews and we couldn't wait to bring them back to share with the girls. As we were coming over the wall in Nazareth House, **SR 134** was waiting for us. She marched us up the fire escape, got all the children around us and shaved our heads. While she was doing this, she made us repeat "I am guilty of greed and gluttony". I was about ten years old at the time and it was a traumatic thing for me to go around with a bald head.

PRIVATE

23. I have some happy memories of the home. At Christmas two men from outside called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] used to come in and do Christmas plays with us and that was fun - I really enjoyed that. We used to put on concerts for the nuns and people from the local community. It was an escape for us. My sister ^{HIA 63} says we used to get a fried egg at Christmas but I don't remember that. I do remember getting an orange and liquorice though and either a florin or a half a crown.
24. We also used to get out to Christmas parties in places like Mackies and the BBC. You would wait to see if your name was called out and everyone wanted to go to Mackies because it had the best presents. All the presents would be displayed on the stage and there would be some amazing presents like roller skates, hula hoops and skipping ropes. However, the disabled children got the first choice and they always chose the best toys so I would end up with talcum sets and things like that. I remember feeling guilty for being annoyed that the disabled children would pick things like roller skates that they could never use. Even the talc sets were a big deal to us; it was great to have some smellies.
25. I never had any visitors in the home because my mother and father were both only children. I don't recall any inspectors or anybody from Social Services ever visiting the home. The only outsiders I recall are the ones who came up on Sundays looking for children to adopt.
26. When I was fourteen [REDACTED] **SR 134** was sent away to Hammersmith and a young nun called [REDACTED] **SR 153** took her place. [REDACTED] **SR 153** was a breath of fresh air. She was twenty-four and she was really artistic. She started to paint flowers on the bare walls of the dormitories and she made a list of all our birthdays. We all got a cake on our birthday – that was the first time we ever had any recognition of our birthdays. [REDACTED] **SR 153** had just come from South Africa and she was so compassionate and caring. She saved me. She gave me a purpose in life and was the closest thing to a mother I ever had.
27. The dynamic between her and the other nuns wasn't good. I know she didn't see eye to eye with them. She was young and had new, radical ideas on how

PRIVATE

to do things and they didn't like that at all. There were many times I heard **SR 153** crying and the other nuns shouting at her. She was ostracised because she didn't fit in with the regime. She would always come back in and say everything was fine.

28. We older girls had an agreement with **SR 153** that if we did all our chores we could go to the church disco in the hall next door. Three of us used to go – **NHB 22** and myself. There weren't even any boys at the disco, only girls and it was on from 7 to 9pm. All of a sudden **SR 153** got another assignment and left the home. Initially she went to Nazareth Lodge but **SR 31** was there too so one of them had to go and **SR 153** was sent to Hammersmith. She had been there about two years from when I was thirteen to fifteen.

29. There were a lot of changes taking place in the home when I was about fourteen or fifteen. They got rid of the big dormitories and replaced them with smaller bedrooms with about three girls to a room. The skinny mattresses were replaced with proper mattresses. All of a sudden we had minty toothpaste instead of Gibbs block and scented soap instead of carbolic soap. They also got voluntary staff in to help look after the children in the early 1970's.

30. After **SR 153** left she was replaced by a nun who came from Derry called **SR 18**. Although she was young, she had the same kind of disciplinary attitudes as the older nuns. She wanted to make all these negative changes and there was a lot of resistance from the older girls. We told her about our agreement with **SR 153** about the disco and she actually seemed to take it on board. She said we could go but there were a lot of conditions attached. We had to scrub the tiles in the bathroom with a toothbrush. We did everything we said we would and then at 5pm on the day of the disco **SR 18** said she was cancelling it because she had a headache and wanted an early night. Looking back now I know **SR 18** never had any intention of letting us go; she played us. She was

PRIVATE

devious. She wanted an excuse to get rid of us older girls so she could mould the younger children.

31. We were absolutely devastated because this was the highlight of our life so we decided we were going to go anyway. The three of us – NHB 22 and me snuck out the fire escape, climbed over the wall and went to the disco. As we were climbing over the wall on the way back, somebody stood on someone's hand and there was a loud scream. All these little lights started to come on and when we got to the bottom of the fire escape SR 18 was standing there with her arms folded. She didn't punish us. She just said "I'm not talking to you but let me tell you this – the three of you will be out of here by the end of the week".

32. SR 18 kept her word and the three of us were out of Nazareth House by the end of the week. We all left on the same day but I never saw the girls again. I left Nazareth House on 15th March 1974 when I was sixteen. A social worker called NHB 115 brought me to a hostel with a massive Union Jack on the wall and people with Red Hand of Ulster tattoos. I was terrified to be in a Protestant hostel and I had to lie about my name, my identity and what school I went to. This was the height of the Troubles and I was really scared. I ended up staying in the hostel for three weeks and then I moved in with my sister HIA 63 in

Life after care

33. I enrolled in College when I left the home but I didn't finish my course. I ended up getting a job as a typist with a civil engineering firm in . A good friend of mine from the home called convinced me to get a job waitressing in the Hotel on in the evenings so I did and we had great fun there together.

34. I was very naive when I came out of Nazareth House. It was a big culture shock for me. I remember the bullets flying overhead and all the talk of the

PRIVATE

IRA and the British Army. The nuns had always told us the IRA was only rough 'uns so I went about saying this and defending the British Army. I don't know how I didn't get my head kicked in.

35. My sister **HIA 63** had met her husband and moved to [REDACTED] and my sister **HIA 61** was living in [REDACTED] so I decided to move to England with my friend [REDACTED]. We wanted to get away from Belfast. We ended up in Leeds and from there we went to London. We found work in the [REDACTED] Hotel and there was a great Irish community there.

36. On a night out in the West End I met my husband. He was [REDACTED] and I thought he was different to all the Irish men. We ended up getting married and having a daughter [REDACTED] but he was very abusive to me. It was a culture shock realising how women were treated in his culture. He was very controlling and expected me not to work and wait on him hand and foot. He had a very low tolerance level and when [REDACTED] would cry he would shout at me to keep her quiet. I stayed in the relationship because I had very low self-esteem and I didn't know what was normal. I put up with an awful lot.

37. Eventually I had enough and I realised I had to get out of there so I took [REDACTED] and snuck down the stairs one night. He came chasing after me and I fell down the stairs and broke my ankle. I knocked on an old couple's door and begged them to call the police. The man told my husband to let me go and they called the police. I had nowhere to go so I asked the police to contact **SR 153** in Hammersmith for me. I had drifted apart from my sisters because they didn't approve of my marriage and I wasn't allowed to have any friends. I ended up going back to [REDACTED] to live with my sister **HIA 63**. I filed for divorce and then one day my husband's sister rang to say he had died of a heroin overdose. I didn't even know he was a drug addict while he was living with me – I was so naive.

38. Growing up in Nazareth House has had a huge impact on me. I am not very tactile or affectionate and my daughter says I always pull away from a hug. I cannot cope with any sort of intimacy and I only had one relationship after

PRIVATE

████████ father. I am on my own now and I am happy enough with that although I would like to meet a companion. I am very close to my two sisters. My daughter has a good job and I have two grandchildren ████████ and ████████. My brother NHB 117 is a very vulnerable person; he has special needs which we never knew. He ended up getting involved in petty crime and has been in and out of prison. I think he is institutionalised and feels safe in prison. He has never talked about his time in care.

39. In 2002 I began a course to become a counsellor but I could not complete it because the coursework involved a lot of personal development which brought all these issues to the fore. I felt a bit of a spectacle in the class and it was too raw. I feel very resentful that I missed the opportunity of becoming a counsellor because I couldn't cope with my own past. I now work in ████████ Social Care and I enjoy that but I am angry about how my education was stunted. I know I have a brain and I could have made a better career for myself.

40. I have kept in contact with ████████ SR 153 and I still visit her about twice a year. She has just been a ray of sunshine in my life.

41. I have never 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 62

Dated 29th August 2014

HISTORY SHEET

Date	REPORT	Initials of Officer
25.9.73	<p>Visited. Met SR 153 who has been dealing with HIA 62 age group. She introduced me to HIA 62 who is an intelligent attractive girl mature for her years. I explained the purpose of my visit viz to formally accept her into the care of the Welfare Committee. Filled in Admission to Care forms & told her that a Social Worker would visit her at least once each month to discuss whatever problems she might have or just to chat with her. SR 153 seems to fulfill this role. HIA 62 has been in care since she was 3 years old. Both parents deceased, she does not remember her parents. Two other sisters HIA 63 & HIA 61 were admitted with her and her Brother HIA 62 was admitted to Nazareth Lodge. HIA 62 is now in HIA 62 HIA 63 and HIA 61 stay in flats in Belfast and HIA 62 has close contact with them. Family relationships seem to be quite strong. HIA 62 attends St. Monica's school and is in a commercial class. She is very keen to get on and is especially keen on nursing. After our interview she was going to Rupert Stanley College for extra English classes. SR 153 spoke very well of HIA 62 HIA 62</p>	

HISTORY SHEET

Date	REPORT	Initials of Officer
	For previous information - see short rept. from Ngorveta House and [REDACTED] interview.	
28.3.74	Ref. NHB 122 - S. Wer Down & Connor placed [REDACTED] HIA 62 is becoming difficult to cope with at Ngorveta House, and [REDACTED] SR 18 would like her removed tomorrow. It was agreed that [REDACTED] HIA 62 should be kept at Ngorveta until 5 th April. Until alternative accommodation could be sought.	
29.3.74	Visited [REDACTED] SR 18. She is finding [REDACTED] HIA 62 very difficult and a bad example towards the younger children in the group. [REDACTED] HIA 62 has a boy friend of 23 yrs - [REDACTED] he was brought up in Ngorveta Lodge and is an [REDACTED] HIA 62 considerable influence. When [REDACTED] HIA 62 was questioned about the boy, by the Sister she said she liked a well experienced boy. [REDACTED] HIA 62 stayed out late on Tues. evening having gone to the Star Light, without permission. She stayed out coming home with a couple by car. [REDACTED] HIA 62 has on other occasions stayed out late, and has made excuses of going to her grand-mother (who may be [REDACTED] mentioned on the rept). Several days ago a work-man came up from the Brigal Pub, saying he had seen [REDACTED] HIA 62 with an older	

HISTORY SHEET

Date	REPORT	Initials of Officer
	boy, it seems that she was quite involved with him.	
29.3.74	Went to St. Monica's where I talked with Mother SR 192 and HIA 62 from mission. They were surprised to learn of the difficulties felt in Ng. Hse. as they feel that HIA 62 is settling well in school and her work has improved.	
"	Saw HIA 62 and discussed with her the feelings of Ng. It seems that it had not previously been discussed with HIA 62 . Told her of the suggestion of the Good Shepherd at which she was very upset. The Good Shepherd being seen as a step downwards, for the girls who were out of control. HIA 62 spoke of SR 153 who she had previously been with, she is now in Ng. Lodge, and asked if it would not be possible for her to go there, I said I would inquire about it.	
"	Visited SR 153 , she said she would love to have HIA 62 , as she was very fond of her and missed both she and her sisters. She said she would enquire from the Mother if this would be possible.	
1.3.74	Phone call from SR 153 to say that they would be able to have HIA 62 .	
"	Went to see SR 18 who was not very happy about the idea of Ng. Lodge, feeling that HIA 62 should go to the Good Shepherd in Derry. I was totally against this, because of	

HISTORY SHEET

Date	REPORT	Initials of Officer
	<p>fall down. HIA 62 seemed to appreciate this reasoning, but was still somewhat indignant at not being taken at her word.</p> <p>I warned HIA 62 that NHB 125 may force her to come in early.</p> <p>Suggested that she could suggest to NHB 122 that she visit NH 125 sometime. I feel this would perhaps make NHB 125 a little happier knowing where HIA 62 went.</p>	
11.6.74	<p>Called with NHB 122 who seemed distressed at what had happened. I suggested to her that she should meet NHB 125, and she felt this would be a good idea. As with HIA 62, I pointed out the fact of NHB 125 having to take into consideration the other girls in her care.</p>	2.7.
2.7.74	<p>Visited HIA 62. HIA 61 has visited NHB 125 who felt she was quite a nice girl. HIA 62 still seems to be seeing John the taxi driver - 25 yrs. old. NHB 125 I feel he is not a good influence on HIA 62 who seldom speaks of him in the house. Told NHB 125 I would be going on leave and would contact her when I returned.</p>	2.7.
	<p>SR 153 is taking a group of Nogaret's Lodge children to Ballyharney and has asked NHB 125 if HIA 62 could go with them. NHB 125 contacted the official and it was agreed that she could go on 29th July.</p>	2.7.
26.7.74	<p>Phone call from NHB 125 - I was just back to-day from holidays. HIA 62 has asked to go to Dublin with HIA 61 on Sun-</p>	

HISTORY SHEET

Date	REPORT	Initials of Officer
	<p>NHB 125 vanders in front of HIA 62 had an option but to go to Dublin with Jn. Spoke to SR 153 re. the difficulty. She says Jn. is not a very honourable boy, but she does not believe that he is in the IRA. SR 153 said she would have a talk with HIA 62. HIA 62 returned from B'hamon and stayed with SR 153 until 28th. Aug. She begins College on 4th. Sept. It has been agreed that HIA 62 should go to live with her sister for a time at least, how things go. Discussed with NHB 124 PSW the possibilities of B/O HIA 62. This has been agreed to if the references are suitable. HIA 61 Asked for names of referees. She gave me [redacted] of Puddystown Laundry, where both HIA 63 and HIA 61 had worked and [redacted] planned to say he knew little of the girls. [redacted] verbal reference on the phone was poor for HIA 61 saying her time keeping was very poor when she had worked in the laundry. 30.9.74 Visited HIA 61 after having discussed the possibility of helping under Sect. 164 until alternative arrangements could be made. Agreed to give a food voucher of £5 a week for a temporary period. Told HIA 61 of the arrangements. She was quite amazed at the sum of £5 being all she was receiving. I decided I ought to give the reason why, and said that I had been unable to receive satisfactory</p>	

13/11/2014 15:41

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NAZ HOUSE CONVENT

PAGE 02/02

Name: SR 18

Date: 11th November 2014

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

Witness Statement of SR 18

I, SR 18 will say as follows: -

1. I transferred from Nazareth House, Bishop Street, Derry to Nazareth House, Ormeau Road, Belfast on 7th October 1973.
2. At that time, there were three independent family groups in the home, each supervised by a Sister. The senior Sister was responsible for all the children in the home. Among other duties, she attended to all admissions and discharges.
3. I supervised a group of eight girls aged between nine and sixteen years. I remember HIA 62 and all the other girls. I replaced SR 153 who was transferred to Nazareth Lodge, Belfast. They spoke highly of SR 153 found the girls to be very pleasant, helpful and well mannered.
4. With regards to HIA 62 statement, I have absolutely no recollection of the incident HIA 62 has reported. I have never asked any child/children to scrub bathroom tiles with a toothbrush. Regarding my saying that the three girls concerned would be out of the home at the end of the week, I would not have had any authority to carry this out.
5. I do not remember when these girls were discharged from Nazareth House.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

SR 18

Dated 13/11/14

took place and offer a sincere and profound apology to any child that suffered this horrendous act.

15. With regard to paragraphs 23 and 24, we are pleased that **HIA 62** has such great memories of Christmas time in Nazareth House. The sisters tried to give the children as normal a Christmas as possible within the constraints placed on us by the number of children and the financial restrictions.
16. We regard to paragraph 26 & 27, we are delighted that **HIA 62** felt loved and cared for by **SR 153** however we do not accept that this Sister was ostracised by the other Sisters.
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17. With regard to paragraph 29, we are pleased that **HIA 62** has acknowledged the development within the home and the freedom which the children were given.
18. With regard to paragraph 32, we do not accept that the three girls, **HIA 62**, **NHB 22** and [REDACTED] were discharged from the home because they sneaked out of the home to attend the disco. Most children would have left the congregation at this age.
19. The Congregation offers **HIA 62** an unreserved and most sincere apology for any treatment she received by any Sister which fell below the acceptable standard.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed *Sr Brenda McBall*

Dated *23 December 2014*

DOWN & CONNOR CATHOLIC FAMILY WELFARE SOCIETY

Name: HIA 62Address: Nazareth House,
BELFASTCASE REFERENCE:

Residential Care

Date of Inquiry:

Date admitted 11/9/73

REPORT

28/3/74

Telephone call from [REDACTED], asking me to come and see her and
SR 18 HIA 62 housemother.

I called to see them that afternoon. SR 18 is very concerned
about HIA 62 behaviour. Apparently, she is keeping company
with one of the ex-Nazareth Lodge Boys who is aged 23 years. She
goes off in the evenings and is known to frequent his flat in the
[REDACTED] area.

The previous night SR 18 awakened to discover that
HIA 62 and two other girls had left the house and had gone to the
Starlight Ballroom. They did not return until 3.30 a.m. which give
great cause for concern and anxiety in these troubled times.
Particularly since they had to pass through mixed areas to get
home and there have been many assassinations in that area.

HIA 62 language to the nuns has got beyond control and she
frequently uses 4 letter words. The nuns are worried about this
also, but are much more concerned about the detrimental effect she
is having on the other members of the group. One older sister is
currently living with a married man and another sister has had an
illegitimate child, which is in St. Joseph's. SR 18 feels
that HIA 62 is now beyond their control and that they do not
have adequate facilities to control her influence on the other
members of the group. They are most anxious that she be moved out
of Nazareth House as soon as possible and also complain that although
her attendance at school is very good, her application to work is
poor and her teachers agree that she is very wayward.

On one occasion recently a man working on a building site on the
Ormeau Road, came up to the nuns to complain of her behaviour at
4 o'clock in the afternoon when this boy with whom she is keeping
company. The nuns feel that if her behaviour with him (kissing,
etc.,) in the broad daylight is so blatant, the chances of a more
intimate relationship in his flat is highly probable and fear she

Re:

HIA 62

Born: [REDACTED]

Father: [REDACTED]

(Deceased)

Mother: [REDACTED]

(Deceased)

Next of Kin: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] is an elderly person living alone, she is interested in HIA 62 because she was friendly with her mother. HIA 62 visits this old lady from time to time and brings her food and clothing.

HIA 62 the youngest of a family of four children, was put into the care of Nazareth House in June 1961 when her mother died, the father having died some years previously. [REDACTED] was found dead, having taken an overdose of tablets, and there was no-one to look after the four children. The three older members of the family are now working and independent.

HIA 62 is now fifteen and is attending St. Monica's Secondary Intermediate School where reports from both Principal and form mistress are very favourable. She has completed the entrance course to the Rupert Stanley College and hopes to do a secretarial course.

NHB 122 Social Worker for Nazareth House contacted South District in March, 1974 to say that HIA 62 was causing concern in Nazareth and the Sister felt she would have to leave. It was at this time that I became involved. SR 18 was visited and HIA 62 future discussed. She had been seen with a boy of twenty-three years and was said to be going with him and it was felt he was not a desirable influence. She had also left for a dance one evening and stayed out until 10.30 p.m. without permission. These seemed to be the only two incidents for which HIA 62 was being blamed. I saw HIA 62 in school that day to discover that none of this had been discussed at length with her, she admitted to both the happenings, but said she was no longer going with the boy.

SR 153 used to be in charge of the group that HIA 62 is now in, but was moved to Nazareth Lodge. HIA 62 would like to have gone to her and SR 153 said she would love to have her, as she had a very good relationship with HIA 62 and found her of little trouble. Unfortunately it was said in Nazareth House to be the policy not to move children between the House and the Lodge.

HIA 62 has never experienced home life as such and I feel it would be of benefit to her to experience life away from Nazareth. It is hoped that Boarding-Out accommodation will be found for her in the near future.

On Saturdays HIA 62 works in a Chemist shop and spends some time with her older sister. I will be continuing to visit HIA 62 regularly.

9th April, 1974

Social Worker

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