

HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE INQUIRY 1922 – 1995

Statement of SPT126

Module 7 – St Patrick's Training School

Date: 6th August 2015

I, SPT126

will say as follows;

1. I was a resident of St Patrick's Training School from [REDACTED] until [REDACTED]
2. I was aged [REDACTED] when I was admitted. I was in the Junior school for all but the last 3 months which I spent in the Senior School.
3. While in the Junior School I stayed in the dormitories above the school. These were long open dormitories, with about 20 boys to a room. Generally the beds were always fully occupied. Three Brothers, BR94 BR42 and BR47 acted, on rotation as Housemasters. They had a room located between my dormitory and the neighbouring dormitory.
4. When we retired for the night, the Brothers would give us 15-20 minutes 'settling down' time and then it was lights out save for a small dim light in the centre of the room. Night time supervision was undertaken by civilian nightwatchmen but the Brothers could observe the dormitory from a window in their room. There was a need to observe and supervise the dormitory because of the mischief the boys got up to. There was no major events during my time, just normal messing about, boys creeping around the dorm, horseplay, swapping comics books etc after lights out.
5. One of the older boys would be allocated a role in maintaining order between the visits of the patrolling nightwatchman. If you were messing about too much this old boy could ask you to kneel in 'the square'. 'The Square' was that part of the room just in front of the door. If you 'were' in the square the nightwatchman would know you had been misbehaving, would question you and could give you a slap. At most, you could be in 'the square' for about 30 mins.

6. I cannot recall the Brothers ever needing to become involved in a night time issue but we were aware of their presence in the little room and assumed they could be called in an emergency.
7. I have been advised that some former residents have alleged that Brothers entered the dormitories at times to conduct abuse or remove boys from the dormitories to then abuse them elsewhere. At no time during my three years in St Patrick's did any Brother approach me in such a way. Furthermore, I can say that at no time during those years did I ever see a Brother removing a boy from the dormitory after 'lights out'. There was never any talk, rumour or innuendo about this type of behaviour either.
8. At no stage did ^{BR94} , ^{BR42} or ^{BR47} give me any cause for concern in this regard.
9. One of the Brothers would wake us in the morning. They would walk in, clap their hands and simply shout 'ok everyone up'. We would usually simply fall out onto the floor and start prayers. Thereafter we would get a wash, get dressed and head down to the canteen for breakfast.
10. The food was plentiful but pretty basic, average sort of fare. Breakfast was in tables of four with the food, milk, bread, jam etc already laid out in the middle of the table. The boys helped themselves. You sat at the same place every day. At dinner time, the table would have been pre-set, but you would take a plate and go to the serving hatch to order the food. The menu may have seemed repetitive at times but there was always plenty to eat. In the evenings supper was available but it was fairly informal and you could choose to miss it and stay out at the games and activities.
11. After breakfast we returned to the dorm, made the beds and then gathered for assembly in the yard where there was a roll call before heading off to class. In terms of chores, we made our beds and once a week (on a Saturday) cleaned the dorm. This consisted of moving all the beds on one side to the other, brushing under the beds and polishing the floor and then bringing all the beds over to the cleaned side and repeating the process. The polish was applied by way of cloth square put on to your feet.
12. We were in class from approximately 9 to 3. Generally you stayed in one class the whole time, other than for technical drawing when you went to the Technical Drawing classroom near the senior school. This was the only time a 'junior boy' would have been anywhere near the senior school. I was taught by [REDACTED] and later by [REDACTED]. The teaching set up

did remind me more of a primary school than a secondary school set-up, largely because we just stayed in that one room with the same teacher. BR24 oversaw the Junior School. We never saw him outside of school. He was a rather aloof character. I understand that allegations have been made against him. I didn't spend much time in his company and wasn't that close to BR24 but I find those allegations difficult to believe.

13. The evenings would have been dominated by sport and recreation activities. We participated in a lot of sports – football (soccer & Gaelic), hurling, basketball, swimming together with billiards, snooker and table tennis. There was a TV and activity room as well.

14. There was never any pressure put on anyone to participate. BR47 simply called an activity and if you wanted to take part then you went with that group. BR47 co-ordinated the sports. I recall on one of my first days not really being sure of the process. I stayed until the end and then BR47 came down and asked what I'd like to do. I said I didn't know. He suggested basketball but I had no idea what it was. He asked if I'd play gaelic and when I confirmed I had he said 'you'll have no bother with it'. He brought me to the basketball court and handed me a ball. I had no idea what to do with it. From there I went on to play BR42 wasn't really sporty. He would have acted as a referee in-house tournaments but otherwise tended to stay away from the sports altogether.

15. At the weekends I used to accompany the other boys to the Cinema in Broadway. We simply walked to the cinema. There was generally no bother at all. We weren't called names by the locals and the Brothers had no difficulty with the boys. After a while I started to get home on a Saturday and Sunday and my cinema visits stopped.

16. When I became a 'Senior' I had only 3 months left to stay at St Patrick's. I didn't go to school but went to work in the garden with a civilian called [REDACTED]

17. The Brothers helped me get into employment and set me up with a job in [REDACTED] garage. I have gone through a series of jobs but have worked my whole life. For the first few years after I left I continued to go back to St Patrick's to tell the Brothers what I was doing and where I was working.

18. I do recall that the night watchman had a strap. One of them may have had a cane – I'm not sure. I don't recall punishment being administered in the school. I did not receive any.

19. While the classes were streamed I wasn't pushed too hard and could probably have been pushed a bit more. At 14 I got a job in the kitchen and my formal schooling sort of finished.
20. At no stage during my stay did I hear any rumours about inappropriate sexual activity. Boys will be boys and there was talk of sexual issues, girls etc but never anything to suggest abuse by other boys or by members of staff.
21. I remember^{BR1} I met him when I first came into the school from the Courts. He met me in the front office and took my details, filled out forms etc. I had no dealings with him thereafter. He didn't have any role with the boys. I never saw, or heard of, him teaching.
22. I also recall^{BR4} and^{BR8} but I never really got to know them.
23. I absconded once, quite early on. I was probably homesick. I remember my brother inviting me round for dinner. He got up from the table and made some excuse to leave. Five minutes later^{BR46} walked in. My brother clearly wanted me back at the school. As we went out to the car^{BR46} said 'it is bonfire night isn't it' and we spent about an hour,^{BR46} another Brother whom I can't remember, and myself driving round the different bonfires. I didn't receive any corporal punishment for this transgression. I was 'stewed' which meant I was not allowed home. Generally the punishment for absconding was 'stewed' for 6 weeks. At assembly the 'stewed' boys were called out first and stood to the side. I was stewed for 2 weeks, rather than 6, and then allowed to return home at the weekends.
24. I remember^{BR26} but had little dealings with him, even when I was in the Senior school. I remember he was into . I wasn't. However, I don't believe the allegations I now know about. I certainly never heard any inclination, rumour or suspicion at the time.
25. I generally lost touch with my old class mates and St Patrick's colleagues but in the 6-12 months that we hung around together after I got out at no stage did any of them ever mention anything untoward to me.
26. In the three years I was at St Patrick's I met many Brothers but my three main mentors were^{BR94} ,^{BR42} and^{BR47} . I would describe my relationship with each of them as one of father and son. I didn't have a father figure growing up and these three Brothers were

as close as I got to one. I kept in touch with all the Brothers on my routine visits back to the school. I lost touch with BR47 after he left the Order but I have stayed in touch with Brs BR42 and BR94 for over 50 years.

27. Brothers BR47 BR42 and BR94 have influenced my life greatly. BR47 was a very outgoing person who was very into sport. He taught me the skills of hurling, football and soccer and [REDACTED] BR94 was more into the technical things in life, cars, engines, electronics and he very patiently shared his knowledge with me. He was a chatty sort of person, but also a good listener with a sympathetic ear. BR42 was more reserved and was more inclined to stick rigidly to rules. He advocated that we too abide by the rules, and thus avoid trouble. BR42 was quiet and quite strict but he was equally very fair minded.

28. BR26 and BR83 were my mentors on the senior side during the last three months. I did not get to know them as well but I offered them the same respect. BR26 was like BR47 and BR83 more like the BR42 mould.

29. When I first heard the vile accusations directed against these men I was completely stunned. As opposed to facing charges or court I considered that we should be awarding them the highest honours for their contribution to society. They had left their homes, completed education processes and training courses and came to Belfast to give us and our children the benefit of their learning. I spent three years under the same roof as these men. I played all kinds of games and sports with them. I watched TV with them. I dined with them, prayed with them and attended Mass with them. I have raised a family based on the principles that these men taught me and I see those same basic principles reflected in the upbringing of my grandchildren. How can I even attempt to begin to repay these men for their guidance and foundation that they established in my life?

30. Unfortunately I cannot disprove these heinous, criminal allegations, but I am happy and content and totally at peace in my mind that such deeds never occurred. I pray that justice will prevail.

Signed:

Dated:

10.08.15.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND), 1950

J4-10

J.379

TRAINING SCHOOL ORDER : OFFENCE (Section 59)

THE QUEEN
At the Prosecution of *James Lagan*
District Inspector of the
ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY, BELFAST.

Complainant

Petty Sessions District of Belfast

SPT126

Defendant

County Borough of Belfast

SPT126

Belfast

~~ld young person under the~~
~~age of 17, having been born, so far as has been ascertained on the~~ day of
~~age of 14, but being under the age of 17, and though informed by the Court of his right to be tried~~
~~by a jury, having consented to be dealt with summarily, being of the age of 8 years, but under the~~
~~age of 14 years, and his parent or guardian, though informed by the Court of his right to have the~~
~~child tried by a jury, having consented to the child being dealt with summarily), for that he~~ *at Belfast*

*on the [redacted] did feloniously steal 1. article
Robinson pedal cycle value £5, the property*

which is punishable in the case of an adult with imprisonment.

And the Defendant was resident in the district of the Council of the County Borough of Belfast.
And the offence was committed by the Defendant in the District of the Council of the County
Borough of Belfast.

It is hereby ordered that the Defendant (whose religious persuasion appears to the Court to be
that of *Roman Catholic*), be sent to a Training School, namely
St. Patrick's Training School, Glen Road, Belfast. forthwith:

And it is further ordered that the District Inspector of the Royal Ulster Constabulary
at Belfast shall be responsible for conveying the Defendant to such Training School:

And it is further ordered that
residing at [redacted] in the County Borough of Belfast, being the parent,
~~person liable to make contributions in respect~~ of the Defendant, shall pay to the Council of said
County Borough a weekly sum of *fifteen* shillings
until the Defendant ceases to be under the care of the managers of
a Training School, ~~and a further sum of~~ *for costs-*

Dated this

[redacted] la [redacted] [redacted]



J. S. Mills
Resident Magistrate.

Take Notice that you are required, under
a penalty of Two Pounds, to give notice forthwith to the said Council of the County
Borough of Belfast of any change of address. No sums are payable in respect of any period
during which the Defendant is out on licence, or under supervision from a Training School.

No. 10/15B.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS ACT (N.I.), 1950.

Section 76 (2)

TRAINING SCHOOL ORDER—RECORD OF INFORMATION

Transmitted by the _____ Juvenile Court to the Managers of

St. Patrick's Training School.

(Signed)

J. Hall

Clerk to the Court.

Date.....19.....

A. GENERAL PARTICULARS :

SPT126

Name of child or young person.

Date of Birth.

Address.

Circumstances in which brought before the Court. (State the substance of the offence or the ground of application).

*Leaving of Pedal Cycle
D/O of R.V.C.*

By whom brought before the Court.

B. SCHOOL RECORD :

School last attended

Educational attainment

Regularity of attendance.

Health and physical standard.

Conduct.

Character.

Ability.

Any other particulars.

*S. G.
Good
Good
Good at school.
Not Good - but rather immature
Average for his age*

C. OTHER INFORMATION :

Previous offences (if any).

*Shop breaking and handling
Larceny*

Previous Order of Court (if any). State Court and date of Order; if sent to a Training School state name of school; if placed on probation, the name of the Probation Officer; and if any other Order made, state nature of Order.

*Best of juvenile Court
Probation 2 years
Mr. Mc Mahon
- Probation 2 years
(Mr. Mc Mahon)*

Religious denomination.

R.C.

Connection with church or chapel.

Member of

Membership of club or any other juvenile organisation.

None

Undesirable associations.

-

If left school:--

Date of leaving.

Employment since leaving.
(Give approximate dates).

Name and address of last employer.

Character in employment.

Any other particulars.

Signature

Official Description.....

Date.....

D. PARTICULARS OF PARENTS OR GUARDIANS OF:

	(a) Father	(b) Mother
Name and address	RC	RC
Whether parents, step-parents or guardians.	-	Adm wife of H. R. - 6 Widor
Religious denomination	-	Protestant
Occupation.	-	-
Approximate earnings.	-	-
Particulars of any family allowances payable	-	-
Particulars of any disability or other pension. (No. of pension book).	-	-
Particulars of any forces service. (Date of enlistment, Regimental No., etc).	-	-
Character, with particulars of any convictions.	-	Good
Attitude to the boy or girl.	-	-
Any other information.	-	-

see Home Surveying Report

E. HOME SURROUNDINGS OF:

Particulars of other members of the family living at home. (State where possible, ages and character, with particulars of any convictions).

Name, sex and age of any other member of the family in a Training School, Borstal or prison.

General home conditions:—

Number of rooms.

Rent.

Condition.

Surroundings.

Name and address of any person interested.

Any other information.

Kitchen, scullery & 2 bedrooms

4/3

Fair

not good

Signature *P. J. Mason*

Official Designation *Probation Officer*

Date 

SPT126

Stealing

Birth:

Committal:

Discharge:

Debit

2nd June

Didn't return. Slept Dunville. back mon. 9 p.m. ^{Br. 6H}

Key - not sure - Tyrrell etc. Kept in. On Office
Kept in - no sign of other key.

Home Tues - Wed. by day 27 + 28

Kept in 3 Sundays - Entering ^{BR42} Room taking Cigarette case keys.
McCaughey with key ^{BR1} to answer phone.

Home Sun - Tues.

letter from uncle J. Hayes re Purse 2 x 10/- missed
on Sunday 16th. Sent Mr. Murphy down

1st June

In Managers room in House while he was on holiday
Questioned re Watch. In

Home Fri - Sun. G.K. 1 saucer 3^d 3/10/09th

Home  by day 28th

Home Sun. Mar 29 - Thurs Apr. 2nd

1st Jun. 

Big brother up re getting out.

Home Sat - Mon - by day Tues.

Home 

[REDACTED]

Dear Sir,

SPT126

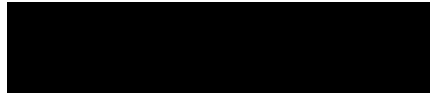
I beg to refer to the attached Form "D" in the case of the above-named youth who was discharged on licence from St. Patrick's Training School on 8th inst. It appears that he has been associating with undesirable companions and keeping bad hours, and so I thought it best in his own interest to revoke his licence and recall him to the School.

Yours faithfully,

Manager.

The Secretary,
Ministry of Home Affairs,
Training School Section,
Stormont,
BELFAST, 4.

St. Patrick's



SPT126

Discharged on
Licence



Licensed to his mother

Belfast, to
work as [redacted] with
Garage,
Belfast. Wages: 30/- p.w.



St. Patrick's



SPT126

Final
Discharge



Discharged to his mother

work as Labourer with
Belfast.
Wages: 80/- per week.

No

NAME SPT126

REFERENCE No.

HOME ADDRESS

Date of Committal and offence.	Date of Birth	Date of admission	Date of Lic. or discharge	Period of detention expires	Occupation on leaving School
Stealing.			Licensed. Discharge.		

HEALTH

Education

Conduct

Vocational Training in School

Progress

Character

Interests

Reports of Welfare Officers and Friends

Licensed to his mother, Belfast, to work as [redacted], me [redacted] with Belfast. Wages: 30/- p.w.

Recalled to the School.

Made a start with

Report from foreman "a willing and obedient lad, shows some intelligence for the job. very promising.

Interview with his mother. Doing well and [redacted].

Changed employment to

Working as above and doing well.

No one in when I called. [redacted] Working and doing well Has passed his Driving Test. [redacted]. Working as above.

Transferred to [redacted]

No one at home when I called. [redacted] Working as above. His mother assures me that he is [redacted] employed with

Working as above. Good report from his mother.

No one at home when I called.

Interview with his mother. SPT126 Working as above and doing very well at home.

OFF AMERICAN AT THIS DATE.

-2-

PHYSIQUEGENERAL HEALTH: *Good.*PHYSICAL DEFECTS: *none*SIZE: *normal - average.*APPEARANCE: *Good.*EXPRESSION: *alert.*GENERAL REMARKS

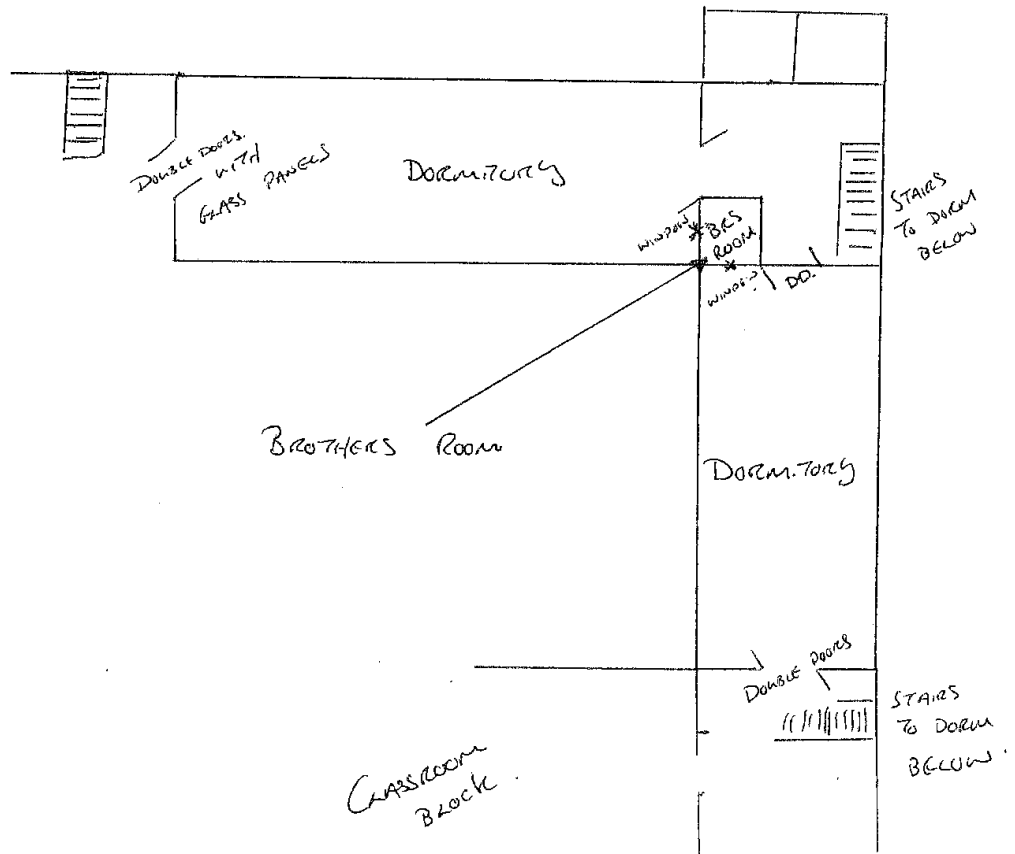
I think SPT126 is one of the better type pupils in the school at the moment. He is quite good all round in his class work, tries hard at games etc. and generally has given me a good impression in the short time he has been in my class. I don't think he will be a cause of any great concern? [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

SPT126

Doesn't seem to have changed very much in character over the year. He is still a polite, quiet and obliging lad. Always in the best of form and wearing his usual big smile. Presently in the kitchen, where he has been working now for about five months, has only praise for him. A good honest & steady worker at manual work. He always has good marks every week and Mr. Brown is quite pleased with him. He is always neat and tidy in his person. — D 9-11-611

NOT TO SCALE

ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY

JUNIOR SCHOOL
2ND FLOOR

THERE WERE 2 DORMITORIES ON JUNIOR SIDE.

1 ON 1ST FLOOR + 1 ON 2ND FLOOR ABOVE + BELOW EACH OTHER

THE ARRANGEMENT WAS REPLICATED ON THE SENIOR SIDE.

1 NIGHT SUPERVISOR PATROLLED ALL 4 DORMITORIES AND
COULD ACCESS THEM ALL ON PATROL BY WALKING
THROUGH THEM AND UP + DOWN STAIRS TO NEXT
LEVEL.

JW FROM DESCRIPTION 25

BR94