

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 162

Witness Name: HIA 162

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 162

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]. I lived with my parents and [REDACTED] siblings. They were [REDACTED]. I was the second youngest child in the house. My father was previously in [REDACTED] and was a strict disciplinarian. After he left [REDACTED] he continued to work and was never unemployed as far as I can remember. My mother also believed in firm discipline in the family home.
2. I was classified as a bad child and considered wild and hyperactive. I could not sit still and was always fidgeting or constantly looking for something to do. Nowadays I would in all probability be labelled as having ADHD but when I was a child people did not know enough about that type of condition. I was frequently slapped because that was felt to be the appropriate way of chastising a child who was seemingly out of control.
3. I appeared in court from I was [REDACTED] years of age and this was for offences such as breaking into a shop. I was expelled from my [REDACTED] school for fighting and also from the [REDACTED] which I subsequently attended. I appeared before [REDACTED] Court when I was [REDACTED] years old and received a Training School Order which was served at St Patrick's Training School in Belfast.

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St Patrick's Training School Belfast

4. I was taken to St Patrick's straight from court on [REDACTED]. One of my older friends had been there previously and told me about pillow fights and other games and it sounded like a good place. I had very strict parents and it seemed like a good place to go compared to my home. It was going to be something different from the life I was used to. He did not tell me about some of the other things which went on at St Patrick's.

5. I absconded from St Patrick's at every opportunity I could. I was there for [REDACTED] in total but I believe that during my time there I probably absconded between ten and fifteen times. I used to try to go back to [REDACTED] and would have to hitch lifts. Sometimes even the police would have brought me home thinking I had no way home. There were gangs in St Patrick's and there was a lot of bullying. The Brothers knew what was going on and they watched from the sidelines. They only intervened if things got very serious. I never told my parents what was going on at St Patrick's but just told them that I did not want to go back. My parents held me until one of the Brothers came to collect me and drive me back. On other occasions when I ran away I would hang around in certain areas of Belfast because I knew that the Police were unlikely to come into those areas to look for me due to the political situation at the time. Then I would make my way home to [REDACTED]. I knew that if I stayed away from the city centre I had a better chance of not being located.

6. I am aware from news reports that there are allegations of child abuse but in my time at St Patrick's I was molested by some of the older boys but not by the Christian Brothers. A couple of the Brothers did beat me but I was used to that because I was beaten at home and at school because of my hyperactivity. Things did happen that as a young boy I didn't understand at the time. Some of the Brothers would rub themselves up against the boys. At the time we didn't know what this meant. The [REDACTED] used to push up behind us as we bent over the [REDACTED] and then laugh it off. He did this to me and I saw him do it to other boys although we didn't speak about it.

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7. The major problem I had during that time was with the IRA. I know that on one occasion the night watchman allowed [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] There were never any Brothers around when this was happening. The night-watchmen later told me they would say I was found wandering outside the dormitory. I absconded that night and walked to the house of a boy called [REDACTED]. He was also in St Patrick's but was on a period of home leave. His mother allowed me to stay that night but when I went to bed she phoned the Training School to let them know where I was. I understand that she was only doing what she thought was best for me but I left the next morning as soon as I could.
8. The Training School had a number of boys who had been remanded there due to suspected involvement with paramilitaries. There was a lot of Republican involvement in the school at the time and the Brothers seemed to let them do what they wanted and seemed to support them. I had the impression that they were treated a lot better than people such as myself who were not involved in that type of activity. I am aware that explosives were found in the grounds and I remember that I was arrested with a number of other boys and taken to Fort Mona for interrogation. I had absolutely nothing to do with that sort of thing. The Brothers became very anti-IRA after a while.
9. Two older boys beat me regularly and once they took me to Black Mountain and tortured me for five or six hours. The boys were called **SPT 45** and **SPT 46** who were both from [REDACTED]. They made me stand with my hands out holding rocks and hit me. They said that they were from the IRA and that I had been an informer and because of me the uncle of another boy had been interned. It was all nonsense and I do not believe that the boys were actually part of the IRA and were just pretending that they were. I was taken back to St Patrick's that night and was bleeding and bruised. I never received any medical treatment for the injuries I received that day. I remember that later that night the Irish National

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Anthem was played and all the boys stood to attention. A housemaster called **SPT 47** saw this and was very annoyed at the other boys.

10. The sexual abuse which I suffered at the hands of the older boys happened when I was on holidays in Cushendall. Every summer a group of boys would go to this house in Cushendall which was owned by the Brothers. There were six or seven boys sharing a bedroom. I had terrible experiences there because I was small and looked very feminine at that time. I believe that due to this I got more abuse than anyone else. This group of older boys made me give them oral sex and masturbate them every night during my first week there. There were more than four boys in that group. I ran away after this first week and never returned to Cushendall. I believe that the Brothers and the staff must have been aware of what was going on and I would be shocked if they were not.
11. The Brothers always seemed to have their favourite boys and those boys got whatever they wanted. If they did not like the food for example they could get something else that they did like. I did not get that option. The food in general was good and there was always enough. On a Sunday there was always a fry. However if you left any food on your plate you were in trouble and got slapped. Sometimes the Brothers would kick you in the back of the ankle with their big heavy brogue shoes. It was very painful and took a few days to heal. We had some chores to do but these were usually just shining the floors. We were also allowed to smoke which I thought was strange. We also got pocket money to spend in the internal shop.
12. Sometimes I was humiliated in St Patrick's. The toilet paper we were given to use was like tracing paper. Every week the laundry was washed and if there were any marks on my underwear then it was hung on top of the television so that everyone could see. I was the subject of ridicule about this and the other boys called me names throughout my entire time at St Patrick's. I was given my clothes from the clothes store. They weren't clothes I would have chosen but they were fine but normally two sizes too big.

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13. It was so boring in St Patrick's because there was so little to do. I remember that there was an old pool table but it did not have any felt on it. It was just slate and six pockets. There was also a table tennis table that boys could use. Some of the older boys were given power by the Brothers and were able to leave the grounds and look for people who absconded. If they found a boy who had absconded they were allowed to beat him and they were never reprimanded by the Brothers.
14. I went to school for a few hours every day but it was very poor. There was one English composition to be done in each week and there was a prize for the best one. There were no books, no Maths or English lessons and there was never any homework. I remember **BR 87** just sat at the top of the classroom and read the paper. The teachers did not really teach anything and if I complained about the poor standards I was beaten.
15. There were never any birthday cards or presents in St Patrick's. On your birthday the routine was that the boys sang Happy Birthday to you and then you were beaten up. At Christmas and other holiday times I was allowed home.
16. My parents came to see me whenever they could but they lived in [REDACTED] and it was not easy for them to visit all the time. I did not tell my parents what was going on at St Patrick's but I do remember that I made a complaint to one of the Welfare staff. I think she was called **SPT 48** I remember that within an hour of making the complaint I was beaten and taken to the punishment cell. The cells at St Patrick's were the worst cells that I ever experienced. The cell was inside a cupboard and had no windows, just bricks made of glass and a hard bed. There was only a half mattress on the bed and there was no food. I was kept there for three or four days. It was solitary confinement and it did not matter how loud I shouted because no one came to help me.
17. Approximately six months after I made the complaint I was sent to the Borstal in Millisle. I remember that shortly before I went to Millisle I was visited by two Brothers in Crumlin Road Gaol which was a holding centre for boys going to Borstal. I think that it was **BR 20** and **BR 87** The visit took place

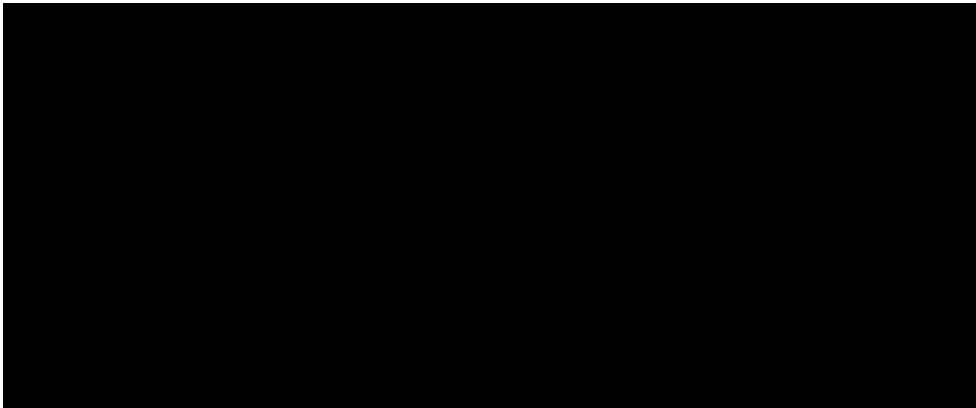
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in a cell and was a closed visit with no one else present. I thought that it was strange because I did not think any Brothers would go to visit a boy in jail. The Brothers recommend to the court that you have to leave St Patrick's because they cannot control you so it was odd that they would take the time to visit me.

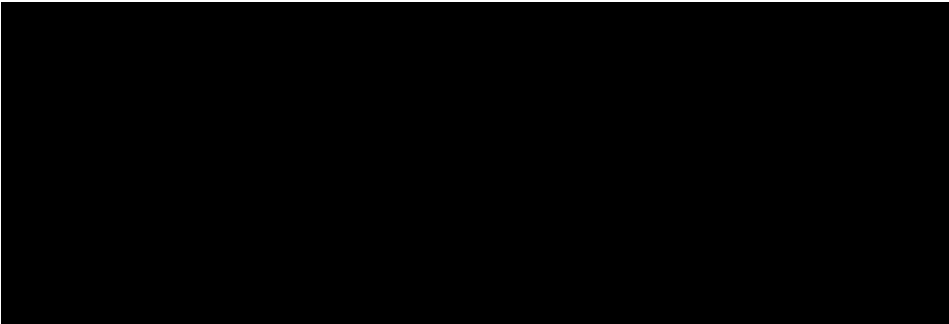
18. They told me to say nothing about what had been going on at St Patrick's. I felt intimidated by them because there was no one else in the cell. **BR 20** was known to molest children at St Patrick's and I knew about it even though he did not actually abuse me. It was well known throughout St Patrick's what he was doing. I remember **BR 20** was always taking the new smaller boys by the hand. I remember him taking one of the young boys who came from the orphanage called **SPT 49** under his wing, and **BR 20** always seemed to have him by the hand. **BR 46** conducted himself in the same way.

Millisle Borstal

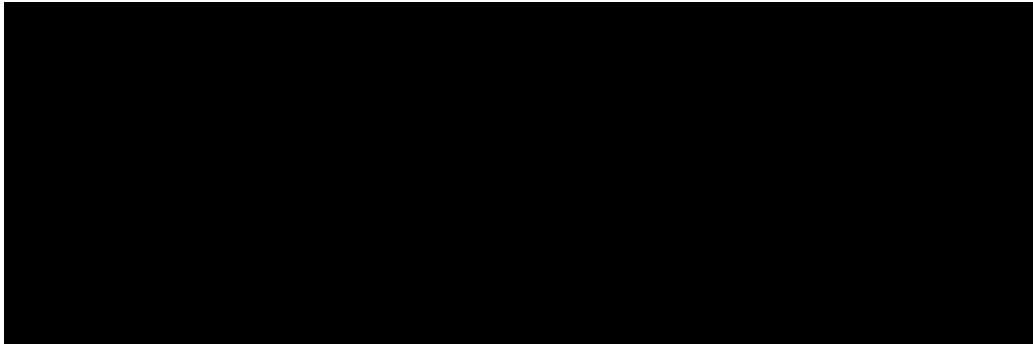
19.



20.



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Life after care

21. I was released from Borstal when I was about [redacted] and I returned to [redacted] I lived by myself for the majority of the time and I was also in and out of prison. I was [redacted] when I decided to move to [redacted] I then decided to move back to [redacted] I had a life in [redacted] but once the recession hit I lost [redacted]

22. I have been [redacted] but I now live alone and am not in a relationship. I have a daughter who lives in Northern Ireland but I do not see her as much as I would like. I work as a [redacted] and am trying my best to get on with my life. It is not easy sometimes because memories come into your head and it can be hard to forget them. I have never received counselling regarding my time in care. I try to think of other things and my motto is to sing Happy Birthday because that normally makes me forget.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed HIA 162

Dated 3/03/15




Recd. 19/1/79
Mr

Hi

How's life for you down there
it's rotten up here. In [redacted]
Some business or another has
been burnt out for the last
4 nights. I had a kind of fight
to get going to the Disco tomorrow
night with the teachers. Still I don't
care. I don't really want to go
out tomorrow night (fr) I might
just go down the town for a
laugh. Are you coming home this

Weekend. I am sitting here in school
with a rumbus going on from
all the girls who got valentine
cards. This morning I tried to
miss the bus, but he saw me
and stopped. I nearly died. And
the postman was coming towards
me still I wasn't really expecting
any because I didn't send any.
The truth is I forgot all about it.
Well hope you are coming home.
Soon ^{NB} don't forget to write
Bye lots of love.



Dear [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sorry I didn't write but I have been very busy. Although I haven't been about [REDACTED] for a long time because I am working at the weekends. Tell all the boys I was asking for them. Even [REDACTED] is included in that. Because to tell the truth if [REDACTED] hadn't finished with me I wouldn't have met [REDACTED]. Oh! he's the boy whom I am now going with. Sorry [REDACTED] that I can't accept your offer. I would like to be able to only I couldn't do it on [REDACTED]. We are happy the way we are. But anyway [REDACTED] I hope we will remain friends and maybe sometime I will be once again in a situation which leaves me free to accept your offer. Well who are [REDACTED]. And tell [REDACTED] I am sorry to hear he was caught. Well [REDACTED] I have to go soon as I am doing this in the middle of class as the teacher has just gone out for a piss. Ha ha ha. Oh I haven't seen [REDACTED] for quite a while but I'll tell her you were asking for her. Well I did go to see the Exorcist twice [REDACTED] was sitting behind

me the second time I went. It was good
when ~~you~~^{are} you getting out. I haven't
seen you for a long time haven't you
been out for some time. I went to [REDACTED]
with [REDACTED] a couple of times. By the way
~~what happened between you two~~
why did you say you and [REDACTED] had fell out
I have just heard you haven't. So even although
I am going with [REDACTED] if I wasn't I wouldn't go
with you because of [REDACTED]

Received [REDACTED]

Industrial Schools Act, Ireland, 31 Vic., Cap. 25.

PUNISHMENT REPORT BOOK

OF

ST. PATRICK'S INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL,

DONEGALL-STREET, BELFAST.

CERTIFIED 27TH AUGUST, 1869.





ABSCONDINGS

Absconded



Returned



Recommitted



St. Patrick's Training School

Telephone :
Belfast 612291/2

GLEN ROAD,
BELFAST,
BT11 8BX

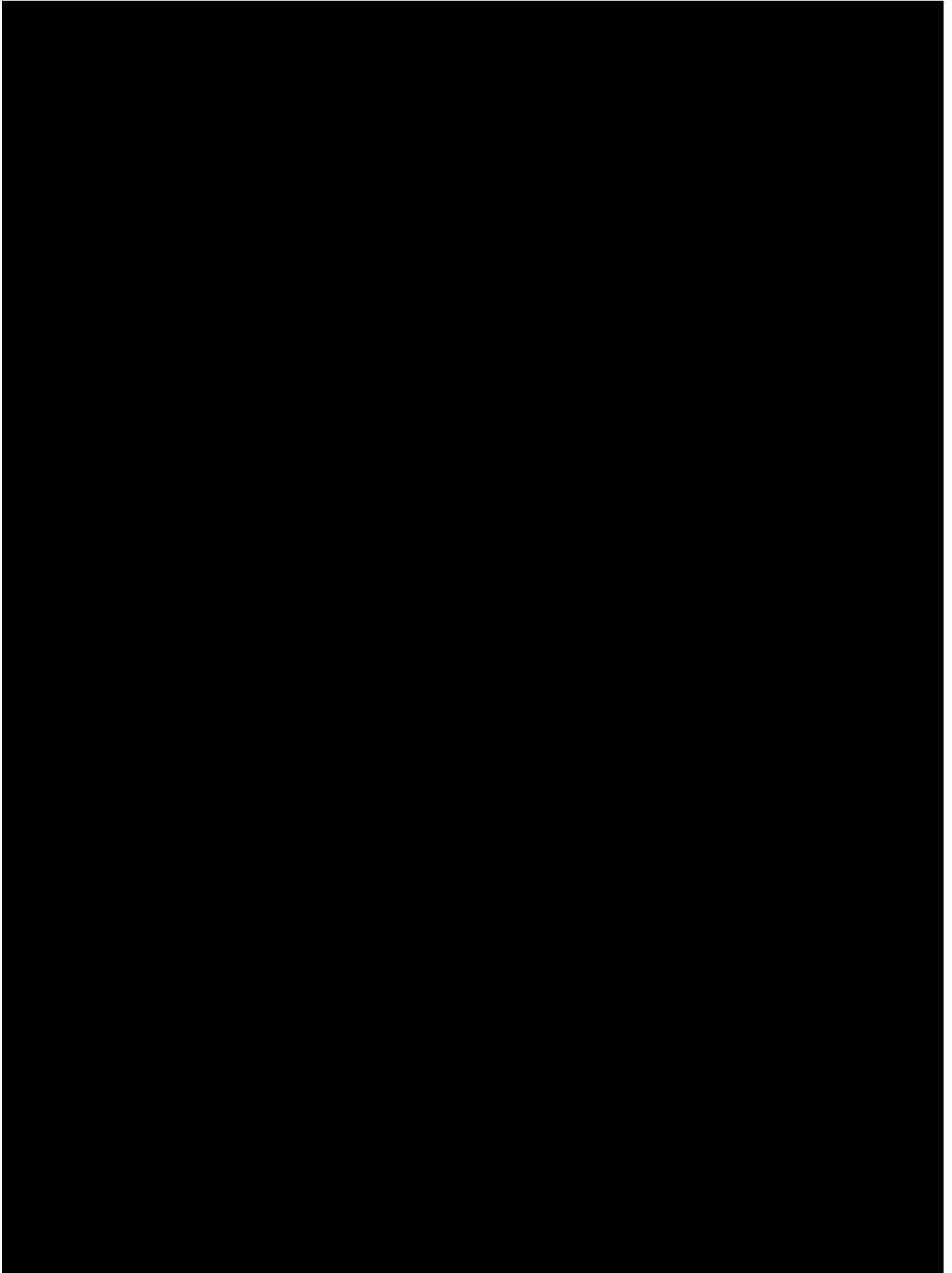
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] was running wild in the town and was responsible for leading other boys into serious trouble. She cited several instances recently when [REDACTED] was involved in the bullying of boys much younger than himself. [REDACTED] behaviour was having an adverse affect on [REDACTED] former school where the principal [REDACTED] had expressed concern.

We pointed out that a decision on [REDACTED] future couldn't be made until he would return to the training school.

Before we left [REDACTED] had a telephone call from the police stating they would be making an effort to locate the boy within the next few days.

Thursday [REDACTED]



DATE

REPORT.

[REDACTED] out of Bed at 11-20 PM
 put in hours. Absconders remain as listed
 4 Boys called at 2 PM for Toilet
 back in School [REDACTED]

Boys in bed usual time
 (Chalet boy) in Sick bay
 and [REDACTED] "mopped up" toilet and
 dormitory which were flooded owing to
 a leak in drinking water apparatus. I
 feel they should be rewarded for their
 good work. 3 Boys for Toilets 12.30 A.M.

Boys in bed at the proper times
 [REDACTED] absconders.
 home till 11-11 74. 3 Boys called at 12-30 AM
 Night for Toilet [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] in bed at 9-30 New boy Leo
 Night Light in up stairs from dormitory
 not working. New Boy admitted on remand until
 15/11/74 Quiet Night 3 Boys called at 12.15
 for Toilet Absconders remain as listed

Boys in bed 10:00 P.M. watched T.V.
 [REDACTED] brought back to School
 by his father [REDACTED] put out of Dorm
 for "check" [REDACTED] back in Chalet.
 3 boys called for toilet 12.15 A.M.

Report

Boys in bed usual time

[redacted] now back in bed. also
[redacted] also did not
[redacted] and [redacted] "put

out" for throwing slippers, [redacted] HIA 162
out for constantly talking after "lights out"
Although the above three, named, were
the only boys to be "put out". The
behaviour of all the boys in the
Dormitory leaves a lot to be desired

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continued with [redacted]