

PRIVATE

HIA REF:267

Witness Name: HIA 267

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 267

I, HIA 267 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED]. I was one of six children and I am the fourth child in the family. I lived with my mother and father in a new estate in [REDACTED]. My father was a [REDACTED] who frequently worked away from home. My mother found me difficult to manage and I began playing truant from school. I was attending [REDACTED]. I was bullied there and I began to play truant more and more. Eventually, I was sent to Rathgael in 1975 on a Training Order for 1 to 3 years.

Rathgael Training School (1975-1977)

2. I remember when I arrived at Rathgael, I was taken to Reception and on the first night I was waiting in a queue to go into the dorms with the other new boys. I was only [REDACTED] at that time and I was overwhelmed because of the strange environment. [REDACTED] RG 63 a boy who was directly behind me in the queue punched me and I punched him back. [REDACTED] RG 50 who was one of the staff members there, pulled me out of the queue and began to beat me with his fists. He was a big man who towered over me and he handled me as if I was a rag doll. This happened on the very first night I was there and I was very fearful afterwards.
3. I was moved from Reception to Lisnevin to the assessment unit. I was there for six weeks or more and I have no complaints about that time. I enjoyed the activities and my time with the other boys there. I was then transferred back to Rathgael.

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4. Life became particularly difficult for me at this point. **RG 64** a staff member who [REDACTED] was a sadist. I witnessed him deliver some vicious beatings to the boys he [REDACTED] and I remember being terrified of him. I constantly felt afraid [REDACTED] I remember one incident when he knocked a boy called **RG 65** or **RG 223** unconscious with a blow from a book. He was very unpredictable in his behaviour, for example, he had a party piece where he would do an impression of a woman called [REDACTED]. He would do this impression with us one minute and make us all laugh and then lose his temper the next. I always felt on edge around him because I never knew what to expect.
5. I remember one incident when we were playing pater tennis outside in the grounds when he walked by. I joked with him and I asked him to do his impression of [REDACTED]. He lost his temper with me and started to beat me. I ran off towards House [REDACTED] because I was afraid of him. He followed me and began beating me with such force I fell against a radiator and sustained a cut to my head which began to bleed.
6. I was so upset by this attack that I absconded very shortly afterwards. I went with 2 other boys to Scrabo Tower which is about 7 miles from Rathgael. It was the middle of winter and it was very cold that evening. We were only wearing our Sunday shirts which were quite light and eventually we realised that we would have to go back. The group split up and we handed ourselves into the police and were taken back to the school. I was with one other boy, **RG 67** when we returned. **RG 4** another member of staff, who was known as [REDACTED] gave us a beating. We bore the brunt of his anger because we were the first ones back. **RG 4** was very well known in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. There was no way I could complain about the way he treated us. My parents would have just said "It was your fault" or "He didn't hit you for nothing" if I told them what was happening.

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7. I remember another incident where **RG 4** had told the boys they were not allowed to hang on the monkey bars inside the school. I was away when he said this and I didn't know that he had forbidden us to hang on the bars. I was leaning against them when he walked back later that day and **RG 4** I refused to hold my hand out to be caned. He lost his temper and beat me with such force that his cane broke and he started thumping me with his fists. I was only thirteen at the time and I was terrified. I remember hearing about another incident where one of the teachers, **RG 66** who was a small man with glasses, hit a boy called **RG 68** on the lip. **RG 68** had to get four or five stitches. These sorts of violent incidents were the norm rather than the exception.
8. There was other incident with a boy who had come from Kincora. He was a big lad and he was very withdrawn. We called him **RG 69** He just wandered around with his hands in his pockets and never spoke to anyone or about anything. I remember we were told that he had taken his own life by **RG 69**
9. In the summer of 1976 we were made to work chipping small mosaic tiles from a swimming pool which was on site as a form of punishment. We were given small hammers and told to chip away the tiles. We spent hours at this task and our hands were covered in blisters when we finished. The dust was overwhelming and we had no masks or protective clothing. It was a form of child labour and I felt degraded doing this work.
10. I remember being afraid constantly at Rathgael. For example, there was a night watchman, I think his name was **RG 13** He used to patrol the grounds at night. **RG 13** He used to come up right up beside you with **RG 13** It was just an example of another thing that really scared me.
11. The general level of care was good at Rathgael. I have no complaints about the living conditions as such. For example, the food was good and the environment was clean. The laundry was done every week and your clothing

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and bedding were clean. We all had chores to do and kept our individual houses in good order. There were inspections and if, for example, the standard of cleanliness was not up to scratch, then we would be made to clean it again as a punishment, or given toothbrushes and told to clean out the multi-gym. I remember feeling degraded by these punishments.

12. There was a points system in Rathgael which was linked your privileges within the institution. If your behaviour both at school and at your house was good, you were allocated points. Once your points reached a certain level, you were given weekend leave to visit your parents. The number of points you received was reviewed monthly and you could work your way up to a position where you were getting leave every weekend. Some staff were quite fair and others would be very quick to deduct points for minor misdemeanours. It left me in a position where I was constantly on guard as I never knew when my leave might be affected by a small breach of the rules.

13. The day-to-day regime at Rathgael was that we got up in the morning about 7.30am to 8am and made our beds. We got washed and then did chores in our houses. We had breakfast and then we were marched up to the chapel. Then we had an assembly and after that we went to the school which was in a different building on the site. There were classrooms and there were lessons until mid-day. The education system there was fairly good. For example, although **RG 64** was a violent man, he was a good teacher. He had a particular system which helped me to learn to read. However, I didn't leave Rathgael with any formal qualifications.

14. After lessons in the morning, we went back to our houses for dinner and when that was over, we went back to school for afternoon lessons. When school was over, we went back to our houses and tidied up. Then we had some social time outside for activities like tennis or gymnastics. **RG 17**

RG 17 I spent a lot of my free time training with them.

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15. RG 17 background was in [REDACTED] and he was quite strict but fair. He knew he didn't have to hit the boys to get their respect. He did have a slipper and he would use it to punish the boys occasionally. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] made up from the boys at Rathgael. I really loved developing my skills in this area. He was a positive influence during my time there. There were some good teachers there, but for every good one, there were bad teachers like RG 64 and RG 4
16. I don't remember any welfare officers or social workers coming to visit me during my time there. There was no-one I could talk to either in my own family or in Rathgael. Some of the most violent staff, like RG 4 were very well known, almost heroes, in my community. If I complained about my treatment, it would have come back at me, so I kept it all to myself.
17. I came to lose respect for all authority figures because of the experiences I had in Rathgael. I believe that, because I saw these violent encounters as a young man, I turned into a very, very violent man myself. It ruined me in the end. Even now, as an adult, I don't back down from a fight not even if paramilitaries are involved. Consequently, as an adult, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I feel I have lost almost everything positive in my life because of my exposure to violence.

Life After Care

18. After I left Rathgael, I went home and lived with my mother and family for a while. The violence I was exposed to at Rathgael changed my personality. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I have a real problem with authority figures. This kind of conflict just triggers something negative in me. It reminds me of that fear I experienced when men who were supposed to be looking after me were actually beating and humiliating me. The fear I felt then and that sense of not being safe has stayed with me and it means I react aggressively in conflict situations.

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19. I left Belfast and moved to [REDACTED] some time ago. I find it difficult to control my emotions and I don't just see "red", I see "white". I rarely go out now. I think that it's just better for me to be on my own and away from people. I feel that I never really got a proper chance at life. It destroyed me for work because I can't accept any form of authority. I just turned into a very angry person.

20. I don't believe a memorial or an apology would help me come to terms with what happened to me. I did go to some counselling sessions last year. They were based in [REDACTED] and it took me nearly an hour to get there on the bus [REDACTED]. I didn't find that counselling helped me particularly and the travelling distance proved to be problematic.

21. I was sent to Rathgael because I was playing truant. I was in there with boys who had committed serious crimes, for example, theft or killing animals or paramilitary activities. I turned from being bullied into being a bully. I just wasn't prepared to put up with any more abuse.

22. I did get married and had two daughters. I am divorced now but I have a good relationship with my ex-wife. I have two lovely daughters and I have a brilliant relationship with them. I have two grandchildren, and although I have lost a lot, I am very grateful for this part of my life.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed [REDACTED] HIA 267

Dated 16 4 20

CASE CONFERENCE on**HIA 267**MONDAY 15th DECEMBER, 1975Present:

[REDACTED] (Housemother),

1. [REDACTED] matches his volatile overactive temperament. He is a very impressionable boy who idolises the deviant escapades of the older members of the peer group. The more serious the charge the more attractive is that [REDACTED]. A committal order was a great thrill to him and his next goal is to establish a record number of abscondings. Despite this appetite for self-destruction, [REDACTED] was not an unpleasant boy but a recurrent theme in most of the reports was the need for a firm approach. He has the capacity to annoy with his niggling attention-seeking persistence. Close supervision was necessary but a positive response could be achieved as soon as he realised the need to conform to a clearly defined procedure either in the classroom or during leisure time. A soft hearted approach [REDACTED] best interests. Towards the end of the assessment period he developed a mania for the game of Chess and this interest should be fostered to distract him from his more accustomed role of a mischievous meddler.
2. [REDACTED] is the fourth member of a family of six children. [REDACTED] reported very favourably on the home circumstances and assured case conference that the boy would be warmly received when he was eligible for leave. The only reservations were the father's prolonged absences from home because of the nature of his employment and the vulnerability of the boy to the adverse influences of the [REDACTED]. A valuable contact to be encouraged would be the local Youth Club and information about this amenity can be obtained from Mr. J. McCallen the Educational [REDACTED].
3. Prolonged absence from school was a major contributory factor to the marked degree of retardation recorded on the battery of attainment tests administered in Lisnevin. [REDACTED] member of a remedial group while he was enrolled at Dundonald High School and an extension of this specialised educational treatment would seem appropriate. Projects on the natural world might help to absorb some of his noted classroom restlessness. His susceptibility to praise and encouragement will be valuable allies in planning programmes in Vocational Subjects and Physical Education.
4. [REDACTED] was pronounced fit to participate in all activities. Psychiatric oversight was considered unnecessary, but the report from the Psychologist drew attention to his high score on the neuroticism scale and his bland regard for social rules might suggest a delinquent predisposition.
5. In our mixed community [REDACTED] took great delight in igniting the occasional sectarian outburst. While he delighted in hero-worshipping the older boys his bullying attitude towards the younger members of the group should be quickly quashed.

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His manipulative power in his relationships with Staff should be recognised and adoption of a firm but yet not overdomineering approach would probably be the best treatment.

6. [REDACTED] considers absconding a glamorous escapade and his avowed intention to practise this "game" will provide an initial headache for his Housemaster. In order to reduce its incidence contact with [REDACTED] should be avoided.
7. In his present frame of mind prognosis in [REDACTED] case was not considered encouraging but the wise guidance of a dominant male counsellor might provide the stimulus to divert his energy to an acceptable role within his unit. His love of animals might be a convenient point from which to build such a relationship and if early responsibility could be allocated to him for one of the school pets a significant change of attitude might be revealed.

Placement :

Class - Form 1.
House - Balmoral

-000-

16.12.75
/mfs

UNIT: 8

HOUSEMASTER: [REDACTED]

REC. NO.: J.870

1st Review: 13th December, 1976

Name: [REDACTED]

Rel.: [REDACTED]

Date of Birth: [REDACTED]

Adm.: 14.11.75

Det.: Nov., '75

Home Address: [REDACTED]

Reason for Commital: School Non-attendance

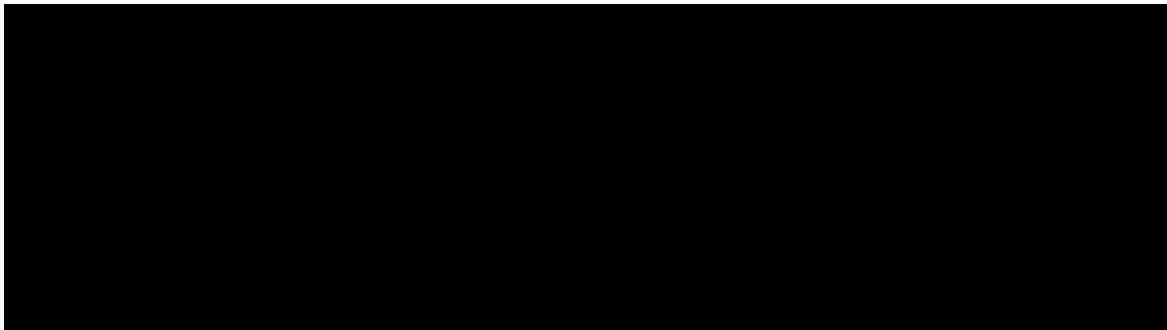
Previous Appearances: 14.11.74 - Hollywood Juvenile - Case adjourned

Previous School: Strandtown Primary
Tullycarnet Primary
Dunonald Boys' High

Ability: Verbal 97
Performance 104 - S.I.C.O.
Full Scale 102

<u>Attainment:</u>	<u>On Admission</u>	<u>Last Test</u>
Type of test not recorded.	S.A. 8 ⁰	10 ⁵ (Schonell)
	S.A. 7 ⁶	8 ⁹ (Schonell)
	A.A. 8 ²	9 ⁵ (Schonell)

Background:



Classroom Report:

[REDACTED] educational attainments fall far short of his chronological age; though some limited progress has been made. [REDACTED] though he is extremely easily distracted and finds it inordinately difficult to reapply his attention to his work again. [REDACTED]

RATHGAEL AND WHITEABBEY SCHOOLS MANAGEMENT BOARD

Tel. BANGOR 4276

RATHGAEL SCHOOL,
RATHGAEL ROAD,
BANGOR,
Co. Down.
BT19 1TA

22nd December, 1976.

[REDACTED]
Headmaster,
Dundonald Boys High School,
DUNDONALD,
Belfast.

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT ON [REDACTED]

Home Address: [REDACTED]

Date of Birth: [REDACTED]

Religion: [REDACTED]

Date of Committal:

14.11.75

Reason for Committal:

School non-attendance

Background Information:

[REDACTED]

Although sometimes moody and highly strung he is well accepted by the peer group and a firm but friendly approach is appropriate in the case of adults when interested he can exhibit a high degree of concentration but he can also be restless and quick tempered. He responds extremely well to adult attention in the one-to-one situation and is capable of intelligent verbal exchange.

[REDACTED] is well meaning and highly co-operative she is finding the rearing of her relatively large family without the presence of her husband difficult. Any hint of further truancy will require quick supportive action. His general reaction to the educational system at Rathgael has been excellent and in [REDACTED] has been a rewarding subject to work with.

Educational Report:

(below average)

On admission this boy's I.Q. was estimated as 70 - 84 on the Terman Merrill Intelligence Scale for Children.

Attainment Test Results as assessed in December, 1976.
are as follows:

Mechanical Arithmetic (Schonell Form A)	- 8 years 8 months
Problem Arithmetic (Schonell Form A)	- 9 years 7 months
Reading - Oral (Schonell)	- years months
Spelling (Schonell Form)	- 9 years 0 months

The above attainment results it is suggested are depressed by 1 to 2 years and don't give a true indication of this boys attainment. They typify the rather erratic nature of Lawrence in both educational and social matters. He responds and performs best to strict firm handling. He enjoys adult company especially in the one to one situation and at thi level can perform quite maturely. However he has an 'ever present' habit of 'stepping over the mark' and on these occasions he needs to be very firmly put back in his box!

[REDACTED] can fall foul of just about every calculation he has the ability to confuse signs relating to different pieces of work. In these situations it is the prevailing impression that he is not trying. It can be said that with some help he can cope with all the basic calculations with the exception of long division.

- 6. In addition to the matters referred to above we also had a reward scheme in place that was used to build up a sense of trust between the pupils and the teachers. The award scheme was simple in its theory although more complex in reality but would allow for the teachers and myself to take the boys on a trip if they had behaved well and responded well in school. The trips were to a number of places which included attending at Glentoran Football Club and I can recall playing on occasions when I had a minibus of pupils to the football club at that time. There were also other outings that were given as rewards for pupils. Needless to say not all boys responded well to this reward scheme and some absconded during the outings that may have led to the teachers and other staff having to pursue them or asking for the assistance of the police.

- 7. Dealing with the specific allegations of [REDACTED] I do not recall the incident where he absconded and went to Scrabo Tower. Indeed the boys being returned by the police would not have been uncommon unfortunately. I deny that I gave a "beating", however in the circumstances as set out if I had been on duty and it was felt with the other member of staff that the boy in question should be caned, they would have been caned.

- 8. With reference to paragraph 7 of [REDACTED] statement I do not recall the incident in relation to handing on the monkey bars in the school. I would say however that I never lost my temper and beat any pupil with such force that the cane broke. I have never had a cane break during my tenure. I certainly did not start to thump any pupil with my fists. To suggest that these violent incidents were the norm rather than the exception is erroneous. I would ask the Tribunal to view the book which I have referred to above in relation to the administering of the cane during my tenure as the Deputy Head.

- 9. Regarding paragraph No. 16 of [REDACTED] statement I would take exception to this. There was a system in place that allowed any pupil to approach their housemaster to discuss any incidents with either myself, [REDACTED] or any other member of staff. I do not know which house [REDACTED] was placed in during his tenure in Rathgael so I therefore cannot comment as to whether or not any particular housemaster spoke to me about any incidents.

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

Signed: .. [REDACTED]

Dated: 19th October 2015

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20/5/76

At breakfast on Sunday morning [redacted] came to the staff complaining that [redacted] threatened him with a knife. Each blamed the other for 'name calling'. A short time afterwards [redacted] and [redacted] were involved in a fight. I held [redacted] by the shirt and pullover beneath his chin, and as he continued to resist and to be abusive, he bit his lower lip, - a loose lip, that seldom closes except to say his 'F' or similar words. He did not at any time either in the fight with [redacted] or afterwards receive a blow of any kind to the mouth. [redacted] was sent to Matron, and later returned for lunch. His mother was informed in the afternoon when she came to visit him before his five day course at Bunkerry.

[redacted]

6-6-76

I made a point of seeing [REDACTED] about [REDACTED] lip injury. She seems to have mellowed considerably and accepts the explanation that it had been done accidentally. She said that she was quite annoyed at the time, but realises now that there wasn't anything of a vicious nature in it and admitted that [REDACTED] had not been behaving well at the time.

She was also pleased that she is now getting an allowance for travelling to visit her sons and gives the school credit for a lot of things.

I think it is the last we will hear of this one - at least I hope so!

Date		M.	G.
June	House Meetings: Continues to progress satisfactorily Awarded 1 mark for unit and 1 for school.	12½	3
July	House Meetings: On full July leave. Awarded 2½ marks during school holidays.	15	2
August	House Meetings: Good month. Cheerful, and willing. Awarded 3 marks.	18	2
SEPT 28 th	HOUSE MEETING. CONTINUED GOOD PROGRESS - ROWDY BUT WILLING - A GOOD MONTH. School 1 House 1½	20½	2
OCT.	HOUSE MEETING. STILL CONTINUES TO MAKE PROGRESS. MUSIC SCH. 1 HSE. 1½	23	2
	13. 12. 76. Review Board - Discharge to school at TMS. R ₄		
16. 12. 76	Home Visit		