

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 268

Witness Name: HIA 268

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 268

I, HIA 268, will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] and lived with my family in Belfast. I am the youngest child and have one older sister called [REDACTED] and I have one older brother named [REDACTED]. My mother left the matrimonial home because of domestic violence. My father placed us into care. I was placed in Bethany Children's Home on the Somerton Road in Belfast with my brother and my sister was sent to Williamson House because she was older. I then spent time in Bawnmore Road Children's Home and attended Malone Primary School. These were happy times for me. When I was nine years old my mother gained custody of myself and my siblings and we went to live with her in [REDACTED].

Whiteabbey Training School 1982-1985

2. My mother was not coping and when I was eleven years old I was placed in care in Whiteabbey and then Coneywarren Children's home in Omagh. I did not like Coneywarren and so misbehaved until I was sent back to Whiteabbey.

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3. In Whiteabbey I shared a room with 2 others. A typical day consisted of rising at 7.30am and making my bed. If I did not make my bed correctly the carers would strip the sheets off the bed. If I argued back with staff I would be taken to the day room. The day room was punishment.
4. I would then go to breakfast. We were served porridge three days a week for breakfast. I do not like porridge and would not eat it. The staff would serve my breakfast bowl of porridge to me at lunch time and again at tea time. This resulted in 3 days a week I did not eat.
5. I then would get washed and school started. The head mistress, [REDACTED] was a big lady. I did not get along with her. I was expected to undertake the same work as the 16 and 17 years olds when I was just eleven years old. I was the youngest resident in Whiteabbey. If I could not complete any of the work [REDACTED] [REDACTED] would put me in the day room, she would grab me and push me along the corridors to the day room. I would try to protect myself with my hands and arms. I would have been left there until the end of the school day. [REDACTED] would have given me comprehension questions to complete whilst in the Day Room. I would not have been allowed out of the Day Room until I had correctly completed this work. I would have often spent nights in the Day Room because I had not completed this work correctly.
6. [REDACTED] taught us ballroom dancing. She always picked me as her partner. I was 5 foot 2 inches tall and she was a lot taller. She would press me against her breasts. I do not believe [REDACTED] done this in any sexual way but in a rough manner. I did not like ballroom dancing. If I made a mistake and trod on her foot [REDACTED] would toss me on the floor, sit on me and put my arm behind my back, before taking me to the day room.
7. [REDACTED] taught physical education. During physical education class all the girls had to change and shower in front of each other. On numerous occasions I would not get changed as I did not have any privacy. The other girls would tease me as they were older than me. My punishment for this would have been to be sent to the day room.

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8. There was another member of staff who I believe was an ex-prison officer named [REDACTED]. She was a very big lady and did not realise her own strength. She would sit on me and grab my hand, bending my fingers to calm me down before she took me to the day room. I would scream and cry in pain.
9. Another male member of staff, **RG 11** purchased a packet of vests and gave these to me in front of the other girls. I was eleven and bullied by the older girls because my breasts were not developed. I believe he did this in order to have me bullied.
10. On another occasion because I spoke back to **RG 11** he grabbed me by a necklace/chain that I wore and dragged me up two flights of stairs before throwing me in the day room. This left a red mark around my neck for several days.
11. Punishment for not doing what I was told was to spend time in the day room. It was shut off from the rest of the school units. The Day Room was empty with the exception of a pot in which to urinate. There was no toilet tissue provided. Staff often forgot to bring me food when I was there. At night they would provide a mattress and bedding. This would be removed the following morning. In the day room there was nothing to do.
12. When I was twelve years old I attended typing classes every week. During typing classes if I pressed the wrong key or looked at the keyboard the teacher would move me to the front of the class. She would tie my hand behind my back and tie me to the chair. I was made sit there for the remainder of the class. This teacher came in to the school once a week to teach. I cannot remember her name, I believe it began with [REDACTED] she was a small lady with blond hair and spoke in a high pitch.
13. On Sundays if I did not go to church I would be sent to the day room. If the home was short staffed I would be sent to the day room. I believe during my 3 years at Whiteabbey I would have spent a year and a half in the day room.

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14. At Whiteabbey we were allowed to go home at the weekends. I did not want to go home as my Mother would have been drinking alcohol and had poor hygiene standards in the home. On a few occasions I ran away other than be sent home. I would usually go to the [REDACTED] area and drink alcohol or sniff glue. Sometimes I would have stayed away for a few weeks at a time. On occasion the police would find me and take me back or I would get hungry and go to the police station and ask them to bring me back.
15. During my time in Whiteabbey I had to wash my own clothes. At night I would wash my underwear and dry them on the radiator. I was not provided with washing power and had to use carbolic soap which the home provided. This led to me developing vaginal thrush. As a consequence of the infection I was often sent to the Royal Victoria Hospital to undergo internal examinations which I found intrusive and humiliating.
16. At Rathgael the residents had to undertake all housekeeping duties. I found it difficult to operate the large buffing machines that were used to shine the floors.
17. I did not receive any visits from my family or from social services during my time in Whiteabbey Training School.

Rathgael 1985-1987

18. In 1985 I was moved to Rathgael as Whiteabbey closed. All the teaching staff at Rathgael were male and I often saw them slap or punch the male inmates. In Rathgael I had more freedom. I was taller and I was able to stand up for myself so I did not get bullied. I learned to play the system and I received more off days.
19. Soon after arriving at Rathgael my maths teacher, **RG 27** started to take a personal interest in me. This started by sending me to do messages on his behalf. It soon progressed to him organising fishing trips away so we could sit in the van together and kiss whilst the other residents went fishing. He would also have taken me to bars and bought me alcoholic drinks and given me cigarettes.

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RG 27 would make excuses to get me on my own and kiss me. This continued over a period of around 2 years. There was no sex just kissing and friendship. We did attempt to have sex but **RG 27** could not achieve an erection. **RG 27** was 32 years older than me. He was more of a father figure to me and I had a bond with him. I believe the staff in Rathgael were aware about our relationship. I believe someone reported **RG 27** and he was sacked or made to take early redundancy. No one from Rathgael ever asked me about my relationship with **RG 27**

20. On one occasion I had been sniffing glue with two other girls. **RG 33** the Vice Principal took us to his office. **RG 34** and **RG 35** were also there. **RG 33** was shouting at me. **RG 35** was standing at the door. There was a window open so I attempted to leave via it. I had one leg out of the window and **RG 33** knocked me against the wall and pinned me there by my throat. I was knocked unconscious. When I regained consciousness blood was running from my head. He again knocked me against the wall. I was taken to Newtownards hospital by **RG 36**. I received 6 stitches for the injury on my head. I told my mother about this incident but I am not sure if she reported this to the police.
21. During my time in Rathgael another resident and my friend, **RG 37** who was from [REDACTED] advised staff that she did not want to return to live with her grandparent as she was being abused. Staff ignored this and when she was sixteen she was sent back to live with her abusers. I was informed by staff that [REDACTED]
22. I received no visits from my family when I was resident in Rathgael. On occasion I would have visited my brother in the Royal Victoria Hospital. He suffered from cystic fibrosis and spent a lot of time in hospital. My brother [REDACTED] died in [REDACTED] from cystic fibrosis
23. I spent two years in Rathgael and left in August 1987 when I was nearly seventeen years old.

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Life After Care

24. On leaving Rathgael I moved into a bed and breakfast in Bangor. I wanted to stay in the general area of Rathgael as I knew it and knew some of the local people. Having spent almost all my life in care and I found it took years to adjust. I attended with my key worker from Rathgael called RG 38 which I found helpful.
25. I attended ██████████ College and studied catering. However I became pregnant when I was seventeen and left college. I now have three daughters and two grandchildren.
26. I currently reside in ██████████ and have recently qualified as a painter/decorator. I have no contact with my sister and my mother is deceased.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed ██████████ HIA 268 —

Dated 16/4/15

1. We are ^{all} aware of circumstances of Mr. C's "Precautionary Suspension". He was observed in licensed premises ~~at~~ & pending further investigations, a ~~precautionary~~ precautionary suspension was invoked according to the Management Board's Disciplinary Procedures.
2. To indicate what has happened since —
 - (a) Chairman of Board informed
 - (b) N.I.O. also informed
3. I have been instructed to investigate the allegations & part of brief is to give **RG 27** the opportunity to give his side of the story. When I have completed this I shall lay the facts before the Board's Staff Comm. for adjudication.
4. Would you like to give me some indication of the events of the evening of Friday — 29th May

5. In the course of my enquiry certain other information has been given to me, which I also have to enquire about.

a) On the afternoon of the same day — you borrowed a car belonging to another member of staff — Would you tell me why?

Did you take **HIA 268** with you? Why? Whose permission did you ask to take the girl?

Would you give me an indication of how long you were out? Why did you borrow a car & not use your own?

b) On the morning of Sat 30th May — you again borrowed a school vehicle — Did you take the girl with you? Why? Time scale

D. . . H. . . H. n.

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HAI Ref: [INSERT]

Witness Name: **RG 33**

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF **RG 33**

I, **RG 33** will say as follows:-**Introduction**

1. I have had an opportunity to read and consider the witness statements of **[REDACTED]** (HIA Reference 268) dated 16th April 2015 and **[REDACTED]** (HIA Reference 172) dated 13th April 2015, in which allegations of improper conduct are made against me. I emphatically deny and refute those allegations. I acknowledge that abuse is to be construed to include physical, emotional, psychological and sexual harm. I make this statement for the purpose of responding to those allegations and thereby assisting the Inquiry in the exercise of its functions.

Personal and Employment Details

2. I was born on **[REDACTED]**. I am married and have **[REDACTED]** children.
3. I served for **[REDACTED]** years as a Police Constable with the Royal Ulster Constabulary, prior to completing my formal qualifications which entitled me to practice as a teacher. Upon qualification, I was employed as a school teacher in **[REDACTED]** for two years and as a teacher at a High School in Northern Ireland for two years.
4. I worked at Rathgael Training School between 1974 and 1993. I retired from teaching in 1993.

Duties at Rathgael Training School

5. Between approximately 1st April 1974 and 30th March 1993 I was an employee of Rathgael Training School. During this time period I held various teaching positions with the institution and progressed to perform the roles of Assistant Director and Deputy Director. When teaching, I taught **[REDACTED]**. As I was promoted, I taught less often as my duties encompassed an administrative role. My superior was a **RG 34**.
6. On occasion, I was tasked with carrying out House Master duties in the residential area of the institution, but I was principally involved in teaching.

On Wednesday, 3rd December, I returned to my office at 3.30 p.m., approximately to find that it was occupied by **RG 217** **HIA 268** **RG 218** and **RG 219** with attendant members of staff (see below). They had been taken there after being involved in a glue-sniffing incident in the school grounds. **RG 33** informed me about this incident before I entered the room.

The girls were in an excited state and it was difficult to communicate with them. **HIA 268** tried to leave the room but I refused to let her do so. Having failed to get out through the door she tried to climb through the window. **RG 33**, who was nearest, stopped her from doing so and he and **HIA 268** fell on the floor. Unfortunately **HIA 268** contacted the corner of my desk as she fell from the window. Her injury bled profusely and **RG 33** took her first of all to Sickbay and subsequently to Hospital to have this attended to.

RG 35 **RG 33** and **RG 152** were the members of staff present in my office when this accident occurred.

This is a factual record of what happened in my office.

RG 34
Deputy Director, Education

12 December 1986