

PRIVATE

occasion be made to stand with the wet sheets on our heads. This sometimes happened to girls individually, but we were often in groups. It was humiliating, and [SR 31] would also beat us for wetting the bed. When I got older I was made to work in the old people's home, so I would bring my sheets up there very early in the morning to dry them in their drier so that no one would know that I had wet the bed.

4. [SR 31] was the nun who treated us most badly. We were beaten on a regular basis for the smallest thing. I recall being sent upstairs to a store room just outside the dormitory where we were hit with a strap or stick. If she was in a temper she would take her belt off and hit us with that. [SR 31] [SR 31] hit me, resulting in a split in my forehead when I was about 10 or 11 years old. I was not taken to see a doctor for my injury. [SR 31] would also make us pull down our pants and she would hit our bare bottom for no reason. I was a stubborn child who didn't cry and she did not like that. I suffered more because I didn't give in and cry to her. As a child I lived in constant fear. I believe that [SR 31] had something against me.
5. I remember lying in bed going to sleep and if [SR 31] caught us with our hands under our sheets we got walloped across our face. She thought we were interfering with ourselves, even though as young girls this would never have crossed our minds.
6. I remember that [SR 134] was often quite rough, but not as bad as [SR 31]. [SR 134] would have hit me for any reason. I know that some of the other girls thought that [SR 134] was worse than [SR 31]. Some of the nuns were nice to me, such as [SR 116] who was a younger nun.
7. Every Saturday we were made to scrub the floors and the 2 or 3 flights of stairs on our hands and knees. The floors were marble and stretched the length of the building. We worked in the laundry, the kitchen and the church, even though I was not even sixteen at that stage. We were often made to scrub down the toilets as a punishment. I had no time to study after school because of all the work that I was made to do around the home.

PRIVATE

worked in the kitchens peeling potatoes. We had to scrub the floors, and there were lots of areas and passageways, and a huge hall. The nun would stand at the far end of the hallway to inspect it and if it wasn't done right, we were hit. We were slapped or grabbed by the hair at the back of the neck which was so painful. They would lift us up by the hair and pull us up from the nape of the neck until we were standing on our tip toes. They would intentionally pinch us under our arms, where the marks wouldn't be seen. I believe that all of the nuns would have done this.

10. From about the age of eleven years, we worked hard in the laundries, mainly at the weekends. We did the washing for the entire convent, including the old people's home. If they were soiled we had to stand over the sink scrubbing them on the washer boards, before they went into a big industrial machine, and then into the huge industrial pressers. I remember I had to stand on a stool so that I could reach the sink and use the washboards. My fingers would be raw, from rubbing them on the boards, and from the carbolic soap. There were two ladies who worked in the laundry, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They were quite elderly and I believe they may have been brought up in the convent themselves. [REDACTED] had a stick which she would hit us with if we weren't doing the washing properly. [REDACTED] was a terrifying lady, but that was all she knew. She also worked in the sewing room. She hit us as well and we would be terrified if she caught us doing anything, because she was always threatening to tell the nuns on us.

11. The whole environment of the home and the school was fear. To my mind, if we were ever caught doing something, it would only have been something minor. The punishment seemed unnecessary for some things. It was just a way of frightening us and keeping us down. [REDACTED] SR 31 [REDACTED] had a particular room upstairs where we were brought to if the nuns were going to cane us. If we back-chatted, tutted or showed an expression that they didn't like, they would take us upstairs, and say that they would beat the stubborn streak out of us. We never used foul language and we weren't rude children, but the nuns saw it as us standing up for ourselves so they would make an example of us. On one occasion [REDACTED] SR 31 [REDACTED] was hitting me across both hands with

PRIVATE

a large stick, but I wouldn't cry so she just continued to hit me because she saw me as being defiant. I have no idea how long the beating went on for. I was attending St Monica's at the time and I had to be kept off school because my hands were black and blue and swollen. I was constantly in fear of the nuns.

12. The Holy Rosary Church was just on the other side of the wall and there were pear trees. We would have been punished if we were caught taking the pears.

13. On one occasion, I can recall being locked in a room by a nun as punishment. The room was somewhere upstairs in Nazareth House. It was small and pitch black and there was a nun outside the door making bogey man noises. I was absolutely terrified and I was screaming to get out. By the time I got out, I was in such a state that I was in convulsions.

14. If we were trying to have fun, the nuns would immediately calm it down. Laughing, singing and fun weren't allowed. We were afraid to play games. We were always afraid of what would happen. There was no love. There was nothing other than constant fear.

15. The nuns told us that we were dirty and worthless, and that nobody would want us. They always said this to the children who had no families. They made us feel like we were nothing at all. Sometimes people would have come up to the convent to take children out for a day. I remember standing at the gates and hoping to get picked, but **SR 31** would say "who would want you, you're nothing" and tell me to get to the back of the queue. I never got chosen to go out for the day. Sometimes we put on concerts, but I would never get picked for any roles. I was never good enough. One of the nuns told me that I was ugly, and just to get to the back. The fact that she called me ugly has never left me. I will always remember the expression of disgust on her face when she said that to me, as if I was nothing. There was never any praise or encouragement in the home. On one occasion, when I was aged about sixteen years, I was told by a nun that I would be damned in hell. **SR 122** **SR 122** was threatening to punish me for something and I was standing up

PRIVATE

Nazareth House, Belfast (22<sup>nd</sup> June 1965 – 28<sup>th</sup> March 1969)

6. I was moved to Nazareth House when I was almost three. The records state that I remained there until I was six when I was adopted but I thought I wasn't adopted until 1970 or 1971.
7. Most of my memories from Nazareth House are from when I was aged between five and six years old. The main person who sticks in my mind is **SR 31**. She was a very cruel nun. I used to tell my adoptive parents she was cruel but I wouldn't tell them why. **SR 31** would beat me for any little thing. I didn't have to do anything wrong; she beat me for no reason. She was a bully. She beat me with her hands or with a cane and she pulled my hair.
8. There was an old people's residential section in Nazareth House and I remember an old resident there called **NHB 49**. I can't remember his surname. He used to take me on walks around the grounds on my own. He would put me sitting on his knee and would feel my legs and up round my stomach. He put his hand between my legs as well. At the time I didn't know this was wrong but looking back it should never have happened. I told **SR 31** once about **NHB 49** touching my legs and she trailed me by the hair and locked me in a cupboard as punishment. She said I was telling lies. The cupboard was small and dark and there were brooms and brushes in it. I don't know how long she left me in there for but it was long enough. To this day I am afraid of the dark and have to sleep with a light on.
9. **SR 31** was wicked in her sense of punishment. I remember there was a sewing room and I was down there once when I shouldn't have been. There were wee milk bottles outside it and I fell and split my whole right knee open. I never got any stitches or anything. Instead I got trailed and beaten by **SR 31**. **SR 31** She was so cruel; she had no sympathy whatsoever. I still have a big scar on my knee from this fall.
10. I used to get beatings from **SR 31** for wearing my pants in bed. We weren't supposed to wear our pants to bed but I didn't like not wearing them



PRIVATE

Nazareth House, Belfast (22<sup>nd</sup> June 1965 – 28<sup>th</sup> March 1969)

6. I was moved to Nazareth House when I was almost three. The records state that I remained there until I was six when I was adopted but I thought I wasn't adopted until 1970 or 1971.
7. Most of my memories from Nazareth House are from when I was aged between five and six years old. The main person who sticks in my mind is **SR 31**. She was a very cruel nun. I used to tell my adoptive parents she was cruel but I wouldn't tell them why. **SR 31** would beat me for any little thing. I didn't have to do anything wrong; she beat me for no reason. She was a bully. She beat me with her hands or with a cane and she pulled my hair.
8. There was an old people's residential section in Nazareth House and I remember an old resident there called **NHB 49**. I can't remember his surname. He used to take me on walks around the grounds on my own. He would put me sitting on his knee and would feel my legs and up round my stomach. He put his hand between my legs as well. At the time I didn't know this was wrong but looking back it should never have happened. I told **SR 31** once about **NHB 49** touching my legs and she trailed me by the hair and locked me in a cupboard as punishment. She said I was telling lies. The cupboard was small and dark and there were brooms and brushes in it. I don't know how long she left me in there for but it was long enough. To this day I am afraid of the dark and have to sleep with a light on.
9. **SR 31** was wicked in her sense of punishment. I remember there was a sewing room and I was down there once when I shouldn't have been. There were wee milk bottles outside it and I fell and split my whole right knee open. I never got any stitches or anything. Instead I got trailed and beaten by **SR 31**. **SR 31** She was so cruel; she had no sympathy whatsoever. I still have a big scar on my knee from this fall.
10. I used to get beatings from **SR 31** for wearing my pants in bed. We weren't supposed to wear our pants to bed but I didn't like not wearing them

PRIVATE

so I always tried to keep them on. There must have been a count done and I was always found out. [SR 31] would trail the pants off me and beat me on my bare bum in front of the whole room. We slept in dormitories with big rows of beds. They were like hospital wards from years ago. Years later I went up to Nazareth House to leave some toys for the children and it had totally changed. It was all smaller rooms; it was nothing like what we grew up in.

11. I remember [SR 31] took me to the chapel after somebody had died and she made me stand beside the coffin for ages. This was a punishment but I can't remember what for. The person who died was one of the people from the old people's part of the home. To this day, I can't look at a dead body as a result of this experience. We used to go to the cinema every other Saturday and as we walked down the Ormeau Road I used to rub my hand along the walls. The skin on my fingers would all come off. I don't know why I did it. [SR 31] would always beat me for doing this.

12. [SR 134] came to Nazareth House while I was there. She was a hard woman as well but I didn't have as much contact with her as with [SR 31]. [SR 31] There was another nun called [SR 122] who was lovely. She worked in the sewing room. [SR 122] took a liking to me and she knew [SR 31] was doing wrong. You could see the sympathy in her eyes but she was powerless because [SR 31] was above her. She wasn't outspoken; she just did as she was told. I always felt safe with [SR 122]. [SR 122] She was an angel; she tried to pamper me. If I was in tears she would try to comfort me.

13. My biological mother came to visit me a couple of times. I remember she was an old lady and she wore a yellow and brown check coat. She was quite old-fashioned and shabby looking. I would be brought into this room to see her and [SR 31] would always be there too. It was a big room and was beautifully furnished. The visits only lasted about five minutes and then she would be gone again. My mother never took me out of the home. She only visited two or three times in the seven years I was there.

PRIVATE

Nazareth House, Belfast (29<sup>th</sup> September 1965 – 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1966 and 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1969 – date unknown)

4. I remember being picked up off the streets by social workers and being brought to Nazareth House a number of times. Social Services were involved from a young age. The five girls, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were taken out of the home. The two boys and [REDACTED] HIA 163 went to Nazareth Lodge as [REDACTED] HIA 163 was only three so she was too young for Nazareth House. [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and I were taken to Nazareth House. My older brother [REDACTED] did not go into care – he either stayed with my paternal grandparents or [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had not been born at that stage.
5. The nuns I remember from Nazareth House are [REDACTED] SR 31, [REDACTED] SR 134 and [REDACTED] SR 116. My sister [REDACTED] and I were in [REDACTED] SR 31 group and my sisters [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were in [REDACTED] SR 134 group. Each time we were brought in to the home, we were taken straight to the bathroom and some sort of insect repellent was poured over our hair because we were told we had nits. The nuns were really rough with us when they fine combed out hair. I didn't know whether I was better off going into Nazareth House or being at home.
6. [REDACTED] SR 31 was a very angry woman and you would see her face going red with rage. I wet the bed as a child and this infuriated [REDACTED] SR 31. First of all they gave me medicine which never worked. The bed wetters were all lined up separate from the others and told we were getting wet the bed medicine. [REDACTED] SR 31 would have checked your bed during the night and if it was wet she went mad. She would slap me about the head and legs while grabbing the sheets off the bed. Then she made you walk to her cell which was at the end of the dormitory. She would make you kneel there all night and call you dirty and smelly. She used to say you better pray to God you won't wet the bed again. I would pray because I thought she would know if I didn't as she was a nun. I would have to kneel there all night and I couldn't move because I was afraid to in case she came out. Every creak I heard I would think it was her coming.

PRIVATE

12. I was always very wary of **SR 31**. I never knew when she was going to hit me next and was always on my guard. One day **SR 31** sent me to the pantry once to get my dancing shoes. She followed me and asked me to go and get **SR 187** who worked in the kitchen. She came with me and then sent me to my dormitory. I remember being afraid the whole time that **SR 31** was going to do something to me. Nothing happened that time but I was always afraid of her. I saw **SR 31** grabbing a girl once and hitting her repeatedly with a stick. For some reason she always had a dislike for this girl. I saw them having an argument on the way back from mass and **SR 31** hitting her with the stick really badly.
13. I remember getting my period and going to ask **SR 31** for a sanitary towel. I knocked on her door and when I asked her for a sanitary towel she hit me across the face and told me to go downstairs. I never got one and ended up having to use toilet roll instead.
14. I got a rash on my back like ringworm and **SR 122** treated it by putting cream on it. I was not taken to the doctor. I never remember being taken to the doctor or the dentist. I remember a health visitor coming in to give us injections.
15. I remember a girl called **NHB 39** died when she was staying with a family. She was about nine years old. She had fallen into a swamp and a dog had found her. She must have been going to the shops on her own or something when she died. I remember having to go and pay our last respects. I remember seeing her lying in her coffin and she had cuts and bruises all over her. I will never forget seeing her. It was very sad.
16. I went to stay with a couple in Lurgan a couple of times in the summer. I have good memories of those trips but they stopped suddenly. I have wondered whether we were stopped from going out with families after **NHB 39** died.
17. I left Nazareth House on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1965 when I was fourteen years old. My mother and father had re-commenced their relationship and **HIA 29** **HIA 28** and I went back home to live with them. My mother and father had also



PRIVATE

four of us were put back in Nazareth House. My granny kept <sup>DL 247</sup> because he was the oldest and my aunt took **NHB 11** to live with her because **NHB 11** was only a baby. **NHB 11** wanted to take all of us, but my father wouldn't agree to this.

Nazareth House, Belfast, 8<sup>th</sup> January 1971 - 1977

4. When we first went in to Nazareth House, all four of us, **NHB 8** **NHB 9** **DL 59** and myself were put into the same unit. Over time however we were gradually relocated. **SR 31** sent **NHB 9** and **NHB 8** over to the Good Shepherd, Belfast, leaving just me and **DL 59** in Nazareth House. Subsequently one of my sisters was moved from Good Shepherd to Middletown, and **DL 59** was sent to Kircubbin. We were all eventually separated completely, and we didn't really have much contact with each other. The family just drifted apart. I was in Nazareth House from the age of five until the age of fourteen years.
5. Being in Nazareth House was a nightmare. There were three groups and I was in Our Lady's of which **SR 31** was in charge. I could never do anything right. I was sure to get a slap every day. **SR 31** had her favourites, but I was her punch bag. When I was there, I felt like I was the only one getting picked on, but now I realise that she was probably like that to other children as well.
6. When I first went in to Nazareth House we slept in large dormitories, however they were soon divided up into smaller bedrooms. I shared a bedroom with **DL 59**. We had to get up every day at 6.00am. When **SR 31** wasn't wearing her habit, she wore something like a dishcloth over her head, and she would come along at 6.00am, and shout at us to get up and say our prayers. My brother **DL 59** got battered by **SR 31** every morning because he wet the bed. Because I was older I had to strip his bed and take his bed sheets to the laundry. I was terrified of the two women who worked in there. I recall one was called **DL 59** I would throw the sheets in the door and run away as fast as I could.



PRIVATE

10. I was terrified of SR 31. No matter what you said or did you got hit so it got to the point where I was so subdued I never said anything. The only time I spoke up was when she hit my younger sister. On one occasion Sister SR 31 was coming down the stairs and was in front of her. SR 31 grabbed by the scruff of the neck and I said "don't hit my wee sister". She let go then and grabbed me. She grabbed me and slapped me on the head, telling me not to answer back. She dragged me to the dryer then and threw me in. The dryers had a line of big doors and when you pulled out the door there were racks inside with steel bars to hold sheets. There was a gap big enough for a child to fit. SR 31 slid the door back and left me there. It was pitch black and I couldn't move. I don't know how long I was there but I was afraid to come out. I wet myself in there. When I eventually did come out I realised dinner was over. SR 31 came over and started hitting me saying not to answer her back. She put me back into the dryer and the heat in there was unbearable.
11. Anything that you said or did was an excuse to hit you. If you talked about your family the nuns would say "sure nobody loves you". I loved my granny but I soon learned to stop talking about her. The nuns used to send us out with different people every Sunday. I went out with a policewoman and her husband and they were quite well-off. They would give me lots of stuff coming back like sweets or a teddy bear but as soon as they left everything was taken from you. It was never explained to you that you couldn't have something because the other children didn't have anything.
12. SR 134 beat me as well. I remember one occasion I was playing in the leaves outside and SR 134 shouted something down at me. I didn't realise she was shouting at me. She came down and started thumping me over the head with her keys. This was a big bunch of keys with about fifteen or twenty keys on it. One of the girls told me afterwards that SR 134 didn't like the sound of leaves crunching but I had no idea. The nuns would always hit you in the temple with their keys or their knuckle; just whatever was handy. You don't bruise on the temple which is why they hit us there but it was very sensitive.

PRIVATE

worked in the kitchens peeling potatoes. We had to scrub the floors, and there were lots of areas and passageways, and a huge hall. The nun would stand at the far end of the hallway to inspect it and if it wasn't done right, we were hit. We were slapped or grabbed by the hair at the back of the neck which was so painful. They would lift us up by the hair and pull us up from the nape of the neck until we were standing on our tip toes. They would intentionally pinch us under our arms, where the marks wouldn't be seen. I believe that all of the nuns would have done this.

10. From about the age of eleven years, we worked hard in the laundries, mainly at the weekends. We did the washing for the entire convent, including the old people's home. If they were soiled we had to stand over the sink scrubbing them on the washer boards, before they went into a big industrial machine, and then into the huge industrial pressers. I remember I had to stand on a stool so that I could reach the sink and use the washboards. My fingers would be raw, from rubbing them on the boards, and from the carbolic soap. There were two ladies who worked in the laundry, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They were quite elderly and I believe they may have been brought up in the convent themselves. [REDACTED] had a stick which she would hit us with if we weren't doing the washing properly. [REDACTED] was a terrifying lady, but that was all she knew. She also worked in the sewing room. She hit us as well and we would be terrified if she caught us doing anything, because she was always threatening to tell the nuns on us.

11. The whole environment of the home and the school was fear. To my mind, if we were ever caught doing something, it would only have been something minor. The punishment seemed unnecessary for some things. It was just a way of frightening us and keeping us down. [REDACTED] SR 31 had a particular room upstairs where we were brought to if the nuns were going to cane us. If we back-chatted, tutted or showed an expression that they didn't like, they would take us upstairs, and say that they would beat the stubborn streak out of us. We never used foul language and we weren't rude children, but the nuns saw it as us standing up for ourselves so they would make an example of us. On one occasion [REDACTED] SR 31 was hitting me across both hands with

PRIVATE

a large stick, but I wouldn't cry so she just continued to hit me because she saw me as being defiant. I have no idea how long the beating went on for. I was attending St Monica's at the time and I had to be kept off school because my hands were black and blue and swollen. I was constantly in fear of the nuns.

12. The Holy Rosary Church was just on the other side of the wall and there were pear trees. We would have been punished if we were caught taking the pears.

13. On one occasion, I can recall being locked in a room by a nun as punishment. The room was somewhere upstairs in Nazareth House. It was small and pitch black and there was a nun outside the door making bogey man noises. I was absolutely terrified and I was screaming to get out. By the time I got out, I was in such a state that I was in convulsions.

14. If we were trying to have fun, the nuns would immediately calm it down. Laughing, singing and fun weren't allowed. We were afraid to play games. We were always afraid of what would happen. There was no love. There was nothing other than constant fear.

15. The nuns told us that we were dirty and worthless, and that nobody would want us. They always said this to the children who had no families. They made us feel like we were nothing at all. Sometimes people would have come up to the convent to take children out for a day. I remember standing at the gates and hoping to get picked, but **SR 31** would say "who would want you, you're nothing" and tell me to get to the back of the queue. I never got chosen to go out for the day. Sometimes we put on concerts, but I would never get picked for any roles. I was never good enough. One of the nuns told me that I was ugly, and just to get to the back. The fact that she called me ugly has never left me. I will always remember the expression of disgust on her face when she said that to me, as if I was nothing. There was never any praise or encouragement in the home. On one occasion, when I was aged about sixteen years, I was told by a nun that I would be damned in hell. **SR 122** **SR 122** was threatening to punish me for something and I was standing up

PRIVATE

occasion be made to stand with the wet sheets on our heads. This sometimes happened to girls individually, but we were often in groups. It was humiliating, and SR 31 would also beat us for wetting the bed. When I got older I was made to work in the old people's home, so I would bring my sheets up there very early in the morning to dry them in their drier so that no one would know that I had wet the bed.

4. SR 31 was the nun who treated us most badly. We were beaten on a regular basis for the smallest thing. I recall being sent upstairs to a store room just outside the dormitory where we were hit with a strap or stick. If she was in a temper she would take her belt off and hit us with that. SR 31 hit me, resulting in a split in my forehead when I was about 10 or 11 years old. I was not taken to see a doctor for my injury. SR 31 would also make us pull down our pants and she would hit our bare bottom for no reason. I was a stubborn child who didn't cry and she did not like that. I suffered more because I didn't give in and cry to her. As a child I lived in constant fear. I believe that SR 31 had something against me.
5. I remember lying in bed going to sleep and if SR 31 caught us with our hands under our sheets we got walloped across our face. She thought we were interfering with ourselves, even though as young girls this would never have crossed our minds.
6. I remember that SR 134 was often quite rough, but not as bad as SR 31. SR 134 would have hit me for any reason. I know that some of the other girls thought that SR 134 was worse than SR 31. Some of the nuns were nice to me, such as SR 116 who was a younger nun.
7. Every Saturday we were made to scrub the floors and the 2 or 3 flights of stairs on our hands and knees. The floors were marble and stretched the length of the building. We worked in the laundry, the kitchen and the church, even though I was not even sixteen at that stage. We were often made to scrub down the toilets as a punishment. I had no time to study after school because of all the work that I was made to do around the home.

1     A.    That's correct, yes.

2 Q. The Inquiry is aware she was born in . So  
3 she would have been 35 years old around 1960 whenever  
4 you are talking about being in her group. You would  
5 have been about 11 at that stage. She passed away in  
6 2011. She spent about seventeen years in  
7 Nazareth.

8           You explain in paragraph 4 of your statement that  
9           she would have beaten you on a regular basis for the  
10          smallest thing. I was asking you this morning what sort  
11          of things were you talking about. You were saying if  
12          you had been caught somewhere where you shouldn't have  
13          been or you didn't do precisely what you were told, and  
14          you were saying to me that not everybody was hit by  
15          SR31. It was those children who were strong-willed. Do  
16          you want to explain to the Panel what you mean by that?

17 A. I was a bit stubborn I think and it was from being hit  
18 all the time, and I was being walloped, and I wouldn't  
19 cry, and the more I didn't cry, the more she would hit  
20 me, and I think just that she just had a thing against  
21 me just because I think I was just stubborn and wouldn't  
22 give in to her and she just --

23 Q. Am I right in saying, HIA430, that there were children  
24 who never got hit?

25     A.   That's correct.  They would be called her pets.  There



PRIVATE

day I was going to get fitted for a uniform because I was changing schools. I didn't want to move schools as I had made friends in St. Monica's. I had been very happy there and was achieving well. I had been a Prefect and could have done my O Levels there.

38. It was a really long bus ride to [REDACTED] and when I got back to Nazareth House in the evening I was really hungry as I hadn't eaten since 1pm. I was told it was too late for food as the top kitchen was closed. Another girl from the home got a scholarship as well. Her name was [REDACTED] and she was older than me and a lot more streetwise. She wanted to leave school and the home and get a job. One day she said we were not going back to [REDACTED] and we mitched school for a few days. I was very much influenced by [REDACTED] and I didn't want to go to [REDACTED] without her; I hated the thought of travelling from Belfast to [REDACTED] on my own. When we went back to the home we were told we had to go to the store room. You knew you were in trouble when you were told to go there.

39. [REDACTED] SR 31 [REDACTED] was waiting in the store room for us. She couldn't stand me anyway and she always made life difficult for me. [REDACTED] went in to the store room first and when she came out she just winked at me and I felt relieved. [REDACTED] SR 31 [REDACTED] was very fond of [REDACTED] because she was in her group. As soon as I went in, [REDACTED] SR 31 [REDACTED] told me to put out my hand. I was fourteen at this stage and I said no because I knew [REDACTED] hadn't been chastised.

40. [REDACTED] SR 31 [REDACTED] went hell for leather then with a bamboo cane. I can still remember the sound of it swishing through the air. She went absolutely mental; she had lost the plot. She was hitting me everywhere, on the back of my head, my arms, everywhere. I had welts all over. I ran for the door but she had locked it. I got a shock then; I realised she had calculated what she was going to do to me. She had locked that door so nobody could get in and I couldn't get out.

41. I really thought she was going to kill me so I knocked her over and she fell over a sewing machine. I saw a window pole then which I grabbed. While she

PRIVATE

was on the ground, I put my foot on her chest and I had the pole in my hand. I said to her "give me the keys because you know you're going to kill me". She couldn't get up, she was trapped by the sewing machine and I think she was in shock as well. She gave me the key and I locked her in and threw the key out of the window. I don't know how she ended up getting out.

42. I borrowed money from my friend [REDACTED] to get the bus to [REDACTED]. She was a resident who worked in the parlour and her mother lived in the Good Shepherd across the road. [REDACTED] always had money. I had an aunt and uncle there who I traced when I was fourteen. We used to go out and spend the odd weekend with them and we loved it. It was nice to feel like you belonged somewhere. My aunt thought I was just up for a visit but when I took my cardigan off she saw all the dried blood and seeping welts on my skin and she went ballistic.

43. My [REDACTED] was my dad's brother and he was working in the [REDACTED] but my aunt sent for him and said "look what they've done to this child". [REDACTED] was a quiet, unassuming man who didn't like any fuss but she made him bring me to the police station in [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was very upset. They had a big family of their own and they didn't have much money so they couldn't take us out permanently. My dad never forgave his family, especially his parents for not taking us out of the home.

44. When I went to the police station, I was put in a room on my own. I remember one policeman came in and said I could have caused the injuries myself. I asked him how I could get round to my back and he said I could have done it against a door. I was trying to convince him that it really happened. I remember another policeman with sandy hair coming in and asking me what had happened. When I told him it was a nun, he said he couldn't believe that and there were tears in his eyes.

45. I was examined by a doctor called [REDACTED] NHB 73 and he told me he had three daughters at [REDACTED] and they were [REDACTED]. He said it was a very good school and I should make the most of my opportunity there. I felt very let

PRIVATE

down by the police and the doctor for making me go back to Nazareth House after this incident. [SR 31] and the Mother Superior came and picked me up in a taxi from [REDACTED] I later found out from [REDACTED] that [NHB 73] had told him that he had enough on his plate already with his own family. I felt very hurt and betrayed by this. [REDACTED] later told me that there was a meeting about [SR 31] and she was disciplined for her behaviour. Apparently she was not allowed to be promoted but I'm not sure if that's true.

46. I found out where [SR 31] was living in 1999 and I wrote to her challenging her about the beating she gave me. Her replies were so patronising; she just said what a great girl I was and that she only 'corrected' me because she thought grammar school was a great opportunity for me. She said the reason she didn't punish [REDACTED] was because she was still under the care of her parents and that's why we got different treatment. The nuns had to be careful with children like [REDACTED] because their parents still came in to visit them. To this day, I hate [SR 31] for making me feel this way. I think she is the most evil person I have ever come across in my life.

47. I don't recall anybody from Welfare ever coming to inspect the home. My only recollection is of benefactors coming to visit. That was a humiliating experience. We would all be sitting watching television like clones and the nuns made sure we were all clean and dressed nicely. The nun would then tell us all to stand up and we would have to stand for these people and their children. We were told to stand and greet them by name and smile at them. We had to remain standing until they left. They just looked at us like we were in a cattle mart. I resented having to stand for those children just because their parents gave money to the home.

48. I remember the summer after the beating, [SR 31] said to me I had nine weeks to kill and I could paint all the beds. This was a punishment for not going to school. [REDACTED] was still in the home and she received no punishment. We had a maintenance man named [REDACTED] who did all the odd jobs. He was a great character. I helped him paint all that summer. I had to paint all the big pipes and radiators and nearly one hundred beds but I loved

PRIVATE

10. I was terrified of SR 31. No matter what you said or did you got hit so it got to the point where I was so subdued I never said anything. The only time I spoke up was when she hit my younger sister. On one occasion Sister SR 31 was coming down the stairs and was in front of her. SR 31 grabbed by the scruff of the neck and I said "don't hit my wee sister". She let go then and grabbed me. She grabbed me and slapped me on the head, telling me not to answer back. She dragged me to the dryer then and threw me in. The dryers had a line of big doors and when you pulled out the door there were racks inside with steel bars to hold sheets. There was a gap big enough for a child to fit. SR 31 slid the door back and left me there. It was pitch black and I couldn't move. I don't know how long I was there but I was afraid to come out. I wet myself in there. When I eventually did come out I realised dinner was over. SR 31 came over and started hitting me saying not to answer her back. She put me back into the dryer and the heat in there was unbearable.
11. Anything that you said or did was an excuse to hit you. If you talked about your family the nuns would say "sure nobody loves you". I loved my granny but I soon learned to stop talking about her. The nuns used to send us out with different people every Sunday. I went out with a policewoman and her husband and they were quite well-off. They would give me lots of stuff coming back like sweets or a teddy bear but as soon as they left everything was taken from you. It was never explained to you that you couldn't have something because the other children didn't have anything.
12. SR 134 beat me as well. I remember one occasion I was playing in the leaves outside and SR 134 shouted something down at me. I didn't realise she was shouting at me. She came down and started thumping me over the head with her keys. This was a big bunch of keys with about fifteen or twenty keys on it. One of the girls told me afterwards that SR 134 didn't like the sound of leaves crunching but I had no idea. The nuns would always hit you in the temple with their keys or their knuckle; just whatever was handy. You don't bruise on the temple which is why they hit us there but it was very sensitive.

PRIVATE

Nazareth House, Belfast (22<sup>nd</sup> June 1965 – 28<sup>th</sup> March 1969)

6. I was moved to Nazareth House when I was almost three. The records state that I remained there until I was six when I was adopted but I thought I wasn't adopted until 1970 or 1971.
7. Most of my memories from Nazareth House are from when I was aged between five and six years old. The main person who sticks in my mind is **SR 31**. She was a very cruel nun. I used to tell my adoptive parents she was cruel but I wouldn't tell them why. **SR 31** would beat me for any little thing. I didn't have to do anything wrong; she beat me for no reason. She was a bully. She beat me with her hands or with a cane and she pulled my hair.
8. There was an old people's residential section in Nazareth House and I remember an old resident there called **NHB 49**. I can't remember his surname. He used to take me on walks around the grounds on my own. He would put me sitting on his knee and would feel my legs and up round my stomach. He put his hand between my legs as well. At the time I didn't know this was wrong but looking back it should never have happened. I told **SR 31** once about **NHB 49** touching my legs and she trailed me by the hair and locked me in a cupboard as punishment. She said I was telling lies. The cupboard was small and dark and there were brooms and brushes in it. I don't know how long she left me in there for but it was long enough. To this day I am afraid of the dark and have to sleep with a light on.
9. **SR 31** was wicked in her sense of punishment. I remember there was a sewing room and I was down there once when I shouldn't have been. There were wee milk bottles outside it and I fell and split my whole right knee open. I never got any stitches or anything. Instead I got trailed and beaten by **SR 31**. **SR 31** She was so cruel; she had no sympathy whatsoever. I still have a big scar on my knee from this fall.
10. I used to get beatings from **SR 31** for wearing my pants in bed. We weren't supposed to wear our pants to bed but I didn't like not wearing them



PRIVATE

four of us were put back in Nazareth House. My granny kept <sup>DL 247</sup> because he was the oldest and my aunt took <sup>NHB 11</sup> to live with her because <sup>NHB 11</sup> was only a baby. <sup>NHB 11</sup> wanted to take all of us, but my father wouldn't agree to this.

Nazareth House, Belfast, 8<sup>th</sup> January 1971 - 1977

4. When we first went in to Nazareth House, all four of us, <sup>NHB 8</sup> <sup>NHB 9</sup> <sup>DL 59</sup> and myself were put into the same unit. Over time however we were gradually relocated. <sup>SR 31</sup> sent <sup>NHB 9</sup> and <sup>NHB 8</sup> over to the Good Shepherd, Belfast, leaving just me and <sup>DL 59</sup> in Nazareth House. Subsequently one of my sisters was moved from Good Shepherd to Middletown, and <sup>DL 59</sup> was sent to Kircubbin. We were all eventually separated completely, and we didn't really have much contact with each other. The family just drifted apart. I was in Nazareth House from the age of five until the age of fourteen years.
5. Being in Nazareth House was a nightmare. There were three groups and I was in Our Lady's of which <sup>SR 31</sup> was in charge. I could never do anything right. I was sure to get a slap every day. <sup>SR 31</sup> had her favourites, but I was her punch bag. When I was there, I felt like I was the only one getting picked on, but now I realise that she was probably like that to other children as well.
6. When I first went in to Nazareth House we slept in large dormitories, however they were soon divided up into smaller bedrooms. I shared a bedroom with <sup>DL 59</sup>. We had to get up every day at 6.00am. When <sup>SR 31</sup> wasn't wearing her habit, she wore something like a dishcloth over her head, and she would come along at 6.00am, and shout at us to get up and say our prayers. My brother <sup>DL 59</sup> got battered by <sup>SR 31</sup> every morning because he wet the bed. Because I was older I had to strip his bed and take his bed sheets to the laundry. I was terrified of the two women who worked in there. I recall one was called  I would throw the sheets in the door and run away as fast as I could.

PRIVATE

brought me and **DL 59** into a room with him, and left us on our own with him. At the start he was nice to us. He played with us and gave us sweets and money, although **SR 31** took this off us. He asked about our mother and then he asked if we did any sports or dancing. I told him that I went to ballet classes on Tuesdays from 4.00pm until 6.00pm. Shortly after, Sister **SR 31** came to get us and took us back upstairs.

15. The following Tuesday, Brendan Smyth arrived whilst I was at ballet. He was given a room, and **DL 59** was brought down to him and left alone in the room. When I got back from ballet it was my turn. **SR 31** grabbed me by the arm and brought me to the room where Brendan Smyth was and left me alone with him. He made me walk up and down the room, but kept saying "don't look at me". He told me to pull my skirt up and asked what colour of underwear I was wearing. He told me to sit on his knee. I was terrified. I had already been abused by that stage and I knew what he was doing was wrong. Brendan Smyth told me "this is the finger of God that is touching you", whilst he rubbed up and down my leg, into my underwear, and then inserted his finger into my vagina and my back passage. When I turned to look at him, he said "don't look at me". He gave me sweets and money, and then Sister **SR 31** came to get me and took me upstairs and took the money off me. I told **SR 31** that I was bleeding and I told her what Brendan Smyth had done to me. She told me that I was an evil child and the devil's work. She said that I was a liar, and that Brendan Smyth was a man of God. She nearly killed me. She grabbed me by the hair and trailed me up three flights of stairs, punched me on the head and hit me over the head with her keys. She made me kneel outside her cell all night and pray for forgiveness. **SR 31** shifted my brother to Kircubbin a few days after I told her about the abuse. I believe she moved him because she was scared of the truth coming out about Brendan Smyth. I was left on my own in Nazareth House, with nobody to speak to or turn to.

16. Every Tuesday **SR 31** would bring me down by the hand to that room where Brendan Smyth would be waiting. She would go out and close the door. I would be petrified because I knew what I was going to have to go

Date

## REPORT

Initial  
of  
Officer

with [REDACTED] as she is the only link Jane has with Jane relatives but we did worried about the area in which the Lysie lives and the attitude of the people towards [REDACTED]. Decided that we would try this arrangement for a while before making a decision.

She visited [REDACTED] on the 24th. She starts back to school at Oakley on Monday 3rd September and is looking forward to this.

While on holiday in Killybeggs [REDACTED] picked up some sort of head infection and this is still bothering her since we have later [REDACTED] is treating this twice daily and [REDACTED] has been the whole thing extremely well, especially since she has had to have her hair cut short as before.

[REDACTED] is pleased with [REDACTED] although she is always very possessive about how she may change when she is twelve or thirteen. I find [REDACTED] an easy and co-operative child to work with and feel [REDACTED] possession is unfounded. [REDACTED]

PRIVATE

or underwear under our nightdress. She lay on top of me and kissed me on the mouth and touched my breasts and my vagina. She made me touch her breasts and vagina and made me put my fingers inside her vagina.

23. This happened about twice a week for 4-6 months. I think she was abusing other girls too. She was doing it for her own satisfaction and she always seemed to want somebody new. If somebody new came in, she got fed up with you and pushed you to the side. She must have got bored with me after a few months because she stopped then. I last saw her when I was about 14 when she was leaving the home. I haven't seen her since but the police have told me she is now living in England.

24. I had nobody I could tell about the abuse. I couldn't tell the nuns because I was terrified of them. I think they knew what was going on. I actually saw two nuns kissing once – SR 31 and SR 187. SR 187 was a young nun, she was only about 20 and she was a novice. She was a beautiful girl and all the delivery men fancied her. SR 31 seemed to have a hold over her and she used to get me to pass notes to her. Then one day I was going down to the pantry and I saw them kissing but I hid because if they knew I had seen them I would have been murdered. SR 187 was a lovely nun; she was different to the rest. She always made you feel welcome and she would put her arm around you. You could have a laugh with her, not like the others and she used to give us cigarettes. The only time I ever felt safe was up in the kitchen with SR 187. I went to work there after I left school at 15. You were either put in the kitchen or the old people's home and the kitchen was the best place to be.

25. When I was about 13 or 14 a family of three girls came into Nazareth House. I think they were called the [REDACTED]. They ranged in age from about 9 to 11. They had sores on their heads when they came in and Sister SR 31 got me out of bed to wash their heads. She made me scrub them with a scrubbing brush over the sink. The girls were screaming and blood was pouring from their heads. I was crying but SR 31 just kept saying I



1       tapioca.

2       **A. Yes.**

3       Q. You also said that SR116 had scrubbed between your legs  
4       using a scrubbing brush and that that caused you a great  
5       deal of pain and distress.

6             You then -- that was in September 2004. Then in  
7       June 2005 you came back and spoke to the police again.  
8       As you say, you were in contact with them anyway, but  
9       you did make another police statement. In that police  
10      statement you said this was after a reunion, and you  
11      remembered more details of where one incident occurred,  
12      for example, and you give more details about the  
13      injuries you sustained. I wanted to ask you, first of  
14      all, about the reunion and how that came about.

15      **A. The reunion came about because at the time that I was**  
16      **actually trying to bring these charges I had no**  
17      **witnesses, and the police were saying to me and my**  
18      **solicitor was saying to me, you know, "Really it would**  
19      **be in your ..." -- because I wasn't in contact with**  
20      **anybody from my past, that if I could just have some**  
21      **witnesses that would say they were in there too, that**  
22      **that might be more useful to my case for the criminal**  
23      **court and for ...**

24             So my ex-husband went on to Friends Reunited and  
25      through that a lady who was in Nazareth House at the



PRIVATE

8. We had a bath once a week in the home. There were four baths in the home for all of the children, and we had to share bathwater. At bath time we were all lined up and Jeyes Fluid was put in the baths. If you were at the back of the queue the water would be cold by the time you got to the top. We learnt quickly that to get hot water we needed to be at the top of the queue. They used the same water for all of us and we would often come out with a black rim around our waists. We were usually given a shift-like garment to cover our modesty but it only covered our fronts. It was a first come first served basis and those that arrived late had to do without. Baths were supervised by the older girls, but sometimes the nuns would be there too. When I was an older girl I helped to supervise the children at bath time.
9. If I got into trouble I would be sent up for a beating from **SR 31** **SR 31** who would say "you're illegitimate and you're a bastard, who asked you to come here, we didn't ask you to come here, your mother left you here." I didn't know what the word illegitimate meant until I was older and I swore that I would never tell anyone that I was illegitimate because it just felt nasty. I did not know what a mother was as I had never met my mother. I could not question the nuns as they would have hit me for talking back to them. I did not tell anyone apart from my husband that I was illegitimate for 65 years because I was so ashamed. I only told my two sons a few years ago that I was illegitimate. **SR 31** used to say nasty things about my mother, which included calling my mother a slut. This continues to have an impact on me today.
10. I remember my mother coming to visit me once when I was in the home when I was about 10 or 11. I told her about the beatings that I was receiving, although I was not really sure who she was at that time. She never came back to visit me, and I believe that the nuns told her not to come back. I do not remember ever being visited by a social worker during my time in care.

PRIVATE

9. The beatings happened on a regular basis if you weren't doing the chores correctly. SR 31 would hit you with the bunch of keys round the head saying you were useless and stupid.
10. I went to school at St Monica's on the Ravenhill Road and HIA 368 went to a school in Nazareth House. I couldn't wait to get back after school to see HIA 368 we would play in the play area at the front of Nazareth House where there were bars. It was frowned upon for a girl to be playing on things like that because she would be wearing a skirt.
11. My mummy used to visit every week on either a Saturday or a Sunday. She would thumb a lift from Newcastle and then we were put in this wee hall with seats to see her. Sometimes we would be allowed to go out with our mummy for a couple of hours. After every visit when mummy left SR 31 used to take us into a room at the Sacred Heart group. She would tell us how lucky we were to be in the home because our mummy was an alcoholic who didn't want us and the only reason she came to visit was to pass her day. She would say that mummy was very happy to leave us there. The way she spoke about mum has filled me with a hatred of her that has hurt me more than any of the physical abuse I suffered.
12. The food in the home was made up of handouts from places like Marks and Spencer's. You got the same sort of thing every other day it wasn't great but in those days nothing really was. I was constantly hungry.
13. One day another girl and I were up watching Top of the Pops, the Pans People were on and we were dancing. SR 31 was coming up towards the room and she was totally disgusted at us dancing. We were brought up to her cell and she had a big chain with keys attached to the bottom and we got that round our heads. We were then made to stand outside her cell for hours until we learnt a lesson. I had to stand outside her cell on a regular basis and every time I would have been beaten beforehand.

## RESTRICTED (when complete)

Continuation of Statement of: HIA 175

Page 2 of 2

used to cry while he was standing there. [REDACTED] and the other nuns used to stand and just laugh at him. It was so cruel. This pattern of behaviour continued until I was 15 years old. I also remember that two other nuns were present [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], they were also very cruel to all of us but [REDACTED] was the worst. Whenever my mother used to come to the home to visit [REDACTED] would be all nice to her, but when she left us [REDACTED] would tell us over and over again "Your mummy is a bad person, she loves men, that's why you are here with us, she doesn't care about you, you should be grateful that the nuns look after you". One really terrible task I was made to do was to go upstairs to another part of the home. It was where the older residents stayed, when they died I was made to help wash their bodies. I had to do this about 3-4 times. I used to get yelled at for not carrying this out as quickly as they wanted. I was terrified. When I was 15 years old I left this part of the home to go and work in St Joseph's baby home. I did this until I was 17 years old. On reflection I feel traumatised when I recall the way I was treated in the home and especially my brother. The discipline was horrendous and staying there had a major impact on my childhood both physically and emotionally. I currently see a psychiatrist which is directly related to my time in Nazareth House. [REDACTED]

Certified a true copy of an original signed document

Signature of witness:	[REDACTED]
Signature witnessed by: (Appropriate Adult)	

PRIVATE

occasion I ran away with another girl. As punishment, I was made to kneel all night outside **SR 31** cell. She kept looking out the window to check that I was still awake and if I was falling asleep, she would throw things out at me. She must have kept herself awake to check up on me. The other girl that I ran away with was just sent to bed, and wasn't punished at all.

14. **SR 31** could be very cruel. If I did something wrong, she would say "what do you expect, you're only from the back streets of Belfast". She called us "a pack of tramps". I know that when we were first taken into care, we weren't very clean and she was always bringing it up and reminding me of it. Her comments hurt me more sometimes than being beaten. That's what stuck in my head more than the beatings. She was always humiliating us.
15. My mother came to visit us in Nazareth House at the beginning. The nuns weren't particularly nice to her, in the way they looked at her and spoke to her. They made fun of her and said she was living in sin. I recall on one occasion, my mum wrote a letter and she was complaining about the way we were being treated. **SR 31** read the letter out in front of everybody during breakfast in the big main dining room. She pointed out all the spelling mistakes and the fact that my mother was so ignorant that she had written in red ink. It was humiliating and all the kids were sniggering. Once I got a bit older, and started to answer back, I would threaten to tell my mother what **SR 31** was doing and she would say "you should never have been born, none of you should ever have been born, your mother wasn't even married".
16. There was a brutal regime in the home. Nothing was ever different. I don't remember kids fighting, telling tales or making fun of each other. We all had to stick together. I don't remember anybody really crying, because there was no point.
17. Sometimes we were taken out for parties at Christmas time to places like Mackey's. I always remember feeling embarrassed. The people meant well but I felt like a charity case. I never liked going to them. They would give us



PRIVATE

occasion I ran away with another girl. As punishment, I was made to kneel all night outside **SR 31** cell. She kept looking out the window to check that I was still awake and if I was falling asleep, she would throw things out at me. She must have kept herself awake to check up on me. The other girl that I ran away with was just sent to bed, and wasn't punished at all.

14. **SR 31** could be very cruel. If I did something wrong, she would say "what do you expect, you're only from the back streets of Belfast". She called us "a pack of tramps". I know that when we were first taken into care, we weren't very clean and she was always bringing it up and reminding me of it. Her comments hurt me more sometimes than being beaten. That's what stuck in my head more than the beatings. She was always humiliating us.
15. My mother came to visit us in Nazareth House at the beginning. The nuns weren't particularly nice to her, in the way they looked at her and spoke to her. They made fun of her and said she was living in sin. I recall on one occasion, my mum wrote a letter and she was complaining about the way we were being treated. **SR 31** read the letter out in front of everybody during breakfast in the big main dining room. She pointed out all the spelling mistakes and the fact that my mother was so ignorant that she had written in red ink. It was humiliating and all the kids were sniggering. Once I got a bit older, and started to answer back, I would threaten to tell my mother what **SR 31** was doing and she would say "you should never have been born, none of you should ever have been born, your mother wasn't even married".
16. There was a brutal regime in the home. Nothing was ever different. I don't remember kids fighting, telling tales or making fun of each other. We all had to stick together. I don't remember anybody really crying, because there was no point.
17. Sometimes we were taken out for parties at Christmas time to places like Mackey's. I always remember feeling embarrassed. The people meant well but I felt like a charity case. I never liked going to them. They would give us



PRIVATE

Nazareth House, Belfast (29<sup>th</sup> September 1965 – 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1966 and 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1969 – date unknown)

4. I remember being picked up off the streets by social workers and being brought to Nazareth House a number of times. Social Services were involved from a young age. The five girls, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were taken out of the home. The two boys and [REDACTED] HIA 163 went to Nazareth Lodge as [REDACTED] HIA 163 was only three so she was too young for Nazareth House. [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and I were taken to Nazareth House. My older brother [REDACTED] did not go into care – he either stayed with my paternal grandparents or [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had not been born at that stage.
5. The nuns I remember from Nazareth House are [REDACTED] SR 31, [REDACTED] SR 134 and [REDACTED] SR 116. My sister [REDACTED] and I were in [REDACTED] SR 31 group and my sisters [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were in [REDACTED] SR 134 group. Each time we were brought in to the home, we were taken straight to the bathroom and some sort of insect repellent was poured over our hair because we were told we had nits. The nuns were really rough with us when they fine combed out hair. I didn't know whether I was better off going into Nazareth House or being at home.
6. [REDACTED] SR 31 was a very angry woman and you would see her face going red with rage. I wet the bed as a child and this infuriated [REDACTED] SR 31. First of all they gave me medicine which never worked. The bed wetters were all lined up separate from the others and told we were getting wet the bed medicine. [REDACTED] SR 31 would have checked your bed during the night and if it was wet she went mad. She would slap me about the head and legs while grabbing the sheets off the bed. Then she made you walk to her cell which was at the end of the dormitory. She would make you kneel there all night and call you dirty and smelly. She used to say you better pray to God you won't wet the bed again. I would pray because I thought she would know if I didn't as she was a nun. I would have to kneel there all night and I couldn't move because I was afraid to in case she came out. Every creak I heard I would think it was her coming.

PRIVATE

4. We were placed in the Our Lady's group. In the dormitory we each had metal beds and a small locker. **SR 31** was in charge of our group. **SR 31** **SR 31** should not have been a nun. She was very wicked and she showed no emotion or affection. She slept in a cell at the end of the dormitory. Her cell had a door and a small window so she could see into the dormitory. The other groups were called the St Anne's group which **SR 59** was in charge of and the Sacred Heart group which **SR 134** was in charge of.
5. Some of the girls in my dormitory wet the bed. Tthe bed wetters had a sheet attached to their bed which had a buzzer that sounded if they wet the bed. If the buzzer sounded during the night **SR 31** would go mad. The girl who wet the bed was made to kneel beside their bed for the rest of the night in the freezing cold with just their night dress on. Sometimes **SR 31** would not get up when the buzzer sounded and she would shout to one of the other girls to get up instead. I remember **HIA 28** having to get up to kneel beside the girl a couple of times. In the morning the girl who wet the bed wa responsible for taking her sheets to the laundry and getting herself fresh sheets.
6. In the morning we were woken by a bell or **SR 31** clapping. . If we were going to mass we would be woken at 6am, for mass at 7am. We went to mass two or three times a week as well as Sundays and Holy days. If we did not have to go to Mass we got up about 6.30 / 7am. We got out of bed and knelt down to say our prayers We were taken to the bathroom to brush our teeth. We had toothbrushes but no toothpaste so we rubbed our toothbrush into carbolic soap instead. We then got dressed, went to mass and had breakfast. The food was not good and we were always hungry. I remember my sister **HIA 29** ate the dog's food nearly every day as she was so hungry. When we had the opportunity we used to take the paper off the cheese and eat it like chewing gum.
7. We went to primary school in Nazareth House. We were taught by Sister **SR 31** and **SR 134** **SR 59** taught the younger children. When Sister **SR 31** was in bad form she would take it out on us. When we turned eleven we were sent to St Monica's. We wore a uniform at St Monica's. I remember

PRIVATE

day I was going to get fitted for a uniform because I was changing schools. I didn't want to move schools as I had made friends in St. Monica's. I had been very happy there and was achieving well. I had been a Prefect and could have done my O Levels there.

38. It was a really long bus ride to [REDACTED] and when I got back to Nazareth House in the evening I was really hungry as I hadn't eaten since 1pm. I was told it was too late for food as the top kitchen was closed. Another girl from the home got a scholarship as well. Her name was [REDACTED] and she was older than me and a lot more streetwise. She wanted to leave school and the home and get a job. One day she said we were not going back to [REDACTED] and we mitched school for a few days. I was very much influenced by [REDACTED] and I didn't want to go to [REDACTED] without her; I hated the thought of travelling from Belfast to [REDACTED] on my own. When we went back to the home we were told we had to go to the store room. You knew you were in trouble when you were told to go there.

39. [REDACTED] SR 31 [REDACTED] was waiting in the store room for us. She couldn't stand me anyway and she always made life difficult for me. [REDACTED] went in to the store room first and when she came out she just winked at me and I felt relieved. [REDACTED] SR 31 [REDACTED] was very fond of [REDACTED] because she was in her group. As soon as I went in, [REDACTED] SR 31 [REDACTED] told me to put out my hand. I was fourteen at this stage and I said no because I knew [REDACTED] hadn't been chastised.

40. [REDACTED] SR 31 [REDACTED] went hell for leather then with a bamboo cane. I can still remember the sound of it swishing through the air. She went absolutely mental; she had lost the plot. She was hitting me everywhere, on the back of my head, my arms, everywhere. I had welts all over. I ran for the door but she had locked it. I got a shock then; I realised she had calculated what she was going to do to me. She had locked that door so nobody could get in and I couldn't get out.

41. I really thought she was going to kill me so I knocked her over and she fell over a sewing machine. I saw a window pole then which I grabbed. While she

PRIVATE

was on the ground, I put my foot on her chest and I had the pole in my hand. I said to her "give me the keys because you know you're going to kill me". She couldn't get up, she was trapped by the sewing machine and I think she was in shock as well. She gave me the key and I locked her in and threw the key out of the window. I don't know how she ended up getting out.

42. I borrowed money from my friend [REDACTED] to get the bus to [REDACTED]. She was a resident who worked in the parlour and her mother lived in the Good Shepherd across the road. [REDACTED] always had money. I had an aunt and uncle there who I traced when I was fourteen. We used to go out and spend the odd weekend with them and we loved it. It was nice to feel like you belonged somewhere. My aunt thought I was just up for a visit but when I took my cardigan off she saw all the dried blood and seeping welts on my skin and she went ballistic.

43. My [REDACTED] was my dad's brother and he was working in the [REDACTED] but my aunt sent for him and said "look what they've done to this child". [REDACTED] was a quiet, unassuming man who didn't like any fuss but she made him bring me to the police station in [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was very upset. They had a big family of their own and they didn't have much money so they couldn't take us out permanently. My dad never forgave his family, especially his parents for not taking us out of the home.

44. When I went to the police station, I was put in a room on my own. I remember one policeman came in and said I could have caused the injuries myself. I asked him how I could get round to my back and he said I could have done it against a door. I was trying to convince him that it really happened. I remember another policeman with sandy hair coming in and asking me what had happened. When I told him it was a nun, he said he couldn't believe that and there were tears in his eyes.

45. I was examined by a doctor called [REDACTED] NHB 73 and he told me he had three daughters at [REDACTED] and they were [REDACTED]. He said it was a very good school and I should make the most of my opportunity there. I felt very let

PRIVATE

down by the police and the doctor for making me go back to Nazareth House after this incident. [SR 31] and the Mother Superior came and picked me up in a taxi from [REDACTED] I later found out from [REDACTED] that [NHB 73] had told him that he had enough on his plate already with his own family. I felt very hurt and betrayed by this. [REDACTED] later told me that there was a meeting about [SR 31] and she was disciplined for her behaviour. Apparently she was not allowed to be promoted but I'm not sure if that's true.

46. I found out where [SR 31] was living in 1999 and I wrote to her challenging her about the beating she gave me. Her replies were so patronising; she just said what a great girl I was and that she only 'corrected' me because she thought grammar school was a great opportunity for me. She said the reason she didn't punish [REDACTED] was because she was still under the care of her parents and that's why we got different treatment. The nuns had to be careful with children like [REDACTED] because their parents still came in to visit them. To this day, I hate [SR 31] for making me feel this way. I think she is the most evil person I have ever come across in my life.

47. I don't recall anybody from Welfare ever coming to inspect the home. My only recollection is of benefactors coming to visit. That was a humiliating experience. We would all be sitting watching television like clones and the nuns made sure we were all clean and dressed nicely. The nun would then tell us all to stand up and we would have to stand for these people and their children. We were told to stand and greet them by name and smile at them. We had to remain standing until they left. They just looked at us like we were in a cattle mart. I resented having to stand for those children just because their parents gave money to the home.

48. I remember the summer after the beating, [SR 31] said to me I had nine weeks to kill and I could paint all the beds. This was a punishment for not going to school. [REDACTED] was still in the home and she received no punishment. We had a maintenance man named [REDACTED] who did all the odd jobs. He was a great character. I helped him paint all that summer. I had to paint all the big pipes and radiators and nearly one hundred beds but I loved



PRIVATE

**Nazareth House Belfast (18<sup>th</sup> July 1960 – 19<sup>th</sup> December 1965)**

6. The day we were brought into Nazareth House, we were taken into a big room while my mother talked to **SR 176**, the Mother Superior. Then my mother said goodbye to us and we all started crying. We were taken to the sewing room by **SR 122** and changed out of our clothes into old clothes. We were brought to the canteen and given our supper and then just put to bed. We were just thrown in, we weren't introduced to anyone.
7. My sisters and I were kept in the same group – Our Lady's. **SR 31** was in charge of our group. There were three groups – Our Lady's, Sacred Heart and St. Anne's. We all wore different colours to Mass on Sunday. Our Lady's were blue, Sacred Heart was red and St. Anne's was green. I didn't know I had a younger sister in the home until one day **SR 31** asked us if we wanted to see our sister. I looked at her and asked what she meant and she said 'you know you have a sister in the baby section'. They brought her down to the railings then which separated the baby section from the children's part. We didn't have much contact with **NHB 69** after this as the two sections were completely separate.
8. A normal day in Nazareth House began with the nuns clapping to wake us up. If it was our group's turn to go to Mass, we would get up at 5am. We washed and dressed then after Mass we went down to get our breakfast. We got porridge or dipping bread. The food was terrible but you had to eat it. I hated the bread pudding, it made me sick but **SR 134** would stand over me and make me eat it even while I was retching. We wore pinafores to school which the nuns made themselves and we weren't allowed have our sleeves down. If you were caught with your sleeves down, you got a knuckle on your head from **SR 116**.
9. We were punished for every little thing in the home. You would be brought into the sewing room and slapped with a bamboo cane on the knuckles. If you pulled your hand away, you would get an extra slap. **SR 134** used to beat me with a wooden walking stick like a shillelagh. She used to hide it under her clothes if she saw anybody coming, like the priest. **SR 116** had the

PRIVATE

13. My oldest sister [REDACTED] had special needs but at the time she was just called the slow one; she was never diagnosed with anything. She probably had autism or Asperger's. [REDACTED] had a club foot as well and I was very protective of her. The other girls in the home would have looked out for [REDACTED] as well. She was too slow for [REDACTED] SR 31 movements. I think [REDACTED] SR 31 took a dislike to me because I stood up for my sisters. I was never cheeky; I was too afraid to be but I was always quick to stand up for [REDACTED].
14. The food in Nazareth House was terrible. [REDACTED] SR 31, [REDACTED] SR 134 and [REDACTED] SR 116 used to supervise mealtimes in the dining room. I hated the porridge – it was watery and salty but they forced me to eat it. I hated carrots as well and this infuriated the nuns. [REDACTED] SR 31 used to come over and pull the back of my hair and say “you are going to eat that”. She would lift a fork and put it into my mouth and I would be trying to spit it out. Then [REDACTED] SR 134 would come over and hold your nose while [REDACTED] SR 31 held your head. [REDACTED] SR 31 would be shoving carrots in my mouth and holding my chin until I swallowed them. This happened very regularly; if you weren't getting force fed somebody else was. I believe this force feeding caused me to develop anorexia later on in life. Mealtimes were just a nightmare. The dining room would be packed with children but the silence was eerie – nobody dared to speak.
15. Contact with my sisters was not encouraged in the home. Although [REDACTED] was the oldest, because she had special needs I felt like I was the oldest. I wouldn't have seen [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] very often; only out in the playground. It wasn't like you could go over and say hello at mealtimes. I was just in survival mode every day. If you didn't get hit, it was a good day.
16. My maternal aunt [REDACTED] would have come to visit us sometimes. She was a really funny woman but she soon learned not to laugh or tell jokes because [REDACTED] SR 31 sat in the room with us during the visits. I think they were afraid of us telling people what was going on. [REDACTED] was a lovely woman but she

PRIVATE

wouldn't give in so he drove me back to the home. He said I wasn't doing the job I was sent there to do just because he wasn't getting his own way. I was only twelve or thirteen at the time and NHB 6 and NHB 5 weren't there – it was just me. There was nobody I could tell. He said the nuns wouldn't believe me because it was them who sent me out to him.

20. We used to go on holidays to Glenariff during the summer. I loved that; it was an escape for us. We used to sneak out to the village late at night and one night SR 134 was waiting on us when we got back. She shouted at us "you'll know the consequences in nine months time" and gave us a good hiding but we probably deserved it for sneaking out so late. At Christmas time we went to parties at Mackies which I have fond memories of.

21. My brothers were in Nazareth Lodge while we were in Nazareth House and I remember going down once but we only saw one brother - I never saw or any of the younger ones. The nuns used to take down girls who had brothers in the Lodge. I remember seeing a boy called NL 28 who they called the boy because he went round clucking like a hen. went to Kircubbin then and I remember going to visit him after I left when I found out he was there.

22. I never remember any social workers or inspectors visiting the home. The only people I recall are benefactors who would come in and the nuns would put on a big show for them. There was a doctor called Dr Hunter who used to come down to the home. He would examine us all in a line in a room off the classroom and I remember him giving us injections but we were never told what they were for. Dr Hunter had a practice on the Ormeau Road and I brought a girl I was in charge of down there once because she was tongue tied and he nipped it.

23. I went to school onsite in Nazareth House. SR 134 taught there and she would beat you on the knuckles with a ruler if you got something wrong. Your hand would be so sore for days afterwards you were sure you had broken a bone. SR 134 used to cane us as well – she would keep at you until you

PRIVATE

cried. Then I went to St. Monica's Secondary School on the Ravenhill Road. SR 192 was the head teacher there and I got expelled because I wouldn't let her slap me. The other girls used to make fun of us because we came from Nazareth House and were dressed differently. We used to wear these wellie boots and I hid mine because I didn't want to stand out. Somebody must have taken them and I was forced to go out in the snow with no shoes on.

24. After I got expelled from school, I was sent to work in the nursery. My sister later worked in the old people's home. You were sent to help out wherever you were needed. I loved working in the nursery; the little ones were lovely. I felt like their protector. There was a woman from outside called who worked there too. I never saw any violence towards the little ones in the nursery.

25. I left Nazareth House on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1962 when I was sixteen.

#### Life after care

26. I ended up in a hostel near Church for a while. It was run by a nun called . Then one day I walked out and got on a ship to Birmingham. I came back to Belfast after a while and went to work for a man called . I got this job through the nuns – they were the only people you knew. lived in a big, old rambling house somewhere in Belfast; it wasn't that far from . He was married and he had children. I got pregnant with his baby. He was a pharmacist and he was twice my age; I was only seventeen. Someone gave me love so I took it but it was the wrong kind of love because it was someone else's love. When I got pregnant he threw me out.

27. I had my son then and I went to live with my father because I had nowhere else to go. He threw me out because the baby cried a lot so I had to put into St. Joseph's Baby Home when he was about seven months old. A priest called arranged it for me. I went up to visit

PRIVATE

21. I went to school in the convent but I was very rarely in the classroom. I would get messages from **SR 116** during class that she wanted me to scrub floors, polish shoes and do chores and **SR 134** would release me from class and tell me to go to her. My IQ test carried out in later life showed that I was intelligent but my education was constantly interrupted. I have always wondered what I would have been capable of given the chance instead of the menial jobs I was made to do in the home and after leaving the home. With my level of education I had to work as a waitress and clean toilets. I had a brain but no confidence or self esteem to use it.

22. I was taught by **SR 31** for a while. She had a blackthorn stick that she used to keep in her classroom and she would whack you with it along your legs and back. I remember once an inspector asked about the stick and **SR 31** called it her pointing stick for pointing to the blackboard. I think that was the first realisation for me about nuns actually lying after telling us that we would go straight to hell if we lied yet there she was in front of this inspector saying that it was her pointing stick. **SR 134** also used big silver serving spoons to whack the back of your knuckles and they would swell up and you couldn't move your hands and that happened regularly.

23. There was another nun who was also vicious; I think she was called **SR 189**. She would get your head and smack it up against the wall. I have had blood pumping from my head following an incident like this with her and she just told me to get up to the dormitory and clean the mess up. I never received medical treatment. It was not just **SR 116** who abused me, it was all of them but as I was in **SR 116** group which **SR 116** was responsible for I had the most abuse from her. She was my nightmare and the one mostly in my head. In my view the other nuns were just as bad. We came from bad people, bad homes, we were the scum of the earth, children of drunks and prostitutes and goodness knows what and so we had our parents sins to answer for and that had to be beaten out of us.

24. There were also occasions of being nearly drowned in the bath, being pushed under the water in the bath. We were bathed in four big baths and one girl



PRIVATE

have us all in a big line. We were only little kids; we were only about eight or nine. A nun would be standing there watching and if it wasn't shiny enough, you had to go back and start again. You were practically slipping on the floor it was so shiny. We scrubbed the floors every day. For the big hall downstairs, we had to throw tea leaves on it, sweep it, scrub it and then wax and polish it. I scrubbed the church as well.

14. We were never given a break; it was just constant work. If you were thirsty you couldn't ask for a glass of water. You would be beaten if you asked for anything. Even if you were sick, you still had to do the cleaning. If you had been beaten, your hands would be sore and blistering but you still had to put your hands in water and scrub when you were in pain.
15. I was often beaten by the nuns. They would tell you to hold your hands out and slap you on the knuckles with the side of a ruler. They would hold your hands so you couldn't pull away. Another thing they used to do was pull you up by the earlobe so you were on your tiptoes and your feet were practically off the ground. **SR134** used to dig into the soft flesh under your arms with her fingers. The nuns would hit you on the head as well either with their knuckles or these big sets of keys they carried around.
16. The beatings happened pretty often. If it wasn't you, you saw someone else being beaten. You didn't have to do anything to get a beating; if you so much as tutted you would be punished. You could not express yourself at all or you would get battered. **SR134** would have given you a box in the ears but I don't recall her using a weapon against you. **SR116** would have beaten me the most because I was in her group. She was a very wicked woman.
17. I always felt that the children who had parents or families were treated better than those of us with nobody. They got out for the weekend and their parents would come visit them. I remember saying to one of the nuns I was going to tell someone about the beatings and she said 'who are you going to tell, you've got no one to tell, you were left on the doorstep'. I think the nuns

PRIVATE

Nazareth House, Belfast (21/10/1952 – 10/01/1967)

3. When I was two I was transferred to the nursery in Nazareth House and then I was transferred to the children's department when I was five.
4. I remember there were two dormitories; the senior dormitory and the junior dormitory. Shortly after I arrived the two dormitories were divided into three groups which were called Our Lady's, Saint Anne's and Sacred Hearts. There were about 30 children in each group ranging in age from 5 to 16. There was a nun in charge of each group and she slept in a cell at the end of the dormitory. I was in the Sacred Heart group and **SR 134** was in charge of my group.
5. We were all dressed in similar clothes. We all had to wear pinafores. We were given shoes to wear and if they did not fit we had to squeeze our feet in to them. The older girls were in charge of handing out the shoes and you were too afraid to say that they did not fit.
6. We went to Mass first thing most mornings and went to benediction in the evening. I tried to avoid sitting in front **SR 134** in chapel because if she thought you were doing anything wrong she would reach over and nip your neck or pull your hair. I was also made to pump the church organ which was hard work. Services lasted over an hour and I had to pump for the entire time. Sister **SR 134** also had a terrible habit of grabbing you by your wrists and making you hit yourself and then say "see I didn't touch you".
7. After Mass we had breakfast which consisted of porridge, bread and butter. Until I was about eleven, meals were eaten in complete silence. I do not know why. If you did not eat your dinner you were made to sit until it was finished or Sister **SR 116** would make you come up and get more. The food could have been better. We seemed to live on bread and butter and any meat was very grisly. It felt like we were always being given the butcher's scraps. I was always hungry. We had to say the Rosary before bed every night. The juniors went to bed between 6.30pm and 7pm and the seniors had to be in bed for 9pm.

PRIVATE

They tried to say it was ringworm or something and I was given cream to deal with it. I still have problems with my scalp.

10. The bath water was never changed and we shared towels. We were given old dirty shoes to wear that didn't fit.
11. **HIA 430** was older than me and my bed was next to hers in my dormitory. She pretended to tell us stories and got us to lean around her bed. She took our hands and she tried to get us to touch her. This happened a few times and I always pulled my hand away.
12. On one occasion I was crying and I told **SR 134** about what had happened. **SR 134** beat me on the head with keys. She moved me out of the dormitory and put me in a store room on the landing which had a small camp bed. She then moved me to outside her cell where my bed was near the fire escape.
13. **HIA 430** continued to hit me after this as she knew I told **SR 134** I was bullied by **HIA 430** and other older girls. If I received anything, the bullies would have stolen it from me. They would thump and kick me. For example, if I had a ball they would take it off me and thump me.
14. There was no one to tell. The nuns wouldn't have been believed you and they would have beaten you.
15. I was starving with hunger all the time. The stew was water with bits of grizzled fat in it. We got dipped bread from a dirty oven and we were given black pudding. The nuns probably got the good meat. I remember climbing the wall at back of Holy Rosary Chapel to get to the pear trees. We were constantly starving. On one occasion I remember someone brought in greasy apples and we were given them to eat.
16. There was a doctor, Dr Hunter I think, who came in and gave injections for measles and children's illnesses. I got a BCG injection. **SR 134** knew this

HIA103

PRIVATE



PRIVATE

and thumped my arm when I got the injection. The wound became infected and swollen and SR 122 treated it.

17. My father bought us things, for example, my sister got a yellow jumper but it was taken off her by the nuns. When my dad asked about it they said it was lost or something. I remember my sister having a bruise on her arm. My father complained to the nuns but nothing was done about it.
18. At Christmas parties we were given presents when we went to Hughes Bakery and Mackies. I got a doll called Rosebud and it was taken off me by the nuns when I returned to the home. I think they sold the presents that were given to children in the home.
19. I remember an inspector coming in and we were told to be on our best behaviour. We were warned not to be telling anything to the inspector. I remember a slide was brought out for a picture with the inspector beside it. This was just for show as we never got to use it and I never saw the slide again.
20. We weren't really educated. I was picked to play the violin and they brought in a music teacher called [REDACTED] to teach it.
21. I attended St Monica's Secondary School on the Ravenhill Road. I had a couple of lovely teachers there. Miss Hill and Miss McCabe were particularly nice.
22. We had to mend old skirts the nuns gave us for our uniform and we had to borrow PE gear because we didn't have our own. Any time I had a hole in my uniform I was mortified.
23. I was ashamed about walking back from school to Nazareth House and I didn't tell people where I lived. I told no-one I was in care.
24. I left Nazareth House when I was about 11 or 12 years old. I was returned to my father's care because he got a house. I went back first because I was eldest. It

HIA103

PRIVATE

PRIVATE

no food in the house. My mother wasn't even there at the time. We were crying – we didn't want to be taken away. Even though it might have been a good thing for us at the time because we weren't being well looked after at home, no matter what's happening to you, you don't want to be taken away from what you know.

5. I was taken to Nazareth House a week before my 8<sup>th</sup> birthday and I stayed there for nine years. My brothers were taken somewhere else – I now know it was St. Joseph's Babies Home.

**Nazareth House, Belfast (13<sup>th</sup> November 1953 – 19<sup>th</sup> February 1962)**

6. I went in to Nazareth House with my sisters NHB 6 and NHB 5 when I was almost eight years old.
7. The first thing that happened when you went in to the home was you were stripped off, put into a bath and changed into different clothes. Then the older girls went through your hair checking for nits. They spent a whole day delousing us.
8. My younger sister NHB 5 went into the nursery section of Nazareth House because she was only four at the time. NHB 6 and I were put into SR 134 group – Sacred Heart. I remember NHB 6 couldn't stop crying and she would get thumped by SR 134. We used to call SR 134. You got thumped by her for anything – there didn't have to be a reason. She would grab you by the ears and pull you over to a door and bang your head off the door. She used to bang our heads off the wall outside as well.
9. SR 189 used to bash your head off the wall as well. You didn't have to do anything – you might have pushed somebody over by accident. She was a rough, wicked woman and she would belt you. She had a habit of grabbing you and squeezing you tightly so you would end up with bruises. Even though SR 134 gave me more beatings, SR 189 was the worst. NHB 6 was her favourite and she used to say to me "there's more in her little finger than



1 earlier is after you left, your younger sister continued  
2 to live on in the home for a period.

3 **A. She did, yes.**

4 Q. I want to go back to your witness statement then at 661.  
5 As I was doing when we were discussing matters earlier,  
6 HIA95, I am going to try to deal with these as groups of  
7 issues.

8 You describe in paragraph 8 and a series of other  
9 paragraphs various difficulties you had at the hands of  
10 SR134. I am going to talk to you, first of all, about  
11 SR134.

12 In paragraph 8 you say that she -- you remember her  
13 thumping your younger sister --

14 **A. That's right, yes.**

15 Q. -- because she wouldn't stop crying. You say that she  
16 was someone who would grab you by the ears. Can you  
17 just explain to the Panel what you mean by she would --  
18 did she just --

19 **A. She used to get you by your ears and then whatever was**  
20 **closest to her, be it the wall, the door, you got**  
21 **slammed back into it, not more -- more than once.**

22 Q. What -- can you remember what you had done or were  
23 perceived to have done to be treated in that way?

24 **A. You may have done -- you weren't doing your work**  
25 **properly, whatever was allocated to you. You weren't --**

1       sometimes I couldn't even think why I was being hit, but  
2       that was one of the reasons, and another time was  
3       a friend I got, she -- we -- as a --

4   Q.   This is one we are going to come to I think --

5   A.   Okay.

6   Q.   -- that we discussed earlier. So there were times  
7       whenever it happened and you weren't really sure, but it  
8       seemed to be something that had --

9   A.   It was something very simple. It never was anything  
10       really major that -- depending on her mood I would say  
11       that day.

12   Q.   You talk in paragraph 10 of a particular incident. You  
13       describe yourself as having a tick and you are talking  
14       about that as it relates to your knee.

15   A.   Yes. I used to sit and shake my leg. I wasn't aware  
16       I was doing it and mostly when you were still that would  
17       happen in church.

18   Q.   That had the effect of shaking the pew a little.

19   A.   It did. It used to make a noise, but obviously, as  
20       I say, I wasn't really aware of it, and then she  
21       would -- SR134 -- she would always sit behind you,  
22       SR134, and then she'd come at you with a knuckle in your  
23       spine, or I don't know what she was pricking me with.  
24       She'd prick you with something, but I'm never sure  
25       whether they had a little -- you know, with their habit,

1 I am never sure whether she had a pin that held in here.

2 I know it was something sharp she was pricking me with  
3 and she'd do that to you quite often right into your  
4 back.

5 Q. So it may -- it mightn't be a pin as we understand it  
6 today.

7 A. No, no, but I don't know. I know it was sharp. Let's  
8 put it like that.

9 Q. But it was you think something that helped secure --

10 A. That's what I always thought, because I don't know how  
11 they kept this on. They obviously don't wear the same  
12 habits as they did then. They don't wear them today.  
13 They had a kind of a thing across here and the veils  
14 came down here. I am sure it was something that must  
15 have held on here to hold it in place.

16 Q. This poking would be to get you to stop?

17 A. To stop, yes.

18 Q. You mention in the same paragraph the crunch in the  
19 back, which I presume was a knuckle to your --

20 A. Yes. She'd get her knuckle like that and come at you  
21 quite hard right into your spine.

22 Q. You describe in the same paragraph her throwing the  
23 blackening brush that was used for polishing the shoes.  
24 Now was that -- you mentioned to me earlier that was on  
25 Saturday.

1       they would actually -- sometimes they would hold your  
2       hand straight and make sure that it came -- the side of  
3       the ruler, it would go right down on the hands.

4   Q.   So it wasn't the flat part of the ruler?

5   A.   No, it was always the side of the ruler, and you would  
6       get -- sometimes you would get it on the knuckles.  
7       Depending what mood they were in, they would slap you on  
8       the hand -- on the palm, but if they were probably in a  
9       worse mood, wanted more punishment, then you got it  
10      right across the knuckles.

11   Q.   You said another thing they used to do was to pull you  
12       by the ear lobe so that you would be on your tiptoes and  
13       your feet were practically off the ground.

14   A.   Correct.

15   Q.   You also describe SR134 in particular used to dig in the  
16       soft flesh under your arms with her fingers.

17   A.   Uh-huh.

18   Q.   You say the nuns would hit you on the head as well  
19       either with their knuckles or these big set of keys they  
20       carried around.

21   A.   Yes.   They would kind of go like that to you, you know.  
22       (Gesturing.)

23   Q.   You are just demonstrating there that you are being  
24       punched in the head with the knuckle.

25   A.   Well, a knuckle like, you know, would be -- sometimes be

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. [REDACTED] and I went out to stay with a woman called [REDACTED] in Newry whose brother was a monk called [REDACTED]. He wore a long brown robe and [REDACTED] 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. [REDACTED] 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 [REDACTED] was convicted of paedophilia.

21. Then I went out to a family called [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]. 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 [REDACTED] during holidays, the mother used to send me and her daughter [REDACTED] 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 [REDACTED] 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.



1     **A. Normally, yes, yes.**

2     Q. They would shave you hair --

3     **A. Yes, with the shavings things, yes, yes, yes.**

4     Q. -- into the shape of a bob or whatever --

5     **A. Yes, yes, yes, yes.**

6     Q. -- the normal hair style was, but on this occasion your  
7     hair was shaved off.

8     **A. It was shaved off completely. We were told to repeat**  
9     **whilst the shaving was going on that, "I'm guilty of**  
10    **greed and gluttony", and I had to keep repeating it and**  
11    **repeating it and repeating it.**

12    Q. You were explaining to me -- take your time, HIA62. You  
13    were explaining to me this morning that -- you don't  
14    mention it in your statement -- but one of the  
15    outworkings of this was in the Nazareth House school you  
16    --

17    **A. Yes.**

18    Q. -- took hold of a --

19    **A. Yes.**

20    Q. -- tea cosy. Do you want to just explain what you did?

21    **A. Well, in a weird sort of way I didn't want to mention**  
22    **anything, because I thought it was a vanity thing,**  
23    **because when I went to school the next day, my head was**  
24    **very, very cold, and I know that some of the teachers**  
25    **used to go into a little room and have tea at**

1 11 o'clock. So I knew there was a tea cosy on the  
2 teapot and it was like Joseph's technicolour dream coat.  
3 There was all colours round the tea cosy. I thought,  
4 you know, the handle and spout being for my ears because  
5 my head was cold. It sounds really weird, but I thought  
6 I could just slip back into class and be invisible with  
7 this thing on my head. You know, looking back, it is  
8 just preposterous, isn't it, but I did do that, yes.  
9 I did put this tea cosy on my head, because I was cold.

10 Q. You were reflecting that, you know, as an adult you,  
11 looking back, can't understand why you ever thought that  
12 would work out --

13 A. Would work, yes.

14 Q. -- but that's what you did.

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. You -- that's the various incidents that you recollect,  
17 the specific incidents involving SR134.

18 A. Uh-huh.

19 Q. I just wanted to ask you -- you know, you were saying of  
20 SR101 there was just that one particular incident and  
21 you had no other -- obviously SR134 you spent a number  
22 of years with before SR153 replaced her in around 1970.

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. So you were about 12 when that happened.

25 A. Uh-huh.

PRIVATE

before mass. Other bed wetters were also subjected to the same treatment and called names by the nuns.

8. Once a week on a Thursday night we had to line up and show our knickers to the nuns. If they were not clean we got shouted at or they would hit you over the head with your knickers. We only got a clean pair of knickers once per week so I do not know how they expected them to be clean. It was humiliating and degrading.
9. I think we had a bath every Tuesday and Saturday night. At bath time we were treated as though we were dirty animals and we were bathed in Jeyes fluid and scrubbed all over with carbolic soap, including our genitals. The older girls would have scrubbed us and the nuns would just have supervised. It was awful and it made my skin and my vagina really sore. I suffered from eczema and I think it was as a result of the carbolic soap. There was a nun who we had to go to if we needed a plaster or something. It was either **SR 134** or **SR 122** **SR 122** I cannot remember. I lined up to see her one day because my vagina was stinging from the Jeyes fluid in the bath but she told me to go away so I never got to tell her what was wrong.
10. When we had our bath we were all expected to share the same bath water. I did not like it because by the time I got a bath the water was always dirty and cold. I remember one occasion I went up early to try and get bathed first when the water was hot and clean. I think I was about seven or eight years old. I was in the bath when **SR 134** came in. There were a couple of other girls but I cannot remember their names. **SR 134** started shouting at me. She then grabbed my hair and started repeatedly pushing my head under the water, holding it down and then pulling me back up by the hair. I remember being petrified and unable to breathe. She then dragged me out of the bath by the hair and started to whip me over my legs and back with the leather belt she wore around her waist. I had red marks where the belt had hit me. I have been left with a fear of water. I was unable to take my sons swimming as children and I still do not enjoy taking baths.

PRIVATE

22. There was a lack of love and nurturing in the home. I tried to take on the nurturing role for my sister. I was used to having a lot of responsibility at home from a young age, there were always babies around. I got a lot of punishments in Nazareth House for sticking up for **NHB 72** I was always questioning things in general but eventually I learned to keep my mouth shut. When it came to the nuns hitting **NHB 72** though, I would always tell them to leave her alone.
23. One punishment was I had to take my mattress down to the bottom floor and sleep there for the night. That was absolutely terrifying. I was still in primary school at this stage. I was forced to do this on a number of occasions. It was really dark and there was a man who looked after the furnace who was often drunk. The children spread lots of rumours about him and I remember lying on the mattress and hearing him come down. I was petrified thinking what he was going to do to me. He was probably harmless but I remember he came over to me and I could smell the drink on his breath. He didn't do anything to me but I was still terrified.
24. Other punishments in the home were being forced to kneel with our hands on our heads for hours. We would be told to kneel to be caned as this gave extra force to the strikes. The nuns would use both hands for extra strength and cane us until they were exhausted. Our hands would be red, raw, swollen and painful for days and we held them under our arms to try to reduce the pain. We would be punished for looking at our reflection when passing a glass window; we would be accused of vanity.
25. **SR 116** used bamboo canes on us. They were split from being used and were sellotaped together. She also used the side of a wooden ruler to hit me on the wrists, forearms and hands. **SR 134** would use a large metal spoon. I and other girls were made to clench our fist and she hit our knuckles with the spoon. **SR 134** used to grip my forearm and forcefully hit me with my own hands whilst saying "there, you can't say I hit you, you're hitting yourself".

PRIVATE

Nazareth House, Belfast (21/10/1952 – 10/01/1967)

3. When I was two I was transferred to the nursery in Nazareth House and then I was transferred to the children's department when I was five.
4. I remember there were two dormitories; the senior dormitory and the junior dormitory. Shortly after I arrived the two dormitories were divided into three groups which were called Our Lady's, Saint Anne's and Sacred Hearts. There were about 30 children in each group ranging in age from 5 to 16. There was a nun in charge of each group and she slept in a cell at the end of the dormitory. I was in the Sacred Heart group and **SR 134** was in charge of my group.
5. We were all dressed in similar clothes. We all had to wear pinafores. We were given shoes to wear and if they did not fit we had to squeeze our feet in to them. The older girls were in charge of handing out the shoes and you were too afraid to say that they did not fit.
6. We went to Mass first thing most mornings and went to benediction in the evening. I tried to avoid sitting in front **SR 134** in chapel because if she thought you were doing anything wrong she would reach over and nip your neck or pull your hair. I was also made to pump the church organ which was hard work. Services lasted over an hour and I had to pump for the entire time. Sister **SR 134** also had a terrible habit of grabbing you by your wrists and making you hit yourself and then say "see I didn't touch you".
7. After Mass we had breakfast which consisted of porridge, bread and butter. Until I was about eleven, meals were eaten in complete silence. I do not know why. If you did not eat your dinner you were made to sit until it was finished or Sister **SR 116** would make you come up and get more. The food could have been better. We seemed to live on bread and butter and any meat was very grisly. It felt like we were always being given the butcher's scraps. I was always hungry. We had to say the Rosary before bed every night. The juniors went to bed between 6.30pm and 7pm and the seniors had to be in bed for 9pm.



PRIVATE

there is in the whole of your body". I think she took a dislike to me because I was feisty. SR 189 ended up becoming Mother General. She's dead now.

10. I had a tick as a child – my knee used to bounce up and down and SR 134 SR 134 hit me so hard in Mass one day for it that I saw stars. She used to stick pins in you as well and crunch you in the back. I always hated her doing that to the little ones but she didn't care how young you were. SR 134 used to take a blackening brush that was used for polishing shoes and fire it at you - you learned to duck out of the way. I hated porridge and SR 134 made me sit at the table all day, right through to lunchtime and then dinner to try to make me eat it. I wouldn't eat it, I wouldn't give in to her and I knew I would just vomit it back up. In the end she just pushed my face into the porridge. I still have a mark with a lump from where she pushed me so hard.

11. I lived in constant fear in the home. If you weren't getting hurt yourself, you were watching somebody else being beaten. I remember one girl called NHB 42 who was paralysed down one side and the nuns brought her up to the stage in the big hall, bent her over and beat her on her bare backside in front of one hundred girls. She couldn't even fight back. I was out playing with a girl called HIA 85 one day when SR 134 got us by the ears and gave us such a hiding. SR 134 would grab you by the hand and batter you with your own hand. Then she would say "I'm not hitting you, you're hitting yourself".

12. The older girls were put in charge of a younger girl and the nuns made you feel like you had to bully the younger girl. Even though I have always tried not to bully anybody, when the girl you were meant to look after didn't do something right, you had to slap them or you'd get in trouble. Looking back now, I know that's wrong. I used to think to myself "you're doing to her what the nuns are doing to you". A lot of the older girls were bullies. There was an older girl called who worked in the laundry and we were terrified of her. You hated going down to the laundry especially if your pants were soiled.

1 the pain. We would be punished for looking at our  
2 reflection in passing a glass window and be accused of  
3 vanity."

4 **A. Yes.**

5 Q. You say in paragraph 25 that:

6 "It was SR116 who used bamboo canes on us. They  
7 were split from being used and were sellotaped together.  
8 She also used the side of a wooden ruler to hit me on  
9 the wrists, forearms and hands. SR134 would use a large  
10 metal spoon. I and other girls were made to clench our  
11 fists and she hit our knuckles with the spoon. SR134  
12 used to grip my forearm and forcibly hit me with my own  
13 hands while saying, "There! You can't say I hit you.  
14 You are hitting yourself".

15 In paragraph -- just one thing. There is  
16 a statement of someone else who is in the police  
17 material. It is at SNB-61288 to 89. I am going to use  
18 the name, but again the name is not to be used outside.  
19 This was a girl whose surname is <sup>HIA 28, HIA 29, HIA 39</sup> She made  
20 a statement to the police and in that she recounted  
21 a situation -- if we just look that, please, at 61289.  
22 Did you know a girl called <sup>HIA 28, HIA 29, HIA 39</sup>

23 **A. I did know the** <sup>HIA 28, HIA 29, HIA 39</sup> **I wouldn't have, well, as we**  
24 **would say, have played with them or anything. I do**  
25 **remember them vaguely. When you are older -- obviously**

PRIVATE

Once a week you got your underwear changed. We had to show each side and if you had a mark on your knickers you got a hiding from [SR 134]

13. There was another nun called [SR 116] who was a wicked woman. I never had much contact with her but I saw her abuse and beat children - she used to take them away upstairs sometimes and they'd come back upset. We were all terrified of a nun called [SR 145] who worked in the sewing room where we got our uniforms. She never did anything; she just put the fear of God into you. Not all the nuns were nasty. There was a nun called [SR 190] [SR 190] who worked in the kitchen who was lovely and then [SR 191] [SR 191] who worked in the old people's home was nice too.

14. Some girls in the home used to wet the bed and they were made to walk round with their damp sheets around them. I used to be one of the girls who got up in the middle of the night to get the 'wet the beds' up because my bed was next to [SR 134] cell under her window. After a while I had to stop this though because I became violently sick when I woke up out of my sleep suddenly. I suffer from Meniere's disease which is a disorder of the inner ear that causes vertigo. I've had this since I was a child but it was never diagnosed. I was very ill as a child and the nuns just left me in bed. They didn't have much choice because if I stood up I just fell down again. We had to sleep with our hands crossed over our chest. I now know this was to stop us touching ourselves. I still sleep like that to this day. We also used to have to sit on our hands to stop us fidgeting and I find myself doing that even now.

15. I hated bath time in the home. We got baths about twice a week. There were two bathrooms with four baths. We were bathed in Jeyes fluid and our skin used to be red raw from it. We had our hair washed in it as well. We lined up and you would try to be first in the queue because the water was warm at first but it certainly wasn't warm at the end. One girl would sit on the edge of the bath scrubbing her knees while another girl was in the bath. Then you got in the bath when she got out. When you got out the older girls held a sheet up and you had to stand in the corner with the wet sheet around you.

PRIVATE

there is in the whole of your body". I think she took a dislike to me because I was feisty. SR 189 ended up becoming Mother General. She's dead now.

10. I had a tick as a child – my knee used to bounce up and down and SR 134 SR 134 hit me so hard in Mass one day for it that I saw stars. She used to stick pins in you as well and crunch you in the back. I always hated her doing that to the little ones but she didn't care how young you were. SR 134 used to take a blackening brush that was used for polishing shoes and fire it at you - you learned to duck out of the way. I hated porridge and SR 134 made me sit at the table all day, right through to lunchtime and then dinner to try to make me eat it. I wouldn't eat it, I wouldn't give in to her and I knew I would just vomit it back up. In the end she just pushed my face into the porridge. I still have a mark with a lump from where she pushed me so hard.

11. I lived in constant fear in the home. If you weren't getting hurt yourself, you were watching somebody else being beaten. I remember one girl called NHB 42 who was paralysed down one side and the nuns brought her up to the stage in the big hall, bent her over and beat her on her bare backside in front of one hundred girls. She couldn't even fight back. I was out playing with a girl called HIA 85 one day when SR 134 got us by the ears and gave us such a hiding. SR 134 would grab you by the hand and batter you with your own hand. Then she would say "I'm not hitting you, you're hitting yourself".

12. The older girls were put in charge of a younger girl and the nuns made you feel like you had to bully the younger girl. Even though I have always tried not to bully anybody, when the girl you were meant to look after didn't do something right, you had to slap them or you'd get in trouble. Looking back now, I know that's wrong. I used to think to myself "you're doing to her what the nuns are doing to you". A lot of the older girls were bullies. There was an older girl called who worked in the laundry and we were terrified of her. You hated going down to the laundry especially if your pants were soiled.

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 <sup>HIA 63</sup> 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

18. A doctor came to the home once a week or once a fortnight. I think his name was Hunter. He would examine all the new children who had come in. He was a privately contracted doctor which I don't understand because the NHS was well established then. The nuns were always complaining about money so why would they hire a private doctor? I think it was to keep things hidden. A lot of the new children would have head lice. We used to sit like monkeys doing each other's hair, combing through with the nit comb. I used to like that; it broke the monotony and gave us something to do. The nuns never exposed themselves to risk in any way. The doctor examined me a couple of times because I was prone to chest infections and I had a bad flu or bronchitis once.

19. I remember one nun was nice to me when I was sick. It was **SR 116** and it was just after she arrived in the home. She brought me gruel with sugar in it and would check on me. She used to put Vicks on me and I remember thinking she was trying to touch me up but she wasn't. She was a nice nun to begin with but she soon changed. She was only a novice when she first came in and she took her final vows in the home. She was clearly influenced by the other nuns and became cruel like them. It's true that one bad apple can ruin the barrel.

20. I remember once there was an epidemic of measles or something but I must have been a carrier because I never contracted it. I had to take the trays of food up to a lot of the girls. The nuns never took them up. I was exposed to infection rather than them. **NHB 72** had the measles once and I remember taking her food up. Another girl called **[REDACTED]** was put in an isolation room because she had jaundice and I had to bring her food and medicine up to her. The nuns kept themselves well guarded.

21. The nuns never showed any compassion or nurturing. When a child is sick, all they want is a hug but we never got any affection from the nuns. They even discouraged affection between families. I would have been quite affectionate to **NHB 72** but we learned quite early on not to show that in public especially if the nuns were around. If she had fallen I wouldn't have been able to give her a hug, I'd have to tell her not to make a fuss.

PRIVATE

Once a week you got your underwear changed. We had to show each side and if you had a mark on your knickers you got a hiding from [SR 134]

13. There was another nun called [SR 116] who was a wicked woman. I never had much contact with her but I saw her abuse and beat children - she used to take them away upstairs sometimes and they'd come back upset. We were all terrified of a nun called [SR 145] who worked in the sewing room where we got our uniforms. She never did anything; she just put the fear of God into you. Not all the nuns were nasty. There was a nun called [SR 190] [SR 190] who worked in the kitchen who was lovely and then [SR 191] [SR 191] who worked in the old people's home was nice too.

14. Some girls in the home used to wet the bed and they were made to walk round with their damp sheets around them. I used to be one of the girls who got up in the middle of the night to get the 'wet the beds' up because my bed was next to [SR 134] cell under her window. After a while I had to stop this though because I became violently sick when I woke up out of my sleep suddenly. I suffer from Meniere's disease which is a disorder of the inner ear that causes vertigo. I've had this since I was a child but it was never diagnosed. I was very ill as a child and the nuns just left me in bed. They didn't have much choice because if I stood up I just fell down again. We had to sleep with our hands crossed over our chest. I now know this was to stop us touching ourselves. I still sleep like that to this day. We also used to have to sit on our hands to stop us fidgeting and I find myself doing that even now.

15. I hated bath time in the home. We got baths about twice a week. There were two bathrooms with four baths. We were bathed in Jeyes fluid and our skin used to be red raw from it. We had our hair washed in it as well. We lined up and you would try to be first in the queue because the water was warm at first but it certainly wasn't warm at the end. One girl would sit on the edge of the bath scrubbing her knees while another girl was in the bath. Then you got in the bath when she got out. When you got out the older girls held a sheet up and you had to stand in the corner with the wet sheet around you.

PRIVATE

who shouted at me for waking them. I was hit and called names by the other children. I got up and turned the buzzer off. The nun never got up. I eventually learned to turn the buzzer off before I went to sleep so that it wouldn't make a noise if I wet the bed. The following morning I had to strip the bed and rinse the sheets in cold water in the bathroom. I then took them to the laundry. My bed was always made with fresh sheets the following evening but I have no recollection of doing that myself or how that was done. I was taken to see a doctor at the Ulster Hospital twice and I think it was about my bed wetting.

11. We were given a bath twice a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays. The baths were filled with water and Jeyes fluid. In the summertime we had our hair washed in tubs of water containing Jeyes fluid in the yard of Nazareth House. Before our bath the nuns inspected us and our underwear. I was given the number fifty one at some stage and I had to shout it out when I was showing the nun my clothes. If our underwear was not clean we got a slap across the face. I had quite swarthy skin and I have a clear memory of **SR 134** grabbing me by the scruff of the neck and scrubbing my neck over the sink until it bled. **SR 189** got an older girl called **SR 189** to scrub my neck. She was told to do it again and again as I was still dirty. A couple of days later when **SR 189** was cleaning Sister **SR 189** pointed to a pile of dust in the corner and said "I suppose you are going to tell me that can't be cleaned because it is swarthy".
12. I remember one day when we were playing in the hall, which was only permitted when there was very heavy rain, one of the nuns either **SR 59** or another nun called three girls to the front, told them to bend over the stage and punished them by pulling their pants down and smacking their bare bottoms in front of everyone.
13. I remember being beaten by **SR 116**. It was always for a trivial reason. She had a classroom that you were made to stand outside and wait for her to call you in to hit you. She used a bamboo cane and hit me again and again on the arm. It was extremely painful and left marks on my arm. She hit you until you cried so I learned to cry as quickly as possible. There was also a lady called **NHB 32** who worked in the sewing room who hit me. I was called in to

PRIVATE

up in a row outside the nun's cell. I wet the bed a lot. We had to take our sheets and wash them in the bath. If you wet the bed the first night, you got four whacks with a cane. If you wet the bed two nights in a row, you got eight whacks and so on.

6. **SR 116** used to shout at me that my mother didn't want me and they were stuck with me and they didn't want me either. I remember the swish of the roly poly bamboo cane as it went through the air. **SR 116** would lose control and hit me on the head and the hands. She would always hit me on the knuckles where it hurt the most. We would have to hold out our knuckles, we never got hit on the palm. I used to have black and blue knuckles all the time; they were always swollen.
7. Every morning I woke up terrified my bed would be wet, especially if it was the fifth night in a row. I knew then I would be getting twenty whacks. I used to lie and say I hadn't wet the bed to save myself from a beating. I would just sleep in the wet sheets night after night. We must have smelled terrible when we went out to school. I wet the bed up until I was 13. They got a special device which set off a buzzer if you wet the bed and it must have worked.
8. We went to Mass every morning and we also had to say the Rosary and Benedictions throughout the day. The priests I remember are **NHB 84** and Canon Daly. Canon Daly had a relative in the old ladies part of the home. I remember one night I woke up in the middle of the night and **NHB 84** was standing at the edge of my bed. He was quite young at the time. I was about 7 or 8. My nightdress was around my waist. I don't remember anything sexual happening but when I look back as an adult I wonder if I was sexually abused. As soon as I woke up **NHB 84** moved away. That is the only time I remember anything like that happening but it has really stuck in my mind. We would never have seen the priest in the dormitory.
9. After Mass we went down for breakfast which was usually porridge. The food wasn't great but it kept us alive. For dinner we would have meatballs, beans

PRIVATE

the old men. [REDACTED] knew I preferred working with the women so she would send me back over to the women's section.

11. Once a week we had to clean the organ in the church and polish the chalice.

[REDACTED] SR 134 would look after the children cleaning the first six rows, and Sister Francis would supervise the children on the next six rows. Sometimes if the nuns left their glasses case sitting down, we would peek into it to find out their real name. We were just making our own entertainment. I was caught once by [REDACTED] SR 134 and she nipped me on the neck. [REDACTED] SR 31 name was [REDACTED] SR 31 [REDACTED] SR 31 and [REDACTED] SR 134 name was [REDACTED] SR 134 [REDACTED] SR 116 first name was [REDACTED] SR 116

12. In the autumn time we had to clean the garden and sweep all the leaves up.

We weren't allowed to have our sleeves below our elbows so we would have been cold. We had to lift the leaves with our hands and if the nuns saw us kicking the leaves up, we would have been clapped over the head. We weren't really allowed to laugh.

13. Anytime there was thunder and lightning the nuns would tell us that we had made God angry and he was moving furniture in heaven. [REDACTED] SR 31 would

grab one child, and make them listen to the thunder and say that we must have done something to make God angry. I remember [REDACTED] SR 116 telling [REDACTED] SR 31 there was no point trying to get me to listen because I wouldn't be able to hear the thunder.

14. For some reason [REDACTED] SR 116 always picked on me. She really took against me, and she was the worst nun as far as I was concerned. She was always beating me over the head, and smacking me across the ear. Sometimes she just hit me with her hand and sometimes she used the metal crucifix of her Rosary Beads, her big leather belt or a big bunch of keys. The Reverend Mother would be around the home, but I don't remember her ever being there when [REDACTED] SR 116 was beating me. [REDACTED] SR 31 was quite sly when she was being cruel. She would do things, give you a smack over the head when there was nobody else around.



PRIVATE

15. I remember one occasion when I was standing in the bathroom, and I didn't hear **SR 116** when she spoke to me. I got a whack to the side of the head and I fell to the floor, after hitting my head off the metal part of a mirror. My head was bleeding. I remember waking up in bed with a bandage over the left side of my head. I started to have difficulties with my hearing after this.
16. When I couldn't hear **SR 116** she would come right up to my face, in an intimidating way. I was sent to the Reverend Mother's office once by **SR 116** **SR 116** just because I couldn't hear what she was saying to me. The Reverend Mother made me kneel outside her office for half a day, and then she eventually came out and told me I could go. At one stage a teacher came into Nazareth House to teach us. I think she was called **SR 116** I could never hear in school, and so I was sent to the Royal Victoria Hospital to get my ears checked. I would have been aged eight or nine years at the time. I was brought by a lady who always took us for our medical appointments. I think she might have been called **SR 116**
17. I had to do a hearing test where I tapped the desk every time I heard a noise. The doctor asked me did I have a fall, did I bang my head on the walls or did somebody hit me. I told the doctor that one of the nuns hit me over the head. The doctors would always ring the Convent with the test results. When I went back to the Convent, **SR 116** told me that I had to go back to the hospital and tell the doctor that I had been telling lies. I said that I wasn't telling lies and that she was always hitting me.
18. I had to keep going for tests and operations and I remember always wearing bandages. When I was at the hospital for tests, the doctors would say that they would ring the Convent with the results. I knew then when I went down for supper if I was in trouble. **SR 116** would just point at me and I had to wait in her cell. One night she forgot about me and I had to kneel outside her cell all night.

PRIVATE

19. After the first test, **SR 116** told me that I would have to do better the next time. During the next test I was scared so I kept tapping even though I couldn't hear anything. After the test the doctor said the nuns wouldn't be very happy because I was lying, tapping even though I couldn't hear anything. When I arrived home I was sent to see **SR 116**. She made me kneel down in her cell and face the wall. She threw holy water over me, and told me that when she was finished with the holy water, the devil would be out of me. She said that God was watching me and that she would beat the devil out of me for telling lies and I was so confused. The doctors had told her that I was lying in the test, because I was tapping the table even when there was no noise. I was even more frightened then because I couldn't do right for doing wrong. I was trying to make things better by doing better in the test but I had just made things worse for myself.
20. I saw a specialist who said that the damage to my ear was very severe, and it had been caused by beatings on the head. The damage was too severe for him to be able to do anything about it, so he told me I would have to wear a hearing aid. I had to wear one with a big wire, like a transistor radio. I tried to grow my hair and I would pull my hair over my face to hide the wires. I remember not really hearing anything in class and **SR 116** would pull my hair back and make me take off my pullover so that everybody could see the hearing aid in my pocket. I think she did this intentionally to embarrass me. My nickname when I was little was deaf ears.
21. I had no difficulties with my hearing before I went into Nazareth House. I always liked to sing. I remember before going in to Nazareth House, walking to school with my mother and being able to hear the birds sing, and singing along with them. When I first went in to Nazareth House and we made our Holy Communion, we were taught a song to sing and because I had the nicest voice, **SR 31** let me sing the first verse by myself alongside the organist. After my ear was injured, I wasn't allowed to sing anymore because I couldn't hear the right time of the music properly. I remember **SR 31** grabbed me by the hair and pulled me away from the organ. She told me I wouldn't sing again because I was holding everyone else back. When I was

PRIVATE

operation on my breast. I told him I had never had surgery on my breast but he said I definitely had and he showed me the scar. I don't recall ever being taken to hospital as a child or having any operation.

22. I went to secondary school in St. Monica's. We stuck out like a sore thumb; everyone knew we were from the home. SR218 was the headmistress. I often got slaps from her at school. Sometimes when the nuns in the home beat you they would really lose their temper. They would get the big bamboo cane and bring it down from above and you could really feel the force of it. SR218 beat me with a strap as well. I was a bit of a rebel in school and I got expelled from St Monica's when I was about thirteen for throwing a snowball at the house of the headmistress. I was put up on the stage in front of everyone and told I was the worst girl in the school. SR116 gave me a bad hiding for getting expelled.

23. You normally got beatings in the room upstairs but I remember once getting a bad beating from SR116 in a room downstairs beside the dining room. She really lost her temper and lashed out at me. I was trying to protect my body so my back ended up black and blue from the hiding. It was extremely painful. I remember one teacher at St Monica's called [REDACTED] who was nice to me. She was the only teacher who would take me back after I was expelled. She kept asking a lot of questions but at that time I wouldn't have told anybody about the abuse no matter how bad it got. I thought nobody cared so why would she care. That was my frame of mind. [REDACTED] was my [REDACTED] teacher and one time I was making a dress and I was supposed to try it on. I refused to try it on because I knew if I did she would see all the marks on my back from the beating.

24. When I was fourteen I ran away to Manchester with three other girls. I cannot remember how we got there. We had no money or anything and we were brought back. I can't really remember how we were brought back; it's all a blur to me. Girls often ran away but they were always brought back to the home. I cried for two weeks after I was brought back.

PRIVATE

would be sitting dipping her feet waiting on the other to get out. The water was always brown because of the jeyes fluid. I don't remember the nuns having towels but they used bath sheets to dry us. There was no privacy and the after effects of the jeyes fluid meant that my skin was sore and itchy. However I never complained as the nuns would just make it worse.

25. There were lots of different incidents with different nuns and it happened daily so it is difficult to describe the detail of every incident. It was what you came to expect from them and it was just how they were. It was exactly the same in Middletown which was run by the St Louis Order so this order of nuns believed that was how you brought children up.

26. During holidays and on occasions I was sent to stay with the **NHB 30** family on their farm in [REDACTED]. They had pigs and hens and I was sexually abused quite badly every time I went to their house by both the father in the home and his brother who also lived there with them, **NHB 30** and **NHB 31**. I want to know why the nuns did not carry out any inspection of the homes we were being sent to in advance of any child being placed there. The **NHB 30** lived in a three bedroom bungalow and they had eight children and as their uncle also lived with them there weren't even enough beds for their own children. The uncle, **NHB 31** used to lift me at night and put me in his bed and he would sexually abuse me in the bed at night. When I was in the bath the husband, **NHB 30** sexually abused me. He would also take me to the barn to look at kittens and then sexually abuse me there. Once when I returned to the convent I told one of my older sister's friends, I can't remember her name now but she knew something was wrong with me when I came back and I told her about the abuse. I really liked Mrs **NHB 30** and I really liked the food she cooked for me and I loved spending time with the other children in the family so I was reluctant to tell and did not feel there was anyone I could tell. It was ironic but I would try to run away when [REDACTED] the social worker, came to pick me up to take me back to the home. I was being abused there but still felt as if Mrs **NHB 30** was a bit of a mother figure to me and it was better being abused there than going back to be abused in the home. I told this girl anyway and word got back to **SR 116** who

PRIVATE

gave me the biggest beating of my life for telling tales on a good Catholic family. I got my mouth washed out with carbolic soap. I got dragged by the hair and ended up under one of the beds in the dormitory with my hair was all stuck to the springs and it was being pulled out as she was still grabbing me out from under the bed and hitting me and my head hurt for ages afterwards. I learned then that you cannot report abuse to anyone.

27. A man turned up at the convent one day when I was very young and took me out to Lurgan. I was then taken out quite regularly by him and one day, I don't remember why, they took me to a convent in Newry and whilst we were talking to the nuns they remembered me and my sisters. One of the nuns took me to a nursery and showed me a cot that she said I had stayed in. This memory is very vivid and this nun knew exactly who we were. She knew my mother's name and she told me that we had been in that home prior to going to Nazareth House but I do not recall being in a convent in Newry at any stage.

28. My sister and I eventually ran away from the home. We broke into a house that was still under construction to keep warm overnight but we were freezing and found by the police. We ended up in court after being caught and we were sent to Middletown remand home. We were not really aware of what was happening at the time and did not even realise that we were taking part in court proceedings. **SR 31** and the social worker, who took us, Miss **██████████** told us what to say in court. If asked we had to say that the nuns were good to us. We viewed **██████████** as being on the side of the nuns. If we had understood what was going on and why we were there we perhaps would have had a chance to explain why we ran away but we just sat there like dummies. We never went back to Nazareth House after that. I was about thirteen at the time and my sister was eleven.

29. **██████████** came to visit me in all of the various homes and also at the **NHB 30** She always came across as very nice but I would never have told



PRIVATE

8. I remember the cot going out the door in Plevna street as [REDACTED] was giving it to another neighbour. I remember the [REDACTED] family who lived across the road and the birthday parties we were invited to in the street. You brought your cup with you to get a drink of lemonade, sang Happy Birthday and away you went. Everytime I was with [REDACTED] whom I thought was my mum, I found it very unsettling going back to the convent. I always had a lot of friends when I returned to the convent as I had a load of sweets but then when the sweets were gone so were my friends. Nazareth House was massive compared to where I had lived before. There must have been more than 50 girls in my group which was called St Anne's and **SR 116** was the nun in charge.
9. When I first went into Nazareth House, we slept in a huge dormitory in iron beds. The house was eventually renovated however and smaller rooms were created. Each group had their own apartment as such. We all got new comfortable beds. The dining rooms were made smaller as well, and at meal times we would just eat with our own group. There was a house mother for every group, who would have supervised us.
10. I remember seeing girls getting hit and I was also smacked myself by Sister **SR 116**. She didn't prowl round with a bamboo cane all day smacking, she only used it when you broke the rules. **HIA 14** slept in the bed facing me. Also a girl called **NL 134** [REDACTED] I remember [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and I remember their names were changed from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] I was friends with [REDACTED] but I remember her beating me up. In fact I was beat up and abused by other girls until I was able to hold my own, but that was the way things were.
11. One Saturday I had to do adoration with one of the [REDACTED] Sisters. I remember talking to **HIA 134** and when we were finished I remember [REDACTED] telling me to stand outside **SR 116** cell because I was talking during adoration. I remember being filled with fear because I knew it was a punishable offence. I had been standing a while when **SR 116**

PRIVATE

came and she asked me why I was standing at her cell. I said the first thing I could think of and that was that I didn't want to go to the [REDACTED] House that week-end. I remember her being very sweet to me explaining that the [REDACTED] loved me. Shortly after that I was called to the Gate as [REDACTED] had arrived to take me home so I was able to relax until Monday morning. I remember my dad [REDACTED] was getting frustrated with me as I was keeping him late for work. I refused to move on several occasions but eventually we did get to my classroom in Primary 1 and [REDACTED] rapped the door. Sr **SR 116** answered as she taught me and told me to take my seat. Well I had worried for no reason as she didn't seem angry, that was, until later when I asked her to go to the toilet which was next door and she told me to stay there until she came. She walked in with a block of wood from the work bench we had in class and put me across her knee and smacked my bottom with it. I cried a little but I deserved it as I had also lied to cover up what I had done.

12. We hardly seen the nuns. They got us up in the morning and we all knelt at our beds to say the morning offering. The nuns went to mass while we got washed and dressed and then the nun was back to serve breakfast. Then the nun went and had her own breakfast. We were fed very well. I remember porridge and a cooked breakfast. Every tea time the table was set with salt, pepper, vinegar, bowl of sugar, large plate of bread, container of jam and a butter dish with butter and a pot of tea. We had our tea and if we were still hungry we were able to avail of the jam and bread made already available. The nuns would have collected food from Marks and Spencer's in a van, and I remember having chocolate éclairs, large packets of crisps and yoghurts.

13. Everything I did was a competition. I remember [REDACTED] and myself having a race to see who could eat the most bread the quickest. The competitiveness was included in everything. From polished floors to skipping in the garden, to fighting. I did Irish dancing, and the nuns made my dancing costumes. I remember there were violin and accordion classes, and we were part of a choir. We entertained the old people, and sometimes we entertained at events outside the Convent. Some people did ballet. I always wanted to go to elocution classes but I wasn't allowed because I didn't need them. There

PRIVATE

our uniform. We used to put our skirts under our mattress to keep the pleats in them. After school and on Saturdays we had chores and played for a while. My chores included cleaning, laundry and shovelling coal into the furnace which heated the home. We said the Angelus outside at 6 o'clock. We were then brought in for our dinner. If you did not eat your dinner **SR 116** would clip you round the ear and then spoon fed you. Our lips would have swollen from the force of her digging the spoon in. Sometimes we did not get to go to bed until 10pm so we were always tired. We were late going to bed if we were cleaning somewhere.

7. We were always hungry. The food was not of good quality and there was not very much of it. There was a dog that lived at the home and the outside toilet was near where he stayed. I was so hungry that I used to hide in the toilet until **SR 116** had fed him and then I would eat his food.
8. One day we were cleaning the floors in the dining room and I looked in to the big cupboard in the dining room and saw a big block of cheese. Another girl and I were so hungry that we ate some of the paper which was covering the cheese. When we chewed it it turned into chewing gum. We knew we could not eat the cheese as the nuns would have known if any of it was gone.
9. We were bathed every Saturday. Jeyes fluid was put in the bath which burned really badly. The three nuns took it in turns to be on bath duty on a Saturday. **SR 116** was the worst. She used to use a scrubbing brush. She used it on our private parts to make sure we were clean. When we got out we were brown all over but we were not allowed to use clean water to clean it off. We just had a big sheet to dry ourselves with which we had to share and it was soaking by the time I would get it so I was not able to dry myself properly. The nun on bath duty used to check our necks to make sure they were spotless and if they weren't we had to go back in and clean them again. We had a rag that we used to clean our necks. We also had to use carbolic soap, we even used it to clean our teeth.

PRIVATE

was placed in the nursery at first. NHB 62 and NHB 63 were placed in the "big girls" part. NHB 62 is six years older than me and NHB 63 is four years older than me. I remember that I never got to see my sisters when we were in different parts. There were railings that separated the playgrounds for the two parts and I only ever saw them through the railings when they were queuing for mass. I remember crying for them. SR 180 looked after me in the nursery and she was very nice. She would cuddle me and kiss us goodnight.

4. My mother had two more children after we were admitted to Nazareth House. They were both born in England as my mother moved back and forwards to England a lot. I remember SR 180 telling me I was no longer the baby of the family.
5. When I was about six or seven years old I moved to the "big girls" part. I was in a massive dormitory which I always remember being cold. SR 116 was in charge of my dormitory. There were two other dormitories; one was run by SR 31 and the other by SR 134. NHB 62 was SR 116 dormitory when I moved over. NHB 63 was in SR 31 dormitory for a while and was then moved to SR 116 with NHB 62 and I from what I recollect.
6. SR 116 told us to sleep with our arms crossed over our chest so that we would go to heaven if we died in our sleep. She told us if our arms were not crossed we would burn in hell. One morning SR 116 told me she had seen the devil dancing on my bedside locker during the night. She had an obsession with the devil. She used to use the long pole to open the window and said she was letting the devil out.
7. I remember one time, not long after I moved in to the "big girls" dormitory I wet my bed. SR 116 pulled back my blankets in the morning and started shouting at me. She called me a "filthy cow". She then grabbed my head and pushed my face in to the wet sheet. She did not clean me up. She then left me to remove the wet sheet and remake my bed with fresh sheets. We were all responsible for making our own beds which had to be done every morning

PRIVATE

19. There was a lot of physical and mental abuse in Nazareth House. After about a year, [REDACTED] and I were moved from St. Anne's group into Sacred Heart because of the shortage of beds. [REDACTED] SR 134 was in charge of Sacred Heart. Once when I was about thirteen or fourteen, I must have done something naughty and [REDACTED] SR 31 brought me into her storeroom. She started slapping me with a stick and then she pulled up my nightdress and started hitting me on the backside. I was so embarrassed because I was at a tender age but she just said "this is where you need it".
20. I went to the dentist once and he asked me why I hadn't been cleaning my teeth. I told him the truth – that I didn't have any toothpaste. We would have been given toothpaste in the home but mine must have run out or something. The dentist must have phoned the nuns because the next thing I knew [REDACTED] SR 134 made me go into the hall and stand on a chair in front of all the other children. She humiliated me in front of everyone saying "oh, [REDACTED] HIA 63 told the dentist she had no toothpaste". I don't know how long she made me stand on that chair but it was for hours.
21. I remember one time when I and a few other girls ran up to the serving table in the dining room to see what was for dinner. [REDACTED] SR 116 came in and said whoever was up at the server had to go up and wait outside her classroom. You had to stand there and wait until she was ready to come slap you. It was a form of mental cruelty. On another occasion I was standing on a swing and [REDACTED] SR 116 told me to get up to her classroom. She came at me with a bamboo cane and it snapped in half and flew across the room. She just said "there's plenty more where that came from", got another stick and continued to beat me.
22. [REDACTED] SR 116 was a very physical woman – more so than the other two. She was the youngest of the three nuns and I later heard she had psychiatric problems. She should never have been in charge of children; she had no compassion whatsoever. She would spontaneously grab your forearm for no reason whatsoever, take her hand back as far as it would go and slap you



PRIVATE

Once a week you got your underwear changed. We had to show each side and if you had a mark on your knickers you got a hiding from [SR 134]

13. There was another nun called [SR 116] who was a wicked woman. I never had much contact with her but I saw her abuse and beat children - she used to take them away upstairs sometimes and they'd come back upset. We were all terrified of a nun called [SR 145] who worked in the sewing room where we got our uniforms. She never did anything; she just put the fear of God into you. Not all the nuns were nasty. There was a nun called [SR 190] [SR 190] who worked in the kitchen who was lovely and then [SR 191] [SR 191] who worked in the old people's home was nice too.

14. Some girls in the home used to wet the bed and they were made to walk round with their damp sheets around them. I used to be one of the girls who got up in the middle of the night to get the 'wet the beds' up because my bed was next to [SR 134] cell under her window. After a while I had to stop this though because I became violently sick when I woke up out of my sleep suddenly. I suffer from Meniere's disease which is a disorder of the inner ear that causes vertigo. I've had this since I was a child but it was never diagnosed. I was very ill as a child and the nuns just left me in bed. They didn't have much choice because if I stood up I just fell down again. We had to sleep with our hands crossed over our chest. I now know this was to stop us touching ourselves. I still sleep like that to this day. We also used to have to sit on our hands to stop us fidgeting and I find myself doing that even now.

15. I hated bath time in the home. We got baths about twice a week. There were two bathrooms with four baths. We were bathed in Jeyes fluid and our skin used to be red raw from it. We had our hair washed in it as well. We lined up and you would try to be first in the queue because the water was warm at first but it certainly wasn't warm at the end. One girl would sit on the edge of the bath scrubbing her knees while another girl was in the bath. Then you got in the bath when she got out. When you got out the older girls held a sheet up and you had to stand in the corner with the wet sheet around you.

PRIVATE

have us all in a big line. We were only little kids; we were only about eight or nine. A nun would be standing there watching and if it wasn't shiny enough, you had to go back and start again. You were practically slipping on the floor it was so shiny. We scrubbed the floors every day. For the big hall downstairs, we had to throw tea leaves on it, sweep it, scrub it and then wax and polish it. I scrubbed the church as well.

14. We were never given a break; it was just constant work. If you were thirsty you couldn't ask for a glass of water. You would be beaten if you asked for anything. Even if you were sick, you still had to do the cleaning. If you had been beaten, your hands would be sore and blistering but you still had to put your hands in water and scrub when you were in pain.
15. I was often beaten by the nuns. They would tell you to hold your hands out and slap you on the knuckles with the side of a ruler. They would hold your hands so you couldn't pull away. Another thing they used to do was pull you up by the earlobe so you were on your tiptoes and your feet were practically off the ground. **SR134** used to dig into the soft flesh under your arms with her fingers. The nuns would hit you on the head as well either with their knuckles or these big sets of keys they carried around.
16. The beatings happened pretty often. If it wasn't you, you saw someone else being beaten. You didn't have to do anything to get a beating; if you so much as tutted you would be punished. You could not express yourself at all or you would get battered. **SR134** would have given you a box in the ears but I don't recall her using a weapon against you. **SR116** would have beaten me the most because I was in her group. She was a very wicked woman.
17. I always felt that the children who had parents or families were treated better than those of us with nobody. They got out for the weekend and their parents would come visit them. I remember saying to one of the nuns I was going to tell someone about the beatings and she said 'who are you going to tell, you've got no one to tell, you were left on the doorstep'. I think the nuns

PRIVATE

19. After the first test, **SR 116** told me that I would have to do better the next time. During the next test I was scared so I kept tapping even though I couldn't hear anything. After the test the doctor said the nuns wouldn't be very happy because I was lying, tapping even though I couldn't hear anything. When I arrived home I was sent to see **SR 116**. She made me kneel down in her cell and face the wall. She threw holy water over me, and told me that when she was finished with the holy water, the devil would be out of me. She said that God was watching me and that she would beat the devil out of me for telling lies and I was so confused. The doctors had told her that I was lying in the test, because I was tapping the table even when there was no noise. I was even more frightened then because I couldn't do right for doing wrong. I was trying to make things better by doing better in the test but I had just made things worse for myself.
20. I saw a specialist who said that the damage to my ear was very severe, and it had been caused by beatings on the head. The damage was too severe for him to be able to do anything about it, so he told me I would have to wear a hearing aid. I had to wear one with a big wire, like a transistor radio. I tried to grow my hair and I would pull my hair over my face to hide the wires. I remember not really hearing anything in class and **SR 116** would pull my hair back and make me take off my pullover so that everybody could see the hearing aid in my pocket. I think she did this intentionally to embarrass me. My nickname when I was little was deaf ears.
21. I had no difficulties with my hearing before I went into Nazareth House. I always liked to sing. I remember before going in to Nazareth House, walking to school with my mother and being able to hear the birds sing, and singing along with them. When I first went in to Nazareth House and we made our Holy Communion, we were taught a song to sing and because I had the nicest voice, **SR 31** let me sing the first verse by myself alongside the organist. After my ear was injured, I wasn't allowed to sing anymore because I couldn't hear the right time of the music properly. I remember **SR 31** grabbed me by the hair and pulled me away from the organ. She told me I wouldn't sing again because I was holding everyone else back. When I was

PRIVATE

would have recognised [REDACTED] This only happened once or twice and we lost touch over the years.

3. I remember being dragged along the long hall by my hair, by a nun in a white dress. She was telling me that I wasn't a baby anymore. I must have been about four at the time. She handed to me a nun who was wearing a black habit, and I remember I was holding a doll, which they took off me. I was brought into a room, like a large classroom, which was full of children and there was lots of noise. It was very intimidating. I remember I was put on a table and I had wet myself. All of the children were looking at me. I recall a nun striking a cane hard across the table to get everyone's attention. I was given the number 49. If a nun called out my number and I didn't happen to hear, I would be slapped with a ruler. We were all separated into different dormitories.
4. The nuns that I recall being in the Convent at the time were **SR 31** and **SR 134** I remember one nun with a really red round face. She always looked angry. There was another nun, **SR 59** who would give me a sweet sometimes. If she was standing talking to me, and another nun came along, she looked scared, and she would stand back from me. **SR 59** was the only nun I remember who was kind.
5. I had no idea what lay in store for me over the next few years. The nuns constantly told us that no one wanted us because we were bad, we were orphans. There was emotional abuse and humiliation. I was only a child feeling very small and helpless. I was told that I wasn't worthy to have such a beautiful name of [REDACTED] and how dare I be born on [REDACTED] the day of the Annunciation when the Angel Gabriel came down to the Blessed Virgin Mary. I always felt scared and bewildered about why they said this to us as we were only children. We called the nuns the dark shadows. We could always tell which nun was coming into the dormitory by the way they walked and the tinkle of their beads.



PRIVATE

were bathed two or three times a week. The nuns put Jeyes fluid into the bath water, and it would burn our skin. The same water was used for all the children and it was cold by the end. The nuns washed our mouths out with carbolic soap, which made us feel sick. We had to stand naked and have our hair washed in big tin baths in the yard, regardless of the weather. We were checked for nits. If I had nits, the nuns would cut all my hair off, and then push my head back down into the water. Sometimes it felt like they were drowning me. They would hit me at the same time and pour Jeyes fluid onto my skin. They would hit us if we tried to lift our head out of the water. Sometimes we would try and wet our hair so it would look as if we were already washed, but the nuns would smell it to check, and then they would really make us feel as if we were going to drown to teach us a lesson. If we wet the bed, we had to walk around the yard with the sheets on our head and no shoes on, regardless of the rain and snow, so that everyone could see us. Sometimes the nuns would rub our faces in the wet sheets. On a Friday night, we were made to stand naked in a big hall and hold our knickers in our hands and turn them inside out so the nuns would inspect them. If my underwear was soiled, I would be punished and called a rank, smelly dirty girl. The first time I had my period, I was petrified. I thought the devil had actually got me for all the bad things the nuns told me I did. I tucked myself up in bed and wouldn't get out. The nuns told me I was an evil wicked child because of what the devil had done to me. They never told me what was actually happening to me. There was no education about personal development.

9. Our clothing was not warm enough for the winter days when we were put into the garden. We would be sent out without any coat, and indeed I don't remember having a coat at all the entire time I was in Nazareth House. Our clothes were always hand-me-downs, and we generally didn't have our own personal clothes. Everything was shared. My shoes were always too big for me and sometimes I needed an elastic band to keep them on. Sometimes we used to steal apples from the Holy Rosary. We would tuck them in our knickers. When the nuns realised what we were doing, they started to remove the elastic from our knickers so that we couldn't hide anything in there. We had to tie string around our legs instead.

PRIVATE

5. In my eyes the early stages in the home were not the worst but as we got older the head nun [REDACTED] SR 112 was very bad to us. She battered us stupid, she couldn't hit me hard enough so she would make me take my shoes off and she would hit me on the feet. [REDACTED] SR 112 used a cane and she would hold the sleeve of her habit so she could get a good whack at you. In the home we were only ever known as a number never called by our name.
6. In the morning we cleaned the dormitories they were massive they might have had fifty two beds. I was in Our Lady's Dormitory. We had to sleep with our hands crossed over our chests. The nuns would go around and check that our hands were neat beneath the covers fearing we were interfering with ourselves. They would hit us really hard if they discovered our hands were not where they should be.
7. The floors had to be shining and we cleaned them with a cloth under our feet going up and down until they were glittering. I remember us scrubbing a big passage that ran the length of the convent. We would have been on our knees.
8. On occasion we were sent to the laundry and there was a lady there called [REDACTED] who was in charge she had been reared in the convent. She was a cross old woman with a double chin. We had to scrub when washing the boards in the sink; we thought it was great because she would give us bread and jam.
9. I ran away from the home on one occasion with three or four others. We did not know Belfast and the police found us and brought us back. The nuns shaved our hair when we returned so that we could be identified and known as the runaways. We were hit and punished but the punishment was not too bad. I was made kneel in the Church with the old people. I liked doing it because the old people were nice and they would bring in biscuits and sweets. This didn't last too long as one of the nuns seen us and we hadn't eaten our sweets in time so she took us back.



Name: Sister Brenda McCall

Date: 12 December 2014

## THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

---

### Witness Statement of Sister Brenda McCall

---

I, Sister Brenda McCall, will say as follows: -

1. I have read through the statement of HIA 439 and can find no record of HIA 439 in our records. The search of our records has demonstrated that we did have HIA 439 who was admitted to Nazareth House 2 May 1942 and discharged 18 April 1950. We believe this resident may be HIA 439
2. With regard to paragraph 5, the physical chastisement discussed by [REDACTED] is not accepted by the Congregation as a tolerable approach in dealing with children. With regret, the Sisters believe that, on occasion, the policy of 'no physical punishment' may not have been adhered to.
3. With regard to paragraph 7, whilst we do accept that the children would have been given chores, we do not accept that these were excessive. Further to paragraph 8, the girls may have helped in the laundry but this would have been merely assisting the sister and lay staff in their duties
4. With regard to paragraph 8, we do not accept that a child's head would have been shaved to identify them as a 'runaway'.
5. With regard to paragraph 10, religion played a large role in the life of a Sister and this may have reflected on the children's lives also. All children would have been encouraged to take communion but we do not accept that they would have been slapped.

PRIVATE

7. The nuns did not like me talking to or playing with my sisters. The nuns tried to divide everybody; even if you got close to a friend and were having a laugh they would try to divide you. When the nuns each went on holiday we were told to write notes to them welcoming them home. We were not allowed to write any notes like this to our own family. We were also taken on holiday to Ballyhorn as a group. I think we stayed in soldier huts. I was sick the entire week with the measles and I just recall being told trust you to get sick.
8. My granny told me before I went into the home that I would not be in too long. She used to come up and visit us. I missed my father a bit. I don't remember much about my mother. I don't think she was ever really there and the reason was unknown to me. When my granny came to visit, I used to cry and on one occasion she was hugging me and I did not know that [REDACTED] SR31 was watching me. I was going on and on about getting home. After my granny left [REDACTED] SR31 got a hold of me. It was the first time anyone had lifted their hand to me. She dragged me into the isolation room and asked me why I was carrying on and throwing myself on top of people. I said that my granny was going to take me home and she said that I would not be in here for a start if my granny was going to take me home.
9. I wondered why my granny stopped visiting us and then someone told my eldest sister that she had died a month or so ago. When she died it broke my heart even though I was used to death as there was an old people's home in Nazareth House. We had to kiss the coffin if a priest or bishop died. If a cardinal died you would have to kiss his ring. On the night that I was told that my grandmother had died I could not sleep, I cried and nobody could stop me crying. I then heard a big thump behind me and I was dragged out of bed by [REDACTED] SR31. I was stammering about my granny and I thought she would have some sympathy but she just said "how dare you wake everyone up with this nonsense, you're better praying for the soul of your granny, she wasn't a catholic you know". She then threatened me that she would bring me back to the isolation room if I didn't stop crying. I could not stop crying and she put me in the room where nobody could hear you cry.

PRIVATE

PRIVATE

wet the bed had to take their bed sheets down to the laundry to be washed. It only happened to me twice but I remember feeling embarrassed by this.

7. The food was absolutely rotten. We were starving. We used to eat the grass in the garden. I recall one girl, **HIA 430** asking for more bread. It was the first time we had ever seen a full loaf of bread as we were only ever used to seeing it in slices. **SR 134** was very sarcastic. She grabbed a loaf of bread and set it down in front of **HIA 430** and said "there's your bread". We were all starving and staring at the bread, but **SR 134** took the bread back into the kitchen and we never saw bread again.
8. We spent a lot of time in the garden when the nuns wanted rid of us. We were freezing. We had climbing frames to play on. When children came in who weren't in the home since birth, they would teach us new games so we were able to make our own fun. We had our good times. We all supported each other. We were all innocent. We just made our own fun. The nuns didn't like to see us make friends and they couldn't handle it. They always tried to split us up.
9. I had one particular friend, **NHB 52** whom **SR 31** didn't like. Her family weren't that well off but we didn't know about things like that at that stage. **SR 31** noticed that had I became good friends with **NHB 52** **NHB 52** On one occasion whilst we were getting ready for bed, Sister **SR 31** told me to stand outside her cell. I didn't know what she meant so she came back, pulled me from my bed and made me wait outside the storeroom. She then brought me into the storeroom where she slapped me and told me that she wanted to me stay away from **NHB 52** She slapped me a couple of times. **NHB 52** was my friend and I didn't know why **SR 31** wanted me to stay away from her. The next day we went to school together as normal. That night, I was pulled out of bed again and slapped and reminded not to go near **NHB 52** I took no heed of **SR 31** and I was beaten for a third night. I was told that I didn't need to go to school the next day and I believe this was because my hands were black and blue. I wanted to get out so I went anyway, and I think **SR 192** who was in charge of St

PRIVATE

9. I went to primary school in the grounds of Nazareth House. I remember being called a dunce and being made to stand in the corner with my hands on my head. You were always put down and told you were good for nothing. You were always told you were stupid, your mother never wanted you and you were left on the doorstep.
10. The food in Nazareth House was very basic. There had to be silence at mealtimes; we couldn't even talk to each other. We got lumpy porridge in the morning and a lot of the time it was inedible but you had to eat it. If you didn't eat your meal you were made to sit there until you ate it and if you didn't eat it, it would be put back in front of you for your next meal. You could be vomiting and retching but if you vomited the food up you had to pick it up and eat it. The nuns did not care.
11. If you misbehaved during meal times you had to stand in the passageway outside the door way to the dining room. I remember that happened to me many times if I shared my food or if I was talking. I was often hungry; I used to eat grass and it was actually quite nice. If you were bad they never told you what you had done wrong. We never got any luxuries like cake or sweets. I remember once when the nuns were on retreat one of the girls got the keys to the pantry and we raided it. We knew we would get in trouble but we didn't care; we hid apples and other food down our pants. We had fun times when we got into mischief.
12. I didn't really make friends in the home because you could never get too close to someone. You were not allowed to have friendships. We never knew anything about love or comfort. If you saw another child crying, your instinct would be to go put your arm around them but if the nuns saw that, you would get a hiding. We were never shown any love. You were completely on your own. There were no social connections at all; it was just work, work, work.
13. We were made to do hard work in the home. We had to start out chores from 6.00 every morning. I must have scrubbed the whole of that building. We used to have to scrub the big corridors on our hands and knees. They would



PRIVATE

was basically evil. I didn't realise until later life that the man that I had seen had been down an alley relieving himself and hadn't zipped himself up properly. I didn't know what a man's shape was like and I think the nuns who saw it probably got more of a shock than me that's why she called me evil.

22. On occasion we would have visitors from outside they were called benefactors. They often came in and put on little concerts for us. On those occasions we would get very excited, our meal would be served to us and I recall on one particular day I got ice-cream for the first time. One of the girls brought it down in a cone and I remember putting it on my plate because I thought you had to eat it with a knife and fork. I felt in the home we missed out on a lot of things from outside.
23. I did not have any real visitors until I was about twelve or thirteen. A lady that my mum used to stay with came to see me. It only lasted for about a year. My mother never visited and they didn't talk about our parents, a lot of the children didn't know if they had a mother or father. It was during war times and after the war a lot of children were taken out by their parents.
24. I formed strong relationships with some of the girls I grew up with and we are still in contact today. We only had each other as we were never shown any type of love or affection from those in charge of our care. I believe the nuns didn't know how to show love and affection.
25. I always had a feeling of fear in the home. I felt that we had to know our place and if you looked at the sisters in the wrong way they might slap you. It was like you always had to sit down and behave, the nuns didn't want to hear from you.
26. The dormitories were always cold and we had the old grey army blankets with a band of blue or green across them. Each nun had a cell at the top of the dormitory and there were older girls in our dormitory as well.
27. I remember one morning the girl two beds down from me was crying and I went to see her. She said she was sick and I got her a bucket from the

PRIVATE

and they more or less bowed down to them. There was one particular priest who would slap the girls across the face if they did not say Amen in a loud voice. I remember being in the sacristy with a priest and it is unclear to me why but I have a vivid memory of him being dressed in black and offering me sweets. It was a real novelty as we were not given sweets too often.

8. All the children in the home had to know the catechism or they risked being caned by the nuns. I was personally never caned as I knew it but I did witness other girls being whipped and the nuns just would not stop.
9. We never got called by our name we were addressed by our number. I distinctly remember being number four in the baby home and number nine in Nazareth House. Our number was sewn into our clothes and rather than call me HIA 161 it was always HIA 161 was in the home at that time and she had speech problems. The nuns gave her number sixty-six and she had difficulty pronouncing the s each time she tried to pronounce it and it wasn't clear the nuns would wallop her.
10. The nuns discovered that I had not been baptised when I was due to make my Holy Communion. I was punched, kicked and put in a room away from everybody else because HIA 161 was a pagan". SR 116 pulled me up by the hair and lifted me off the floor and she said "your mother is nothing but a prostitute anyway, a drunk and a prostitute and that's how you're going to turn out". That kind of thing was said to me on a daily basis and that was normal for me. I grew up to not expect any more than that. I was never called HIA 161 and never shown any love or affection.
11. A lot of the abuse would have been hidden away. It happened in a store room, it was used as a cleaning cupboard and it stank of jeyes fluid and it held wooden items like brushes that SR 116 used to batter you with. She had a bunch of keys that would rattle as she opened the door and she would get you in there and punish you. SR 116 did this regularly and when you heard those keys jangling you knew that she was taking you to that room and you knew what you were in for. I prayed just to die.



PRIVATE

3. When [REDACTED] was old enough she had to work with the elderly residents in Nazareth House and also with the deceased. When they died she had to do their hair and other chores. She would try to get down to see me and every now and again I would try and sneak into see her. One day one of the dead bodies frightened the life out of me because they burped or made some sort of noise and I ran away at once.
4. I did not get to see [REDACTED] as she was in a different section and the only time I would see her was at playtime. She would also be out playing and I could see her through the railings but there was never anything arranged.
5. [REDACTED] would sometimes sneak down into the dormitory and wake me up just to let me know she was there and thinking about me or to give me a sweet or something. One night she actually put a sweet in my mouth because when I woke up in the morning I didn't know what on earth it was. It was that kind of thing that siblings had to hide from the nuns. When I left the nursery and moved to the infants section I would ask to see my sisters but was rarely allowed. The nuns would call me "the scum of the earth" amongst other things and they talked a lot about the sins of our parents. I never knew my parents and my sisters and I never had any visitors so it was safe to abuse us as we had no-one to tell about our treatment.
6. Every morning a nun would walk up the dormitory and ring a hand bell. We had to get out of bed and kneel by our bed to say morning prayer. We then got washed and changed into our clothes and went to mass. After mass we got breakfast before starting our chores. The same routine was followed in the home every day. We would have benediction every afternoon and we had to say the Angelus every evening at 6pm. On a Friday we had to attend confessions and we would often make up stories about any sins we had in order to have something to say. We would also have to do the Stations of the Cross every Friday.
7. There were several priests that used to visit the home, I recall specifically Father Fulton and Father Daly, they were treated with reverence by the nuns

1    **A.   Yes.**

2    Q.   Would it be fair to say that you sort of felt that you  
3       and your sisters were scapegoats then to an extent?

4    **A.   I think we were definitely singled out, and SR116 would**  
5       **regularly say, you know, "There is no room in heaven for**  
6       **the [REDACTED]". I thought it was something to do with our**  
7       **surname. I actually growing up thought being a [REDACTED]**  
8       **was why we wouldn't get into heaven and why we were**  
9       **going to straight to hell, because we were a [REDACTED].**  
10       **I suppose if that's told to you on a daily basis, that,**  
11       **you know, "There's no room in heaven for a [REDACTED].**

12       **[REDACTED]aren't going", you know, you definitely felt**  
13       **singled out and you knew that you were treated**  
14       **different. You knew what happened behind a closed door.**  
15       **You couldn't walk out of there and tell anybody. It was**  
16       **very hard, because the situation at Nazareth House was**  
17       **you weren't allowed to be weak either. If you cried,**  
18       **you got something to cry for. If you told somebody**  
19       **something, you got punished even more. So, you know, it**  
20       **is something that you learned very young. Just don't**  
21       **cry. Don't go out of there crying.**

22    Q.   The congregation have said -- are you all right, HIA161?  
23       If you do need to take a break at any time, please just  
24       say.

25    **A.   Okay. No. I am all right.**

PRIVATE

a large stick, but I wouldn't cry so she just continued to hit me because she saw me as being defiant. I have no idea how long the beating went on for. I was attending St Monica's at the time and I had to be kept off school because my hands were black and blue and swollen. I was constantly in fear of the nuns.

12. The Holy Rosary Church was just on the other side of the wall and there were pear trees. We would have been punished if we were caught taking the pears.

13. On one occasion, I can recall being locked in a room by a nun as punishment. The room was somewhere upstairs in Nazareth House. It was small and pitch black and there was a nun outside the door making bogey man noises. I was absolutely terrified and I was screaming to get out. By the time I got out, I was in such a state that I was in convulsions.

14. If we were trying to have fun, the nuns would immediately calm it down. Laughing, singing and fun weren't allowed. We were afraid to play games. We were always afraid of what would happen. There was no love. There was nothing other than constant fear.

15. The nuns told us that we were dirty and worthless, and that nobody would want us. They always said this to the children who had no families. They made us feel like we were nothing at all. Sometimes people would have come up to the convent to take children out for a day. I remember standing at the gates and hoping to get picked, but **SR 31** would say "who would want you, you're nothing" and tell me to get to the back of the queue. I never got chosen to go out for the day. Sometimes we put on concerts, but I would never get picked for any roles. I was never good enough. One of the nuns told me that I was ugly, and just to get to the back. The fact that she called me ugly has never left me. I will always remember the expression of disgust on her face when she said that to me, as if I was nothing. There was never any praise or encouragement in the home. On one occasion, when I was aged about sixteen years, I was told by a nun that I would be damned in hell. **SR 122** **SR 122** was threatening to punish me for something and I was standing up

PRIVATE

for myself. I tugged at her veil. [SR 31] and [SR 122] marched me up to the Mother Superior's room. The Mother Superior told me I was going to be damned in hell.

16. At Christmas time, we used to be brought to Courtaulds Factory for a party that they put on for the homes. I couldn't say that Christmas was made a wonderful experience in the home. There were never any celebrations such as cake or cards for birthdays.

17. I don't recall the home ever being visited by any Social Workers or inspectors. I remember being seen by a dentist, Dr Boyd, and I remember getting our inoculations in the home.

18. When I was aged approximately thirteen or fourteen years, I recall a lady coming to see me. She was the only visitor I had in all the years that I was in Nazareth House. I believe this lady must have been either my mother or my aunt. I remember being dressed in nicer clothes and being taken up to the parlour. I was a very timid person, and this was such an experience, having a visitor for the first time. I was too frightened to ask who I was meeting. I remember this lady mentioning a place called Enniskillen and it has always stuck with me. In all the years I was at Nazareth House, I never had any sort of connection which indicated that I belonged to anybody, such as visitors or cards. This was the first acknowledgement of any kind at all that I belonged to somebody, and then I never saw this person again.

19. I left the school when I was aged fifteen years. I was moved into the dormitory for older girls, that [SR 122] was in charge of. Some of the other girls in the Convent were let out to live in a house in [REDACTED] Street, but it was generally the girls who had families. Girls who didn't have families generally had to stay in Nazareth House.

20. I went to work in the sewing room in Nazareth House, for maybe a couple of years. [SR 122] was in charge of the sewing room. I got a little pocket money for working there.

PRIVATE

oddball in the group. I don't know if that's because I was being financially supported by my stepfather in America which I didn't know at the time. There were times I got dresses and dolls sent to me but they were never given to me. We dared not to question it.

7. There was an older girl in the home called **NHB 76** who sexually molested me. It happened more than one time. She made me smack her and made me touch her breast. She touched my breasts too. After our bath she would dry me but she wasn't drying me right. She made me touch her below the waist. It was tough - I didn't want to do it but she was a big girl and I had to do what she told me. She used to bring us to bed and one night I told my best friend **NHB 103** that **NHB 76** made me feel her bum. All of a sudden the door barged open and **NHB 76** said **HIA 134** get out of bed and stand outside **SR 199** office now". I was never so scared in all my life standing there in the dark.
8. **SR 199** came then and told me to repeat what I had said to **NHB 103** so I did. Of course I was made out to be a liar. **SR 199** said I was just making it up for attention. It was really humiliating. Even when I spoke the truth she didn't believe me. This has affected my faith in the authorities to this day. I went back to bed and cried myself to sleep. I was about eight or nine at the time. That left me feeling really dirty and ashamed. Then telling **SR 199** the truth and not being believed left me devastated.
9. I had chores to do in the home and after this **SR 199** made me do even more. I was in charge of the bathtubs. There were about five or six baths and they were never clean enough because she wouldn't let me use Ajax; she would only let me use carbolic soap. One of the older girls gave me Ajax once and I had the baths sparkling but then I got whacked by **SR 199** for using Ajax. I also had to clean everybody's shoes and this cubby hole where they kept brooms and things. I was scared of the cubby hole because it was so small and dark. It got smaller the further you walked into it. It was really dark but I had to clean it every day. I was only seven or eight years old. **SR 199** was very cold and I felt much neglected in the home.

PRIVATE

10. I used to tap the big girls on the shoulder for attention. I remember one incident when the nuns were asking who scribbled on the wall and nobody would own up. I put my hand up and said I did it even though I hadn't, just for the attention. I got spanked by **SR 199** for this but the abuse from her was generally more mental than physical. I was totally crushed by **SR 199** **SR 199** saying I had made up the story about **NHB 76** I broke my arm in the house but **SR 199** didn't believe me so I went around for three days in pain with a broken arm before they got me a cast. It happened outside. We were playing with a rope with wooden handles and one of the kids pushed me and the rope hit my wrist. It hasn't been right since. There was a doctor who we saw maybe once every four months and he said I had to go to the hospital to get a cast.

11. I went to school onsite in Nazareth House. My education was really poor. I wasn't very good in school; I had problems learning but I was a good little athlete. They should have acknowledged that I needed special care because I had an attention disorder. Now I take medication for attention disorder.

12. The best times were with the sponsors. They were strangers who volunteered their time. They cared about you and made you laugh. We used to go to Christmas parties outside Nazareth House <sup>cm</sup> but my name was never on the list of children who were going. <sup>cm</sup> I was always left out. <sup>cm</sup> Ever since I told on **NHB 76** <sup>cm</sup> **SR 199** checked my name off the list for speaking the truth. At Christmas we just got a toothbrush without toothpaste. The nuns never made sure our teeth were cleaned and I had trouble with my teeth as a result.

*cm  
my name was  
always on the  
List*

13. Summertime was good in the home. If we didn't get anybody to take us out for the summer, we would play skip rope and throw balls against the wall. I was taken out by an old woman once when I was about seven and she was very good to me. I was meant to be taken by a younger couple but I had nits and they didn't want me so they gave me to their mother. <sup>cm</sup> I had thousands of creepers all over my eyebrows. <sup>cm</sup> Their mother was a lovely woman; she had a heart of gold. She cleaned my hair and spent hours fine combing my hair by



PRIVATE

called me evil and said I was a liar. I started to cry then thinking it would make her stop but she just battered me harder and told me to stop crying.

21. I lived in absolute terror. Every morning I woke up I didn't know what lay in front of me. Sometimes you'd be told to look at the nuns and then they'd say "don't be looking at me". You were told to tell the truth but when you did you were beaten. You were damned if you did and damned if you didn't.

22. The nuns would emotionally abuse me too. [SR 31] despised me and she let me know it. She was constantly putting me down, degrading me and making me feel stupid and worthless. This feeling of worthlessness has stayed with me my entire life. The nuns had their favourites and I wasn't one of them. They would give sweets to certain children and leave me out. I always seemed to be excluded. Other children got to go to the cinema and out with families but I never did. Looking back now I had it worse because I wasn't an orphan and I had a father. I was always on the outside looking in.

23. Those nuns should never have been involved in the care of children. They seemed to hate children; you could see it in their eyes. Although they had a veil on that didn't make them any way holy. They were supposed to be our role models and they instilled a terrible attitude in me. When they accused me, I accused others. It was survival of the fittest in there. I didn't realise how nasty I was and I didn't realise that's why I had no friends growing up. There was a [ ] girl in the home called [NHB 48] and I think she was traumatised. She used to rock back and forth all the time – in bed and on chairs. [SR 134] started to call her [ ] and the children followed suit. The nuns allowed the children to call her that.

24. To get attention and to get out to the dentist, I had one good tooth pulled out that I recall. That's how badly I wanted to get out of there. Afterwards, I was just left to suffer on my own in a room. Nobody ever checked on me. There were never any doctors in Nazareth House unless it was an emergency or we were getting injections. Dr Hunter from the Newtownards Road used to come and give us injections. I remember [SR 122] would put this brown stuff

PRIVATE

called me evil and said I was a liar. I started to cry then thinking it would make her stop but she just battered me harder and told me to stop crying.

21. I lived in absolute terror. Every morning I woke up I didn't know what lay in front of me. Sometimes you'd be told to look at the nuns and then they'd say "don't be looking at me". You were told to tell the truth but when you did you were beaten. You were damned if you did and damned if you didn't.

22. The nuns would emotionally abuse me too. [SR 31] despised me and she let me know it. She was constantly putting me down, degrading me and making me feel stupid and worthless. This feeling of worthlessness has stayed with me my entire life. The nuns had their favourites and I wasn't one of them. They would give sweets to certain children and leave me out. I always seemed to be excluded. Other children got to go to the cinema and out with families but I never did. Looking back now I had it worse because I wasn't an orphan and I had a father. I was always on the outside looking in.

23. Those nuns should never have been involved in the care of children. They seemed to hate children; you could see it in their eyes. Although they had a veil on that didn't make them any way holy. They were supposed to be our role models and they instilled a terrible attitude in me. When they accused me, I accused others. It was survival of the fittest in there. I didn't realise how nasty I was and I didn't realise that's why I had no friends growing up. There was a [redacted] girl in the home called [NHB 48] and I think she was traumatised. She used to rock back and forth all the time – in bed and on chairs. [SR 134] started to call her [redacted] and the children followed suit. The nuns allowed the children to call her that.

24. To get attention and to get out to the dentist, I had one good tooth pulled out that I recall. That's how badly I wanted to get out of there. Afterwards, I was just left to suffer on my own in a room. Nobody ever checked on me. There were never any doctors in Nazareth House unless it was an emergency or we were getting injections. Dr Hunter from the Newtownards Road used to come and give us injections. I remember [SR 122] would put this brown stuff

PRIVATE

21. When I was about twelve one of the other girls, called [REDACTED] convinced me to go up to the old men's place, as we used to call it. It was like a glasshouse. There were two men there. One was sitting in a chair and he said "come here, I'll give you some sweets". When I went over to him he gripped my wrist and he started putting his hand in my underwear. I managed to get free and I ran back to the children's part of Nazareth House and hid in the toilets. I thought he was going to tell the nuns and we would be in trouble for being somewhere we should not have been. As children we should have been protected by the nuns from such situations. That man is now dead.
22. I was teased by the other children because I wet the bed and went to a different school. I was called things like "fish" and "dunce". However I think that the cruelty from the nuns was worse. They did not care for us properly and were constantly degrading us. I remember we were told by the nuns, mainly Sister **SR 31** "nobody wants you, do you know why you are here, you were just dumped, nobody wants you". I remember some of the other children were encouraged to write letters to pen pals and I was told I did not need to as I would not be able to write a letter. All I seemed fit for was scrubbing the floors, working in the laundry or washing up in the kitchen.
23. I remember being sent to **SR 31** store room to be punished by her. You were locked in and you would have to wait until she came in and hit you. She must have forgotten about me that day and I was left in the store room all day. I remember there were boxes in that room and I climbed on top of them so I could see out the window onto the playground. I sat there all day watching the other children playing. I was brought no food all day. In the evening the door was opened by one of the older girls and she just told me to get out.
24. **SR 31** was always degrading me. She taught Primary 7 and I remember when I was sixteen she called me into her class and in front of the children she asked me what I was doing and I told her I was cleaning. She told me to go and find a girl called [REDACTED] who was her pet and whom she asked to do messages for her. When I came back with **SR 31** said to me "what are you standing there for, have you nothing else to do". I thought it was

PRIVATE

leaving imprints of her hands. It was always at least six slaps – three on each forearm. That was when she wasn't using sticks.

23. **SR 134** was a cruel, mocking woman. She would always say derogatory things to you. One day when I was about fourteen I was wearing a black dress with a white collar and she said "get that dress off you, it's too short with your fat legs". When I was in St. Monica's, me and two other girls mitched school for the day and we were sitting in the dormitory chatting to a girl who was sick in bed. If you were sick you were just told to stay in bed for the day. When we heard someone coming we ran and hid – two of us in the wardrobe and one under the bed. When **SR 134** found us, she banged and shut the door of the wardrobe half a dozen times and shouted "I've a good mind to leave you there". Then she took us down to her classroom and made us stand there in front of the class all day as punishment.

24. We lived in fear in the home. **SR 31** was always threatening you with Middletown or the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd was across the road and it was like a Magdalene laundry for wayward girls. We were terrified because we'd heard of girls going to Middletown and never being seen again. We lived in fear of being sent away. It was awful especially if you had siblings in the home because you didn't want to be separated from them.

25. At one stage we were moved into Our Lady's dormitory but we were still in the Sacred Heart group. There were two older girls in Our Lady's called **NHB 25** and **NHB 40** who were constantly getting beaten in the home. They were around fourteen at the time. Every single night, one of those two girls got beaten by **SR 31**. They didn't have to do anything; she targeted those two girls. I remember feeling bad for them but you were also glad it wasn't you. You were constantly thinking about who was going to be beaten next. **SR 31** would take girls individually into the storeroom so I never witnessed her beat anyone but the girls would come back crying. One time **SR 31** found **NHB 40** in the garden mitching school and she brought her up to her classroom. **SR 31** told **NHB 40** to kneel down and then she started chopping off her hair with scissors. It was awful; **NHB 40**

## PRIVATE

side. I felt there would have been more freedom in the children's part. The front part of the convent was reserved for the nuns. There was a beautiful garden with flowers at the front of it. Children were only allowed in there on certain occasions but we weren't totally isolated from it. In the earlier days, around the 1960's, we would only have been allowed into the nuns' garden during the month of May to say prayers, but that all changed and the gardens were more open to both the old people as well as the children. Beside the nun's garden was the nursery garden and then the children's garden, which had swings and climbers. These were used constantly. The garden was used for skipping, netball and many other activities.

5. There were three groups, St Anne's, Sacred Heart and Our Lady's. In the early days, we were all dressed in the same clothes, a tweed skirt and a jumper. The nuns must have got one roll of material for each group, and made skirts with a matching jumper for each child. Our Lady's wore blue uniforms, Sacred Heart wore red, and St Anne's wore green. It was an easy way of identifying which group each child belonged to. This form of dress changed over the years.
6. I was in St Anne's group. There were thirty children in our group. I don't remember being a number at all. We each had our own hand-made cloth toiletry bag, with our names written on them in marker pen. I still have my toiletry bag. We kept our toothbrush and our gibbs toothpaste in it, which were renewed when necessary. In the 1970's the house mother of St Anne's was a lady named **NL 143** who then became **NL 143**. Our whole group were taken to her wedding. She passed away a year ago.
7. Our life in the convent was basic, which you would expect. We were fed and given a roof over our heads. Our basic needs were met, but there was no emotional side to it, there couldn't be. Who were we to get that off? In my view that was just a product of society in the fifties – who did care? My family did not. To me, it was worse on the outside than it was on the inside. Every child had a different background, circumstances, genetics. Some people who came

## PRIVATE

in to the Convent still had families, and they came in with siblings, and their experiences were different from mine. I was an orphan, totally on my own.

8. When I was very young, it was tough. We slept in huge dormitories, on wrought iron beds and thin mattresses. It was simply a product of the time. There wasn't a lot of money, and the thin mattresses we had would have been standard everywhere. As a young child, moving from the small nursery to a large dormitory, with all those children, would have been traumatic. As time passed, the dormitories were split into three different groups. We had our own bed, a lovely comfortable bed, with our own wardrobe, cupboard and chest of drawers. This would have been around 1970. There was a living room for each dormitory as well, and we had a record player. The children who lived in Nazareth House before me, in the 1950's, would have had it much harder, but as we moved along, times changed and systems changed.
9. Because I was one of the older girls, I had a lot of responsibility. After we got up, I had to get the breakfast. I would roll the trolley up to the kitchen to get thirty pieces of bacon and thirty sausages, or whatever was on that day. In the earlier days, around 1960, we all ate in one huge dining room, and then over a space of time, the dining rooms were divided up, so each group had their own. It was a great transformation. I would have been about ten or eleven years at the time. The food was okay. We didn't have a choice in what we ate, after all it was not a hotel. We ate what was put on the table, and if we didn't eat it, we didn't get anything else. Once the dining rooms were divided, things were better and the food seemed to change. I remember us getting a lot of food from Marks & Spencer's, marzipan cakes, huge bags of crisps and meat.
10. After breakfast, we went to school, which was on site. I was taught by Mrs [REDACTED] Children from outside the home came into the school as well. We called them the highfalutin people. This is the language that was used. Their parents were doctors, whereas we were paupers. We got dinner in school, and then we got a meal when we came back. I recall on Sunday mornings I went to the massive kitchen, where I would have to make toast and a huge pot of scrambled eggs, enough to do thirty children.