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HIA REF: 301

Witness Name: HIA 301

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 301

I, HIA 301, will say as follows:-

Personal Details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] in Donegal. I was born out of wedlock and my mother placed me in care in St Joseph's Children's Home, Termonbacca, Derry when I was two years old. My father was a soldier working in Donegal at the time. His name was [REDACTED]. He died in 1959 when he was only [REDACTED]. My mother's name is [REDACTED]. I found out in recent times that I was brought up with my biological father for a very short period of time but something happened and my mother had to place me in care. She wrote to the Reverend Mother at St Joseph's Children's Home, Termonbacca and requested that she take me under her protection for a few months. She also wrote "it would ease my mind considerably to know that my little boy would be in good hands". Her request was supported by a letter from a Jesuit priest, [REDACTED] who stated that I needed to be put in care as my mother had no home and no-one to take care of me and needed the Sisters to look after me for a few months. My mother went off to nurse in [REDACTED] in Soho, London.
2. I found out six months ago that I have four half brothers and four half sisters. My father already had three children and he had another five after me. My

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older half brother, [REDACTED] lives in Drouin in Australia, south of Melbourne. We have different mothers. He contacted me by phone about six months ago and told me that my mother had lived with [REDACTED] and his wife at the time for a very brief period of time. I have one half sister living in Australia also and the rest of my family live in England or Ireland.

3. My mother had been in foster care as a child. She married a man named [REDACTED] in 1953. He was eleven or twelve years older than her and he died many years ago. My father was also thirteen years older than my mother. My mother also had a daughter who only survived for a few months due to a blood disease.
4. My mother is ninety years old now. She is alive and living in a nursing home in [REDACTED] England and she is doing well. I have visited her there a number of times, I call her every so often and send her birthday and Christmas cards. She has dementia and her memory is obviously starting to deteriorate.

St Joseph's Children's Home, Termonbacca (14 April 1946 - 26 January 1953)

5. I was born in Donegal and placed in a home in another jurisdiction. In my view I was a Southern Irish citizen and should not have been selected for migration to Australia under a British migration scheme. I want the Inquiry to investigate who gave the order for a child from the Irish Republic to be deported under a Commonwealth programme.
6. I remember a few things about my time in Termonbacca. My first memory is of my time in the nursery. They had female civilian employees looking after us there and I can recall them picking us up, throwing us into the air and then waiting for the ground to hit you. You would line up and they would do it again and the fear was unbelievable. We were standing there waiting on this to happen and we were totally helpless, they were brutal people. The full horror of being thrown into the air and allowed to fall to the ground was vividly recalled as an adult in an incident when I fell from a roof on a building site and

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the impact on landing caused me to have flashbacks of this particular type of childhood abuse in Termonbacca.

7. I also recall the nuns used to bathe us in Jeyes Fluid once a week and it used to burn and leave a rim around our skin where the water mark ended. They used to hold us under the water. At the age of about five or six when we moved to the older boys section they made us wear a slip around us for modesty but bath time was always a terror.
8. There was one worker there called [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] and she used to always have dirty underwear. There was nothing sexual about this in any way but at times when she went to sit down some of the boys could see under her dress and she always had soiled underwear. She was a heavy girl with red coloured hair.
9. When I was about five or six years old we moved to the senior section of the home. There were different nuns there to look after us and they were brutal. I recall an occasion when we found a jar of lollies outside a nun's room and one of the boys stole one and we were caught by [REDACTED] SR 86 [REDACTED]. She was a bit tall thin nun. She was one of those people who filled you with fear when she entered the room. It was like a big black cloud would hang over you when she was around. She was really angry when she realised what had happened and she picked this little boy up off the ground by his wrist and flogged him. She hit him with a long stick or cane of some kind. It was dark and long. She really beat him hard and we were all sitting waiting on our turn and the fear was unreal. We were all flogged following this incident. I was just a skinny little kid at the time and she picked me up by the wrists and flogged me. I was often beaten at Termonbacca and still have lumps on my head from being bashed on the head so often by the nuns.
10. The burning injustice of violent bullying has stayed with me all my life. When confronted by bullies I feel as if a switch goes off in my head and I am thrown into a physical rage at times without even thinking about it. It is immediate and intense. I was neither valued, regarded nor respected as a vulnerable

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child or human being. The consequences have been with me all my adult life and at various times have caused me acute stress.

11. I recall walking to school at Bishop Street. The school was located at the site of the girl's orphanage. The nuns were brutal to those girls. The nuns were alright with the boys at the school but very hard on the girls. One day when I was about six or seven years old I recall a nun called [REDACTED] SR 105 belting a little girl round the ear. She made her take her underwear off and she showed us her soiled underwear. I remember the little girl's head bent over in a very passive pose. She made her put them back on, gave her another belting and sent her out. That was not the act of someone who had simply lost their temper, it was a brutal act. Humiliating a child like that was a deliberate act by someone with an evil mind.

12. Not all the nuns were evil. I recall [REDACTED] SR 11 was a kind nun and she was communicative and did not have a disciplinarian attitude with the children. She was a really nice person. However, even the non abusive nuns simply stood by whilst children were abused and did not act to protect us or report the perpetrators to the authorities.

13. There were good times when you made your First Communion and Confirmation as you got lemonade and treats. I recall making my first confession and thinking I was a good boy and hadn't sinned and the priest put a real dampner on it by giving me a decade of the rosary for lying. I do not recall getting much at Christmas time. I can only remember one little car that we got to share amongst four other boys and when I rolled it on the floor the wheels fell off and it broke my heart at the time.

14. I was also sexually abused at Termonbacca by the older boys. I recall one night when I was about six or seven I woke up face down on the bed, the blankets were off me, my pants and my pyjamas had been taken down, my buttocks were parted and I recall one of the boys making the comment "He's green". I cannot recall the identity of this boy but his voice had obviously broken as I recall he had a deep voice. I did not know what he meant by this

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phrase at the time but I now believe that they meant that I was still a virgin. One of the boys then proceeded to rape me. I just recall feeling pressure being applied to that area of my body as he penetrated me. He anally penetrated me with his penis and it was terrifying and painful. I didn't know what was going on at the time but they filled me with fear and shame because I knew it was dirty and wrong. I was terrified I would get into trouble and so I told no-one.

15. The older boys came in another night and held my mouth open and they masturbated into my mouth.

16. I recall another occasion when an older boy came to me with a towel on and sat me on his lap. It was obvious he had had a bath but I could still smell body odour off him. I do not recall his name but I remember the smell and fearing what was about to happen and he sexually abused me. This happened during daylight hours. I knew the name of this boy at the time but cannot recall it now.

17. We used to go to bed and these older boys used to come around and bash us with a broom in our beds. We learnt to pull the blankets tight around us so that the broom bounced when it hit us. I cannot recall their names or what age these boys would have been but their voices had broken, I recall the sound of their voices. We would see these older boys about the home during the day at times. You would see them on Saturdays when it was time to clean the home. There were boys who did not leave until they were much older. They stayed on to help on the farm. There was one of these older boys who stayed on as [REDACTED] and I met him in later years when I revisited Derry.

18. We had to wax the floors of the main hall on our hands and knees. We would have two cloths in our hands and we would say a poem "River back, river back, I got a broom to break your back".

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19. I recall there was a bucket in the dormitory at the end of the room for boys to urinate and defecate in if they got up at night. At times it would overflow and we would have to carry it down and put it in the toilet.
20. We had breakfast in the morning, usually porridge and some bread. We had very simple food in the home but I do not recall feeling hungry. I was a delicate boy and I wasn't a big eater.
21. We walked to school in Bishop Street even during the winter time in black ice. I recall a lay teacher at the school called [REDACTED] SND 411. She was a very kind woman. I went back to visit her in 1974 when I visited Ireland. She had grown old at that stage and she could not remember me.
22. I recall [REDACTED] SND 411 teaching us about Australia. We were given new clothes and we did not even know we were going to Australia. No-one asked me at any stage if I wanted to go. I have a medical form examining me for Australia and it is dated 12 February 1951. I have a second medical form dated December 1952 but I do not recall undergoing either medical examination.
23. The Mother Superior of St Joseph's Home, Termonbacca signed my child migration form giving consent for me to be sent to Australia. The form is dated 10 October 1949. I think her name was [REDACTED] SR 106. One day we were taken in a green station wagon by a man that we nicknamed [REDACTED] to the station and we took a train to Belfast. We then made our way to England and travelled to Australia from Southampton on a ship called The New Australia.
24. We departed for Australia on 26 January 1953. We were all seasick at various times throughout the trip. There was a lady in charge of us on the ship called [REDACTED] and she was a very nice person. I had never met her before. There were about sixteen boys from Termonbacca on the ship and she looked after all of us. We met up with English children when we got on board the ship.

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25. We got off the ship at Fremantle and we were met by a couple of Christian Brothers and taken by bus to Clontarf. Some of the boys were sent to Bindoon and others to Tardun. I stayed at Clontarf. Another boy from Termonbacca called [HIA 295] was on the ship with me and we were great friends. [HIA 295] just disappeared off the radar on arrival and I did not know where he was placed. I was eight at the time. We met up again in later years and I found out then that he had been sent to Tardun [HIA 295] and I still keep in touch.

Clontarf Boys' Town (22 February 1953 – 22 February 1960)

26. I was eight years old when I arrived at Clontarf Boy's Town. The standard of education was much higher in Northern Ireland than at Clontarf.

27. I do not recall anyone from the Child Welfare Department coming to check on me when I was in Clontarf. I got a letter from them when I turned twenty one advising that I had been under their guardianship since my arrival in Australia and that jurisdiction ceased on my coming of age.

28. There was a lot of brutality at Clontarf from the Brothers and the older boys. There was a bit of adolescent sex amongst the boys themselves but it was more mutual masturbation and "fiddling" but some of the older boys would force themselves on you which was entirely non consensual sexual abuse. Also a number of Brothers sexually abused the boys at Clontarf. I was sexually abused by a number of Brothers at Clontarf, by some older boys and by a lay teacher called [AU 9]

29. It is my view that the Brothers at Clontarf saw us more as livestock to be controlled than children to be nurtured and encouraged.

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30. I stayed at Clontarf for seven years. I went to a boarding house in Perth and started work with a [REDACTED] as a saw doctor cutting wood, steel, plastic and metal. My wages at the time were £4/12 a week and my board was £4/5 per week. I started up my own business in this same profession when I was twenty and continued in it for another twenty five years. I also spent time in the Citizens Military Forces. I had applied to go to Vietnam but we had to stay back as my unit was in second line defence.

Life after care

31. I have a good life now. I have never married and have no children but I am a contented single man. I am financially sound and I made a good life for myself. I sponsor a number of young adults with their education and they have all done extremely well. They see me as a sort of father figure and some of them call me on Father's Day and say "Happy Father's Day" to me. Financial independence, helping these children to get educated and Buddhism are the three things in life that are most important to me.

32. I obtained \$45,000 AUD under the redress scheme in Australia about four or five years ago.

33. I also received a small amount of compensation directly from the Christian Brothers.

34. I am involved with the Child Migrant Trust. I represented child migrants in or around 2001 in the Australian Senate's investigation in Canberra into the child migration programme.

35. I had always wondered about my mother and her whereabouts especially on my birthday every year. I made enquiries myself about her over the years. I wrote to the parish priest in [REDACTED] on 10 December 1981, Father [REDACTED] and he replied in writing with a contact address for someone who might have known her but he could not assist me further as she had left that

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area a long time ago. I returned to Ireland a few times and visited Termonbacca. I visited Ireland initially in 1974 but despite my enquiries I could not locate any members of my family. I was more successful with my search after I contacted the Child Migrant Trust in the late 1980's. I found my mother in 1991 when I was forty eight years old. I visited Ireland on four occasions. I took my mother with me on the third visit back to [REDACTED] in Donegal. I also took her back to see the nursery where I stayed in Termonbacca. It was a good trip.

36. I am specifically mentioned in a book entitled "Empty Cradles" by Margaret Humphreys who is the Director of the Child Migrant Trust. A film has also been made based on this book. It is called "Oranges and Sunshine". It was shown at the Cannes Film Festival. I suppose it took me a number of years to realise the extent to which being in care had left a void in my life that I had repressed or suppressed. I continued with my brave soldier act. However, any void that I may have had in my life was filled after I met Margaret Humphreys. She put me in touch with my family. My biggest fear was that my mother would reject me and it is a blessing that she didn't and this has helped me fill the void in my life.

37. In 2010 I last visited my mother at [REDACTED] I went on this trip as the British Government were giving an apology to former child migrants and a fund was being set up to help families reconnect and to assist the Child Migrant Trust. I met Gordon Brown during my trip.

38. Regardless of achieving what people would consider a certain degree of success in my life I would maintain that that still does not mean you are not affected in some way by your time in care. Your formative years are an essential part of your development and I at times feel socially handicapped by my childhood.

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed _____

HIA 301

Dated _____

25 / 11 / 13

Ease my
 mind considerably to know
 that my
 little boy would be in
 good hands
 as your Home has
 been recom-
 mended to me. Trusting you
 will
 do your best, as I am
 anxious
 to try and get on
 my feet
 and provide for my

I must
 let you know to thank
 you for
 everything he did in the way
 of getting
 decent lodging that night
 I was in Derby.

I am,

Your Humble Servant,

To The Rev. Mother Superior. 5/11
 Dear Rev. Mother,

Enclosed
 the Baptism Certificate of
 little boy, whom I
 you will take under
 protection for a few mo-
 I remember you said
 would have no vacancy
 Christmas, but if you
 kindly let me know at
 nearest convenience when
 would be able to take
 state your terms I would
 very thankful. It is

The Catholic Child Welfare Council

(Incorporating all the Catholic Child Rescue Societies of England and Wales)

EMIGRATION COMMITTEE

Secretary:

The Very Rev. Canon Charles B. Flood

Telephone: LADbroke 5305, 6, 7 & 8

Office Hours: 9.30 to 5.30

Mondays to Fridays

The Reverend Mother,
Nazareth House,
Termonbacca,
Derry. N. IRELAND.

73, ST. CHARLES SQUARE,
LONDON, W.10

16th December, 1955

Dear Reverend Mother,

It is with the deepest regret that I inform you of the following cablegram, received through Mr. Armstrong of Australia House, from Australia:-

"Yesterday number migrant children from Clontarf Boys Town Perth were involved in serious bus accident. All are without known next of kin and came from Nazareth institutions. Our advise is that [REDACTED] September 1952 from Swansea was killed".

The following boys are among those who suffered in the accident:-

HIA 301 "New Australia" February 1953 Londonderry. Lacerations both knees. Condition excellent.

P.T.O.

AU 29 "New Australia" February 1953 Londonderry. Fractured right tibia and fibia. Left leg amputated mid calf. Condition well.

[REDACTED] "Asturias" September 1947 Londonderry. Fractured left tibia and fibia. Condition excellent.

From my records there seem to be no parents or relatives known. Should you, however, know of any relations would you be kind enough to give them the information.

Wishing you every blessing.

Yours sincerely,

Charles B. Flood
Secretary
EMIGRATION COMMITTEE