

Christian Name	Where Born	Date of Birth	Where Baptised	Parents' Names	Occupation	Recommended by
HIA 196	Belfast		Holy Family Church Newington Belfast		Domestic servant	Rev. J. Mc Kenna Irwinstown Co. Dub.

Occupation	Recommended by	Received	Died	Left	Observations	No.
Domestic servant	Rev. J. Mc Kenna P.P. Irwinstown Co. Fermanagh	25 th March 1955		17 th July 1966	brother living	660

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HIA REF: 196

Witness Name HIA 196

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT C HIA 196

HIA 196 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born c [REDACTED] in Belfast.
2. My mother had me out of wedlock and she couldn't afford to keep me so she handed me over to a priest. Records show that I was placed in Termonbacca in 1955 so I think I must have been in Fahan, Co. Donegal for the first two years of my life.
3. On 25th March 1955, I was placed in the nursery in Termonbacca and I remained there until I was adopted in 1966 when I was thirteen.

St. Joseph's Home, Termonbacca, Derry (25th March 1955 – 17th July 1966)

4. The nursery at Termonbacca consisted of rows of beds lined up with the odd cot and a small toilet. Then there was a side room where the nun slept. At that age I was happy and loving. I didn't know any different and I wasn't going hungry. There was always plenty of food in the nursery because you couldn't have babies going hungry. I stayed in the nursery until I was about six when I made my Holy Communion.

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5. I moved to the junior dormitory when I was about six or seven [SR 2] [SR 2] was in charge of my dorm and [SR 1] was in charge of the senior dormitory. The dorm was basically an ex-army hut with a tin roof made out of corrugated iron. The beds were lined down the middle of the floor and there was a much larger bed in the corner for a senior boy. Whoever was in charge of the dormitory slept in the big bed in the corner. In the other corner, there was a cubicle with a window where [SR 2] slept. The nuns never really got their hands dirty; they gave responsibility over to the senior boys.
6. These older boys would have been about fourteen or fifteen. They were residents of the home and they were part of the furniture [SR 2] and the other nuns loved having them around because the senior boys had responsibility for us. We would seldom ever see the nuns. They would be away at the offertory saying prayers. They spent very little time with us. You couldn't approach [SR 2], she wasn't nice. She was a bully and she was very controlling. She was the sort of person who made you feel like you were always doing something wrong and you were a problem. There was no love in her at all; she was an evil, hateful bitch. She gave me a nickname [redacted] and it stuck. You wouldn't mind your friends giving you a nickname but not someone who was supposed to be your guardian. Two years ago I was listening to Highland Radio when I heard [SR 2] being interviewed. I knew it was her by her squeaky voice. Apparently she was going to live with the lepers in South Africa.
7. At night the senior boy in charge would walk up and down the dormitory and batter us across the legs with a brush. I would just lie there and say nothing out of fear. The senior boy in charge would change depending on who was available; the older boys would take turns. Every night the senior boy would call out the names of the younger children. He would take them round to his bed and strip them and use them for his entertainment. You had to pretend you were sleeping. You wouldn't even be able to breathe because if he thought you were breathing you would be called over to his bed. I often heard my name being called. I was brought over to a senior boy's bed on a couple of occasions. I never once saw [SR 2] walking up and down checking on

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the boys. She must have heard the boys' names being called. I can't understand how she never once came out that door. That dormitory was a bad place to be; there was no way out and SR 2 was no advantage to us.

8. SR 2 ran Termonbacca for her own cushiness. To the outside world it was a great place and she was a lovely woman. The St Vincent de Paul would come up to visit on a Sunday and she would put on a show. They would bring sweets but they would just throw them on the ground and we all had to scramble for them. The older boys got all the sweets and the younger ones ended up with none. I remember one man from the St Vincent de Paul, George Johnston. He stands out in my mind because we got to know him and he was very nice. Once they left, the atmosphere changed and you were unhappy again.

9. The daily routine in Termonbacca began when we were awakened by a bell. If any boy had wet his bed, he would have to carry his sheets the whole way from the dormitory to the bathroom. We were all lined up naked for our bath and they bathed us in Jeyes fluid. The smell of the Jeyes fluid was horrendous. We had to go to Mass at about 7am. When we came back we would have breakfast and then go to school. There was a chapel in Termonbacca where we attended Mass every morning and rosary every evening. Latin was pumped into us; we had to learn the whole Mass in Latin but to this day I don't know what any of it means. I was an altar server as well. I often fainted at Mass because I would be so hungry. I was never ill-treated by the priests. There was one nice priest called [REDACTED] who would have played in the fields with us, he seemed like a lovely man.

10. I went to primary school in Nazareth House, Bishop Street in Derry. We walked there on foot. My teacher was called SND 130 and I was happy in school. The classrooms had low tables and chairs to suit children. The aroma from the kitchen went through the whole of Nazareth House and you would be starving by the time you got your dinner. On one occasion, I was punished in school by SR 9 for knocking another boy off his chair. SR 9 was

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in charge of the other classroom and it was all girls. She brought me out to her classroom and spread me star-eagled across a desk naked. She made the girls hold me out and she beat me repeatedly with her hand. She just lost her temper and kept going. She was so aggressive and I was only about four years old at the time.

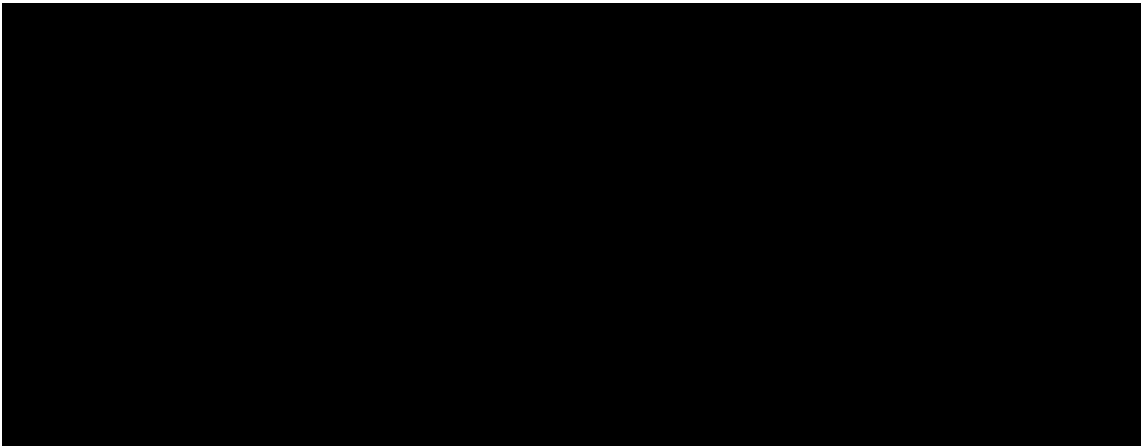
11. I went to secondary school in St. Joseph's in the Creggar [REDACTED] was the principal and [REDACTED] was his second in command. We would have to walk up the hill to school every day no matter what the weather was like. There was no transport in those days. At school we were always called the homeboys. We were ashamed. We had a school uniform which was Sister SR 2 [REDACTED] pride and joy. I don't know what chemical it was washed in but it was stinking. It smelled like vinegar. The blazers we wore were always handed down, nothing was going in the bin in Termonbacca but I always thought I was well enough dressed. It's not like we were in rags or anything. As far as the nuns were concerned, we were living in the lap of luxury. Education wise I always felt like a gopher; we were never encouraged to aim for anything in life.

12. When I was about seven or eight, I was fostered out to the [REDACTED] family in Omagh with another boy [REDACTED] HIA 143 [REDACTED]. They were nice people. Then I was fostered out by the [REDACTED] who eventually adopted me when I was about thirteen. The [REDACTED] were good enough people [REDACTED] was a milkman and they also had a farm. From the moment I arrived at the [REDACTED] I worked like a slave delivering milk. I was up every morning at 4.30am to deliver milk and collect scraps for the pigs. I didn't mind the work but it was like slave labour. It annoyed me that the [REDACTED] own children never helped out. They had five children older than me and a son [REDACTED] who was seven months older than me and they never did any work. I loved [REDACTED] he was a good man but his children were taking the hand by not doing any work. They were lazy. [REDACTED] used to always say about me 'here's the great wee worker'. I loved doing the work but I didn't see why I should be treated like a slave.

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13. In the summertime, I would be taken out by the [REDACTED] for maybe a week in July and a week in August. [REDACTED] SR 2 [REDACTED] was always threatening me 'if you don't do this, you won't be going'. She would have me pairing socks on a Thursday evening from 5pm until midnight. I would be kneeling on the ground and she'd have me like that for five hours until the blood stopped flowing to my knees. It was cruelty. I used to love getting out of Termonbacca in the summer. [REDACTED] SR 2 [REDACTED] would give you a wee case and send you off on your holidays. It was great to get away but it was devastating to come back. I would cry all the way from Strabane and then for hours when I was back in the home. I really think it did more harm than good to take me out and then put me back in again. [REDACTED] kept promising to adopt me but I think my mother kept delaying signing the papers.

14. I remember one occasion when I was out in the playing field and I was told [REDACTED] SR 2 [REDACTED] was looking for me. I went to her and she said there was a woman to see me in the parlour. I went in and this woman said she was sent there to see me by my mother. I asked her where my mother was and said I wanted to see her. She told me that she was in the same hospital as my mother when she gave birth to me and my mother had asked her to come see me. I don't understand why my mother did that. Sending another woman up to see me was cruel. The woman said she would take me out to her house in the Creggan one day. I did go up to that house but I can't remember if my mother was there or not.



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16. We would have had absolutely no reason to be in the laundry. I went up and when I opened the door I saw my friend **SND 11** standing totally naked. **SND 70** was the instigator of what was going on. **SR 2** had **SND 70** doing the laundry work so he would have had access to whoever he wanted. I remember being stripped naked and laid on a wooden rack. **SND 70** and his mates would have touched me sexually but they didn't make me touch them. **SND 11** and I were both subjected to this. The abuse never went further than touching.

17. I couldn't believe it because I was only a child. I was about six or seven and I thought **SND 70** would have been fourteen or fifteen. I had my little circle of friends that I had known since nursery in Termonbacca. They were like brothers to me, we got so attached. **SND 70** infiltrated that friendship. I've since learned that **SND 11** stood out in front of a train in London and killed himself. An ex-Termonbacca resident named **HIA 144** told me and he said **SND 11** was stupid for doing it. He had no sympathy for **SND 11** at all but I did; I think he did it because of what happened to him at Termonbacca.

18. Even after I left Termonbacca, these people still had access to the younger boys. I just don't understand why that was allowed to happen. Was it because they were **SR 2** favourites and they were the ones that helped her? **SR 2** knew it was going on. It's not what she did; it's what she could have done. She could have put things in place to stop it happening. Those older boys had the run of that place. They were bullies. I remember **SND 70** and another older boy named **SND 70**. I can't remember his surname but it wasn't **HIA 144**. I can't be completely sure but I think one of the older boys who abused me in the dormitory was a different lad. I am 60% sure it wasn't **SND 70** in the dormitory.

19. Another day during the summer, I was out playing when I noticed a light on in the bathroom. The windows were up high and I climbed up to look in. I saw **SND 70** standing there with a load of boys. He grabbed me and pulled me up through the window. Another boy whose name I can't remember hit me

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with a towel rail across the head. I had to go to Altnagelvin and I still have a scar. The last I heard [SND 70] had committed a crime with children in Derry and was sent across the border by the nuns to a home they have there. I was told that in 2000 by the Nexus Institute in Derry which is a support group for survivors of childhood abuse. It angers me that he has never had to answer for all the things he has done.

20. I was always hungry in Termonbacca; I think it was run on starvation. At the dinner tables, an older boy doled out the food and if you weren't one of his favourites, you would get smaller servings. I hated Sundays in Termonbacca; it was such a long, long day. I remember every Sunday all I got my hands on to eat was a tub of margarine. I remember running my finger along it and eating it straight from the tub because I was so hungry. I never remember the nuns being there to help give out the food. Because the place was so big and there were so many people, there was nobody in charge really. If Sister [SR 2] had half the people in the place, she wouldn't have been able to look after them properly. The older boys had the run of the place and we were neglected. If there was something wrong, you had nobody to talk to.

21. I don't recall anybody from Welfare ever coming to inspect Termonbacca. You would never have heard tell of what a social worker was. Our dentist was in James Street and a man called [REDACTED] came to the home to teach us music. He is still alive. I have never met him but I heard him being talked about on Radio Ulster [REDACTED] was the drama teacher at St Joseph's and he came out to the home to teach us drama. We would put on big plays every Christmas and the Bishop of Derry [REDACTED] would come to see them. The older boys in Termonbacca were in a big brass band that performed as well. We would get small presents at Christmas time, I assume they were donated from outside.

22. On a Saturday everyone went into [SR 1] office and she would write down in a big notebook who had gotten 2 and 6. You would get your 2 and 6 and go down the town to Derry on a Saturday with your friends. I remember your name and a date were in that book. I always thought that date

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was my date of birth but it wasn't. It was the date I was admitted to Termonbacca. For years, I never knew my age and I never knew my date of birth. You were called by a number in the home and I was number twenty-eight.

Life after care

23. In 1965 I left Termonbacca for good as I was adopted by the [REDACTED] when I was about thirteen. I was lucky in that I was put forward for adoption. When I met my mother in later life, I always asked her why she didn't have me adopted as a baby so I could grow up in a normal family instead of in an institution. She didn't care what happened to me.

24. I was happy enough with the [REDACTED] although I worked very hard. Eventually, I took over the milk run when [REDACTED] died because there was nobody else to do it. I don't speak to the [REDACTED] today because the children didn't respect their parents. I would have worked all my life for [REDACTED] but when they sold the farm, I didn't get anything from it. Once you are adopted there is a stigma. I don't think that's right, I think you should be treated as if you were their real child. I never told the [REDACTED] about what went on in Termonbacca.

25. When I was getting married in 1978 I went up to Termonbacca to get my mother's contact details. [REDACTED] SR 2 [REDACTED] was still there and she was nice as pie to me. When my first child was born in 1979 I got in touch with my mother. We met up at the Grand Opera House in Belfast and I found out she had went on to have six more children after me with her husband. Her husband was still alive and he didn't know anything about me. She had become pregnant with me by another man. She was terrified I would turn up on her doorstep out of the blue and ruin things for her but I never did. After her husband died, she said she wanted nothing more to do with me.

26. My mother is still alive today, she is 84 but I haven't spoken to her in the last four years. The first time I met her was when I was twenty-eight and from the

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ages of twenty-eight to fifty-six I had a relationship with her. In all that time, she made no attempt to make amends for what she had done. She would have been happier if I had never approached her. I can't understand how somebody could just have a child out of wedlock and use that as an excuse to keep them out of sight and out of mind. The fact she went on to have six more children as if you never existed is devastating. They know the full story about me now but I don't have a relationship with any of my half-siblings. My mother probably spun them some sort of yarn about me.

27. The sexual abuse I suffered in Termonbacca has devastated my life. I've been married but I got divorced twelve years ago. I have had relationships but I find it difficult to relate to people. I have four children, three girls called [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and a boy called [REDACTED]. They are all in their thirties now except [REDACTED] the youngest who is twenty-six. Their mother left when the youngest was twelve but they have all done well for themselves, they are all educated. I have a good relationship with my children but I feel they can't understand what I went through at Termonbacca. The majority of people wouldn't understand. I have been with my partner [REDACTED] for four years now. She is widowed about fifteen years. Her husband was an alcoholic and we have a lot in common. We go on holidays together and I visit my daughter [REDACTED] who lives in New York.

28. I feel like this story needs to be told. It's not sympathy I'm looking for, just for somebody to say they understand what we went through. It seems like nobody gives a crap to be honest.

29. I have recently reported the abuse I suffered to the police. I met with DS Arnie Henderson of Strand Road PSNI station on two occasions in October 2013.

Statement of Truth

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

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HIA 196

Sig

Dated 31/OCT/13.