

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 305

Witness Name: HIA 305

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 305

I, **HIA 305** will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] in County Donegal. My mother was called [REDACTED]. She was a single mother. She died in Kildare. I only met her once since leaving care.
2. I do not know the identity of my father. I met my cousin [REDACTED] later in life and she had looked after my mother during the last ten years of her life and my mother had told her that my father was either a British soldier or a jockey called [REDACTED].

Nazareth House, Derry (1/10/1947 – 1949) and St Joseph's Home, Termonbacca (1949 – 26/1/1953)

3. I was placed as a baby in Nazareth House in Derry on 1st October 1947 when I was [REDACTED] old. I was then moved to Termonbacca two years later in 1949.
4. My only memory of Termonbacca is that the toilets had a black floor and I was caught licking the floor once and punished. I think I was three or four at the time. I also recall being punished for wetting the bed. The nuns put me in the parlour

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with the door locked and all I could see was the light from the Sacred Heart picture fluttering and the eyes from the picture staring at me. It scared me so much that I squealed until they let me out. I met the Mother Superior of Termonbacca during my first trip back to Ireland in 1979. She recognised me but I cannot recall her name now. I reminded her of that punishment and she said "I know, that was so bad, we don't do those things these days".

5. I recall there was a woman at either Nazareth House or Termonbacca who was always there for me and we bonded with each other when I was a child. She was always smiling, helping and coming to see me and then she seemed to disappear out of my life with no explanation. I think her name was [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] I remember being very fond of her and feeling it was a great loss to never see her again.
6. I only remember little things like suffering from earache, the rows of cots in the nursery and peeling icicles off the window in the home. I also remember being called cruel names by the other boys like "flannel face".
7. I sailed to Australia on 28th January 1953 on the New Australia. I do not recall anything about why I was chosen to go to Australia. I think I was only five years old at the time. My migration form is signed by [REDACTED] SR 85 who was the Mother Superior in Termonbacca. It is dated 25th November 1952. Before boarding the ship I was dressed in a little grey suit and I was so proud of my appearance. I recall very little about the ship or the journey. I know we came via the Suez Canal and I can recall some of the tourists on the boat throwing pennies over and local children diving in to get them. I arrived in Fremantle on 22nd February 1953.
8. There were women sent with us to look after us and I recall a nun called Sister [REDACTED] AU 107 came on the ship with us. I recall the heat upon arrival. It was forty degrees and my face burned and my lips cracked and we were not given any cream to protect ourselves from the heat.

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Castledare (February 1953 – 1957)

9. We were taken initially to St Joseph's Foundling Home which was run by the Sisters of Mercy. I stayed there for a year and was then moved to Castledare. I was constantly called "Fatty" **HIA 305** or ridiculed for being short and was constantly put down or expected to perform for the other boys and the Brothers so I became a bit of a show off when in reality I suffered from very low self esteem. **BAU 7** called me a "show pony" and he used it as a put down but he also used it to his advantage when he wanted to increase donations. I remember on appeal days when the Brothers were collecting money and shaking their tins I always did better and was able to collect more money than the other boys. The Lotteries Commission were always asked to make donations and the Brothers often asked me to entertain them in order to encourage donations. In fact Mr Triat, who was the Chairman of the Lotteries Commission, and his wife chose me to stay with them on occasion and the Brothers encouraged this as Mr Triat was an important benefactor.
10. One of the Brothers at Castledare, **BAU 9** had a notorious reputation for abusing children. He did not abuse me but he abused other boys. **BAU 33** **BAU 33** put on concerts at Castledare and I liked him because he was quite theatrical but he was physically very strict and would often hit the boys. He had a vicious temper. I was not sexually abused by any Brother but I was sexually abused by a few of the older boys.

Clontarf Boys Town (1957 – 1963)

11. I moved to Clontarf when I was about ten years old. There was an aboriginal man on the staff at Clontarf and he was a very good teacher. He was called **AU 9**
12. **BAU 8** was another Brother at Clontarf who used his fists a lot to hit me and the other boys.

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13. I recall feeling quite anxious as I grew older to know who I was and where I had come from. When I was about thirteen or fourteen I wrote a few letters to the nuns and the Child Migration Centre in Perth whilst I was at school in an attempt to learn more about my background but I did not find out anything about my family at that stage. I never received any response and am not entirely sure that my letters were ever forwarded on to the correct addresses.
14. I was sent out to stay with the [REDACTED] family during my time in care which was a real saving grace for me. I was sent up to the wheat belt area and things were quite different there. They enjoyed a drink and were not as strict and they let me sing at parties after football matches and things like that. I never stopped talking and they nicknamed me "earbasher". I stayed away for six weeks and had a great time. It was a double edged sword however as I loved staying there but hated having to return to the orphanage and I wouldn't eat for a couple of days after I returned as I didn't like feeling like an orphan again. I think I was institutionalised.
15. In 1959 I was asked to host St Patrick's night at Her Majesty's Theatre in Perth. I did this when I was twelve years old. However, the put downs by the other boys and the Brothers had an effect on me and I remember as a child I always felt as if I had to change my personality and repress my urge to have fun.
16. I was given a cat by the Lotteries Commission and I looked after it in my room when she had kittens. [REDACTED] **BAU 16** made fun of me in front of all the boys because of the way I was taking care of this cat. The boys then started to make fun of me and they would shout "meow" as they passed me. I was always good at school and around this time I passed seven out of eight exams and qualified to go to Aquinas College when I was about fifteen or sixteen years old. However, I was not allowed to go and [REDACTED] **BAU 16** said that after what I had done with the cat I was not worthy of going to this college. I was sent instead to a boarding house in Perth and a job was arranged for me in a men's clothing store called [REDACTED]. I was devastated at not being allowed to go to Aquinas College.

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17. I was not supposed to be selling products in [REDACTED] shop but I did this on occasion and I was a good salesman but they would always make me go back to dusting hankies so I got bored with this job. An employee in the furniture department in [REDACTED] put me in touch with another firm and I moved to work in a cabinet making factory.
18. I then worked with building firms for a number of years. There were certain initiation pranks that the older men played on the new members of staff and I did not have any idea what was going on. I was obliged to complete my apprenticeship until I was twenty one years old and when I reached twenty one I was no longer under the guardianship of the Child Welfare Department. I did not receive any money from them at this stage but they assisted by paying for my tools and equipment during my apprenticeship. I then worked for [REDACTED] which was owned by two Irish brothers and I worked there on and off from 1968 until 1984.

Life after care

19. I returned to Ireland in 1979. At that stage I had no idea where to go or how to trace my relatives. I travelled around on a motorbike and slept rough. I located the priest who was named on my birth certificate and he told me how to find my mother. I found my mother in Kildare. She had never married. She was taken back when she saw me. She did not want me to take a photo of her but I did. She denied that she was my mother but then asked me how things were going for me in Australia. The Child Migrants Trust hold a copy of a letter sent by my mother to the nuns putting me in their care. My mother and I did not keep in touch and we never met or spoke to each other again after this trip.
20. During my trip I visited the Reverend Mother in Termonbacca and she recognised me. I cannot recall her name now. She told me that I would never go to sleep as a baby unless I was picked up from the cot and cuddled.

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21. I funded my first trip to Ireland myself but I returned in 2005 as I was assisted financially by the British Government. On that trip I met some of my relatives that the Child Migrants Trust had traced on my behalf. My cousins were extremely happy to see me and they welcomed me with open arms.
22. I am usually the life and soul of the party and I know a lot of people but at times I feel that it is all superficial contact with people. I get angry at times and go on drinking binges. I am off alcohol at the moment.
23. I loved being allowed out on visits to families from the home. I have always missed out on that feeling of family and the closeness that you develop with family members. I miss never having any family feeling and the lack of warmth. I remain single and am a bit circumspect about relationships in general. It would have been nice to have known that you belonged somewhere. I do not really allow myself to get close to anyone because once you grow fond of someone they tend to disappear or that is what happened a lot throughout my childhood.
24. My feelings towards the Brothers remain conflicted. After all they were the only family I had for many years.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

HIA 305

Dated

29th May = 2014.

L.E.M. 3.

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Ref. No.....

Group Nomination No.....

Commonwealth of Australia

DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION, AUSTRALIA HOUSE, LONDON.

Child Migration.

Sections A and C of this form are to be completed by the approved voluntary organisation in the United Kingdom. Section B to be completed by the parent or guardian of the child.

SECTION A.

1. Name in full **HIA 305**
(In block capitals, surname first) ST JOSEPH'S HOME, TERMONDACCA. DERRY. N.I.
2. Full Postal Address.....
(In block capitals)
3. Age 2 yrs. Date and Year of Birth..... Place of Birth.....
4. Sex M Weight 2st. 6lbs. Church Denomination R.C.
5. Furnish name and address of parent, guardian or next of kin **SR 106**
(If father is living his name must be given) St Joseph's Termonbacca.
6. Is there any record of mental disease in the child? NO
7. Has he or she at any time been subject to fits? NO
8. Educational standard Under school age.

Signed M.M. Muldoon -
Catholic Child Welfare Committee.
For and on behalf of.....
19.10.49 (Name of Sponsoring Organisation)
Date.....

SECTION B.

PARENT'S OR GUARDIAN'S CONSENT (FATHER IF LIVING)

I, **SR 106** Superior
of St Joseph's Home Termonbacca Londonderry.
the father of **HIA 305**
mother
guardian

hereby consent to my child/ward proceeding to Australia under the Commonwealth Child Migration Scheme.

Dated this 16th day of Oct. 1949

Signature **SR 106**

*Witness J.E. Hennessy Qualification Head Teacher
Address Christian Brothers' Brow of the Hill
Derry.

*The witness to the parent's or guardian's consent must be one of the following :-
A Mayor, Magistrate, Provost or Justice of the Peace.
A Barrister, Advocate, Solicitor or Notary Public.
A Minister of Religion