HIA REF: 225

Witness Name: HIA 225

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 225

I, HIA 225 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [redacted]

2. I was the third of seven children. I had two older siblings called NHB 21 and DL 136 and four younger siblings called NHB 22 NL 60, NHB 23 and NL 3. When my mother had the younger children I was placed in Brethany Nursery twice and Williamson House Children's Home on the Antrim Road twice. We lived in the [redacted] Road area of Belfast. We had a two bedroom house. My father was an alcoholic and I think he was domestically violent towards my mother. When I was about five or six my mother left home and never returned. I never saw her again. I understand that she moved to America for a while. I am not sure where she went after that. I think she has now passed away.

3. On the evening before I was placed in Nazareth Lodge my father set the house on fire by breaking a gas pipe in the kitchen when he was drunk. I do not know what woke me up but I came down the stairs and saw the fire and was able to wake everyone up so we all got out of the house safely. We stayed at a neighbour's house that night and we were all placed in care the next day. The boys were placed in Nazareth Lodge and the girls were placed in Nazareth House. NL 3 was initially placed in the nursery and then came to the main part

of Nazareth House Lodge when he was older. I was eight when we were all placed in care in 1965.

4. We were taken into care by a social worker called [redacted]. He told us we were going on holiday for a week to a big house like a castle and our house would be fixed by the time we got back. At the end of the week I was standing waiting for him to come back for us to take us home but he never came. I do not remember ever seeing him again while I was in care. That was my first memory of a social worker and his dishonesty has remained with me. In 1982 when I was an adult and [redacted] I met [redacted] again while I was [redacted]. I spoke to him about what he had said. He apologised to me and justified his comments by saying "that's what we did in those days."

Nazareth Lodge Children's Home, Belfast (13/01/1965 - 20/08/1968)

5. [redacted]

6. [redacted]

7. [redacted]

8. [redacted]

[redacted]

9. [redacted]

10. [redacted]

11. [redacted]

12. [redacted]

13. [redacted]

14. [redacted]

[redacted]

15. [redacted]

16. [redacted]

17. [redacted]

[redacted]

18. [redacted]

19. [redacted]

20. [redacted]

21. [redacted]

[redacted]

22. [redacted]

23. [redacted]

24. [redacted]

De La Salle Boys' Home, Rubane House, Kircubbin (20/08/1968 – 17/04/1972)

25. I was moved to Rubane House on 20th August 1968. I had no idea what the place was going to be like. Every possession that I brought with me from Nazareth Lodge was numbered. I was number two. And every possession I acquired in Rubane was numbered with the number two.

26. When I arrived in Rubane I saw my brother DL 136 for the first time in three years. He was waiting for me when I got there and he looked out for me but he was not there for very long.

27. When I arrived there was the main house and chalets. I was placed in Chalet 1 and DL 134 and DL 135 were the house parents in our chalet.

28. I remember one day DL 135 sent for me. She took me into where she lived, told me to take my trousers and pants down and she hit me on my backside and backs of my leg with a bamboo cane. The tears were streaming down my face. She had found out that I had gone upstairs earlier in the day without putting my slippers on. She was fiery and would fly off the handle easily. When I was about fourteen DL 134 and DL 135 left and they were replaced by a couple called Mr and DL 314 .

29. I remember a two boys running away once. BR 2 put the boys over a railing and beat them really hard on the backside with a bamboo cane. We were told never to run away because they would find us and punish us. I never ran away. Even DL 136 who had a history of running away, did not run away when I was in Rubane.

30. We were able to earn points by doing housework or behaving ourselves or doing well in school, for example. The points were then turned into pocket money (rewards). The rewards were handed out on a Sunday morning after mass in the main hall. If you had earned enough points to receive pocket money you were given 20 pence to 25 pence. We were called out by our numbers.

31. I remember after about a year in Rubane realising that I wanted to learn more at school. There were no qualifications like "O"-Levels to work towards and there

was no homework. I thought I needed something more than this and I wanted to go to another school. When I asked BR 2 if I could go to another school he gave me an "O"-Level paper to look at and told me that if I was able to complete it I could go to another school. Of course I had no idea how to complete the paper so I was stuck where I was.

32. There was one day at school when I was being taught by BR 4 I was sitting beside DL 95 daydreaming and BR 4 walked past and said "you need to stop copying". I replied "Brother, I don't copy". BR 4 used to keep a rolled up strap in his pocket. He took out the strap and hit me several times on the hand with it. The tears were streaming down my face. I remember my hand was so sore I could not lift my pencil so when I could not get on with my work he hit me across my left ear and knocked me off my seat.

33. I decided after this that I had had enough and I told my social worker, Doreen Davidson. She asked me what I wanted to happen and I told her I just did not want it to happen again. I do not know what she said or did but BR 4 did not cane me or hit me again.

34. There was a woodwork teacher called DL 6 He was good at wood work but he was a poor teacher and he was the most bad-tempered man I have ever met. He had a habit of throwing things at us like T-squares, hammers or dusters, for example. He used to call me names like [redacted] and [redacted]. I was not good at woodwork. Something happened in class one day and he hit me with a steel ruler. He pulled my arm behind my back and hit me on the fingers. I lost the finger nail on my little finger on my right hand. He knew where to hit you to hurt you the most.

35. BR 15 was in charge of the clothes and one of the jobs I had was to help him. He would have touched me up and touched my penis but it never went any further than that. He was notorious for touching your backside and other parts. I had heard stories about him so I learned to stay away from him whenever possible.

36. I shared a room with another boy. He moved and I had the room to myself. When I had the room to myself a boy called DL 95 would come into my room and try to have sex with me. I tried to fight him off but he held me down. I just went rigid so he could not do what he wanted to do so he gave up and left. He tried to do this about four times but he was not able to any of the times as I went rigid and wouldn't let him have sex with me. He had a relationship with another boy whose first name I cannot remember. He was DL 412 's younger brother. One day this boy [redacted] and DL 95 pulled me down the stairs at the snooker room. I fell and really hurt my coccyx. I got up and went to thump him. DL 95 joined in and he gave me a good hammering, he split my lip, made my nose bleed and gave me a black eye. DL 95 was the toughest boy in Rubane. Nobody intervened. I realised afterwards that BR 2 was watching. He summoned us to his office. He asked me what had happened. I said "nothing happened" out of fear of what DL 95 would do if I told. I realised BR 2 had been watching and I said to him "if you saw what happened why did you let it happen?". He caned the both of us. Afterwards people who would have given me a hard time stopped giving me a hard time. I think it was because I did not tell.

37. There was another boy called DL 94 who came into my room twice and tried to have sex with me. I did the same thing as I had done with DL 95 DL 95 I went rigid, so he was not able to have sex with me.

38. I woke up one night and HIA 21 was in my room and he had his hand under the covers trying to masturbate me. I told him to get out or I would tell BR 2 . He never bothered me again.

39. During my time in Rubane I was also sexually assaulted by a man called DL 141 DL 141 DL 141 was a past resident and he used to visit Rubane after he left. I knew his brother who was two or three years older than me. They were both in Nazareth Lodge and Rubane. When I was fifteen he became very friendly and I do not know who he asked but I was allowed to go to his house for

the weekend. He lived on Beechmount Avenue, off the Falls Road. I was about fifteen and he was in his early twenties. He was a plasterer and he had his own business. I think I went up to his house about three or four weekends over a period of time. I slept in his room in his double bed and he slept in another bed. The first weekend I spent with him was good. We played cards and I won some money so when I went back to Rubane I was the bee's knees for a while as I had more money than everyone else. The second weekend that I stayed with him he came into my room, got into my bed and started to touch me. I pretended to be asleep. I did not know that this was wrong because this is what was happening at Rubane as well. I just knew that I did not want it to happen. The third weekend I went up he tried to have sex with me. I pretended to be asleep again because I thought that was the only way I could protect myself. I do not think he penetrated me but he did try. He then turned me over and tried to put his penis in my mouth. I just kept my mouth closed. When I went back to the home I did not tell anyone what had happened. It happened every time I went back there. During one of the weekend visits he told me there was something wrong with the bed he slept on and he would have to share his double bed with me. I decided I did not want to go there anymore.

Life After Care

40. Around Easter 1972, when I was fifteen and a half years old, I left Rubane. Before I left, my brother DL 136 was visiting me in Rubane and I was visiting him in Kincora. I thought that I was going to Kincora because that is where DL 136 was and that we would be together again. Since I was placed in care, the thought of us all being together again as a family was what kept me going so I was initially angry when I found out that I was not going to Kincora. I had no idea where I was going as nobody had told me. There was no preparation and there was no aftercare. I did not know how to look after myself. I was placed in digs at [redacted] This is where I met [redacted]. He came into my room one afternoon and sexually assaulted me. He held me down and tried to masturbate me. I realised I had to try and survive here as well. DL 136 came back and stayed for a while. I did not tell DL 136 what was happening but [redacted] left me alone while DL 136 was there. After I left

care and moved to a flat I ended up having to ask DL 136 to leave my flat for stealing my money when I was about seventeen or eighteen. I have not seen him since.

41. When I was in Rubane it was arranged for me to a training course in a government training centre on the [redacted] to be an apprentice [redacted] However they told me that class was full so I did an [redacted] course instead which lasted 3-6 months. I then went to work for [redacted].

42. When I was seventeen I went back to college and got five "O"-Levels. I worked in [redacted] and I then worked in a laboratory. I think I did well to get my exams but I still thought I was stupid. After a childhood in care I found it over whelming to make decisions.

43. When I thought back to my childhood I thought that there has to be a better way for people to treat each other. I decided I would like to give something back to children in care. That is when I decided to become a social worker. I applied for a post as a [redacted] with the [redacted] when I was twenty one. One of the women on the interview panel, [redacted], told me that if I wanted to work as a [redacted] to go and get a year's experience and come back if I was still interested. I phoned BR 2 and told him about the experience I needed so he invited me to come to work in Rubane on alternate weekends. I assisted with Chalet 3 and I helped supervise activities and make the boys' tea. I then applied for a job with the [redacted] and I was given a job in a [redacted] in Portrush as an [redacted]. I trained and qualified as a [redacted] and have had various [redacted] jobs since. I have progressed to be a [redacted]. I think I wanted to be a [redacted] to show [redacted]

44. The girls seemed to have an equally difficult time in Nazareth House and have had long term issues. My eldest sister NHB 21 has mental health problems. She

is bi-polar. NHB 22 got married and went to live in [redacted]. She is anorexic and an alcoholic. NL 60 suffers from depression and her grandchild is in care. NHB 23 also had mental health problems and she committed suicide when she was forty six. NL 3 was the brains of the family. He passed the eleven plus. He moved to [redacted] with NHB 21 and her husband. He joined the [redacted] and was engaged to be married however he committed suicide when he was twenty six. I have not seen DL 136 since the incident in the flat after I left Rubane.

45. In reflecting about my childhood experiences and contrasting it with life after care I do not see myself as a victim I see myself as a survivor.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed HIA 225

Dated 10-3-14