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HIA REF: 204

Witness Name: HIA 204

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 204

I, HIA 204 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]. I had four older sisters called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] died. My parents had another daughter who they also called [REDACTED] in memory of her. She was younger than me. My father worked in the mines in [REDACTED]. When I was one or two years old the family moved to Northern Ireland. We lived near [REDACTED].
2. I am unsure of the circumstances of how I ended up in care. I understand that my father left us and moved back to [REDACTED]. We never heard from him again and he never provided my mother with any financial support. My mother was trying to establish a career as a nurse so we were placed in care. I was sent to Nazareth Lodge and my older sisters were sent to Nazareth House. My younger sister [REDACTED] was brought up by my grandmother in [REDACTED].

Nazareth Lodge, Belfast (03/04/1929 to 05/09/1936)

3. I was placed in Nazareth Lodge when I was three years old. My mother paid ten shillings a month for my keep. I was initially in the nursery part of the home and then I moved to the older children's part when I was about four years old. There were two dormitories called St Patrick's for the senior boys and St

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Joseph's for the junior boys. I was in St Joseph's dormitory and Sister **SR 118** was in charge. She had a cell at the end of the dormitory but it was the older boys who were in charge of us at night time.

4. My mother trained to be a midwife in [REDACTED] and then she got a job as a midwife in [REDACTED]. She was only able to visit me once a year in the summertime for an hour. My father did not support her in any way so I suppose she was unable to afford to visit more often as well as the fact that she worked so far away.
5. I went to school in Nazareth Lodge which was run by the nuns. If I got a bad report in school I was beaten by the nuns. There was a lay teacher called Mrs **NL 118** who had a temper. She hit me across the face with a whip once and left a terrible mark on my face. She told me to lie to the nuns if they questioned what had happened to my face and tell them that I had fallen.
6. I was always selected to sing in concerts as I was an attractive child. I would also have been selected to present boxes of chocolates to visiting nuns. One time I shared the box of chocolates with some of the other boys and I was beaten by one of the nuns with a strap for that.
7. Older boys were in charge of us. They were about fourteen or fifteen years old. At night when the boys were taking a bath the older boys were left in charge as the nuns did not come into the bathroom. That is where the sexual abuse took place. I was regularly taken into one of the toilet cubicles in the bathroom and made to perform impure acts on them. I was abused by a boy called **NL 121**.
8. I would cry in bed every night because of the abuse. I was also abused in the dormitory at night time. A boy called **NL 119** abused me. He made me perform acts on him and he performed acts on me.
9. I had a bed wetting problem. When I wet the bed I was punished the next morning by being taken to the bathroom by the older boys where they threw buckets of ice cold water over me. I then had to kneel outside Sister

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SR 118 room. When she came out she made me lie down on the floor and she beat me on the backside with a strap. This went on for years.

10. The older boys bullied me and played mind games. One of them broke a statue of our Lady and told me that if anyone asked I was to say that I had done it. I was so manipulated by them that I even told the priest in confession that I had broken a statue.
11. I would cry every night about the abuse but I knew that I could not do anything about it. I told my mother about the abuse every year when she visited but she could not do anything. I think she was worried that if she made a fuss the nuns would kick me out and she needed the nuns to keep me so that she could make a living in [REDACTED]
12. If the weather was good in the summertime I saw my sisters a couple of times a week as the girls from Nazareth House used to come and play in the field in front of Nazareth Lodge. I never saw my sisters during the winter time.

Life After Care

13. When I was ten years old my mother got a job in [REDACTED]. She then took my sisters and I out of our respective homes and took us back to live with her. We lived in a house near the dispensary which our mother ran. We helped to keep it clean and I chopped the wood and brought in the coal for the fire. I went to a Christian Brothers primary school in [REDACTED] and then [REDACTED] Secondary school.
14. When I grew older I got a job in a chemist shop in [REDACTED]. I was serving an apprenticeship to become a pharmacist when I was called up by the [REDACTED] Army. I went through my physical in Belfast and I was sent to [REDACTED] Germany. The war had just ended. I was put in charge of the pharmacy because the man who had been in charge was going home. There was a lot of disease in the country especially venereal disease. I was posted there for three years. I went home to [REDACTED] every six months. When I left the Army I went back to [REDACTED] and went to school [REDACTED]. The idea was to get all the men coming out

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of the Army an education in order to start the economy again. I went to [REDACTED] University for two years. Among other subjects I studied Greek and English. I had picked up German from working there. After college I was head hunted by a [REDACTED] called [REDACTED] who trained me to be a [REDACTED]. I would take [REDACTED] to Europe – Germany, Ireland, Scotland, England – for three to six months of the year. I was based in [REDACTED] and I would work there for the other six months of the year as a [REDACTED]. I also took [REDACTED] to other parts of the world including Australia and New Zealand. I worked up to [REDACTED] manager and was running the organisation, especially in Europe and [REDACTED]. I worked in [REDACTED] for close to forty years.

15. I suffered three strokes while I was living in [REDACTED]. My nephew decided to bring me back to Ireland and I have been very happy here ever since. I live with him and his wife.
16. I found out that my father died of lung disease which he contracted from working in the mines. He was also a heavy drinker.
17. I believe that the victims of institutional abuse should receive compensation for their suffering.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

HIA 204

Dated

6-8-2014