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HIA REF: 214

Witness Name: HIA 214

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 214

I, **HIA 214** will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] I was the youngest of nine children. Six boys and three girls. We lived in [REDACTED] Shortly after I was born my parents separated. My father was an alcoholic and my mother became unable to cope with us all. My eldest brother, [REDACTED] went to live with my aunt and uncle in [REDACTED] The welfare authorities put the rest of us in homes in pairs. [REDACTED] and I went to Nazareth Lodge. **NL 90** and [REDACTED] went to Marmion Children's Home in Holywood. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] went to the De La Salle Boys' Home in Kircubbin. [REDACTED] and **NL 91** went to a foster home in [REDACTED]

Nazareth Lodge Children's Home, Belfast (11/03/1963 to 19/02/1965)

2. I understand that the records show that I was placed in Nazareth Lodge on 11th March 1963 when I was nearly two years old and left on 19th February 1965 when I was almost four. My recollection is that I was in Nazareth Lodge until I was seven or eight years old. I did not know that [REDACTED] was also in the home until a while later when one of the nuns mentioned in passing about me having a brother.

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3. I remember large dormitories and remember I was in the junior section but I am unsure who was looking after us.
4. I remember when I was in bed at night after the lights when out older boys from a different dormitory would get in to my bed and abuse me. I do not know who they were. He made me masturbate him. On two or three occasions I was bugged by him. I was about five or six years old when this type of abuse started. The same thing happened to other residents. I just hoped every night that it wasn't going to be my turn. I knew that it was not right or normal. I was frightened to go to the toilet at night time as I did not want to bring attention to myself so I often wet the bed.
5. The older boys inspected the beds every morning. If I had wet the bed I was punished by being made to stand in the corner of a classroom in front of everyone. I was aware that there were other boys being made to stand in other corners. It was a daily occurrence that boys were made to stand in the corner of the classroom facing the wall in front of the whole class. It was humiliating.
6. I went to school in Nazareth Lodge. I do not know who taught me at Nazareth Lodge and the only memories I have of school are standing in the corner.
7. I do not remember leaving the home apart from the times my foster parents took me out. I was fostered by the couple from [REDACTED] My foster father was [REDACTED] and they could not have children or their own so they decided to foster a child from a home. They told me that they were brought into our dormitory where we were all sitting on our beds and they pick me. They had previously fostered a boy called [REDACTED] and a girl called [REDACTED] They took me out for days at a time and this progressed to a weekend and then to a full week one summer.
8. When one of the nuns told me about [REDACTED] I told my foster parents and they made enquiries about him and confirmed to me that I did have a brother in Nazareth Lodge. After that they also took [REDACTED] out when they took me. Those was the only times I saw [REDACTED] when we were in the home.

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9. When I was eight or nine years old I remember the whole family being brought to a social services office somewhere in Belfast. Both my parents were there and we had to pick which parent we wanted to live with. I did not know who to pick but my older siblings picked my father so I went along with them. Obviously none of us realised at that stage that my mother had only left the home because our father was an alcoholic and she couldn't look after all of us on her own. My father brought us back to [REDACTED]. He had purchased a farm and brought five of the children back to live with him – [REDACTED] and I. [REDACTED] remained with my aunt and uncle and [REDACTED] and NL 91 were old enough to look after themselves.
10. Our mother went off the scene for quite a few years. I next saw my mother when I was seventeen or eighteen years old. I went to see her but it was a cold reunion, we were two strangers. I still keep in touch with her to this day. She is ninety four years old.
11. [REDACTED]
12. My father died of a burst ulcer when I was eleven years old. The Welfare became involved with us again and condemned the house we were living in. We

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were moved to a new Housing Executive house in [REDACTED]. A welfare officer visited us on a Friday afternoon. It was either [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] who visited. They brought us pocket money.

13. After my father died my foster parents came to visit me in [REDACTED] and left their telephone number in case I ever needed to get in touch with them. I remember going to a neighbour's house and asking to use the telephone so I could ring them and our relationship began again. They adopted [REDACTED] NL 90 and I and we moved back to [REDACTED] to live with them. They had also adopted a girl called [REDACTED] who was about five years old.

14.

15.

16.

Life After Care

17. When I was growing up I worked in one of the shops that my foster parents owned. When my foster father decided to sell the remaining shop I got a bank loan and bought the shop. I have owned and worked in shops ever since. I met my wife and we married in 1984. We have three children and are still married.

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18. The abuse I suffered began in Nazareth Lodge and continued throughout my childhood. I used to blame myself and wondered if I was doing anything to encourage those people to abuse me. Whenever my son was born I went through a very bad period worrying that I would do to him what was done to me. Of course I never did but it worried me greatly because I had often heard that people who were abused often go on to be abusers. What I went through as a child destroyed me so I was determined to bring my children up in a safe environment.

19. Everybody I trusted as a child seemed to harm me. [REDACTED]

20. As a result of the abuse I suffered throughout my childhood I am a mess today. I am very fortunate to have an understanding and supportive wife. We have three children but we no longer have a sex life. We have not had sex for eight years. We have a very good relationship aside from that. I attended Nexus and went to weekly sessions for nearly a year which I found beneficial but left me mentally exhausted afterward. I am confused about my sexuality after having sex with men so often. It has had a lasting effect on me. I have very little self confidence. I cannot bear anybody to be too close to me. I still feel I brought the abuse on myself. I know that I should not feel this way but it will never go away. All I am looking for is peace of mind. I feel that my mind is in turmoil. I have been on anti-depressants for thirty years but they have not cured anything. The only time I can get away from the thoughts is when I am sleeping.

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed **HIA 214**

Dated 12TH August 14.