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HIA REF: 259

Witness Name: HIA 259

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 259

I, HIA 259 will say as follows:-

Personal Details

1. My date of birth is [REDACTED] I was born out of wedlock. My mother and father had an unconventional relationship. My mother had an affair with my father and I think at one point she left her husband and went to live with my father in [REDACTED] They split up and she returned to her husband. She had other children within the marriage so I have many half sisters. I am the youngest. I also found out in later years that my mother had twins a year before me with my father that I didn't know about until recent years. She abandoned them and they were taken care of by a neighbour until they were placed into care and eventually adopted by a family as babies.
2. I had little contact with my mother from birth. I lived with my grandparents and my Aunt [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] in Belfast. The area was being developed so we moved to a new flat and my Aunt [REDACTED] got her own place. My grandfather died from a chest infection and my grandmother became ill only a few years later so she was hospitalised and I was taken into care after the welfare authorities became involved. I was taken temporarily into Nazareth Lodge but my grandmother did not recover and died in April 1972 so I had to remain in care.

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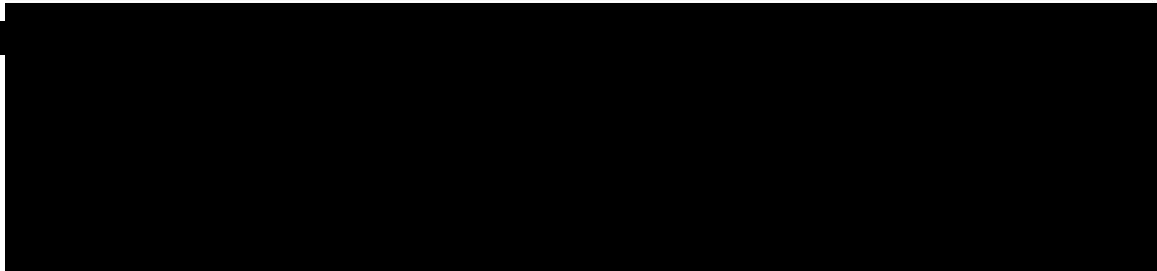
Nazareth Lodge, Ravenhill Road, Belfast (22 April 1972 – 29 August 1974)

3. I was placed in care in Nazareth Lodge for two and a half years. I recall when I arrived there they stripped me down and threw whatever clothing of mine that they considered to be no good out and it felt like being stripped in a prison. I remember for the first few weeks wishing my grandmother would recover so that I could go home but one of the nuns told me she had passed away so I knew I had to stay in the Lodge and that I was then on my own in the world. I never got to attend her funeral.
4. There was a lovely living room and bedroom in the Lodge but we were never allowed to use them. We lived in an old oratory during the day which had a wooden floor and massive windows. The school boys had their dinner there during the day. The kitchen was also there and it was a very large cold place to live. We slept in a dormitory at night that was located close to the oratory and we were locked in until morning. There were nine or ten beds in our dormitory. We then were lined up before breakfast in the morning in a corridor in our underpants and we got dressed in the oratory where our clothes would be put out in front of us, folded up and set out by us from the night before. We got dressed in our uniforms and hung around until school started. **NL 5** was in charge of our group. She would leave to go and do another job before school started and we went down to school ourselves. The school was on the premises. I had gone to St Patrick's Primary School before going to school at Nazareth Lodge.
5. We were taught by nuns and by ordinary civilian teachers.
6. There was an awful routine in the home and we just did the same thing every day. We went to mass on Sundays and sometimes we went to mass in the evenings. We went to school, came in from school and got changed, played a bit until tea time and then there was the usual fight for food every night as we did not get much. **NL 5** would sometimes let us watch a little bit of television but we were put to bed very early.

PRIVATE

7. When anyone important or a visiting dignitary came to the home we were all shoved into the nice room and allowed to play with the new toys until they left and as soon as they had gone we would be moved back to the old room again. We only got to play with toys at the weekend and even then we would not be given the brand new toys but old half broken toys would be dumped in with us.
8. We were not allowed to come and go freely in the home. Boys in other groups could come and go when they wanted but **NL 5** did not allow us to do that within our group. Our group was more regimented than other groups.
9. I also remember bath time was a chore because you did not get privacy and were not allowed to bathe alone. There was always at least two of us in the bath and we always had to share the bath water, we even had to share a toothbrush between seven or eight of us. It was disgusting but that is the way it was.
10. No-one in the home ever showed you any affection or took any interest in you. **NL 5** was vicious and brutal with the children. When it was coming in to Spring but still extremely cold outside she would put us in shorts and t-shirts and send us out in the frost. We would be freezing cold hanging around outside the school. In the summertime she would put us to bed at six o'clock every night even if the sun was blazing in the sky.
11. I used to have really bad chest infections and if I had coughed all night she would be raging the next day or she would hit me a smack on the head because my coughing had kept her awake. She had her own small room near to our living room and she stayed overnight in the home.
12. On one occasion she wanted us to set the table and because we did not know how to do it properly she lost her temper and stuck a fork in my arm. She was really vicious and had a nasty bad temper. I never received any medical treatment following this incident.

PRIVATE

13. The food was terrible in the home and everything was dripping in fat. I recall always being hungry during my time in the home.
14. We were always dressed the same which always made me feel ridiculous. Other groups called us the "whippets" because we whipped around all the time and did everything **NL 5** told us to do. There was no such thing as love shown by her, she was just brutal all the time. In fact she actually left the home at one stage and another friend of hers took over and she was even more brutal. I can no longer recall her name. She was also wicked and had no patience. If you could not do something or you did not do it to her satisfaction she would fly into a rage and punch you with her fists. **NL 5** **NL 5** would also have struck you with her hand or anything she had in her hand at the time.
15. There was always a nun in overall charge of a group and **SR 34** was in charge of our group. She told everyone what to do and kept an eye on everyone. I recall one occasion when I had rolled up newspaper and was kicking it around and broke a statue of St Patrick she whipped the hands off me with rulers. My hands were so badly swollen that I could not use them all day and I could not write for a week. An ex resident of the home had in fact died that day and **SR 34** used that as her excuse for being upset and for her behaviour towards me. The nuns were also brutal. They would turn around and smack you for no reason, they had their moments as well.
16. As I got older I realised that I would be sent to Rubane House, Kircubbin when I was eleven years old as that is what had happened to other boys who did not have families when they reached that age.
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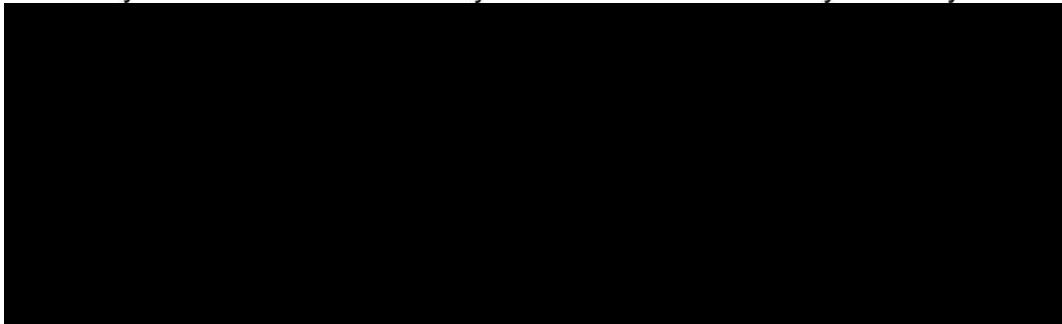
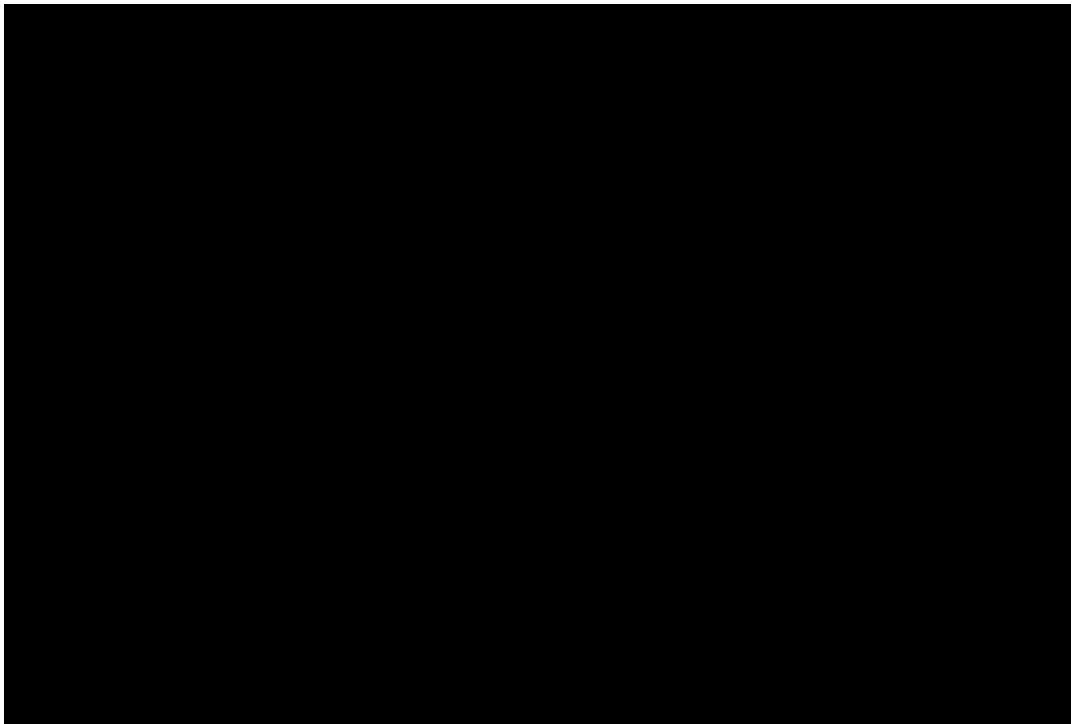
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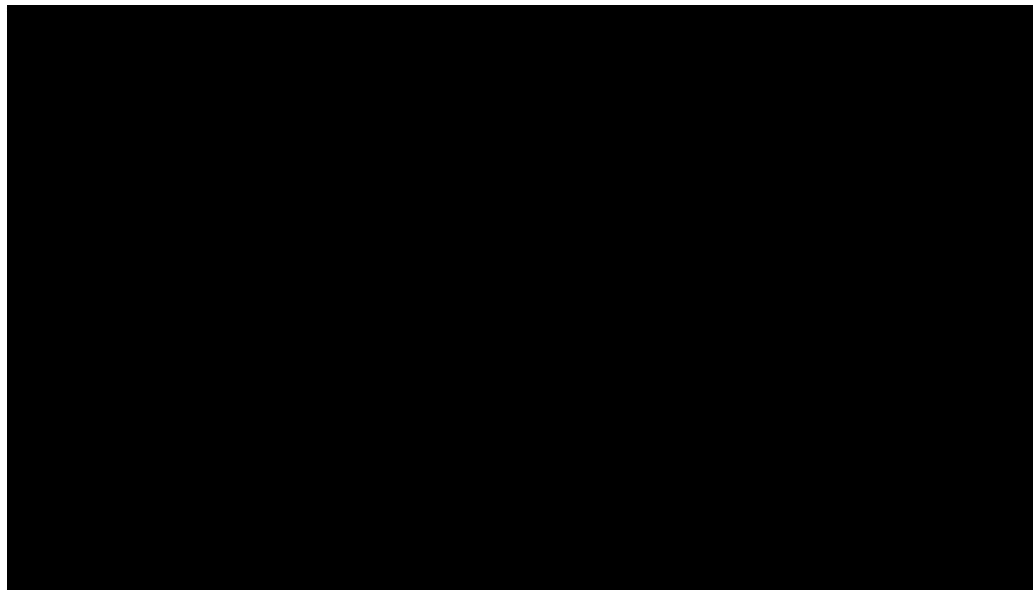
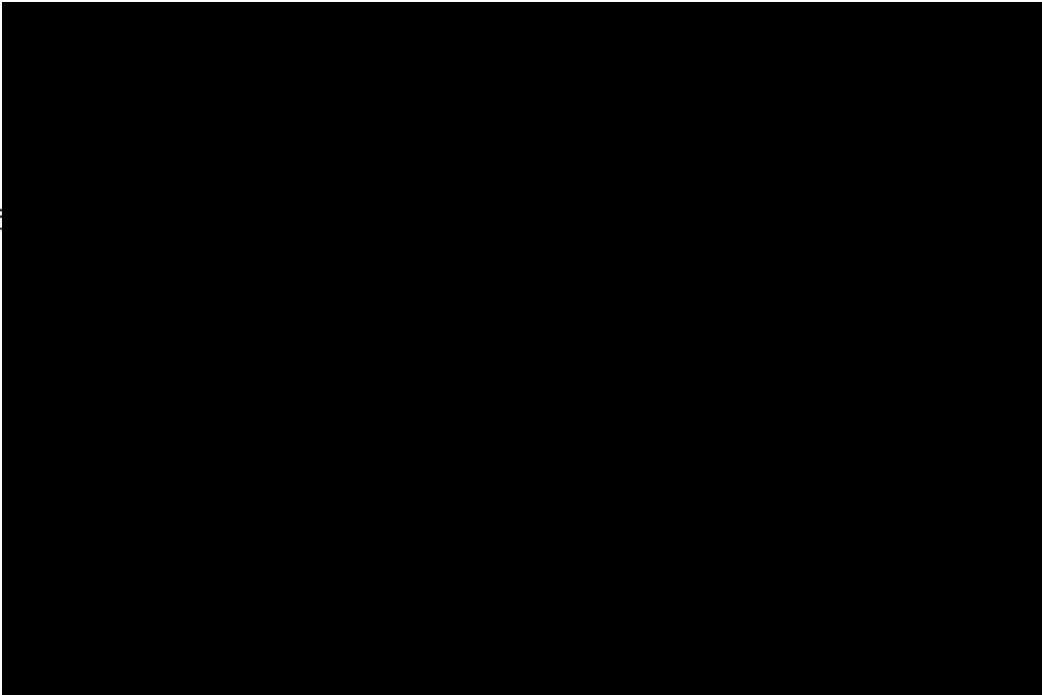
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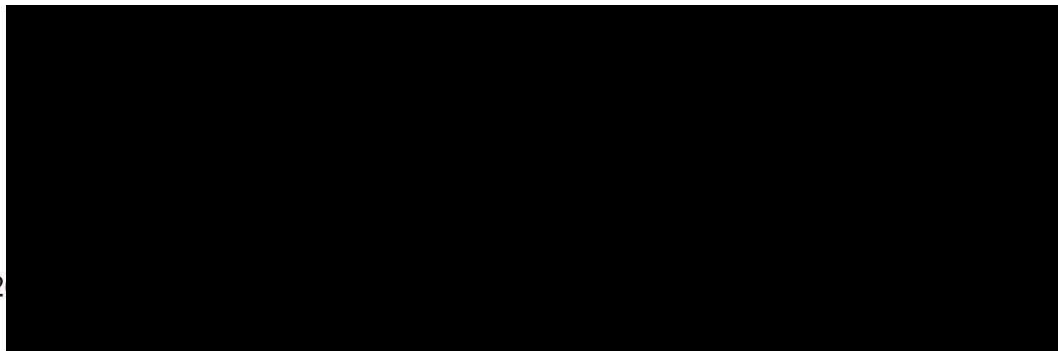


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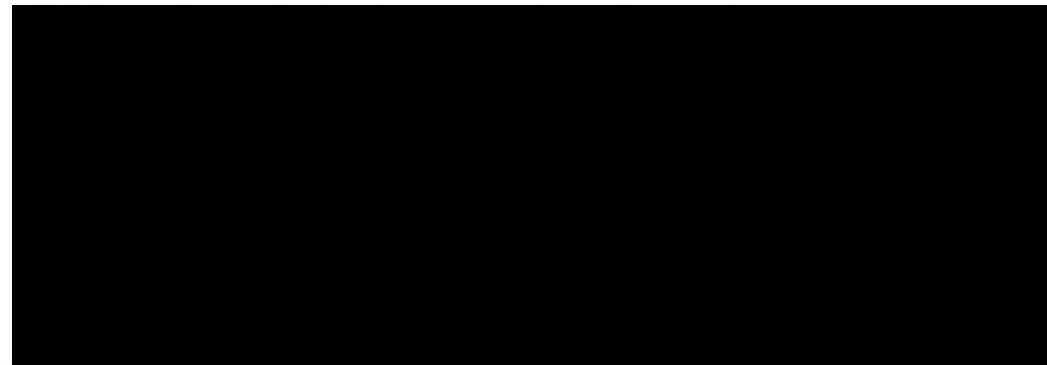
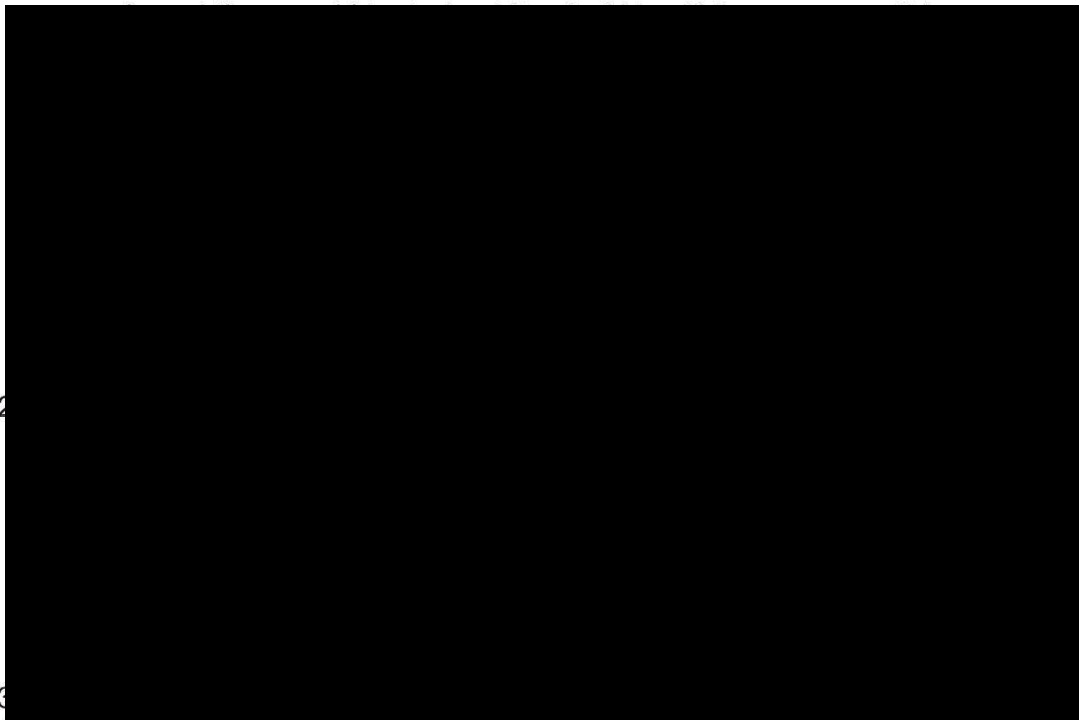
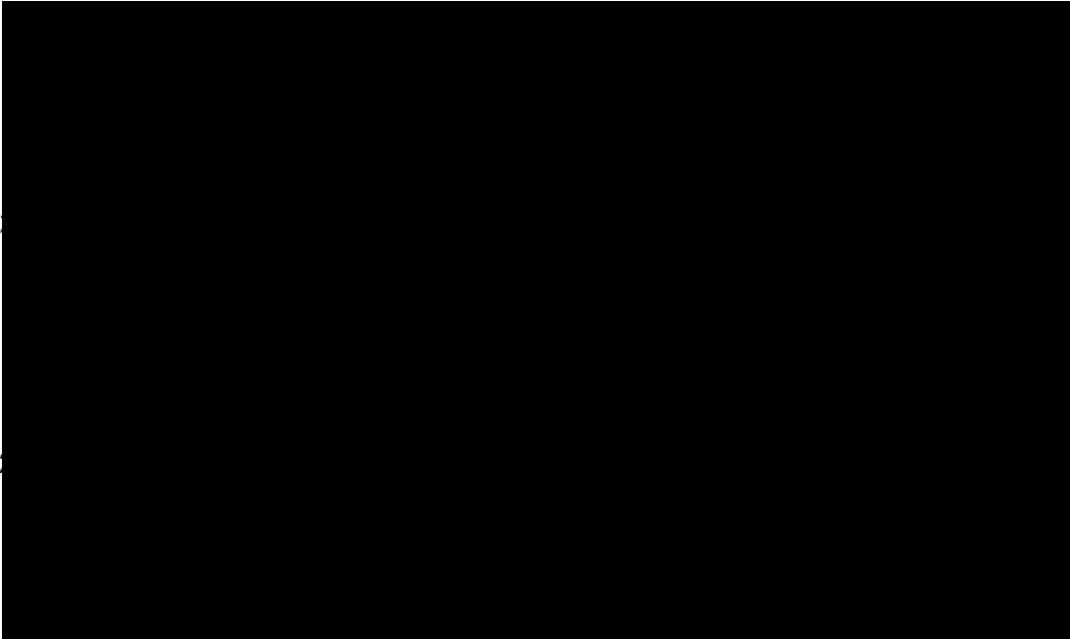
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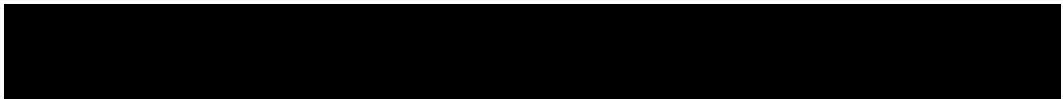
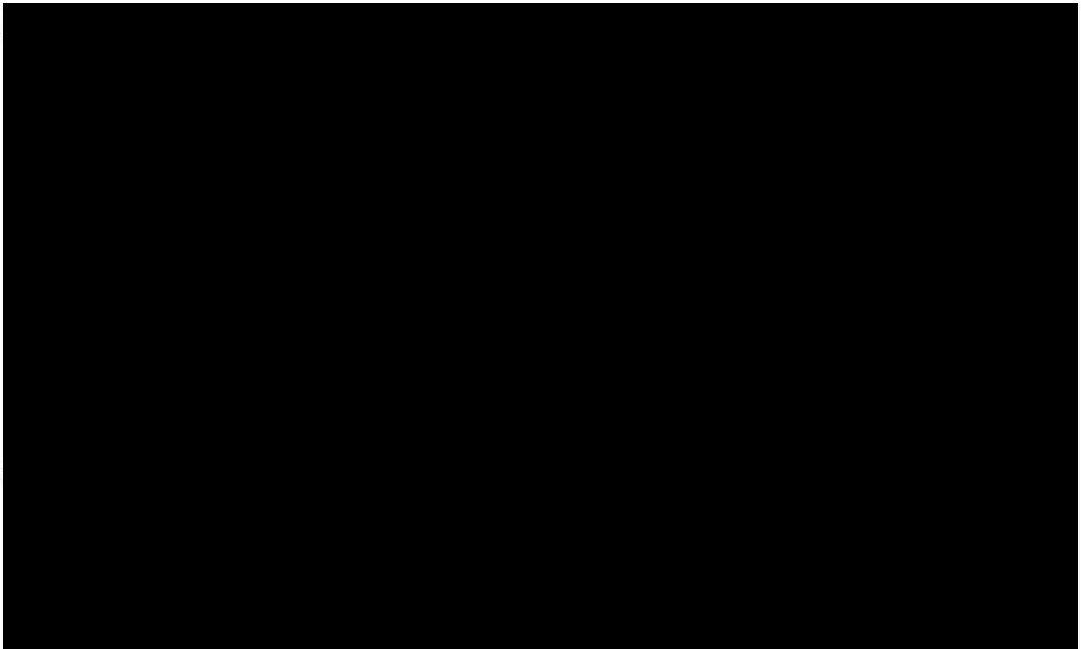
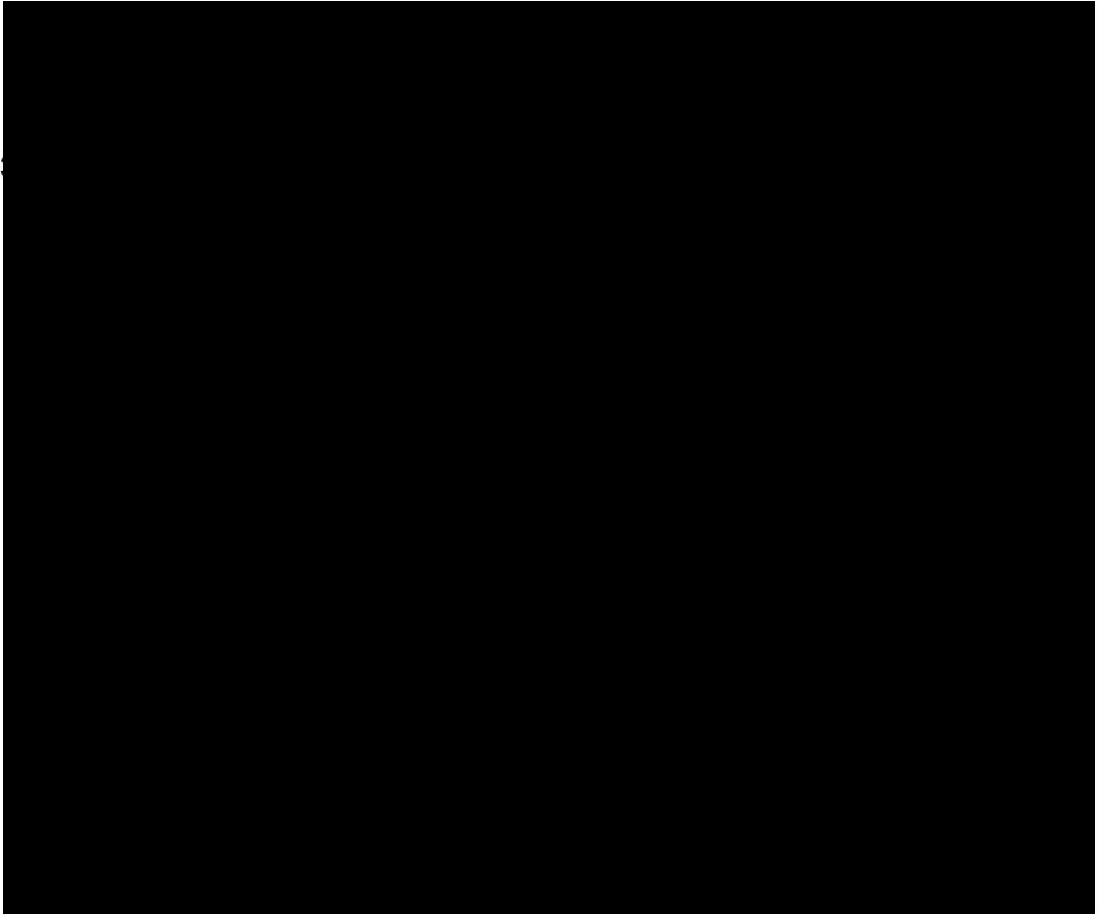
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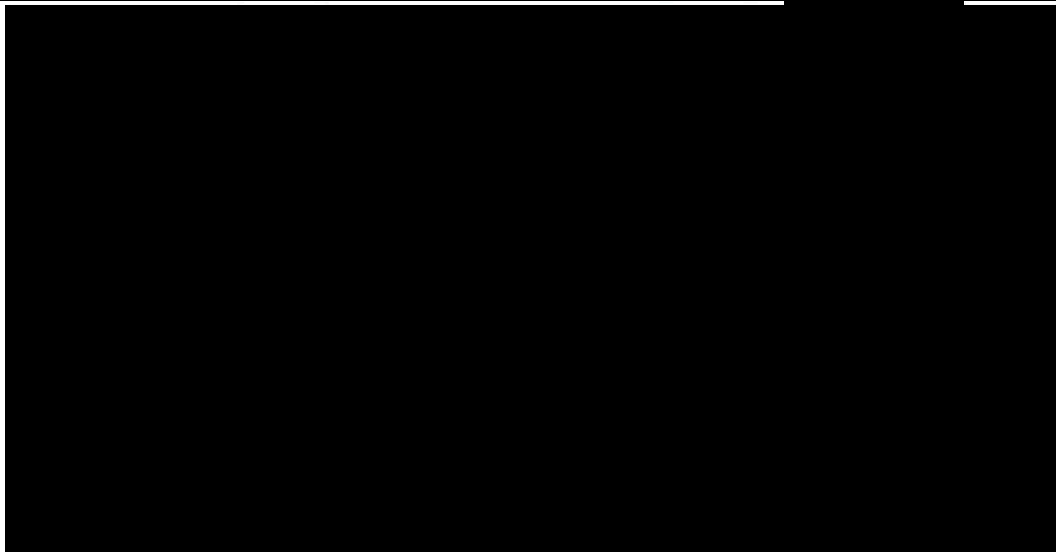
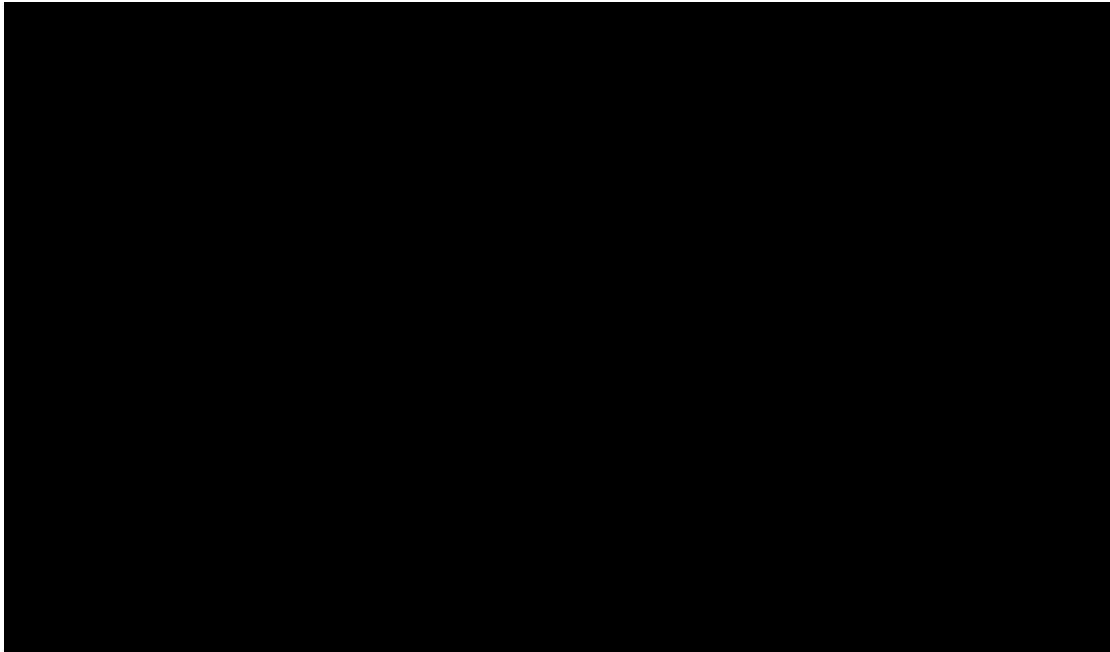
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Life after care

45. Years after I had left care in or around 1995 the police came to question me. I think one of the other boys being interviewed had reported what had happened to me so the police came to question me. I explained that I had not reported the abuse I suffered earlier as I was going to lose my home in [REDACTED] but now that I was living independently I was able to be open about my past. I do not recall which boy exposed [REDACTED] BR 1 [REDACTED] but eventually it came out

PRIVATE

in the open and that is when the police initiated an investigation into the matter.

46. I could not talk about the abuse I had suffered for years. I had nightmares for years about it and I would wake up in cold sweats. It left me very backward with people. I was shy and withdrawn and I could not trust anyone. I suffered from depression. I never spoke to anyone in the **DL 403** family about my experiences in care. **DL 403** had a lorry business and at times when I was in the cab with him he would complain that there was very little conversation with me but the truth was that I was burying things deeper and deeper as time went on and the more I buried it the worse I became. It caused me many sleepless nights.

47. Many of the boys that were in care with me ended up having really bad problems with drink and drugs. They are unemployed and have no life. Their time in care has destroyed their life. I have health difficulties now especially with my bowel and my doctor attributes the condition to stress in my life.

48. I married when I was twenty one years old and had a son. My wife and I divorced five or six years later. I now have a grandchild. It affected my marriage as I always felt dirty. When I had sex with my wife I was always trying to prove that I was the man and that I was not gay but it brought the worst side of me out. It caused more issues than it should have done. My problems became worse as I got older, the nightmares became worse and I had to take anti-depressants. I had to see a doctor as this was affecting other parts of my life and a lot of the relationships I had with other people including my son. It took me a long time to be able to face this and to talk about it.

49. My time in care still affects me and I continue to wake up sometimes at night sweating as I still suffer from nightmares.

50. I took a civil claim in 1998 against the De La Salle Order and sued **BR 10** **BR 10** **BR 2** and **BR 1** for how they had treated me and abused me during my time in care. It was settled out of court a few years ago.

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed **HIA 259** _____

Dated 06/03/14 _____