

HIA REF: SPT 3

NAME:

SPT 3

DATE:

23 September 2015

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

 Witness Statement of

 SPT 3

I, SPT 3 will say as follows: -

I started work as an [REDACTED] in St Patrick's Training School in 1973. Eventually I was promoted to the post of [REDACTED] at St Patrick's.

I retired in [REDACTED] approximately [REDACTED] years after I began working there. In all that time I was never the subject of any complaint or disciplinary action.

I was involved in the initial setting up of Slemish House in and around 1990. This was a specialist unit and was modelled on units in Scotland, England ~~(and Wales)~~ *JK*

The regime was designed for "challenging children" subject to care orders who were on the periphery of various types of behaviour including sexual abuse, violence, criminal damage and repeat absconding.

Being resident in Slemish House was not a punishment but rather a method of protecting vulnerable children in care and also the other children in open care settings.

The age group of the boys in Slemish House would have been approximately 13 to 16 years.

In relation the allegations of [REDACTED] HIA 384 these should be seen in a context that Slemish House was a specialist unit with a strict regime rather than an open care setting.

There was a system of privileges in operation. Black was a basic level, amber was the next level and green was the highest level of privilege.

Staff could move boys up and down from black to amber depending on behaviour during the course of the week. To be moved to green status required a staff assessment which took

place at a meeting at which all staff were present each Thursday. Educational Psychologists and teaching staff in St Patricks would also have feed into these meetings. Green status allowed boys to go off campus i.e out of Slemish House, which required a high level of trust. It was never down to an individual member of staff to move someone to green status.

It would have been normal to talk to the boys about their status and link it to their behaviour. That was the purpose of the scheme. I never used this important method of discipline and development for the boys in the matter characterised by **HIA 384**

HIA 384 said that I used language like "queer". Language like that was forbidden. I wouldn't allow other staff to talk like that even in jest nor would I have used it myself, even 22 years ago when this type of language was much more prevalent in every day conversation.

As for the allegation that I "trailed" **HIA 384** by the throat to the "time out" room. This should be seen in the context that there were procedures in place regarding restraint and I never trailed any boy by the throat and specifically not **HIA 384**

As for being placed in the "time out" room, time out was used a last resort. Verbal warnings for bad behaviour would be given first. Time out was not a punishment but was used to give boisterous or unruly boys an opportunity to settle down. It should be borne in mind that the facilities were not large and the time out room was used to protect the safety of others.

Time being spent in the time out room was recorded in a book. There were time limits for how long anyone could be put there.

In relation to **HIA 384** allegations regarding his mail, I would have to say I do not remember clearly what the rules were regarding mail, however I seem to recall there were general safe guarding rules allowing staff to check mail for inappropriate material.

This material may have been for example of a sexual, criminal or violent nature.

To my recollection the power to intercept or read mail was rarely used. It would normally be used by a key worker specifically allocated to a resident who may have felt that it would be appropriate to intercept a certain boys post.

I do not recall ever opening any boys post and specifically not **HIA 384**.

In relation to **HIA 384** recollection of being before a Board of Directors, I would have to say I don't think any of the boys were ever at a meeting with the Board of Director of St Patricks. I don't know what **HIA 384** allegation of abuse is. It may have been that he was before an admissions panel or a board of management and I presume this was to with the outcome of a complaint that **HIA 384** had made.

I don't know when this presumed allegation of abuse took place and I can't even be sure there was ever a time when **SPT 2** **SPT 87** **SPT 88** and myself would have worked together in Slemish House.

I can say however that it is impossible to imagine us all collectively harassing a boy, practically that would have been all the staff in Slemish House focusing on one resident there. I deny that this ever happened or that it ever could have happened.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

SPT 3

Dated

23.9.15

1 he was for the younger -- younger men in St. Patrick's
2 Training School -- he recorded in one class the number
3 of times I was stabbed and beaten up, kicked and
4 punched. So I wasn't safe in school. So I had to
5 leave, and the Order were saying they could do their
6 best. Well, by law they had to do more, because they
7 didn't give me a proper education.

8 Q. You go on here in paragraph 24 to describe:

9 "The general regime operated on a privileged
10 scheme."

11 You say:

12 "It was based around obtaining a different colour
13 and each colour had privileges attached to it. The
14 lowest rank was black, followed by red, amber and green.
15 Green was the highest rank and therefore had the most
16 privileges. Essentially black was a punishment rank and
17 there were no privileges and boys had to go to bed at
18 6.00 pm. You were not allowed to keep your clothes in
19 your room. There were no personal belongings allowed
20 and you were denied any reading materials."

21 Now the Order, as I explained to you, said they
22 didn't recognise that scheme and it was possible that
23 an individual house operated such a scheme, but
24 I believe the Inquiry is going to receive a statement
25 from someone who actually operated the scheme and can

1 give us some more details about that, but it seems that
2 -- with the black exception, it seems to be like
3 a traffic light system.

4 **A. Right.**

5 Q. You worked your way up from black to green. Once you
6 got to green, what would happen? What kind of
7 privileges would you have achieved?

8 **A. What was meant to happen was that you were meant to get
9 more privileges outside the unit, Slemish House. Green
10 was an indicator that you were going to move back to the
11 main units, chalets or Saul House. So it's kind of like
12 an intermediate back to that unit, but for me I was
13 constant... -- once I got to amber or once I got to
14 green, I was knocked back down again to black or red
15 just for the sake of it.**

16 Q. Yes. You talk about this in paragraph --

17 **A. Can I just go to -- sorry.**

18 Q. Can I --

19 **A. Sorry. Can I just go to the bathroom, please?**

20 Q. Yes, of course.

21 **A. I need to go to the bathroom.**

22 Q. Yes, of course.

23 **A. Thank you.**

24 **(Witness withdrew)**

25 Q. Chairman, I don't know if it is necessary to rise,

1 scheme. It was not in respect of you, but in respect of
2 another child whose mother was hoping that he might move
3 from black to allow him out for his birthday. So there
4 was obviously some knowledge among the families that
5 this was a privileged scheme that operated also.

6 Just in respect of the mail, the point that you make
7 there -- sorry -- no, you were you talking about --

8 **A. Something's just --**

9 Q. Sorry. I beg your pardon.

10 **A. Sorry. Something's just tweaked in my memory.**

11 I remember at lunchtime -- after lunch when the teacher
12 who had been in Slemish House came down to have lunch,
13 after lunch we'd all have a meeting and in that meeting
14 it was confirmed who was moving up a colour or who was
15 moving down a colour. I understand that you said that
16 the Order can't remember or don't know that this
17 actually happened, but it is for the Order to actually
18 know how management is being run in their units. It is
19 clear to me that the Order are saying that they don't
20 know. Therefore that is bad management.

21 Q. Well, in fairness, HIA384, what I think I tried to
22 explain to you was that the Order handed over all of its
23 records on St. Pat's to the Department of Justice. So
24 it is only as the documents have become available again
25 that their memory has been jogged, just as yours has

1 **A. Yes.**

2 Q. While you were allowed to help yourself, if you were on
3 black, you were sent to bed early, and you were often on
4 black, which is why you tried to take books to read in
5 bed, because you went to bed about a couple of hours --

6 **A. Yes.**

7 Q. -- before everybody else. Is that right?

8 **A. That's correct.**

9 Q. And you also made the point to me when we were talking
10 that whenever you did go to bed before normal hours or
11 when you were in bed, you weren't allowed out and you
12 had to ring a bell -- is that right -- to get attention
13 at night-time?

14 **A. That's correct, and then when I -- if I rang too often,
15 the nightwatchman would complain at me. I should also
16 point out that a member of staff would sleep in Slemish
17 House, which was on the same level as myself, and then
18 they would have a person who was meant to be awake, but
19 it was quite clear that that person was asleep, because
20 you could tell he was sleeping when he came up to me.**

21 Q. Okay, and you had to ring and that would have been --
22 the reason you would have been ringing would be to get
23 up in the middle of the night to go to the toilet?

24 **A. Yes, yes.**

25 Q. Paragraph 25, going back to your statement, you say, as

1 you were describing, it always took you much longer to
2 work your way to green status, because you were always
3 taken down the rankings for any infraction, no matter
4 how slight.

5 "I believe I was treated more harshly than other
6 boys who made the same type of mistakes."

7 You particularly recall the deputy head of the unit.
8 You say -- and I am just going to call him SPT3 -- you
9 say he took a perverse pleasure in reducing your status.

10 **A. Yes.**

11 Q. Frequently built up your hopes --

12 **A. Yes.**

13 Q. -- that you would get enhanced status and then
14 deliberately misinterpreted incidents to justify not
15 following through with his promises.

16 "He also called me 'queer' many times and took
17 pleasure in grabbing me by the throat and trailing me
18 into the time out room."

19 Now you know from when I spoke to you earlier we --
20 the Inquiry is hoping to get a statement from this man.
21 We have not as yet received such a statement and
22 I haven't even got a statement in draft form that allows
23 me to put what he might be saying to you in the way that
24 I have been able to do --

25 **A. Yes.**

1 of its work about what should be done in respect of
2 those children who were abused in institutions and
3 I wondered what your view was, HIA384. I think we
4 touched on this earlier when we were talking about some
5 sort of independent monitoring.

6 **A. Yes. I believe that there should be some independent**
7 **monitoring and also I was thinking of a place where**
8 **victims, survivors could actually go to in Northern**
9 **Ireland. Look, I'll need therapy for the rest of my**
10 **life. It's stated in the psychiatric reports for my**
11 **civil case that I am going to be struggling for a long,**
12 **long time because of the abuse that I have went through.**
13 **I mean, even now when people shout, I'm very, very**
14 **fearful. I practically stay in my own room at the**
15 **moment. I don't engage with people, because I am scared**
16 **of being either beaten up or -- I am still having**
17 **nightmares from SPT3, from SPT87, from people in -- in**
18 **St. Patrick's Training School.**

19 **Q.** Well, HIA384, thank you. I have nothing further that
20 I want to ask you about. Now I do appreciate that
21 I~didn't go through the details of the documents that
22 I referred to, because you can rest assured that the
23 Panel Members have those documents and they can refer to
24 them if they want to get more details from them.

25 Is there anything that you feel that we haven't

1 covered in your evidence this afternoon? Is there
2 anything more that you wanted to say to the Inquiry?
3 Now is the opportunity for you to do that if there's
4 anything further you feel we haven't covered about your
5 time in St. Pat's.

6 **A. Basically I don't think I've got across the exact extent**
7 **of the abuse that I've gone through. Okay. A bit of**
8 **bullying is bullying, but the sexual assaults that I --**
9 **that I went through have caused me to have nightmares.**
10 **I mean, it's just -- I don't know how -- how my**
11 **statement -- how much of an impact it has on the Chair**
12 **and the other people who are listening to it, because it**
13 **just seems to be facts, dates given here, dates given**
14 **there, and what's happened. It doesn't really seem to**
15 **be giving the essence of what I went through, because if**
16 **I look at the children's home, I ran away from the**
17 **children's home because I was being bullied for being**
18 **a Catholic. That is why I ended up in St. Patrick's**
19 **Training School. I ended up being beaten up there for**
20 **being different. It just -- life has not been easy, and**
21 **I just don't know how to get across to the Panel the**
22 **extent that this has had an impact on me, and not only**
23 **on me, but on my son and on my wife, because my wife**
24 **has -- is having a hard time understanding what I have**
25 **gone through, and for the -- for the Order to turn round**

1 and say, "Oh, we don't know about this", well, they
2 should have known about this. They should have known
3 about the abuse that was going on. They should have
4 known about a different coloured regime. That's what
5 they were paid for, I mean, and it is just laughable
6 that the NI Office are trying to wash their hands of me
7 when I'm in It is just -- it is just crazy,
8 absolutely crazy.

9 Q. Well, HIA384, thank you very much for that. As I said,
10 I have nothing further that I want to ask you, but the
11 Panel Members may have some questions for you.

12 CHAIRMAN: Well, HIA384, thank you very much for coming to
13 where you are now so that we could speak to you. We are
14 very grateful for you taking the time to speak to us.
15 Thank you very much. We don't have any questions for
16 you.

17 **A. Thank you.**

18 MS SMITH: Thank you, HIA384.

19 (Witness withdrew)

20 MS SMITH: Chairman, the remaining witness today is to be
21 taken by Mr Aiken.

22 CHAIRMAN: Yes. We will rise for a few minutes. We need
23 a short break in any event.

24 (4.05 pm)

25 (Short break)