

Friday, 6 March 2020

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2

(10.00 am)

3

LADY SMITH: Good morning to the last day this week of

4

evidential hearings in the child migrant case study.

5

I think we have a witness ready for us, is that right,

6

Mr MacAulay?

7

MR MacAULAY: We do, my Lady. The next witness is an

8

applicant, he wants to remain anonymous and to use the

9

pseudonym "Johno" in giving evidence.

10

"JOHNO" (affirmed)

11

LADY SMITH: Please sit down and make yourself comfortable.

12

Have you got everything that you need?

13

A. Thank you, my Lady.

14

LADY SMITH: That sounds as though you're in a good position

15

for the microphone. I would ask you to try and maintain

16

that position, please; we'll let you know if you drift

17

away. If you have no other questions at this point,

18

I'll hand over to Mr MacAulay and he'll take it from

19

there. Is that all right with you?

20

A. Thank you very much, my Lady.

21

LADY SMITH: Mr MacAulay.

22

Questions from MR MacAULAY

23

MR MacAULAY: Good morning, Johno.

24

A. Good morning.

25

Q. In the red folder in front of you, you'll find your

1 statement. I'll provide the reference for the  
2 transcript: WIT.001.002.7453. Could I ask you to look  
3 at the final page of the statement? Can you confirm  
4 that you have signed the statement?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Do you say in the final paragraph:

7 "I have no objection to my witness statement being  
8 published as part of the evidence to the inquiry"?

9 A. May I just take a moment?

10 Q. Yes.

11 A. That is correct, thank you.

12 Q. And do you go on to say:

13 "I believe the facts stated in this witness  
14 statement are true"?

15 A. That's correct.

16 Q. Johnno, I believe that you're a little bit hard of  
17 hearing.

18 A. Very.

19 Q. So I'll keep my voice as loud as possible.

20 A. Thank you, Colin, that's much appreciated.

21 Q. And are you hearing me okay at the moment?

22 A. Yes. I will let you know.

23 Q. In order to get a time frame, I just want to get you to  
24 confirm the year of your birth, not the date of your  
25 birth. Can you confirm that you were born in 1942?

1 A. That's correct.

2 Q. In the first part of your statement to the inquiry, you  
3 tell us about your background and your life before going  
4 into care; is that right?

5 A. That's true.

6 Q. The position, I think, was that you were put into care  
7 at about 10 months or so of age; is that right?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And clearly, you'll have had no recollection of that --

10 A. That's not --

11 Q. -- but to be able to piece together since then how that  
12 came to be --

13 A. From various documents.

14 Q. And what was the background?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. What was the background then to you going into care, can  
17 you tell us?

18 A. I don't know the specific details. My understanding was  
19 that I was illegitimate -- I've learned this in the  
20 years after -- and that my mother, when I finally met  
21 her in late 1983, early 1984, had advised me that she  
22 had been pressured to hand me over because of the  
23 circumstance she found herself in with her husband at  
24 war.

25 Q. When you came to meet your mother in the 1980s, what

1           about your father, did you meet him ever?

2           A. I have never met him, but I have some doubts as to what  
3           I was told at that time, in the sense that I was sort of  
4           in a no man's land without having had prior counselling  
5           or whatever. I just took it on myself, because of the  
6           pressure of my own children, wanting to know my  
7           background, so I bit the bullet and went across to  
8           see -- just if there was anything, because up to that  
9           point we had been told quite categorically by these men  
10          of the cloth that your country didn't want you, your  
11          family didn't want you, this is your last resort, toe  
12          the line or else. So we had no reason to disbelieve  
13          that.

14          Q. And that was something I was going to ask you, and I'll  
15          just put it to you again now: throughout your time in  
16          care, particularly in Australia -- and we're going to be  
17          looking at that in a little detail -- did you then  
18          consider yourself to be on an orphan or what was the  
19          position?

20          A. I really had the feeling that I had a nobody. The  
21          orphan business didn't register with me as a kid. It  
22          wasn't until I was able to come to terms with the lot or  
23          my disposition at the time that I began to think as  
24          though I'm an enigma, that I just didn't fit anywhere.  
25          It was a terrible situation to come to grips with



1 in that if you fell down, there was no one there to pick  
2 you up, that sort of thing.

3 Half my life I think was spent trying to work out  
4 who I was and where I fitted into the new society that  
5 I had been deported to. So in that sense, being an  
6 orphan didn't really mean a great deal to me; I was an  
7 island.

8 Q. You used a description there to describe what had  
9 happened to you and that was the reference to being  
10 deported.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. I think throughout this inquiry we've been focusing on  
13 children who had been migrated. Do you consider that  
14 what had happened to you was in effect deportation  
15 rather than migration?

16 A. At the time as a child, I went through, from what I've  
17 learned from other boys that travelled with me, quite an  
18 ordeal.

19 As far as being termed a migrant, I never, ever  
20 believed I was migrated to Australia. You see, migrants  
21 have a right of return; we didn't have that. Migrants  
22 had identity, they had papers, they had documents; we  
23 didn't have any of that.

24 So we didn't even have the right to say whether we  
25 wanted to go or didn't want to go. We were nominated

1           and therefore I don't see the relevance of being called  
2           a migrant.

3           Q. We'll look at some of that in due course, Johnno.

4                     Can I then go back to Nazareth House Aberdeen. You  
5           were admitted, according to the records, on  
6           ██████████ 1943, and I think you understand that to be  
7           the case.

8           A. Yes.

9           Q. And you left on ██████████ 1950?

10          A. 1950.

11          Q. And you sailed off to Australia the following day,  
12          ██████████ 1950?

13          A. On the SS Otranto, yes.

14          Q. And you were aged 7 at that time?

15          A. Seven. I had turned 7. I was earmarked actually when  
16          I was 6 years and 8 months old.

17          Q. And we'll look at the documentation that tells us that.

18                     Just having an overview of your position in  
19          Australia, when you arrived in Australia in ██████████ 1950,  
20          you went to St Vincent's Junior Orphanage in Castledare;  
21          is that right?

22          A. That's correct.

23          Q. And we'll refer to that establishment as "Castledare".

24          A. Yes.

25          Q. You were there, I think, from about 1950 to about 1952

1 or 1953?

2 A. 1953.

3 Q. So you'd be aged about 10 or 11 when you came to leave?

4 A. That was always a confusing or a contentious point with  
5 me because I had two birthdays.

6 Q. I'll come on to that.

7 A. But at this stage it would have been 3 years I was at  
8 Castledare.

9 Q. Then you were moved to another institution and, just to  
10 give it its full name, it was St Vincent's Orphanage in  
11 Clontarf; is that right?

12 A. That's correct.

13 Q. And that place was known as Clontarf Boys' Town?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And I'll just refer to that as "Clontarf".

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. You were there from about 1952/1953 to 1959; is that  
18 right?

19 A. Correct.

20 Q. In 1959, when you came to leave, you would have been  
21 16 years of age?

22 A. I was.

23 Q. And I think, as you'll tell us, the normal age for  
24 leaving would have been 15.

25 A. Fifteen.

1 Q. But --

2 A. They got an extra year out of me, funding.

3 Q. And we'll look to see how that happened.

4 But just looking at the overview then, and these  
5 were places that were run by the Christian Brothers, is  
6 it the case that you were in the care of the  
7 Christian Brothers for about 9 years in Australia?

8 A. That's correct, yes.

9 Q. According to the records, when you came to go to  
10 Nazareth House in Aberdeen, it would appear that  
11 a Canon Grant was involved in that process; is that your  
12 understanding?

13 A. That's my understanding.

14 Q. And I think the inquiry has heard evidence that he may  
15 have been the parish priest at the cathedral in  
16 Aberdeen.

17 A. I don't know.

18 Q. Can I just look for a moment or two at your  
19 recollections of Nazareth House Aberdeen. You went  
20 there when you were 10 months old and you left at the  
21 age of 7. Clearly, therefore, you were there as a very  
22 young child and for a number of the years that you were  
23 there, you'd have really no memory of being there?

24 A. The memories I have of my infant years are non-existent.  
25 I don't have any memories of procedures, care or

1 otherwise.

2 The one thing I do remember is that at one point --  
3 and I don't remember at what stage I was at, whether  
4 I was still in the junior side of it or otherwise --  
5 I became very sick and I never, ever found out what it  
6 was that I had. I'd been sick for quite a long time.

7 Q. Is your recollection of that, of being sick, in the home  
8 or do you know if -- do you have any recollection of  
9 being in a hospital?

10 A. No, I wasn't -- I don't have a recollection of that.  
11 I think I was in the nursery. So I think I would have  
12 been very, very small.

13 Q. Have you managed to recover any records that might cast  
14 any light on what the illness was?

15 A. When I went back to Nazareth House in 1983/1984, I asked  
16 the Reverend Mother there for records of my internship  
17 in Nazareth House from 1943 to 1950. She returned with  
18 one piece of paper, which was a baptismal paper, and no  
19 other records she said were available to me and they  
20 just didn't have any further records.

21 I presume, had I been able to acquire some sort of  
22 information, which is really what I was after,  
23 I probably would have made a lot more sense of my life,  
24 but I was denied the documents then and I don't know --  
25 I didn't know where else to go for documents.

1           It's a story in itself how I got to be able to go to  
2           England in the first place to try and recover some part  
3           of my life. But I was disappointed in making the effort  
4           to go there and to leave empty-handed. I thought  
5           I would get some sort of information about me, but it  
6           wasn't available.

7           Q. And was it to Aberdeen you went for --

8           A. I initially went to London and I spent 3 days searching  
9           around there, only to be told: you're in the wrong  
10          place, sonny, you've got to go up to Edinburgh. So with  
11          meagre resources and what have you, I found my way up  
12          there -- I think I travelled by some sort of bus to get  
13          up to Edinburgh -- and within half an hour, I was  
14          actually tripping over relatives. It was an  
15          extraordinary feeling for me.

16          Q. But when you met the Mother Superior that you mentioned,  
17          was that in Aberdeen?

18          A. That was in Aberdeen, yes.

19          Q. I'll come later on to look at your connection with  
20          relatives.

21                 One thing you do say in your statement -- and  
22                 I should perhaps have said this to you: the statement  
23                 will come on the screen in front of you as well as in  
24                 hard copy in front of you, but at paragraph 6 you say  
25                 this:

1           "Unfortunately, I have blocked out a lot of Aberdeen  
2 and I don't really understand why."

3           I just want to ask you: why do you think you've  
4 blocked out Aberdeen?

5       A. I wish I had the answer to that, Colin. I've spoken to  
6 a lot of former child migrants that do have some memory  
7 of their time as young children in care in both Scotland  
8 and England, and they're able to come up with some  
9 fascinating information as to how they endured or how  
10 they survived. To me, there's nothing. I cannot  
11 recall, particularly in the very young section of the  
12 institution that I was in -- I have nothing there, other  
13 than the illness. The illness is the only thing that's  
14 come from that section of my life.

15       Q. In relation to the latter period is there any sense in  
16 your mind at all as to what it was like?

17       A. I know I was always very frightened. I can't imagine  
18 what the trigger might have been. I don't know if  
19 you've been to Nazareth House, it's a very dark place,  
20 and when I went back there again in 1983/1984, it had  
21 lightened up, it's a much brighter place now. But back  
22 then, it was a dark, damp -- I still get the  
23 heebie-jeebies when I think about the times we were  
24 there. A lot of that was because of the bullying from  
25 the older boys and one or two of the nuns that were

1 probably overly strict in the control area.

2 To me, the thing about Nazareth House that I --  
3 I was pleased to be away from there but I think that was  
4 more because I was going somewhere else. But not  
5 knowing that that somewhere else was going to be even  
6 worse, I couldn't take it back. I don't know if I'm  
7 making sense. But at the time, that was my train of  
8 thought. I thought: this is a very dark place, it was  
9 cold, we were always frightened of the older boys -- the  
10 older boys seemed to run the place from my  
11 recollections.

12 You saw the nuns periodically, particularly -- there  
13 are three nuns that I was almost daily involved with  
14 in the latter part of my time. We're talking there  
15 probably 4, 5 and 6, somewhere around that age.

16 Q. Can we focus then on the nuns that you do remember? You  
17 do mention them in your statement. You mention  
18 a Sister LKG, is that right?

19 A. Yes, Sister LKG was -- my visions of her today are  
20 as an ogre of sorts. I don't mean disrespect in that  
21 regard, but as a little kid, she was a very big person  
22 and a very tough -- I guess she needed to be, but the  
23 point in fact is there was no clemency with her, there  
24 was no love or emotion or anything like that, that  
25 children of that age probably needed to have. I guess



1 that's part of my isolation, the fact that that just  
2 wasn't there.

3 Everything was done by rote. It was a siren for  
4 this or a bell for that or a whistle for this. There  
5 was very little communication between the children and  
6 the nuns that I could see, certainly none from my  
7 perspective. It was: right, line up here, the siren  
8 would go, that was the meal call or church or whatever.

9 Intimacy -- there wasn't any. It was just very  
10 cold, feelingless place to be.

11 Q. You also mention a sister and you think her name was  
12 Sister LYH.

13 A. She wasn't as bad as Sister LKG. Sister LKG,  
14 I felt, was the tougher one for me. Other boys would  
15 say some of the other nuns were, but Sister LKG was  
16 probably the harshest one for me, but I had a few  
17 run-ins, I think, with Sister LYH all I know is her  
18 name started with LYH and I think she was called LYH  
19 LYH for one reason for another.

20 Q. You also mention a sister and the way you describe this  
21 sister is "a very kind and gentle soul." You don't name  
22 her, but that's the way you describe her.

23 A. I don't wish to name her because I think she was the  
24 only person that showed any sort of attention or care to  
25 me. I felt as comfortable as I could feel given my

1 disposition. I felt relaxed in her company. I think  
2 she was part of the hierarchy of the establishment  
3 at the time and I just felt safe when she was around.

4 Q. You also mention a layperson --

5 A. FAJ .

6 Q. -- and you mention her name, who was involved in looking  
7 after the boys.

8 A. Yes, the junior boys. She had the role of keeping an  
9 eye on the junior children. She looked after the  
10 dormitory side of things and her room was actually on  
11 the same floor as the junior boys. I don't know how  
12 many of us were there, but there were quite a few. She  
13 wasn't a disciplinarian, but she used to like to  
14 frighten you, scare you.

15 Q. And I think you give an example of that in your  
16 statement, when she did frighten you on an occasion.

17 A. Oh yes. I was absolutely -- I think I was about 5, 4 or  
18 5, at the time. I was late picking up my chamber pot --  
19 because there was no toilet on any of the dormitory  
20 floors, so you took a chamber pot up to your bed. Some  
21 nights, I just wasn't able to make the chamber pot in  
22 time.

23 But this particular night, I was late coming in, all  
24 the other kids had got chamber pots, and she was waiting  
25 for me and when I got there she said, "Right, go to the

1 hall and pick up your chamber pot, which was right down  
2 the far end of this hall." It was night-time, quite  
3 dark, no lights. I went in very gingerly, making sure  
4 that the light from the door still shone in. When I got  
5 about five or six paces in, she just slammed the door  
6 behind me. I just nearly freaked out and she yelled  
7 out, "Watch out for the rats!" and I could have passed  
8 out, I think. I just absolutely -- I didn't really know  
9 what a rat was, but it couldn't have been good, but  
10 that's how I felt at the time. I just raced back to the  
11 door and I was belting on the door to open it up and she  
12 was laughing.

13 Q. But this frightened you?

14 A. Oh, scared the living bejesus out of me.

15 Q. You say in your statement that as boys you were  
16 addressed by your surnames by the nuns. Is that  
17 correct, it was your surname that was used when you were  
18 addressed?

19 A. My memory is that, yes, I was addressed by LZK  
20 in the main. I don't ever recall being addressed by  
21 a number, but it was either your surname or "you".

22 Q. Can I just say that if you do in passing mention names,  
23 you needn't be too concerned about that because these  
24 names will be redacted from the transcript. So if you  
25 mention the name of a boy, whoever it may be, that name

1           will be blacked out. Do you follow?

2           A. Okay, yes.

3           LADY SMITH: And indeed, if it is somebody who is entitled  
4           to anonymity, although people in the room have heard  
5           that name, they know that they cannot repeat it outside  
6           the room --

7           A. Thank you, my Lady.

8           LADY SMITH: -- if that reassures you.

9           A. Thank you.

10          MR MacAULAY: You also tell us in your statement that your  
11          belief at the time was that there were only boys in  
12          Aberdeen.

13          A. Yes.

14          Q. But have you discovered since that there was also  
15          a girls' section?

16          A. I can never confirm that. I've only heard that there  
17          was a female section to that institution. There was  
18          a junior section; there was an older section for boys up  
19          to what looked to be about 16; and there was the girls'  
20          section; and the whole thing was attached to an aged  
21          care facility. That's my understanding of the set-up  
22          that was there, and the nuns looked after all of it.

23          Q. You have seen records relating to some aspects of your  
24          time in Aberdeen, and I think you've seen, for example,  
25          that your name has been misspelt on occasions. We

1           needn't look at the details of that, but I think that  
2           was the fact, wasn't it, your name wasn't spelt  
3           correctly?

4           A. In Aberdeen it was. In Aberdeen I assume my name was  
5           spelt correctly. It's when I arrived in Australia,  
6           particularly to the second phase at Clontarf, my name  
7           altered from [LZK] to [LZK]. The [ ] was removed and  
8           my middle name was dropped.

9           Q. Again, we needn't look at the detail of that. But can  
10          I ask you about one or two aspects of your recollection  
11          of some parts of the routine.

12                 One of the things you tell us is that you did have  
13          a problem with bed-wetting when you were in Aberdeen.

14          A. Not so -- it wasn't too bad in Aberdeen. I think I did  
15          have an accident once or twice to the point on one night  
16          I actually snuck into [FAJ]'s room, the lady that  
17          was looking after us, and took her pyjamas because I'd  
18          wet mine. But I got caught. I was not disciplined or  
19          anything, but nonetheless it probably wasn't the right  
20          thing to do.

21          Q. Do you have any recollection as to how you were dealt  
22          with if you did wet the bed?

23          A. What punishment it was?

24          Q. Yes.

25          A. No, no. I don't want to mix the Clontarf things with --

1 no, Aberdeen, I don't think there was a specific  
2 punishment that I can ... That's not to say there  
3 wasn't one because I didn't really wet my bed that often  
4 there.

5 Q. One thing you tell us about the food is that the one  
6 aspect of the food that you do remember is black  
7 pudding.

8 A. Love it. I still don't know why. I guess it might be  
9 because of the history of it because I remembered it was  
10 a survival food for us in the orphanage in Aberdeen.  
11 I know we got it quite regularly and I know we used to  
12 get three rings, about so round (indicating), about so  
13 thick.

14 Q. So a couple of inches round and half an inch thick?

15 A. Yes. I just got to love them. I couldn't get back here  
16 quick enough when I was able to and the first thing  
17 I would order is black pudding. I don't know why.

18 Q. You also have some recollection of the washing regime  
19 and you discuss that in your statement. Do you say that  
20 a number of children would be bathed at the same sort of  
21 time, one after the other?

22 A. Yes, you'd have two boys in the bath and we all -- the  
23 thing I did admire about it in later years was the  
24 privacy aspect of the bathing. We were given these  
25 waterproof slips that we could put on, because there

1           were young women bathing us at the time. So it was nice  
2           that we didn't have to expose ourselves in front of  
3           them.

4           We were able to get into the bath and if you were  
5           number 6 or 7 in line, you got into some pretty murky  
6           water. But be that as it may, we were bathed.

7           Q. Clothing, you also touch upon that. What you tell us  
8           there in your statement is that you do believe that you  
9           were reasonably well clothed.

10          A. I have, like most other aspects of my time there --  
11          I don't have recollections of being cold per se.  
12          I probably was, but not to the point that it would be  
13          memorising.

14          Q. You also mention in the following paragraph,  
15          paragraph 29, that you did make friends when you were in  
16          Aberdeen.

17          A. I did make friends?

18          Q. Friends, yes.

19          A. Yes. I guess you could call them friends. Two or three  
20          boys, we stuck together.

21          Aberdeen wasn't the place where I learned later,  
22          such as places like Castledare and Clontarf, where  
23          covert things were going on insofar as the use and abuse  
24          of the children was concerned. It wasn't so prevalent  
25          or I didn't come across much of that in Aberdeen.



1           I came across a survival mode feeling about Aberdeen  
2           in that you never missed a meal because it's a meal you  
3           would never catch up on. They weren't big meals, but  
4           we were fed regularly, and to me -- and I guess that's  
5           where I got the love of black pudding from as well.

6           Q. Can I ask you about your birthdays in Aberdeen? Was  
7           your birthday celebrated?

8           A. No, no. I don't recall anybody's birthday being  
9           celebrated. In fact, to go one further, Christmas was  
10          never something that jumped out at you. Some of the  
11          bigger boys would get heaps of -- strips of Christmas  
12          paper and they would fold them up and make streamers out  
13          of them and hang them --

14         LADY SMITH: Johnno, could you just come a little nearer the  
15         microphone?

16         A. Some of the older boys would make streamers out of  
17         coloured paper that they had acquired.

18                 I only remember -- on one occasion I got a Christmas  
19                 present on Christmas morning and that was a little  
20                 wooden train, all one piece. In the driver's section of  
21                 it there was a chocolate frog, and I thought, wow, this  
22                 is wonderful, only to find we were told to leave them on  
23                 the end of our beds and I thought, oh well, we'll be  
24                 able to come back later and play with them. When we got  
25                 back at the end of the day they were all gone. Wrapped



1 up for next year probably. But that was it, that was  
2 the only time.

3 MR MacAULAY: Did you have any visitors that you can  
4 remember during your time in Aberdeen?

5 A. None.

6 Q. You do tell us in your statement that there was one  
7 occasion when you ran away.

8 A. Well, I don't know that I ran away as such; I was taken  
9 away.

10 Q. Can you tell me about it?

11 A. The circumstances were that we used to have to line up  
12 in pairs to march off to school, so it would have only  
13 been the first year that I was going to school from the  
14 institution. And we had to line up in pairs, an older  
15 boy and a smaller boy had to hold hands, and off we  
16 went. It was a line of about 50 boys, roughly, and off  
17 we'd march down the road to the public school.

18 On this particular day, we were coming back from  
19 school and the boy whose hand I had to hold, him and  
20 another pair of -- two other older boys, brothers,  
21 decided they were going to shoot through. But  
22 [REDACTED] my partner, couldn't take off and leave me  
23 because they would have been discovered because I would  
24 have been there on my own. So they dragged me along  
25 with them. I was 6 at the time, maybe 5. I had just

1 started school, so whatever the age group was back  
2 in that time.

3 Where we went -- oh gosh, I've got recollections of  
4 being stoned by other children away from the  
5 institution, as we were going across country and what  
6 have you. I remember being stoned, told to go away, the  
7 four of us together. I don't know how long we'd been on  
8 the run, but what I do know was that I was very hungry,  
9 I was very cold, and I ended up in a police station.  
10 But the other three boys weren't there so they must have  
11 dropped me off because I must have been a bit of  
12 a burden to them.

13 Q. They were older than you?

14 A. Oh yes, they were all 15, 16 years old at the time.  
15 I was about 6, I think. Yeah, 5 or 6. Anyway, they  
16 dropped me at a police station and the only memory, real  
17 memory I have of it was standing in front of the  
18 copper's home fire, eating a biscuit, and what happened  
19 from there I have very little recollection.

20 Q. Do you remember going back to Nazareth House --

21 A. Not really.

22 Q. -- or if anything happened?

23 A. No.

24 Q. But looking more generally at discipline -- and you've  
25 touched upon this already -- what can you tell me about

1           your recollection of how discipline was maintained at  
2           Nazareth House?

3           A. Well, we got pretty savvy as to how to avoid a lot of  
4           discipline. As I mentioned earlier, the nuns were not  
5           anywhere and everywhere all the time, so you were able  
6           to dodge and move from one area to another if one  
7           appeared.

8                     As far as seeing discipline of other children,  
9           I didn't see a lot of it. But then I wasn't looking for  
10          it either. I don't recall a great deal of discipline  
11          happening to me. I got my share, I mean we were  
12          strapped and what have you if you did something wrong,  
13          but as far as fisticuffs and that type of thing, the  
14          other type of fear that was there was from the older  
15          boys. It was the older boys, more so to me, than it was  
16          the nuns that had struck fear into the heart of me.

17                    There was a morgue just outside the main building  
18          and at that stage we thought it was just a guardhouse or  
19          something like that, where the bodies of the elderly  
20          from the aged care facility were put. So a vehicle  
21          would come and take them away during the day, whenever.  
22          And we were always threatened with being locked in there  
23          with them. To us, that was just -- that was beyond  
24          dying, you just didn't want to go in there. But it was  
25          just part of the kaleidoscope of that situation.

1 Q. Did those threats come from the older boys?

2 A. Yes, essentially, yes.

3 Q. One thing you tell us at paragraph 52 in relation to  
4 discipline is that it was a regular thing for discipline  
5 and punishment to be administered at assembly in front  
6 of everyone. Do you remember that happening?

7 A. Very vague recollections of it, but I know it did occur.

8 I know when we assembled, particularly when we marched  
9 back from school, we had to line up in this undercroft,  
10 underneath the main building. There was a big open area  
11 with these basketball style lights and big lights  
12 underneath it as well. Periodically, one of the nuns  
13 would come down and call someone out for punishment and  
14 they'd be punished in front.

15 But the punishment to me was just normal, I would  
16 have thought, just basic punishment for whatever was  
17 done. It was the bigger boys that put the scare into  
18 the little boys.

19 Q. The way you express it in your statement is that:

20 "In hindsight, the punishment was pretty mediocre,  
21 but at the time as a kid, it was pretty fear inducing."

22 When you talk about it being mediocre, I just  
23 wondered what you mean by that. Are you putting it into  
24 any particular context?

25 A. It was strapping where a nun would hold the child,

1 especially if it was one of the smaller children, would  
2 hold the child and then just lambast them, belt them on  
3 the backside, the back of the legs, and you can imagine  
4 the fear that was put into the children watching this.  
5 Because the boy being punished would be screaming and  
6 that didn't help us any either.

7 The nuns -- there was no measure to how much they  
8 were prepared to give you. I noticed on probably a few  
9 occasions where the nuns lost their grip after giving  
10 one lot of punishment and grabbed the child again to  
11 give him another lot for whatever reason, I don't know.

12 You've got to remember we're 5 and 6 years old  
13 at the time, so to us, the forefront of our mind was:  
14 it's not going to happen to me, they're not going to do  
15 that to me. So you try to push it to one side.

16 Q. One thing you do say -- and this is at paragraph 58 --  
17 is:

18 "I know that I used to be scared of being locked in  
19 a cupboard by the nuns."

20 A. Oh ...

21 Q. I just want to know, why were you scared of that?

22 A. I don't know where this cupboard was, but it was the  
23 other boys saying to me, "Don't let them put you in  
24 there." I never knew where the cupboard was or even who  
25 might have been put in it, but it was sufficient for me

1           to know that I don't want to go there, I don't want to  
2           be put in there because other boys had come out that  
3           cupboard after being in there for hours on end, saying  
4           it was just terrible. With that background, we made  
5           sure we just didn't go in there.

6           Q. Can I now move on, Johnno, to look at the lead-up to you  
7           leaving Aberdeen to go to Australia. Can you tell me  
8           what your recollection is as to the first time you think  
9           you knew something about that?

10          A. We were all assembled in the hall in the different age  
11          groups and we were sat down on the floor. A small group  
12          of people came up to the front of the gathering. I know  
13          there was a priest because he had the collar on;  
14          I learned later that was an Australian priest. There  
15          were two nuns, I think one was the Mother Superior and  
16          I think -- I can't think of who the other one was.  
17          There was a lady and there was a politician came to the  
18          front of the stage and started talking.

19                 We had no idea, really, what they were talking  
20          about, but it was about this -- they were talking about  
21          some place called Australia and to me, well,  
22          Australia -- where? It meant nothing, it meant  
23          absolutely nothing to me at the time. And the lads, the  
24          boys that I was with, we were more inclined to be  
25          whispering to each other at the time.

1           Then it all went quiet and I heard then the priest  
2 actually say, "Give us a show of hands as to how would  
3 like to go to this wonderful place", and then he  
4 elaborated further before the hands went up to say  
5 things to the effect that -- what intrigued me or what  
6 really caught my attention was the sun shone every day.  
7 And you're in Aberdeen and the sun shines every day?  
8 Well, that's got to be something, because in Aberdeen,  
9 when the sun shines, you take a photo of it, that's how  
10 rare it is.

11           Anyway, there was the riding the school, there was  
12 the picking fruit, all that was said. It was a place  
13 that would -- was really worth going to see. They spent  
14 a fair bit of time selling this Australia. That's after  
15 we'd ignored the earlier part of their discussion  
16 because I am still not sure what it was they were  
17 talking about, but I know Australia was mentioned.

18           Anyway, the show of hands came around. I can  
19 remember looking around and there's quite a few boys  
20 in that hall and not a hand went up.

21 Q. And how many boys do you think were present?

22 A. I would think there would have to have been 50.

23 Q. Were these boys of different ages?

24 A. They were all different age groups. We were sat in  
25 rows.

1 Q. And were you one of the youngest?

2 A. I was in the smallest group. Almost against the wall.

3 But there was a passageway between us and the wall.

4 Anyway, as I was sitting there, the next minute I got

5 this tap on the shoulder, or a prod, and it was

6 Sister LKG, saying, "Put your hand up, LZK."

7 I thought, oh, okay, so up went the hand. And I looked

8 around further and then I see the put their

9 hand up and put their hands up over the

10 other side. I thought, gee, this is weird.

11 Q. And these are the boys that had run away?

12 A. That was the four of us. We were the only four to be

13 selected from that orphanage at that time.

14 Q. In your statement at paragraph 66, you say:

15 "I remember one of them was a Father Stinson."

16 A. I learned later Father Stinson had the role from

17 Australia. He was one that was nominated by the church

18 to do the rounds and promote the Catholic side of the

19 institution.

20 Q. So he was an Australian priest?

21 A. As I understand it, yes.

22 Q. So that then essentially, as you tell us in your

23 statement, was you earmarked for being sent away to

24 Australia?

25 A. I'm sorry, could you repeat that?



1 Q. That was you having been selected, if you like, at  
2 least at this point to go to --

3 A. At the time I honestly had no idea what was happening.  
4 It wasn't until some weeks later where we were dragged  
5 off to have medical examinations and what have you that  
6 I began to realise that we must be going somewhere, and  
7 it was at that point, which was probably about [REDACTED]  
8 [REDACTED] of the following year, when the nun that I was  
9 quite friendly with took me into her room, we were due  
10 to be removed from Aberdeen the next day, and I was to  
11 be -- I think it's called confirmation and I was to be  
12 confirmed before going off.

13 She took me into her room, she was in her full garb,  
14 she took this head dress off, this great big thing off,  
15 and sat on the bed and I was asked to sit on the bed.  
16 She sat on the bed next to me, and she said, "Now, we've  
17 got to put this white uniform on", a white shirt, white  
18 shorts.

19 Q. Is that for your confirmation?

20 A. Yes. She stripped me and put a towel on her lap and  
21 then asked me to sit on her lap and then started putting  
22 powder on me. She said, "We've got to have you smelling  
23 nice", I remember that aspect of it. The powder sort of  
24 went all over me, there wasn't a part that went  
25 untouched, so to speak.

1           And at the time, I probably was aware that this  
2           doesn't look right, considering the privacy the girls  
3           showed us in the bathroom and what have you with the  
4           slips. But I just felt that comfortable because nobody  
5           had -- it was the first time anyone ever showed any  
6           consideration or thought for me.

7           So I let it ride. But it wasn't until later on that  
8           I really began to feel that it should never have  
9           happened, but it did. But she was such a kind woman  
10          anyway, I didn't want to expose it.

11         Q. I think you also say that she gave you some information  
12          as to where Australia was.

13         A. It was a bit disappointing, I must say, because I asked  
14          her "Where is?" -- I don't think I could even say  
15          Australia, but, "Where am I going?" and she said, "It's  
16          just down the road", and she pointed through the gate  
17          and around the corner. And I remember thinking  
18          innocently, "Wow, if the sun shines every day and you've  
19          got all this fruit, what am I doing here? And if  
20          I don't like it there, I can come back." That was the  
21          mindset that a kid would have. I took that as being,  
22          wow, that looks like a good deal.

23         Q. And of course that wasn't true?

24         A. No, no, no. In fact, the next day, we were taken to  
25          the -- oh, before then I was taken around to the aged

1 care facility in my white outfit to say goodbye to all  
2 the elderly people that were in bed. There were about  
3 20 of them, I guess, in a big ward, in a big ... I had  
4 to go to each bed, shake hands, and each of them gave me  
5 something: chocolates, money. I finished up collecting  
6 a guinea -- it was 21 shillings, apparently, in  
7 shillings, sixpences, thruppences and what have you.  
8 I gave it all to the nun and she said, "Do you know how  
9 much you've got there?" and I said no. She said, "Well,  
10 if anyone asks you", because she took all the change and  
11 gave me a pound note and a shilling, and said, "If  
12 anyone asks you, you've got a guinea", and that was the  
13 first and only time I needed to be told I had a guinea  
14 because it was a word I remembered for the rest of my  
15 life.

16 Q. And I think you tell us you put the chocolate and the  
17 guinea into the case you were provided with; is that  
18 right?

19 A. Yes, I had probably the equivalent of three or four  
20 quarter-pound blocks of chocolate. Some of it was  
21 candy, candy and chocolate. They were the two  
22 combinations that were given to me.

23 Q. And apart from the money and the chocolate and the  
24 candy, what else went into the case?

25 A. The sister gave me a scapular. It was a little medal to

1 wear around my neck. It was to keep me holy and protect  
2 me and all those other things that these things do for  
3 you. Yeah, it was just a nice thing to do. I felt at  
4 that time very privileged, I've got a scapular, and  
5 I was able to show it to the other kids: look what  
6 I got.

7 Q. Did you wear it round your neck?

8 A. I did.

9 Q. Can I ask you to look with me at the migration  
10 documentation that we have? It'll come on the screen in  
11 front of you. I'll give the reference for it:  
12 WIT.003.001.6049.

13 (Pause)

14 It should, I suppose, have been redacted.

15 A. It's nice to see my original name.

16 Q. Can we just take it off the screen for a moment?

17 LADY SMITH: Can I just remind anyone who has read that:

18 this name is covered by my general restriction order and  
19 it cannot be repeated outside this room.

20 MR MacAULAY: I think you are aware of what this document  
21 contains.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. It sets out that you were aged 6 at the time this  
24 document was completed.

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. So this is in the lead-up to you actually leaving when  
2 you were aged 7?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. It gives the date of your birth. Your weight is 3 stone  
5 6 pounds, according to the information provided here.

6 And then section 5:

7 "Furnish name and address of parent, guardian or  
8 next of kin."

9 And next of kin has been deleted and "guardian" is  
10 left, and the name -- what's been typed in is  
11 "Reverend Mother". I think you're aware of that, that  
12 the Reverend Mother was being put forward as your  
13 guardian?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. There's then a signature on behalf of the Catholic Child  
16 Welfare Committee and the date for the signature is  
17 [REDACTED] 1949. Then there's a section -- and I think  
18 you're aware of this section -- section B, which is  
19 headed:

20 "Parent's or guardian's consent (father if living).  
21 I, [the Reverend Mother], guardian of [you]."

22 And it has been signed by Sister LKC [REDACTED].

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And on the second page, there's a section dealing with:

25 "In the event of the child named in this application

1 leaving Australia before the completion of two years,  
2 the sponsoring organisation is required to repay the  
3 financial assistance granted in respect of the assisted  
4 passage."

5 I think you are aware that that section has been  
6 signed by -- the signature looks like "PF Quille";  
7 is that right?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Again, we're told that this is a representative of an  
10 organisation in the United Kingdom and I think that's  
11 a sponsoring organisation?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. So you're aware of the contents of this form, Johnno?

14 A. I am aware, and I'm just at a loss as to how it was --  
15 in hindsight, I'm at a loss as to how it was all allowed  
16 to happen. First and foremost, under Scottish law at  
17 that time, a guardian had to be someone that was closely  
18 related to you. There's no Reverend Mother or priest or  
19 any other person in my life at that time that had the  
20 power of guardianship over me or over any other child if  
21 we were to adhere strictly to the law of Scotland at  
22 that time.

23 How it got through the system and the agencies were  
24 allowed to flaunt that law to whatever degree beggars  
25 belief in my mind today, that that was allowed,

1           considering the knowledge that was available to the  
2           migration agencies and the various governments was  
3           plainly visible at the time we were deported to  
4           Australia. It should never have happened, it should  
5           never have been allowed. Scotland should never, ever  
6           have agreed to send their children away.

7           I want to make one further comment if I may, Colin.  
8           That's in regard to the then -- I think he was the  
9           foreign affairs minister, Sir Winston Churchill, who  
10          in the 1948 immigration debate asked the question:

11                 "Why are we deporting our children?"

12          That to me speaks oodles of why wasn't more care  
13          taken to look after these children? Because we became  
14          a commodity, we were no longer human beings. From the  
15          time this whole thing started we were considered to be  
16          a commodity. It was just very cruel because we never,  
17          ever at any stage knew, really, what was happening to  
18          us.

19          Q. I think the position is when this was being set up,  
20          Johnno, you were 6 years of age, so you wouldn't have any  
21          real understanding of what was happening.

22          A. That added to the problem, I guess, but when I look back  
23          at papers that are available now, and in fact there are  
24          a lot more documents relating to the Migration Act of  
25          1947/1948 held in the Kew Resources Area in England that

1 highlight a lot of what went on.

2 Part of the argument in that debate was that  
3 it would be more economical, more economically viable,  
4 for us to send these children to Australia, where  
5 they've got a chance of a better life and that it made  
6 more sense financially for us to spend 10 shillings  
7 a week in having them there as opposed to keeping them  
8 here for £10 a week.

9 When you look at the numbers, 7,000-odd children,  
10 that's a big saving, back then as well, which made it an  
11 even more lucrative thing for the British Government.

12 I'm only surmising, but part of the reason why they  
13 allowed the carte blanche movement of so many children  
14 is that the agencies were not controlled. The agencies  
15 had carte blanche, they could walk into the -- yeah,  
16 we'll have that one, this one, no, we don't want him.  
17 They picked and chose. No longer was it a migration  
18 thing -- we became a requirement, we became -- what  
19 would you call it? -- a filling.

20 The institutions in Australia would give a number,  
21 "We need another 17", or, "We need another 25", and off  
22 the agencies would go and pick up the numbers that were  
23 needed and get them out.

24 Q. Can I just interrupt? You're making some very important  
25 points and these are clearly points that the inquiry



1 will be looking at very soon.

2 If I can just come back to your own personal account  
3 for the moment, Johnno, can you tell me, when you came to  
4 leave Aberdeen, what happened? How did you travel?

5 A. We were taken to the train station and I think that was  
6 the first thing that hit me, that this is not just down  
7 the road and around the corner, and I began to become  
8 concerned at that stage and then there was the long  
9 trip, I think it was about -- it seemed to be for hours,  
10 the train ride down to the sea port.

11 I don't have a lot of memory of the actual train  
12 trip because the boys that came with me told me that  
13 I just spent the whole time curled up crying.

14 Q. Were the boys who were with you the three boys that  
15 you've mentioned already from Aberdeen?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. So the four of you travelled together from Aberdeen?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And did somebody travel with you from Aberdeen?

20 A. I think there were no other boys from Aberdeen but there  
21 were other children from other areas.

22 Q. Do you know if these were Scottish children or --

23 A. I think they were. I think there was a contingent of us  
24 because I didn't see much of the other kids on the  
25 train, but I saw a lot of the kids on the ship that we

1           went out on. So the train -- there may have only been  
2           the four of us on the train because I didn't leave the  
3           carriage. I lived on the chocolates that the aged care  
4           people gave me at the time.

5           I don't remember getting off the train. I don't  
6           remember going aboard ship. In fact, it was the morning  
7           of day 2 that I finally left my cabin on the ship.

8           I was told that I bawled my eyes out the whole way.  
9           I don't know, but I just felt as though there's  
10          something wrong, this shouldn't ... what am I doing,  
11          what's happening to us, where are we going? It was just  
12          so confusing.

13          Some of the older boys seemed to have a bit more  
14          tolerance of it, tried to pacify me and say, "Look,  
15          you're on a ship, we're going to Australia", and I'm  
16          going, "Yeah, right", but I think it was halfway through  
17          day 2 on the ship that I finally went and had a meal and  
18          they pulled a bit of a trick on me at that meal. I was  
19          a bit late going up to it and the older boys had made  
20          a hole in the mashed potato that was on the plate and  
21          put a big globule of mustard in the middle of it and  
22          covered it over, and of course I raced in, I was very  
23          hungry, and took a big -- it just about skinned my  
24          mouth.

25          Q. Were these the boys that you travelled with who played

1           this trick?

2           A. I don't know which one did it, but I've hated mustard  
3           ever since. I've not been able to eat it at all. But  
4           that's another story.

5           Q. Then once you were out of your cabin and took some sense  
6           of where you were and who was there, were there other  
7           boys there apart from the boys from Aberdeen?

8           A. Yes, there were. At mealtimes, the boys were served  
9           first and we went up and I could look around and see  
10          there were quite a few boys on that ship. Some of them  
11          were pretty rough and unruly because I remember seeing  
12          deckchairs being slid round the place and yahooing and  
13          carrying on. I'm not sure whether or not I joined in, I  
14          might have. I probably didn't, but I might have. It  
15          was a pretty sedate sort of crossing for me, mainly  
16          because I was probably the youngest boy on there, on  
17          that ship at the time.

18          Q. Were there girls who you understood were child migrants?

19          A. I believe there were two women that did the journey with  
20          us that looked after the bathing and I can never be sure  
21          whether we were bathed or just washed, because most  
22          ships don't have baths, especially back then.

23          Q. What about young girls who might have been  
24          child migrants? Were you conscious of there being young  
25          girls?

1 A. No, these would have been mature, they certainly would  
2 have been over 20.

3 Q. What about young girls who might have been  
4 child migrants?

5 A. All boys.

6 Q. All boys?

7 A. It was all boys that I remember seeing. Whether there  
8 was another section of girls there, I don't know.

9 Q. You do tell us about an incident when the ship was at  
10 Colombo and some little boats came to the side of the  
11 ship to sell things. Can you tell me what happened on  
12 that occasion?

13 A. Well, I lost my scapular that day. When we pulled in,  
14 the ship had been damaged because of rough seas, the  
15 ballast had shifted -- this is the story I'm led to  
16 believe -- and that three people, somewhere in the  
17 Atlantic, were washed overboard. We limped into Colombo  
18 and we had, I think, about a week in Colombo. These  
19 little canoes came out to the side of the ship selling  
20 little ivory trinkets, bundles of bananas and things  
21 like that, and I can remember looking over and there's  
22 all these ropes going up and down from these little --  
23 and the ropes had a bag on them. I remember calling  
24 down or pointing down to the bananas and he looked up  
25 and he got a small bunch of bananas, out them in the

1 bag, and sent it up and I got hold of it and I put the  
2 scapular medal, because I didn't have any money or  
3 I didn't know what money was really then, I put the  
4 scapular in, down it went, and I waited there and next  
5 minute he's climbing up the rope. He put the fear of  
6 God -- he chased me and I ended up down in the engine  
7 room of the ship. I think I was lucky to survive that  
8 day. Stupid of me but I paid the price for doing  
9 something silly.

10 LADY SMITH: Did you keep your bananas?

11 A. I did, I did. There were about six bananas in the group  
12 so I was able to carry them, I didn't lose them. But  
13 I didn't get my scapular back either, my Lady.

14 LADY SMITH: Maybe that's fair enough!

15 MR MacAULAY: You say in your statement that you do have  
16 a clear recollection of arriving in Fremantle in  
17 Western Australia.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And can you just tell us what the process was once you  
20 arrived at Fremantle?

21 A. On the day we arrived, we were assembled and we were  
22 given a number. Wonderful. I was given number 1, the  
23 other two boys were given number 3 -- the other three  
24 boys were given number 3. When we got on to the wharf,  
25 there were people, these were the Christian Brothers, as

1 I know now, but didn't know at the time, all in black  
2 with their collar, on the wharf sorting us into lines,  
3 the four lines that were necessary.

4 I remember there was an awful lot of crying.  
5 I didn't really know why, but I learned later what that  
6 was all about. We were then -- my group, there were  
7 about 15, I think, in my line. We were loaded on to  
8 a small bus and taken out to the institution called  
9 Castledare. The second group went to a place called  
10 Clontarf. The number 3s went to a place called Tardun.  
11 The number 4s went to a place called Bindoon. All in  
12 Western Australia and all run by the Christian Brother  
13 organisation.

14 Q. Were there any younger children, even younger than you,  
15 who may have gone elsewhere?

16 A. Yes, there was a small amount. They were like toddlers  
17 and I was pretty little, but they were littler than me,  
18 and they went to a place called St Joseph's in Subiaco.

19 Q. And that was run by nuns?

20 A. That was run by nuns, yes.

21 Q. Did you understand or discover subsequently that  
22 St Joseph's in Subiaco was a sort of feeder institution  
23 for the Christian Brothers?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. So they took younger children up to a particular age and

1           then these children would be moved on?

2           A. Once they'd got to the age of, I think it was 5, at

3           Subiaco, then they were moved to Castledare. When you

4           turned 10 at Castledare, you went to Clontarf.

5           Q. Do I understand from that answer that the children that

6           were going to Subiaco were really very young children?

7           A. Oh yes, they were 3 or 4 years old, 3, 4, 5. They were  
8           quite small. But they were child migrants like we were.

9           That's where most of the crying was as well. You felt

10          a bit for them because you're looking at them and you're

11          thinking, I wonder where they're going, and you're

12          looking the other way and you've got the older boys in

13          their lines, thinking, what's going on, why are we being

14          all divided up? Because I didn't know many of the other

15          boys that were there as I had stayed with the three boys

16          from Aberdeen and I couldn't understand most of the

17          others.

18          Q. These three boys from Aberdeen were not in your group

19          when you were split up?

20          A. We were separated.

21          Q. They went somewhere else?

22          A. They went to Bindoon, yes. It was like I'd lost my

23          right arm, sort of thing, because they sort of protected

24          me during the voyage and what have you, or kept an eye

25          on me, and then they were taken away and I'm on my own.

1 I don't know who these other kids are, and then when we  
2 arrived at Castledare, of course, I knew -- well, that's  
3 another story.

4 Q. I'll come to that part of it.

5 You've mentioned the fact that you were split up  
6 from the boys that had come with you from Aberdeen. Do  
7 you know if siblings were split up in this process that  
8 you've described of people being divided into numbers?

9 A. I wasn't aware of it at the time, but it would account  
10 for a lot of the crying and stuff that went on on the  
11 wharf because I do remember children actually being  
12 pulled apart. I do remember the brothers saying, "No,  
13 you're in this line, you are in that line", but it was  
14 all very nicely done.

15 But the kids saw it as a fairly traumatic thing  
16 at the time. I think it happened in several other  
17 migration lots that came over as well. But in our lot,  
18 it just ... It didn't seem to be a big thing. But it  
19 did happen, it did happen where kids -- I know I felt  
20 very isolated when they removed the three older boys  
21 because I was trying to get into their line as well and  
22 they kept pulling me out and saying, "No, you're in this  
23 line", so I stayed where I was.

24 Q. I think you've indicated that your group was 15 or so  
25 boys?



1 A. Yes, 15. It could have been 12. Twelve to 15.

2 Q. Did you know any of them at all?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Are you able to say now what nationality they may have  
5 been?

6 A. I think they were mainly Irish. There was English there  
7 and Irish. Irish I think was the --

8 Q. Any Scots?

9 A. No, I don't think so. I think I was -- in that group,  
10 I was probably the only Scot.

11 Q. You then go from Fremantle to Castledare by bus; is that  
12 right?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And on the bus, apart from the boys, were there any  
15 brothers on the bus?

16 A. The driver was a -- I'm pretty sure the driver was a lay  
17 brother. There was one other that sat up the front on  
18 the passenger side of the bus. Other than that, there  
19 was just the rest of us with our little bags up above  
20 us. But we thought we were going to a fairyland. We  
21 thought, "Wow, we're on a bus", I'd never been on a bus  
22 before. It was quite a novelty, but that came to  
23 a shattering halt very shortly.

24 Q. You say that you thought the driver was a lay brother  
25 and there was another brother. How did you distinguish

1 the lay brothers from the religious brothers?

2 A. There was no distinction in dress. They all wore the  
3 same. You just got to know that he works the farm or he  
4 does this or he does that. There was no distinction  
5 between the uniforms.

6 Q. What you say in your statement is Castledare was  
7 a relatively isolated location; is that right?

8 A. Not as isolated as some of the others, but yes, it was  
9 away from any major development.

10 Q. But it was close to a tidal river?

11 A. Oh, it was right on the river.

12 Q. And we'll come to look at something that happened there  
13 later.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. When you arrived there, then, can you just tell me what  
16 your sense was of your arrival and your first day there?

17 A. Well, that's probably one of the worst days of my life,  
18 I think. When I hark back as to how fearful I've been,  
19 and I've been in some pretty fearful situations in my  
20 life, but the level of fear that I had on that day has  
21 surpassed anything that I would want to experience  
22 again. Attributable, of course, to my age at the time.

23 We arrived at Castledare and this big chap, big  
24 Christian Brother, in a long flowing habit -- we thought  
25 it was a dress, actually -- stepped up on to the bus and

1 he was that big, he was hunched over because he was  
2 hitting the roof. He was about 6 foot 6. He looked  
3 down the bus and he said, "Right, when I say 'move',  
4 I want you over there under that tree in a single file",  
5 and then he just bellowed, "Move!" and we were all,  
6 "What's going on here?"

7 So we all got out of our seats and trying to grab  
8 our bags and some of us were a bit slow doing it and he  
9 then pushed his way up to the back and started belting  
10 and kicking us off the bus.

11 Then when we got out of the bus, we were all in  
12 a bit of a gaggle under the tree, and we had no idea  
13 what a single file was, we knew what a straight line  
14 was, but what's a single file? We had no concept of it.  
15 So we were belted again into a straight line.

16 Then we were marched off by some of the Australian  
17 boys that were already in the institution, marched off  
18 and this brother, down to the laundry, with all our  
19 gear, we got into the laundry, there were a couple of  
20 nuns there, ready to hand out clothing to us and we were  
21 bundled into the middle of the laundry and the  
22 Australian kids were sort of all around us and the nuns  
23 were over here (indicating).

24 This Christian Brother said, "Right, strip", and we  
25 thought we'd take our jackets off or ... we didn't know

1           how far down to strip. Most of us got down to our  
2           underwear, "Get that off too!" Suddenly we were  
3           standing there naked, something I'd never experienced  
4           before, in the laundry with Australian kids laughing or  
5           poking at us. The nuns looking over and handing us  
6           shirts and what have you. It was an ordeal that ... It  
7           went beyond humiliation, I think. It was just so  
8           degrading after what we were used to back in the  
9           institutions as far as privacy was concerned.

10           Suddenly, all our self-worth was gone, just stripped  
11           of us, and everything was taken away. We never, ever  
12           saw any of our items again. It was like we had been put  
13           through a washing machine, you know, and come out the  
14           other side a completely different person. It was all --  
15           everything we held firm -- and we didn't hold that much  
16           firm because we were only kids -- but what we did have  
17           was a little bit of dignity, a little bit of pride,  
18           a little bit of self-worth, and it just washed away,  
19           just like that, on the order of a Christian Brother.

20        Q. Who was the brother?

21        A. MDF, Brother MDF

22        Q. What you say in your statement is not just your  
23           clothing, but for example some children, like you, had  
24           had scapulars, they were also taken away? The scapulars  
25           that other children had were taken away?

1 A. Oh, other children, yes, the English kids, the Irish  
2 kids, they had different -- everything we had on us had  
3 to be put in a heap and it was taken away by the  
4 Australian kids. I don't know where they took it too,  
5 but we never, ever saw it again. That included my  
6 guinea.

7 Q. So your case was taken?

8 A. Yes, everything. We were standing in the middle of this  
9 laundry, totally and absolutely naked. Everything had  
10 gone.

11 Q. And the items that you were given, the clothing you were  
12 given, what did that consist of?

13 A. I guess the nuns tried to size you up and, "Here  
14 you are", and it was a shirt and a pair of shorts.

15 Q. No underwear?

16 A. No underwear, no shoes, no singlets. Just a shirt, a  
17 cotton shirt and a cotton pair of shorts. Most of it  
18 didn't fit, but I guess we were just thankful to be able  
19 to cover up at the time.

20 Q. We know that the institution was run by the  
21 Christian Brothers; that is correct, isn't it?

22 A. I'm sorry?

23 Q. It was run by the Christian Brothers?

24 A. Oh yes, totally.

25 Q. Who was in charge when you arrived there?

1 A. Brother **AKG** was the head man at the time. He had  
2 just replaced a Brother **MXC**, but Brother **MXC**  
3 remained at Castledare for a little bit longer as  
4 a junior member of the clergy or whatever.

5 Q. Can you tell me the names? You have mentioned  
6 Brother **MDF** already. What other brothers can you  
7 remember, in particular brothers that you would have  
8 dealings with in your time there?

9 A. At Castledare I can ... Brother **MDF**, Brother **MIZ**,  
10 Brother **AKG**. There was a lay brother there, I think  
11 it was Brother **MYK** or Brother **MPQ**. I'm not sure  
12 which of those two it was, but it was one of them.  
13 There weren't many brothers there at all at Castledare,  
14 but there were about 90 boys.

15 Q. I was about to ask you then: it's all boys we're looking  
16 at in these places?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. You've already mentioned that there were Australian boys  
19 there.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. So was it a mixture of Australian boys and migrants?

22 A. At Castledare?

23 Q. Yes.

24 A. Yes. Oh yes, very much so.

25 Q. And what was the -- do you know what the proportions

1           were?

2           A. I would think about 65/35 British. We would have been  
3           the bigger number.

4           Q. And the age range then at Castledare?

5           A. Yes, from 6 to 10.

6           Q. Because I think at 10 you moved on to Clontarf?

7           A. Once you turned 10, assuming you had the right birth  
8           date, once you turned 10 you were then moved on to  
9           Clontarf.

10          Q. Can I just ask you to look at some photographs to get  
11          a sense of the place? They'll come on the screen in  
12          front of you. The first photograph I want you to look  
13          at is at INQ.001.004.0806. Do you recognise that?

14          A. That's the main building at Castledare. You see that  
15          little pinnacle at the top?

16          Q. Yes.

17          A. That was the hobby room.

18          Q. Sorry?

19          A. The hobby room. We went up there and played around with  
20          making or painting things. That's where we went, up  
21          into that.

22                 The church was in there, inside that building.

23                 That's where the Christian Brothers lived in the rest of  
24                 that building.

25          Q. And what about the boys, where did the boys live?

1 A. The boys were over here (indicating).

2 Q. In a separate building?

3 A. It's one building, but it was connected.

4 Q. So if you're looking at the photograph are you looking  
5 to the left or to your right as you look to the  
6 photograph?

7 A. It would have been over this side (indicating).

8 Q. If I also ask you to look at this photograph, INQ-165.  
9 Do you recognise what is shown there?

10 A. That looks like bottom dorm --

11 Q. Would that be a --

12 A. -- because top dorm had [MDF]'s room in it, built on  
13 the far end, and I don't see it there.

14 Both dormitories looked to be pretty much the same  
15 and you had the shower area joining both dormitories.

16 So [MDF]'s room -- he had his room in what was  
17 called top dorm; this is bottom dorm. I am pretty sure  
18 this one is bottom dorm.

19 Q. When you say top dorm, is it essentially above what  
20 we're looking at?

21 A. No, alongside. But because it was higher up the hill,  
22 I guess, it was called top dorm. This one was further  
23 down so it was called bottom dorm.

24 Q. As we look at this photograph, are we able to count  
25 within this area that there are four rows of beds, 1, 2,



1           3, 4, moving from left to right?

2           A. There are five.

3           LADY SMITH: There are five, Mr MacAulay. I think I'm  
4           counting 30 beds in the space we can see; is that right?

5           A. There's five, right over in the corner.

6                     But I think that's pretty spacious because I can  
7           remember top dorm being a little more busier than that.  
8           There wasn't much room. They've got acres of room there  
9           (indicating), whereas in our dorm ... and top dorm had  
10          little cubicles on the right-hand side, they had about  
11          five cubicles where individual beds were also placed,  
12          because I was in one of those cubicles.

13          LADY SMITH: How many dorms were there?

14          A. Two.

15          LADY SMITH: Just two?

16          A. There's this one and then you walked through the  
17          bathroom or the shower room, and an identical building  
18          was there. This was the one on the far end, and top  
19          dorm, which was probably the bigger of the two -- yeah,  
20          this is the bottom dorm.

21          MR MacAULAY: Just to be clear, were you in top dorm or  
22          bottom dorm?

23          A. I was in top dorm because I had one of the cubicles.

24          Q. But there isn't --

25          A. That was **MDF**'s room as well, top dorm.

1 Q. But as we look at this area we're looking at, and  
2 imagining that being accommodated by a boy to each bed,  
3 there wasn't a lot of room.

4 A. Oh, there's acres there. There's plenty of room there.  
5 I mean, top dorm was busier than that. This might have  
6 been a very, very early photo as well because I think we  
7 had different quilts on our beds as well. The beds are  
8 the same but there were more of them. I think we had  
9 something like 50-odd boys in top dorm and maybe 40 or  
10 so on the bottom dorm.

11 Q. You've mentioned Brother MDF and how you first came  
12 across him. I think you indicated he was a big man;  
13 is that right?

14 A. Well, from our perspective he would have been -- he'd  
15 have to have been 6 foot 6. Big, tall, thin, very long,  
16 drawn face. His photo's actually been in the media on  
17 a few occasions. [REDACTED]

18 [REDACTED]  
19 [REDACTED] If  
20 you saw him, you would understand what I'd -- how I'm  
21 trying to describe him. But he was never a happy man.  
22 He just had this big, long face and ... Oh, I get the  
23 heebie-jeebies when I think of him.

24 Q. Was there a name that you child migrants were known as?

25 A. The British kids, yeah, we were ... Initially, we were

1           imbeciles. That was probably the key name we were  
2           given. But once we started in a sporting competition,  
3           it was always the British kids against the Australian  
4           kids, and we became the Blackguards, we were the  
5           Blackguards or the black team. The Australian team was  
6           always the white team, the British team was always the  
7           black team, the Blackguards. It was a simple game. The  
8           black team had to capture the white team and put them in  
9           a jail, and then it was the white team's turn to catch  
10          the black team and put them in jail, in a pine  
11          plantation. The jail was a great circle of pine  
12          needles.

13        Q. Can I now look at some aspects of the routine with you  
14          and let me turn first of all to bed-wetting. How was  
15          bed-wetting dealt with at Castledare?

16        A. It was very, very seriously looked upon as being the  
17          work of the devil, I think. That was the way it was  
18          portrayed to us. The punishments that you got for  
19          wetting the bed only made you wet your bed even more,  
20          I think, because to experience freezing cold showers  
21          in the middle of winter -- and I mean when those showers  
22          were turned on full pelt and they hit you, you got brain  
23          freeze within seconds and you're not allowed to take  
24          your head out from under the shower. You could almost  
25          pass out from the pain that that alone did, let alone

1           how the rest of your body felt. You'd have to stand  
2           under that for minutes at a time. God knows how they  
3           paid their water bills, but that's what we used to have  
4           to endure.

5           Some kids, if the brother was angry enough, they'd  
6           have to put the wet sheet over them and just stand with  
7           the wet sheet over their heads.

8           Q. And in relation to the sheets themselves, did you have  
9           to do anything with the sheets? Did the boy who wet the  
10          bed have to do anything himself with the sheets?

11          A. We had to strip the beds and take the sheets down to the  
12          laundry.

13          Q. I think I understand from what you're saying, Johnno,  
14          that you were a bed-wetter.

15          A. Compulsive. And I could never understand why because  
16          the amazing thing was the very day I left Clontarf,  
17          I have never wet my bed since. Just an extraordinary  
18          transition and I can't explain why.

19          Q. You've mentioned the cold showers which would be  
20          a consequence of wetting the bed. Was there  
21          a particular brother who controlled that process?

22          A. Oh, Brother MDI was the key to the wet-bed dormitory.  
23          He's the one that would get you up in the middle of the  
24          night -- you would go to bed at 9.30, or lights out at  
25          9.30, and then round about 11, because all the wet-beds,

1           we were on a veranda, open to the weather, and even  
2           though there were some louvres there, but they were more  
3           a hindrance in us getting to sleep because any wind  
4           rattled them and so forth and the wind got through them  
5           anyway and one end of it was completely empty. That was  
6           our punishment, just being on that veranda.

7           Q. So do I take it from that that you were removed from the  
8           dorm and put on the veranda --

9           A. Yes.

10          Q. -- with the other bed-wetters?

11          A. Yes.

12          Q. So just I can understand what happened in the showers,  
13          what brother would be --

14          A. **MDF**.

15          Q. What would he do?

16          A. In the showers?

17          Q. Yes.

18          A. For wet-beds?

19          Q. Yes.

20          A. He would just stand there and make sure -- usually there  
21          was about ... I'd have to say on average a dozen to  
22          15 kids that would have wet the bed that night, even  
23          though there were about 20 beds on the veranda. Some  
24          kids were fortunate enough to miss one night and became  
25          happy little Vegemites because they didn't have to have

1 a cold shower. It was such a relief not to have to  
2 endure that.

3 He would just stand there and watch and if you dared  
4 put your head out, that's what he was looking for, to  
5 keep you under there as long as he could, and it was  
6 just a very painful and very nasty experience.

7 Q. Can you describe the shower --

8 A. You'd think it was an incentive not to do it the next  
9 day, but in fact it made it worse.

10 Q. Can you describe the shower area for me?

11 A. The shower area? Yes. You could shower 27 kids at the  
12 one time in three compartments of nine, but it was all  
13 open, all open. You'd put the shower on first of all  
14 for the first group, and then the brother would move  
15 down to the middle shower group, turn that on, turn this  
16 one off while they soaped up, and then he'd switch that  
17 one off, they would soap up, and he'd go to the third  
18 one and turn that one on, so you've got 27 kids being  
19 washed at the one time. When he turned that off, he  
20 then got back to the top so that they could rinse the  
21 soap off and so it went.

22 When we completed our shower, there was no privacy,  
23 we were all bundled into the one little area to dry  
24 ourselves and what have you.

25 Then we had to file past **MDF** and put our hands up

1 and turn around and he examined us -- or supposedly he  
2 examined us, but I think it just gave him some pretty  
3 bad ideas.

4 If he didn't like you, that's where he caught up  
5 with you. That's where, if he wanted to punish you, he  
6 caught you in the showers or in the classroom, one or  
7 the other. You were never able to escape it all the  
8 time. You could get away with something sometimes, but,  
9 no, **MDF** was a very cruel man.

10 Q. What sort of thing would he do in the showers?

11 A. I remember watching him at one of the shower evenings  
12 and he had a small -- one of the smaller boys by the  
13 ankle -- before we went into the shower there's a very  
14 long foot trough where we all had to wash our feet  
15 before we went into the showers, about that deep  
16 (indicating) --

17 Q. So about a foot deep?

18 A. He had this boy by the ankle and he had his head under  
19 the water in the foot trough, belting him with his  
20 strap.

21 Q. Was the boy naked?

22 A. Oh yes, the boy was naked, yes, but he was just belting  
23 the kid and the kid couldn't scream, his head was under  
24 water.

25 I saw another brother with another boy, not the same

1           boy, up on the landing, a concrete landing, with a  
2           brother his head into the concrete, into the --

3           Q. But that was a different brother?

4           A. That was a different brother, yes.

5           Q. What was his name?

6           A. That was one of the better brothers, I might add.

7           MR MacAULAY: I'm looking at the time, my Lady.

8                     We tend to have a break at this time, Johnno, and I'm  
9           sure you'd welcome a break.

10          A. Very much.

11          LADY SMITH: If it would work for you, Johnno, we'll take  
12          a break just now for 15 minutes. Would that be all  
13          right?

14          A. Thank you, my Lady.

15          LADY SMITH: Very well.

16          (11.30 am)

17                                     (A short break)

18          (11.50 am)

19          LADY SMITH: Johnno, I hope you've been able to have  
20          a restorative break. Are you able for us to carry on?

21          A. Yes, I am, thank you, madam.

22          LADY SMITH: Mr MacAulay.

23          MR MacAULAY: My Lady.

24                     Before the break, Johnno, we'd been looking at some  
25          aspects of the showering procedures. Just staying --



1 A. I'm sorry, what procedures?

2 Q. Showering.

3 A. Sharing? Oh, showering.

4 Q. It's my accent!

5 Just staying with that theme and looking at washing  
6 and hygiene more generally, so far as cleaning your  
7 teeth would be concerned, can you just tell me a little  
8 bit how that was managed?

9 A. Most of us left the institutions with probably the  
10 better part of our molar teeth missing. With that as  
11 a backdrop, each evening, when you look at -- there's  
12 250 to 300 children to clean their teeth. There were  
13 two tubes of toothpaste allocated. The tubes were  
14 roughly the minimum (indicating), very small.

15 Q. 3 inches, you're indicating about 3 inches?

16 A. Three, 3.5 inches. I don't know if there were any  
17 bigger tubes available, but that was the regular one  
18 that we used to get, and if you weren't in the first,  
19 say, 40 or 50, you then cleaned your teeth with soap --  
20 and that's if you had a toothbrush. You didn't always  
21 have a toothbrush either, so then you used your finger.

22 So you tried to adjust your time so at least one of  
23 the days in the week you'd get as close to the front as  
24 you can, and if you were one of the kids that had the  
25 job of squeezing the toothpaste on to the toothbrush,

1           you made sure you left enough in the tube for you at the  
2           end of the day.

3           But believe you me, by the time the last bit was  
4           squeezed out of that tube, there was barely any metal  
5           left in there, let alone toothpaste. Kids used to break  
6           it open and just get the last little bits out. But more  
7           times than enough, never ...

8           It was as bad as the toilets. There was no toilet  
9           paper, you know? You can imagine an orphanage that's  
10          got a toilet with eight or nine cubicles in it, not  
11          a piece of paper to bless yourself with, let alone the  
12          other tasks required. It was just ... We used to tear  
13          bits of our writing pads and what have you to do the  
14          job. And if you were caught doing that, oh boy, it  
15          really wasn't worth the risk. So it's as well we didn't  
16          have underwear to wear, I'll put it that way.

17         Q. You also tell us a little bit about a nit-removing  
18          process.

19         A. That was at Castledare.

20         Q. I think we're still at Castledare.

21         A. Okay, yes.

22         Q. I think you mentioned 250 as a number but I think 250 is  
23          the number of boys at Clontarf and there were about  
24          90 boys at Castledare.

25         A. I was getting mixed up, I apologise. It was Clontarf

1 I was talking about. Pull me into line, please, if  
2 I wander again.

3 Q. If we look at Castledare and the nit-removing process,  
4 if we can call it that. Can you tell me about that?

5 A. There was what we called the nit season and we could  
6 never fathom out what that implied, but each Friday  
7 we were required to scrub each other's hair and then run  
8 this metal comb through the hair, hard -- I mean you  
9 really had to press down on it -- to remove these nits  
10 or the eggs that come with the nits.

11 But more annoying than that was the material they  
12 gave us. I'm amazed some of us have still got a scalp.  
13 This stuff was red hot. It burned your scalp. It was  
14 called Jayze -- I think it was J-A-Y-Z-E or something  
15 along those lines. I'm sure it was some form of paint  
16 stripper. It was very potent stuff. MDF had the  
17 task of doing this as well. He would just walk up and  
18 down and watch. If you didn't seem to be scraping hard  
19 enough down someone's head, he'd take the comb off you  
20 and he'd say, "This is how it's done", and quite often  
21 he would make the scalp bleed for the kid he was doing  
22 it to and of course you'd get a backhander as well for  
23 not doing it as hard as he felt it needed to be done.

24 But I don't remember an outbreak of nits anywhere.  
25 Maybe -- that was probably why!

1 Q. So far you've been telling us about your involvement  
2 with the brothers, in particular Brother **MDF**. He  
3 seems to feature a lot of in your life at Castledare;  
4 is that right?

5 A. He was the bane of my life and the life of hundreds and  
6 hundreds of British kids.

7 Q. You mentioned the nuns who were there when you arrived.  
8 Can I ask you what role, if any, did the nuns play?

9 A. The nuns had no role whatsoever in the administration  
10 and care of the children. Their role -- they were  
11 Hungarian nuns, they could barely speak English at all.  
12 At that time there was the problem in Hungary, it had  
13 been invaded and what have you, so they were rescued and  
14 that's where they were allocated to.

15 There were four of them in the main, but I think at  
16 times there were six of them. They had their own  
17 convent about 300 metres from the main institution  
18 itself.

19 Q. What role then did they play as well as doing the  
20 laundry, for example?

21 A. They looked after the infirmary and they looked after  
22 the sewing, sewing the holes in the clothes, tears  
23 in the clothing, and putting the numbers -- we all had  
24 numbers and they had to sew the number patches on to the  
25 shorts and shirts and repair whatever torn clothing

1           there was. That essentially was their role.

2           Q. Leaving the nuns aside then, was there any other female  
3           input?

4           A. There was a female assistant cook, the wife of the main  
5           cook. But he wasn't really a cook.

6           Q. Do I take it --

7           A. He was the cook's wife.

8           Q. Do I take it then, so far as the care of the children  
9           were concerned, there was no female input?

10          A. No, no, no, none.

11          Q. Can I then just touch upon the food since you've raised  
12          that. What was the food like?

13          A. Are we still talking Castledare?

14          Q. Yes. We'll stick with Castledare and then move on to  
15          Clontarf in due course.

16          A. To say the food was inadequate would be an  
17          overstatement. The food was dreadful. When you  
18          consider we were young kids, full of energy, racing  
19          around the countryside, entertaining ourselves -- for  
20          example, breakfast was two pieces of bread. Porridge,  
21          which was semolina, a powdery type of stuff -- I was  
22          nearly going to say salmonella.

23                 On good days you got some of that and two pieces of  
24          bread and a cup of tea. The tea was a big multi-pot,  
25          you can imagine a 20-gallon multi-pot, or whatever the

1 sizes were. It would have had the equivalent of -- I'd  
2 be surprised if there was a dessertspoon of sugar put  
3 in that mixture. And that was it, very weak. That was  
4 breakfast, two slices of bread. If there was porridge  
5 or ... what was the cereal? Wheaties. The Wheaties had  
6 things crawling around in them. Believe me, if you've  
7 heard it before and didn't believe it, it's true.

8 Just as an aside, one of the boys was caught taking  
9 these things out and he was told, "What are you doing  
10 that for? That's good for you. Leave them in there.  
11 Eat them." And they were little weevils, weevily type  
12 things. So we didn't get that all that often anyway,  
13 but that was our breakfast.

14 Lunch was not much more than that. Sometimes it was  
15 a sausage, sometimes a small pie, sometimes a piece of  
16 fish, particularly on Fridays.

17 The evening meal, which we thought should have been  
18 the main meal, was again two pieces of bread, sometimes  
19 soup -- but the soup, it's like somebody had boiled up  
20 a big vat of water and then just waved a chicken carcass  
21 over the top. It was just flavourless hot water, but to  
22 us that was soup, and we'd use our bread to soak it up,  
23 and a cup of tea.

24 I mean, we were all stunted in our growth. I look  
25 at my -- if I may divert a little, when I look at my

1           7-year-old grandson today, he's at the height I was at  
2 when I was 11. It is just extraordinary how we were --

3           In my view, today, because of the lack of  
4 nourishing, proper food -- and when you look at the  
5 money that was allocated to these institutions, we  
6 didn't have it spent on us. I don't know where it went  
7 to, but it certainly didn't come our way.

8       Q. Were you hungry?

9       A. Is the Pope a Catholic? Pardon the pun.

10           We were always hungry. There was never a time  
11 when ... We used to go down to oval at Castledare,  
12 which was full of asbestos, I might add, but we didn't  
13 know it at the time. Most of the growth in the field  
14 was nutgrass. And with nutgrass you get this seedpod,  
15 which if you get it at the right time, it's nice and  
16 sweet. It's about the size of one of those little round  
17 chocolate things, and you could eat a couple of hundred  
18 of those without any problem at all. We used to get  
19 quite a feed from it. That's only at Castledare,  
20 though.

21           But the problem with the nutgrass, when we had to go  
22 down there to play, because we had no shoes, as you run  
23 around, particularly in the winter, the nutgrass would  
24 cut in between your toes and you'd get chilblains across  
25 the ankles and they're quite painful. If you went to

1           the surgery or infirmary, you'd probably get a clip  
2           under the ear for not taking more care and running so  
3           fast, put a slap of iodine on it, that's it, you are  
4           better, off you go.

5       Q. Did you get an opportunity to see what the kitchen was  
6       like?

7       A. At Castledare? I look back now and I think how did we  
8       survive that? It was essentially a cream-colour  
9       building inside, painted, but it was black. It had  
10      a huge wood fire in one end of the kitchen and you could  
11      run your hands around the wall and leave marks on the  
12      wall from the grease that was all there. That's what  
13      struck me later. Why didn't inspectors -- we saw it as  
14      kids. Where were these inspectors that were supposedly  
15      looking after our interests? How we didn't come down  
16      with some level of poison, I'm mystified.

17            But a good thing about the kitchen was the cook at  
18      Castledare. It was an Aboriginal lady called Rosie,  
19      a dear little thing she was. If you got a task in the  
20      kitchen on the weekend, she would serve up the  
21      brothers -- the brothers had quite different food to us,  
22      eggs and bacon. There's an old military saying that  
23      goes:

24            "Eggs and bacon, we don't see; we get sawdust in our  
25      tea."



1           That's basically us. So the brothers had their eggs  
2 and bacon and all the other beaut things that go with  
3 it, but Rosie would keep a little bit aside and the kids  
4 that had the task of cleaning the kitchen, she would sit  
5 them down and give them a bit extra. That was a treat.  
6 We got to love Rosie. We were very sorry to see her  
7 pass away several years later. She could see what was  
8 going on.

9       Q. And I think what you've said there as well is that the  
10 food that was being served up to the brothers was really  
11 quite different to the food given to the boys?

12      A. Chalk and cheese, insofar as comparison. I can't talk  
13 too much about Castledare and how the brothers ate, but  
14 I do know they had their own dining room and the boys  
15 were required to serve their meals to them. When those  
16 boys came out -- they were different boys each day  
17 virtually -- and they would come out telling us what the  
18 brothers had just had for their dinner. And we would be  
19 shaking our heads, thinking, gosh, we just had  
20 a sausage.

21           But that was life, that was the way it went. We  
22 just had to take it as it was. They were the boss,  
23 we were lucky to be where we were, that's how we felt,  
24 beholding.

25      Q. Can I then look at schooling for a moment and education.

1 At that age at Castledare, was the school in-house?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And what were the arrangements for schooling?

4 A. They had grade 1, grade 2 and grade 3 at Castledare.

5 I can't remember all the brothers there, but MDF had  
6 grade 3, I think MIZ had grade 2 and I think AKG  
7 had grade 1.

8 LADY SMITH: Johnno, can you just confirm for me the age  
9 groups that relate to each of these three grades? How  
10 old you would need to be to be in each of the grades?

11 A. Grade 1 was those that just first arrived. In most  
12 cases we were 7 years old in grade 1. But we'd already  
13 done grade 1 in Scotland, most of us, but we were  
14 required to do grade 1 again. Not that we learned  
15 anything, but we went through the process. Grade 1  
16 would be 7, 8, 9, roughly, some 10.

17 MR MacAULAY: So grade 3 would be aged 9 or 10?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Did you get to grade 3 before you left?

20 A. I got to grade 3. There was nothing startling because  
21 I don't ever believe we had an exam per se as we would  
22 know it today. I think it was just an automatic thing.  
23 You'd done grade 1, so you moved up to grade 2.

24 Q. But looking then to the standard of teaching, can you  
25 just describe that for me? What was it like?

1       A. Not that I'm an expert in what a teacher should know  
2       about a subject, but I left Castledare, after having  
3       supposedly passed grade 3, without even the slightest  
4       knowledge of anything educational. It was just as  
5       though I had 3 years there and ... you know, I can  
6       remember the vivid memories I have in fact of my  
7       education at Castledare, not so much grade 1 and  
8       grade 2, but it was grade 3.

9               At grade 3, **MDF** being the teacher, the classroom  
10       was on a stage in the hall, the hall with a rather large  
11       stage with a curtain across the front of it, and there  
12       were three rows of desks on the stage, and **MDF** had  
13       his rather large lectern up the front. He didn't seem  
14       to know too much at all. Everything was: right, get  
15       this book out, look at this page, do page so-and-so,  
16       which we tried to do.

17               I can't speak for any others, but I would be  
18       surprised if they said anything different. Grade 3 was  
19       just such a terrible place to be because it was a place  
20       where a lot of the abuse happened to kids.

21       Q. I'm going to come on to that, but let's just stick with  
22       the education for a moment.

23               Insofar as the level of teaching was concerned --

24       A. Oh no, it was appalling. The standard that we were  
25       at -- I mean, how does one measure it? Grade 3, I spent

1 more time worrying about whether I was going to be the  
2 next one called up to be beside MDF than I did about  
3 what I was supposed to be reading or studying or doing.

4 My battle was simply: line yourself so the kid's  
5 head in front of you was in line with MDF so he  
6 couldn't see me. I think most of the other kids were  
7 doing much the same.

8 Q. We've already touched upon healthcare and you've  
9 indicated that essentially it was the nuns that were  
10 responsible for healthcare; is that right?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. How would you describe generally your experience then of  
13 healthcare within Castledare?

14 A. I wouldn't say it was the best available by any stretch  
15 of the imagination. If you had a problem and you needed  
16 to line up to go to the surgery, if MDF or one of the  
17 other brothers saw a queue outside the infirmary, they  
18 would go up and say, "What's wrong with you? What's  
19 wrong with you?" etc. And if you didn't have any  
20 visible, you were given a clout and told to get away,  
21 whether you had the flu or not didn't matter.

22 But cuts and things, the nun would give you  
23 a backhand, not often, but she'd call you a name in  
24 Hungarian or whatever, and say, "What are you doing?  
25 You shouldn't be cutting yourself like that."

1           But there were no things -- you very seldom saw  
2           a bandage or Band Aid. It was iodine: that was the  
3           cure-all.

4       Q. I think you tell us about an incident where you were  
5           injured by a cricket stump and you required some  
6           treatment.

7       A. I was batting and this other kid bowled a ball down and  
8           I hit him or the ball went past him, and he raced over  
9           and grabbed the stump at the other end and threw it and  
10          it stuck in my leg just below the knee. I'm sitting  
11          there with the stump hanging out my leg, because it had  
12          a metal tip on it. I was carried to the infirmary by  
13          a group of the kids that were playing cricket and I felt  
14          as though I'd have to go to hospital to get this thing  
15          fixed.

16          But I was then taken to the laundry and I was sat up  
17          where they'd folded all the sheets, 20 or 30 high,  
18          whatever it was, and I was laid up on there for 3 days,  
19          not to move my leg, just to keep my leg straight.

20          Other kids were allocated to bring my meals to me at  
21          the laundry and other kids were allocated to help me go  
22          to the toilet if need be. But luckily, nothing was  
23          broken and I was -- I think it was day 3, late day 3,  
24          I hobbled down and I was able to leave. But that was my  
25          treatment.

1 Q. But do you know why you were not taken to hospital?

2 A. No explanation, no.

3 Q. If we look at events like Christmas, for example, how  
4 was Christmas celebrated at Castledare?

5 A. There wasn't a great deal of -- there was a little bit  
6 of difference at Castledare. There was a tree, a pretty  
7 bare tree, I guess, but at least a tree. You would get,  
8 similar to the next phase of my life in Clontarf, you  
9 would get a small bowl of boiled lollies on the table,  
10 which would work out at about 10 boiled lollies each,  
11 and some peanuts, things that you would never ordinarily  
12 see. But to us, that was a feast, that was a terrific  
13 time.

14 But as far as the meal was concerned, there was no  
15 great difference. We got the regular meal.

16 And toys -- I think we got a lot of stuff from the  
17 second-hand stores. Most of what we got was broken or  
18 didn't work. I do recall that kids got cap guns and  
19 whilst the trigger -- you couldn't get caps, so it was  
20 playing cowboys without the caps.

21 It was very similar to Clontarf as well: you got  
22 these toys that were good for the day, the novelty wore  
23 off, and because they were broken, you just lost  
24 interest in them.

25 Q. What about your birthday? Was anything done to mark

1           your birthday?

2           A. To be truthful, I didn't really know my birthday,  
3           I wasn't even aware that you celebrated a birthday.  
4           I certainly didn't know of any other child at Castledare  
5           celebrating a birthday. It was just not heard of.

6           Q. Visitors. Did you yourself receive any visitors when  
7           you were at Castledare?

8           A. No.

9           Q. Were you conscious of anybody coming to visit, for  
10          example, to inspect the premises or from the welfare  
11          department?

12          A. Not really. We used to assume these things were going  
13          on when we were told we had to move -- we had to walk to  
14          Clontarf, which is about 4 miles away across country.

15                 Whenever they emptied the institution, it meant  
16          there was some sort of inspection going on at the  
17          institution. Sometimes we got prior warning, like  
18          two weeks before, make sure you do a bang-up job on this  
19          because we're going to be looked at and we want the  
20          lotteries commission to see this place favourably so  
21          we can get more money for whatever we need.

22                 This was ... To put it in an overall picture,  
23          9 years of institutional life for me, I was never, ever  
24          spoken to by a welfare officer or anyone concerned with  
25          the welfare of children.



1 Q. But are you saying that there were occasions when you'd  
2 be sent away from the institution on the basis that  
3 there was to be an inspection?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Were there boys who would be kept back to speak?

6 A. Specially trained boys would be briefed on what they  
7 were to say to this team that came round to have a look.

8 It's a bit like, if I may digress again -- no,  
9 we can talk about it at Clontarf.

10 Q. What I was going to ask you is: were there boys at  
11 Castledare, let's focus on Castledare, who were regarded  
12 as the brothers' pets?

13 A. Very much so. One of the -- I won't mention their names  
14 here, but it was almost a treat to be a brother's pet  
15 because you got the easier jobs, you got bonuses here  
16 and there, but you had to be prepared to put up with  
17 what it is they wanted to do with you. That was the end  
18 result. And there were some pretty devastating things  
19 done to children at Castledare, particularly through the  
20 offices of **MDF**.

21 We knew who some of the pets were and they were  
22 trained to advise the brothers of anything untoward  
23 being said or done by any of the other kids. You can't  
24 blame them, you know. Even as kids, we knew who it was  
25 that would have told the brother, but what do you do?



1           You can't ... They're put in difficult circumstances  
2           and they had to do what they had to do or they would cop  
3           it as well.

4           Q. Can I now look at the whole aspect of abuse with you for  
5           a moment? You tell us in your statement at  
6           paragraph 169 that:

7                     "When we arrived at Castledare we were very quickly  
8                     made aware by other kids, probably other migrant kids,  
9                     of different activities that were going on with  
10                    different brothers."

11                   I just want to understand what you mean by that.  
12                   Could you elaborate upon that comment?

13           A. As 6 and 7 and 8-year-olds at Castledare, and Poms, so  
14           to speak, we were blond-haired, blue-eyed, white-skinned  
15           targets for some of the brothers. The blonder you were,  
16           the bluer your eyes were, the more trouble you were in.

17                   That was one of the very first things we'd learn  
18                   very, very early from kids who were already there. And  
19                   most of us -- luckily for me, I wasn't, I had a few  
20                   freckles so I was safe, but there were a number of kids  
21                   that were repeatedly taken into MDF's room at night,  
22                   abused, and then threatened with: don't dare talk about  
23                   this to anyone.

24                   A very, very good friend of mine, who's now  
25                   deceased, even up to the time of his death, would not

1 say what happened to him, but I knew what happened to  
2 him. He wouldn't talk about it, such as the stigma of  
3 the debauchery that happened, because it wasn't just  
4 normal homosexual activities; it was deviant, sickening  
5 stuff that happened to these kids.

6 Q. Is this something you were being told about at the time  
7 or what you've learned about since?

8 A. About?

9 Q. Is this what you were told at the time or is this what  
10 you've heard about since then?

11 A. I don't quite follow.

12 Q. I think you've said that there was some deviant abuse.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Were you conscious of that type of abuse at the time,  
15 from what people said to you, or is that something  
16 you've learned since?

17 A. No, most of us have learned about it since. At the time  
18 we knew what was going on was not good and we didn't  
19 want to be part of that sorry state.

20 We had kids in the showers, for example, and you'd  
21 see they'd been interfered with, they'd be bleeding from  
22 the backside, but you can see it in the shower, but the  
23 kid wouldn't tell you what happened under fear of  
24 what was going to happen to him next if he told.

25 Again, the stigma that came with it as well, you

1           just don't tell people that you'd been interfered with  
2           to that extent.

3           Q. Did you see children being taken to **MDF**'s room?

4           A. I saw **MDF** carry, only on two occasions, boys into his  
5           room. In fact, I had to make the pilgrimage to his room  
6           one night myself.

7           Q. I'll come on to that shortly.

8                        Before I do, can I just look at the different  
9           brothers? You have mentioned Brother **MDF** a number of  
10          times. You say that he was probably the more sadistic  
11          of the brothers. Is that how you describe him, the more  
12          sadistic?

13          A. I would say by a fair measure.

14          Q. You describe his strap; can you tell me about that?

15          A. Yes. He had this quite long, probably so long  
16          (indicating), but it was a very flexible piece of  
17          leather that he had, with two of the old pennies sown  
18          into the end of it, and he could roll it up and then  
19          just tuck it under his arm and then -- he's 6 foot 6 and  
20          you're 3 foot nothing with your hand out, and this thing  
21          would just come down.

22                        It only hurt for the first hit. After the first hit  
23          you really didn't feel it, your hand was that numb. So  
24          if you got four or five or six after it, it didn't  
25          matter, but that first one was just so painful.

1 Q. Over the time that you were at Castledare, were you  
2 strapped?

3 A. Oh, daily. Daily. If not in the classroom, certainly  
4 for reasons outside for whatever.

5 Q. You also mention Brother MDH ; how would you describe  
6 him?

7 A. I think at the time I wrote this I was getting MDH  
8 mixed up with MXC because when you looked at both of  
9 them, they're both very similar. MDH, I really  
10 didn't have that much to do with. I think I would have  
11 been referring to Brother MXC.

12 Q. How would you then describe Brother MXC ?

13 A. He was a very sturdy man. He used to be the principal  
14 at Castledare. I recall an occasion where some boys had  
15 been bought by the police, they'd run away and they were  
16 returned to Castledare, and we were all called up to top  
17 dorm, the main dormitory, and he had moved a few beds,  
18 had the kids move a few beds aside so there was a bit of  
19 an arena there, and we all had to stand the outside of  
20 it, and these six kids were lined up in this open area.  
21 And he made them all pull their pyjamas down and bend  
22 over and he just went along the back of them and gave  
23 them such a lambasting.

24 When he hit them, you'd almost see the welts come up  
25 on the back of the legs and the backside of these kids.

1 Jeez, that must have hurt.

2 Unfortunately -- no, I probably shouldn't say it,  
3 no.

4 Q. You're there giving an example of children being hit on  
5 the bare bottom. Generally speaking, did you see that  
6 happen to children, being struck on the bare bottom with  
7 something like a strap?

8 A. No. From that time on, I don't think I experienced it,  
9 other than sometimes in the shower when the kids have  
10 left the shower, someone would get a kick on the  
11 backside by the brother. But as far as hitting with the  
12 hand on naked -- no.

13 Q. Let's go back to Brother **MDF** and the classroom. You  
14 were going to tell me earlier about what happened when  
15 Brother **MDF** I think in grade 3, was your teacher.  
16 Can you tell us what he did?

17 A. We were all very much aware of what **MDF** was up to and  
18 how he was interfering with quite a number of the  
19 children there, so it behoved us to just keep out of his  
20 eye line, which most of us managed to do, I think.

21 But what he would do is he would sit in his chair,  
22 which was something probably about this width  
23 (indicating), but a bit taller, because he was a big  
24 man, and probably be about this high (indicating).

25 Q. So we're probably looking at probably 3 or 4 feet high?

1       A. Yes. And he would sit behind it and you could probably  
2       see that much of him up (indicating).

3       Q. That's from the upper chest upwards?

4       A. Yes. He would just point to someone and that boy would  
5       have to come up and stand beside him and run his hands  
6       through his greasy, black hair while he just sort of sat  
7       there in a daze or in a stupor, call it what you will.  
8       It was a sickening thing to witness, especially as  
9       a kid, to think, oh my God ...

10       And then when you looked down, because the kid was  
11       outside the line of the desk, and his hand was down the  
12       trousers of the kid, interfering with their private  
13       parts.

14       Sometimes he got a bit bored and he had a kid on  
15       both sides and his hands down the trousers of both of  
16       them. This is in full view of the class. It just  
17       didn't seem to worry him. I mean, anybody could have  
18       walked in the back door, another brother. It would not  
19       have made any difference at all because I think they all  
20       knew what was going on anyway.

21       So that was -- that's just the classroom. What  
22       happened in his room, again, is something else again.  
23       That was a daily occurrence, that wasn't just once in  
24       a while, that was every day. But he had his favourites  
25       there too. Sometimes he'd rope in a new one.



1 Q. You've told us about Brother MDF and his room at  
2 night, but you also say in your statement you'd see him  
3 prowl the dormitories in the evening.

4 A. Oh at night, yes. Particularly when the lights had gone  
5 out and they've been down to the church and done their  
6 prayers or whatever it is that they do, then they come  
7 back, they have supper and their wine and what have you.

8 Round about 11 o'clock they would come upstairs, or  
9 go into the dormitory, and walk into his room. It  
10 wasn't uncommon to see MDF do a detour down one  
11 little passage and go over into that corner or this  
12 corner or that corner. I used to have nightmares  
13 thinking someone was trying to pull the covers off my  
14 bed: MDF.

15 I'm not the only one. I know there were kids there  
16 that cried at night because they felt MDF was going  
17 to get to them. It was just a terrible situation that  
18 your psyche was just so upset by it.

19 Q. You also tell us that you were told something by another  
20 boy as to what that boy had witnessed. This is at  
21 paragraph 179 of your statement.

22 A. Oh yes. I won't mention his name because he was  
23 a pretty good friend of mine.

24 He was seen -- I was going to say "caught", but  
25 I don't think he had any choice in the matter, but

1 he was one of [MDF]'s pets and on one occasion [MDF]  
2 didn't bother about closing his door, you know, so you  
3 could walk past his door and look in. On this  
4 particular day he was lying on the bed naked and this  
5 young lad was lying on top of him naked.

6 That spread through the institution the same day,  
7 everyone knew about it. I'm sure the other brothers  
8 would have learned about it too, but again, it was  
9 business as normal the next night. Didn't make any  
10 difference.

11 Q. You were going to tell us about an incident that  
12 involved you going to [MDF]'s room. Can you tell me  
13 about that?

14 A. One evening, I think I might have been in grade 2,  
15 because I was still quite small, and we were woken to go  
16 to the toilet, 11 o'clock, 11.30, somewhere around then,  
17 very late. While I was in the toilet -- the toilet is  
18 just one big open area, so you had all the boys waiting  
19 their turn to go forward.

20 As I was coming out of there, [MDF] said, "Right,  
21 go and wait in my room". I thought, God, I thought I'd  
22 escaped, that was what was running through my head  
23 at the time. I thought I'd escaped but I hadn't. And  
24 of course, you don't not go. It's just not worth your  
25 life not to go. So I went to his room and I went down



1 to the bottom of his bed. He had quite a massive big  
2 double bed. And I stood at the end of the bed, a very  
3 dark room, he only had a little bulb in the bed lamp  
4 that he had at the head of the bed, and the room itself  
5 was quite dark.

6 I stood there and I must have been there for -- it  
7 felt like hours, but it was probably close to half  
8 an hour, three-quarters of an hour. In he came, he just  
9 stripped off, got into his pyjamas, turned the light off  
10 and went to bed. I thought, he's going to hear my heart  
11 beating, it would thump that loud.

12 Q. Had he seen you?

13 A. I don't think he had. I think he had totally forgotten  
14 that he had told me to go there. I just stood there,  
15 I was scared to breathe. I thought, he doesn't know I'm  
16 here.

17 He got up the next morning, very early, probably  
18 about 5.30, 6 o'clock, they go to church, the brothers.  
19 And he saw me and he said, "Get out of here, get to  
20 bed", and you never saw a person clear a room so quick.

21 Q. Had you been there all night?

22 A. I'd been there all night, just too scared to move, let  
23 alone breathe. I thought, he's going to hear my -- I'm  
24 holding my chest thinking he's going to hear my  
25 heartbeat. It was terrifying, for me anyway.

1 Q. You also mention another brother and you've mentioned  
2 him before, Brother MIZ, and a couple of things  
3 I think that happened. You saw something happen between  
4 Brother MIZ and another boy; is that correct?

5 A. Yes. That was another very, very awkward experience for  
6 me personally. Each Saturday, you had a major chore to  
7 do, and in my case I had, along with three other boys,  
8 the chore of cleaning and polishing grade 3, the  
9 classroom on the stage. It entailed polishing the  
10 floors on hands and knees, polishing the desks, cleaning  
11 the windows, the blackboard, and whatever else needed  
12 doing in there.

13 That took you through to lunch. It took all morning  
14 to do it. On this particular day we got through all of  
15 the heavier work and the other three had gone out  
16 through the back door, the stage door, which is at the  
17 back of the stage, and I had to go down the front of the  
18 stage down the steps and out through the front door and  
19 close the front door. So I came down and I got about  
20 halfway down. I didn't even see initially Brother MIZ  
21 over on the right-hand corner of the hall, and I got  
22 about halfway down and he just bellowed out, "What are  
23 you doing here?" I got that big a fright I nearly wet  
24 myself, honestly, and I say that not as a pun or a joke.  
25 It just ... I still hear it today.

1           As I looked over, he had turned to me as well, and  
2 he was fully exposed. Then I looked behind him and  
3 there's a friend of mine -- I won't give his name  
4 either, I think I've got it on -- kneeling in the  
5 upright position. At that time I had no real idea of  
6 what was going on. I was just so happy for him to say,  
7 in his words, "Get the hell out of here." Well, my feet  
8 didn't touch the floor and besides it was lunchtime and  
9 I was starving.

10           But later on, I learned to regret that. Even if I'd  
11 said, "Brother, what are you doing?" it might have saved  
12 my friend. But I was that terrified and relieved to be  
13 out of there that ... I mean, what do you do?  
14 I couldn't for the life of me ... I didn't have the  
15 strength to stand up against him, but it wasn't until  
16 years later that I began to put two and two, along with  
17 another event that happened to me -- I began to piece it  
18 all together as to why these things were ... or what was  
19 happening at the time.

20       Q. And did you come to the view that this was a form of  
21 sexual encounter?

22       A. Oh, there's no doubt in my mind. I have the images in  
23 my head today, as clear as a bell, as to the scenario  
24 that I witnessed.

25       Q. You mentioned the following day, I think, and something

1 did happen the following day that was incredibly  
2 stressful for you.

3 A. It was a Sunday morning and usually we were allowed to  
4 go down to the river, and because it was October,  
5 November, the warmer part of the year for Australia.  
6 There's a little cordoned off area in the Canning River  
7 where the non-swimmers, which was most of us, could go  
8 in and it was bout up to here (indicating).

9 Q. Up to the top of your chest?

10 A. Yes, roughly. This particular day, there were about 20  
11 of us in that area; it was a fair sized little patch of  
12 water. There were about 20 of us in there. For the  
13 first time ever, I actually saw or witnessed  
14 a Christian Brother going into the river. And  
15 I thought, jeez, that is unusual. But then I saw him  
16 heading towards me and he came at me like a shark.  
17 I knew instantly he was coming for me, and yet there  
18 were all these other kids there, but I knew he was  
19 coming for me.

20 Q. Who was it?

21 A. Brother MIZ. He came straight up to me, he didn't bat  
22 an eye. He said, "Right, LZK, put your arms round  
23 my neck, I'm taking you across to the other side", and  
24 at that stage, I think I started crying. I said,  
25 "I can't swim, I don't want to go over the other side",

1 and I got the proverbial word you don't disobey, "Put  
2 your arms around my neck, now." And when they said that  
3 to you, it just wasn't worth your life not to do as you  
4 were told, and I did.

5 He took me away from where some of the older boys  
6 could do a little bit of dog-paddling near the diving  
7 board. He took me further to the left of that where  
8 kids don't normally go, but it was a deeper part of the  
9 river as well.

10 And halfway across, without any warning, he just  
11 broke the grip I had around his neck. Believe you me,  
12 I had a very tight grip, but he wrestled it off me and  
13 almost lifted himself out of the water and shoved me  
14 under. I felt as though I had been under there for  
15 ever. Because I couldn't swim, it was my flailing under  
16 the water that kept me down there. If I'd known  
17 differently, I just had to leave myself be and let  
18 nature take it course, but I was in that great a panic,  
19 I didn't have any oxygen, because I didn't have time to  
20 take a breath of air, and in the finish, just before  
21 I gave up, just as I broke the surface of the water --  
22 I had stopped struggling and I started hearing these  
23 bells and weird noises in my head. It was just a very  
24 strange set-up. I felt my chest was about to explode.

25 Anyway, I broke the surface and took a gasp, half

1 a gasp of air, before I went down again. I didn't see  
2 anyone when I first surfaced, there was no one, because  
3 my eyes were above the water line. I was looking for  
4 someone to grab but there was no one there. So I went  
5 under again and got back up, but I couldn't lift myself  
6 above the nose line. I'd heard then that if you go down  
7 a third time, you don't come up. Now I can understand  
8 why.

9 No matter what you struggle to do, you cannot get  
10 your nose above the waterline to catch a breath. And it  
11 was at that time, two boys that -- I assume -- saw what  
12 had happened and they had dog-paddled out to where I was  
13 and, between them, they both kicked and pushed me into  
14 the shore where, when I went down a third time, I could  
15 actually touch the bottom. And with that momentum I was  
16 able to kick up and kick up and kick up and eventually  
17 get out.

18 I looked around for MIZ, he'd completely left the  
19 river altogether. There was no doubt in my mind,  
20 absolutely no doubt in my mind, he tried to murder me  
21 that day because of what I witnessed the day before.

22 Q. Did you see Brother MIZ after that?

23 A. No, not -- he was a lay brother and we never saw much of  
24 them. If it was, it was in the company of lots of other  
25 kids, but I avoided him because I just didn't want

1 another -- I may not survive the next one if he tries it  
2 and he may have tried something different.

3 Q. Did you report that or anything that happened to you in  
4 your time at Castledare to anybody?

5 A. Did I?

6 Q. Did you report that or anything else?

7 A. To report something meant more trouble for you.

8 Reporting another brother is being nothing -- you were  
9 a liar. That was part of the control that was there.

10 If you had anything to say to a brother, "How dare you?  
11 How dare you?" Some kids even when they went on the --  
12 that's more Clontarf, I'll get to that point in the  
13 Clontarf area. But no, you didn't report it because it  
14 meant another flogging.

15 Q. You have mentioned Brother **MDF**. What you say at  
16 paragraph 199 is that the frustrating thing was that  
17 nothing was done about Brother **MDF**. You go on to  
18 say:

19 "His behaviour was taken as normal by the other  
20 brothers, such was the protection."

21 So far as you know, to what extent do you think that  
22 other brothers knew what Brother **MDF** was up to,  
23 particularly in relation to the sexual abuse?

24 A. I have to say, because of his brazenness about this  
25 whole thing, I would find it impossible to believe that



1 the other brothers were not aware of what this man was  
2 doing. I also know -- again it's something that  
3 probably may come out in the Clontarf section, but  
4 I also certainly know of one boy that reported MDF to  
5 the superior and got a hiding. That was later on.

6 Q. Can I then take you to the time when you come to leave  
7 Castledare. I think we know that when you got to  
8 a particular age, you were moved on from Castledare to  
9 Clontarf; is that correct?

10 A. Yes, supposedly when you turned 10. At 10 years of age  
11 you moved on to Clontarf.

12 Q. When that time came, I think what you tell us in your  
13 statement is that you had a conversation with  
14 Brother AKG; is that right?

15 A. I see the funny side of it in this day and age, but back  
16 then, we hardly ever knew what a birthday was anyway.  
17 But those that did remember their birthday, and there  
18 weren't many of them, weren't part of the queue. Those  
19 who had no idea when their birthday was were lined up.  
20 Brother AKG had a chair -- this is on the grassed  
21 area outside that main building you showed us, just to  
22 the front of that it was.

23 Q. How many boys were in the group?

24 A. I would say there would have been 30, 35 maybe. Just as  
25 a rough -- there was quite a long line, single line.



1           There were a few ahead of me and I was wondering  
2           what was going on, what is he doing? My turn came, he  
3           put his hand on my shoulder and said, "As of your next  
4           birthday, which will be [REDACTED], you will be  
5           11 years old." So I quickly did a little bit of maths  
6           myself and figured that I must have been born in 1943  
7           because of the time -- my next birthday was 11, but in  
8           fact I'd already turned 11, my real birthday.

9           Q. So what was happening here then, he was giving you an  
10          age that was not your correct age?

11          A. That's correct, yes.

12          Q. He was making you younger than what you actually were?

13          A. Yes, he made me a year younger. I felt it too.

14          Q. But you didn't know of course at the time?

15          A. No, I just assumed that was my birthday and I thought,  
16          that's a bit of a novelty, I've got a birthday. That's  
17          all it meant, though. It didn't mean any recognition or  
18          celebration or whatever. It just meant -- I now know  
19          I've actually got a birthday.

20          Q. The other boys in the group that you were lined up with,  
21          do you know what happened in connection with them?

22          A. I assumed that they were given the same news as me,  
23          probably not the same date of birth. He may well have  
24          had a list; I can't be too sure how he was going to work  
25          it out. But we all got our birthdays that day.

1 Q. Was that shortly before you left for Clontarf?

2 A. Remember, this is only the grade 3 that we're about to  
3 leave for Clontarf, and there were about 30, 35 of us  
4 in that group.

5 Q. Then let's move on to Clontarf. I think we've already  
6 established that you moved from Castledare to Clontarf  
7 in about 1952 or probably 1953.

8 A. I think it was late 1953. I've gone through in my mind  
9 the level of education and the times that I was there,  
10 and the classes that I attended, to come to that  
11 conclusion that it was probably late 1953 that I would  
12 have left Castledare for Clontarf.

13 Q. And you left in a group of other boys?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Again, if I could take you to some photographs to get  
16 a feel for the place. The first photograph is  
17 INQ.001.004.0807.

18 Is that Clontarf?

19 A. That's the den of iniquity, that's Clontarf.

20 Q. Is this the main building we're looking at?

21 A. That is the main building.

22 Q. What did the main building house?

23 A. The main building housed the office, the brothers'  
24 quarters down on the left-hand side as we look at it,  
25 and the library and a storeroom on the right-hand side,

1 ground floor. Top floor were bedrooms, including the  
2 brothers' rooms.

3 Q. For boys too?

4 A. The boys. They're the main bedrooms.

5 Q. The other photograph I would like you to look at at the  
6 moment is INQ.001.004.0808.

7 A. That's the chapel, the chapel the child migrants built.

8 Q. Before your time?

9 A. Before my time.

10 Q. Perhaps you could also look at another couple of  
11 photographs.

12 INQ-167. Do you recognise that space?

13 A. That's one of the dormitories that I wasn't privy to  
14 because I was a wet-bed. I was out on the veranda.

15 Q. But this is Clontarf, is it, or could it be Castledare?

16 A. I don't remember a statue being at the end of any of the  
17 dormitories. I know one of the dormitories at Clontarf  
18 used to be a church. That's where the early church  
19 services -- until the chapel was built.

20 Q. Okay. The last photograph I want you to have a look at  
21 then is at HOC.001.001.2839.

22 This I understand to be an aerial view of Clontarf.  
23 It's not very clear, but as we look at the photograph do  
24 we see that the chapel that we looked at protruding from  
25 the -- as it were, to the front?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And is the front of the main building then just behind  
3 the chapel as we look at the photograph?

4 A. That's correct, yes.

5 Q. Are there any other buildings there -- we can see  
6 there's quite a number of different buildings, and as  
7 I think you've already mentioned, this was a big  
8 place --

9 A. The main building was a hollow square. You had the  
10 major front, which is the previous photograph. But it  
11 had wings down both sides, equal in size to the main  
12 building.

13 LADY SMITH: Johnno, would you just like to stand up? This  
14 photograph is displayed on a larger screen behind you  
15 and maybe you could point on that screen to the parts of  
16 the buildings you're talking about and we'll understand.

17 A. This is the main part of the building (indicating) here.  
18 These are the wings, which also house the dormitories.  
19 This wing over here also housed the showers on the  
20 ground floor. On the bottom floor of this was the  
21 junior classroom. And the storeroom and Brother **MDI**,  
22 the , are on this side, under the front  
23 here (indicating).

24 The wet-bed dormitory was on the other side on the  
25 veranda of this wing. No one slept on this veranda

1 (indicating) because it was all open anyway; we had  
2 louvres on the other side.

3 This is the gymnasium (indicating), but it was never  
4 used as a gymnasium, it was just a big empty building.  
5 For most of the time it didn't have glass in the  
6 windows, but they restored it some years later.

7 LADY SMITH: And the chapel?

8 A. The chapel (indicating).

9 LADY SMITH: Is that one there?

10 A. Here's the chapel. The classrooms are this lot here  
11 (indicating). This is the tower Brother MDI used to  
12 climb with his binoculars to watch the kids on the oval  
13 down here (indicating). The river is just a little bit  
14 further on.

15 LADY SMITH: Is that the same river that flowed past  
16 Castledare?

17 A. It is the same, the Canning River. What else would you  
18 like to know about this place? This is the piggery  
19 (indicating), the dairy area -- no, that's the laundry  
20 I should say, the laundry and the kitchen here.  
21 (indicating). That's the kitchen or the laundry area.

22 MR MacAULAY: Was the dining area in the main building?

23 A. I'm trying to get orientated to the dining room. The  
24 dining room was here (indicating) -- no, let me think.  
25 That's the working boys' dormitory. We had this main

1 building here (indicating). There was an extension here  
2 (indicating) as well, attached to that building, which  
3 was the working boys' dormitory. And underneath that  
4 was some of the staff's accommodation, Mr LZD, one  
5 of the teachers, and a couple of the workmen that worked  
6 at Clontarf were on the bottom floor of this portion  
7 here.

8 This is the dining area, dining room, kitchen  
9 (indicating). Laundry and boiler room. The boiler room  
10 was on this end (indicating). The tennis courts, we  
11 never used them, but they were there (indicating).  
12 Classrooms (indicating). What was called the main altar  
13 room and the band room, that one there (indicating).  
14 The metalwork room, woodwork room and workshops  
15 (indicating).

16 MR MacAULAY: I think what we can take from your description  
17 is that we're looking at a pretty large area with  
18 different types of accommodation.

19 A. Yes. The main accommodation was here and here  
20 (indicating).

21 LADY SMITH: Right. Johnno, thank you, that's very helpful.

22 One question arising out of that. You referred to  
23 a group called "the working boys"; who were they?

24 A. These were boys that the brothers considered had no hope  
25 of any further education and they were pulled out of

1 class, some of them at the age of 11, 12, and put to  
2 work in the dairy and down in the piggery. That sadly  
3 is where a lot of the Clontarf abuse occurred, down in  
4 those regions.

5 They stayed as working boys generally until they  
6 reached the age of 15 or 16, and the odd one actually  
7 continued to work there until 17 or 18 before they were  
8 released to work jobs outside.

9 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

10 MR MacAULAY: I think it's right to say that Clontarf was  
11 a much bigger place than Castledare.

12 A. It certainly was, yes.

13 Q. And in relation to the number of boys, how many boys  
14 do you think would have been there at a given time?

15 A. There would be a minimum of 250 and a maximum of just  
16 over 300.

17 Q. And the age range then would be from your age of 10 --

18 A. Up to 15. Some went on -- I'll make a correction there:  
19 some of the boys that were allocated to go on to Aquinas  
20 were 17 or 18 years old. They went on to leaving and  
21 sub-leaving.

22 Q. Aquinas was a college?

23 A. Yes, a very elite college, run by, again, the  
24 Christian Brothers.

25 Q. Who was in charge when you first went to Clontarf?



1 A. Brother MDI .

2 Q. And how many brothers were there that cared for the  
3 children?

4 A. I think there were round about nine, but one of them was  
5 a very old gentleman, still a Christian Brother, but he  
6 did the books, he had nothing -- very little to do ...  
7 Sometimes he would stand in and take one of the junior  
8 classes for one of the mundane subjects. That when's no  
9 other brother was available. But his role at Clontarf  
10 was the books and any correspondence that came in and  
11 out. He was quite old.

12 Q. And brothers then whose names you can remember who were  
13 involved with the children, can you tell me the names  
14 you can remember?

15 A. There'd be Brother MDI . Brother AOW .  
16 Brother MXD . Brother MHY . Brother MDF .  
17 Brother MHZ . Brother MYK . Brother MPQ .  
18 There's probably one or two others in there too that  
19 I didn't have a great deal to do with. Some of them  
20 were transitory. It's been known now that when they  
21 were caught, they were just moved on from one  
22 institution to another. MDF was probably the most  
23 travelled of all of them.

24 Q. You have just mentioned MDF ; he had been at  
25 Castledare?



1 A. Yes.

2 Q. That's the same **MDF** ?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. So at some point then --

5 A. He was transferred to Clontarf.

6 Q. He was moved to Clontarf?

7 A. When I moved to Clontarf, I was just so relieved to be  
8 away from **MIZ** and **MDF** and I thought it can't get  
9 worse. Boy, was I wrong.

10 Q. But how long after you had been moved to Clontarf did  
11 **MDF** appear?

12 A. About 4 or 5 months. **MDF** was then transferred to  
13 Clontarf. The education -- when **MDF** moved to  
14 Clontarf, he became the teacher for grade 4 and I was in  
15 grade 4 and I thought, oh no, but luckily what happened  
16 was, because a new intake had arrived from  
17 Great Britain, a new lot of child migrants had arrived  
18 that needed to start at grade 4, so what they did was  
19 they halved the current grade 4 that I was in and half  
20 went up to grade 5 to make room for the new ones in  
21 grade 4. So I was a lot cleverer than I thought because  
22 I was one of the ones put up to grade 5. So we did two  
23 years in the one year. **LZD**, or Mr **LZD**, was  
24 the teacher of that particular class, but **MDF** got  
25 grade 4.

1 Q. Looking to the boys who were there, the 250, possibly up  
2 to 300, were there also Australian boys there?

3 A. Oh yes. We had Aboriginals there, we had boys that the  
4 courts had allotted there for disciplinary reasons. So  
5 it was more like a reform school, I think, than  
6 anything. That was the feeling we had.

7 Q. Focusing on child migrants, what do you reckon the  
8 proportion of child migrants then was?

9 A. There was a lot of us. I would have to say, again, at  
10 least 50/50, probably 60/40 child migrants.

11 Q. So far as you can recollect were there different  
12 nationalities of child migrants?

13 A. There were Maltese, Irish, Scots, Brits, Welsh. They  
14 were the main groups. And Australians.

15 MR MacAULAY: My Lady, that's 12.59. It might be a good  
16 time to break.

17 LADY SMITH: Very well. We'll stop now for the lunch break,  
18 Johnno, and I'll sit again at 2 o'clock.

19 (12.59 pm)

20 (The lunch adjournment)

21 (2.00 pm)

22 LADY SMITH: Johnno, are you ready for us to carry on now?

23 A. I am, thank you, ma'am.

24 LADY SMITH: Mr MacAulay, when you're ready.

25 MR MacAULAY: Before the lunch break, Johnno, we had arrived

1 at Clontarf and in your statement what you tell us, just  
2 by way of an overview, at paragraph 210 is that:

3 "The cruelty that occurred in Clontarf knew no  
4 bounds."

5 Can you elaborate upon that?

6 A. There wasn't a limit put on. For example, some places,  
7 you might expect to get six of the best if you've done  
8 something really bad. At Clontarf, there was no measure  
9 of what they were prepared to inflict on children.

10 Sometimes if you pulled your hand away as the cane  
11 came down, you would then get cracked across the skull.  
12 We've had split heads there from kids being hit because  
13 they pulled their hand away.

14 Other occasions are if the cane dropped, the brother  
15 would punch the child while he is picking up the stick  
16 to carry on with the beating.

17 I've actually seen children my age at that time, 11,  
18 12 years old, just after the first few strokes, just  
19 collapse in absolute despair, just give up, from the  
20 pain that they were experiencing. I've experienced that  
21 myself.

22 Q. Could you tell us when that happened to you?

23 A. It probably happened a couple of times. Yes, at least  
24 a couple of times, where you know you've got another  
25 whatever number of cuts to get from the cane, and you're

1 at a stage where the pain is just that intense, you've  
2 got to somehow let him know that you're really hurting  
3 and the best thing to do is, he's going to give me more,  
4 so I've had it, and you would just drop and you just  
5 hope that he sees that that's enough, but it generally  
6 wasn't. Usually, he'd haul you up just to make sure he  
7 administers the remainder of it.

8 Q. When you say "he", which brothers would you identify as  
9 the main people?

10 A. MDI would be the major one, but others did the same,  
11 but more so [REDACTED], Brother MDI [REDACTED]

12 Q. Can I just touch upon certain aspects of the routine as  
13 I did with Castledare. Again, you mention bed-wetting  
14 and how that was managed. Can you tell me about that at  
15 Clontarf?

16 A. At Clontarf it was administered in much the same way,  
17 in the sense that if you wet your bed you were required  
18 to go down and have a freezing shower, spring, summer,  
19 autumn or winter. Some kids, if they were prolific, in  
20 other words they wet their bed every night, they'd get  
21 singled out for extra punishment, such as standing there  
22 with a sheet on their head, the wet sheet, particularly.

23 But the dreadful thing about the bed-wetting  
24 there -- and I'm guilty as being one of the  
25 bed-wetters -- was that initially we had horsehair

1 mattresses on your beds, and of course that never dried  
2 out during the day, so when you put your dry sheet on,  
3 it was wet within minutes because the mattress was still  
4 wet. But also, the floor underneath was corroding as  
5 well from the amount of urine that had to pass through  
6 the floorboards.

7 Q. Was this on the veranda again?

8 A. On the veranda, yes. I note that the verandas have all  
9 been pulled down and I think that's probably the reason:  
10 safety.

11 The showers were very cruel. Kids walked out of  
12 those showers after wetting the bed, the wet-bed  
13 showers, crying from pain or holding their heads. You  
14 felt as though your eyes were going to pop out. It's  
15 that intense and that cold and there seemed to be great  
16 delight in them -- when you go for your normal shower  
17 it's a very slow trickle, they don't put it on very far  
18 and you've got 27 kids being showered at the one time.  
19 But the wet-beds, they turned it on full power and that  
20 really, really comes down, and ice cold in the main.

21 Q. Then looking more generally at the showering  
22 arrangements, because you do tell us about that as well  
23 at Clontarf, I think again certainly by the time he's  
24 there, MDF is again involved in the showering at  
25 Clontarf; is that correct?

1 A. I'm sorry?

2 Q. Just looking at showering more generally, at Clontarf  
3 does **MDF** also become involved in that process?

4 A. Oh yes, yes. **MXD** usually took the wet-bed showers.  
5 When he wasn't available **MDF** would take them, but  
6 **MDF** had every day in the normal 5 o'clock shower,  
7 in the afternoon --

8 Q. And can you tell me what happened then at that shower?

9 A. To me?

10 Q. What did you see, either to you or to others that you  
11 witnessed?

12 A. What would happen is quite often, if one of his pimps  
13 got back to him that someone said something, that's  
14 where he would catch the lad as he walked past the  
15 inspection and he would just punch the kid.

16 I had obviously said something one day, either about  
17 him or about another brother, and was pimped on, and as  
18 I walked past him, as soon as I turned my back, he  
19 punched me in the kidney. He knocked me out. I was out  
20 cold on the floor and the last thing I heard was him  
21 saying to the next kid behind me, "Oh, just step over  
22 him." Of course I don't know how long I was down there,  
23 but when I came to, I just got up and limped away and  
24 thought, oh, that's my lot for the day.

25 Q. You mentioned this was during what you refer to as "the

1 inspection". So did **MDF** as he had done at  
2 Castledare, inspect children?

3 A. Yes. You used to have, as I say, to put your hands up.  
4 Sometimes it was difficult because the towels we had  
5 didn't go right around us and as you'd put your hands  
6 up, the towel would fall off, but he'd still inspect you  
7 and you had to bend down and pick the towel up in front  
8 of him.

9 Q. If we focus on the food at Clontarf, what was that like?

10 A. It was worse than Castledare. At Clontarf, how does one  
11 describe it? Breakfast again was two slices of bread  
12 most days and a cup of tea. Sometimes there would be  
13 that floury porridge or Wheaties, very similar to  
14 Castledare. The tea, worse. Probably weaker, even less  
15 sugar, but it was never enough.

16 I'll add a good point and that is there was butter  
17 on the table, but it was a measured amount of butter.  
18 With eight kids sitting at the table you had the one  
19 square. One of the kids had divided it up, but the kid  
20 that divided got the last pick, so he made sure it was  
21 all done above board.

22 Q. But because of the nature of the food, did you then have  
23 to take other steps to get food from other sources?

24 A. We were regular raiders of the pig bins. Every day the  
25 truck would go out to the different cafés and



1 restaurants around the local area of particularly  
2 Clontarf and particular up their scraps and stuff and  
3 bring it back for the pigs. We had hundreds of pigs.

4 The pigs ate better than us, I think on some  
5 occasions, because we enjoyed some of their food. The  
6 buns we were able to steal from the pig bins were  
7 fresher than what we were getting. We were getting  
8 slices of bread that were quite stale, but edible, just.  
9 Even though we baked our own bread, you didn't get  
10 today's bread, you'd get today's bread in four days'  
11 time sort of thing. That was the way it worked.

12 Q. Again, looking at the standard of the education at  
13 Clontarf, what was that like?

14 A.



15  
16  
17  
18 He admitted in his formal report, which is called  
19 "The Scheme", the book is called "The Scheme". In that  
20 scheme, he emphasised that the dregs of the  
21 Christian Brother organisation were the ones that were  
22 sent to the institutions. And I quite believe that.  
23 I could quite readily accept that.

24 He also mentioned in the secret report, which was  
25 "Reaping the Whirlwind", he mentioned in that that the



1 principal at Clontarf at that time, this Brother MDI,  
2 had three weeks' formal teaching in his whole life, and  
3 he was teaching our junior classes.

4 The teaching principles were very -- done by rote.  
5 We had to learn -- I mean, I can still rattle off  
6 a chemical equation that I have no idea what it is, but  
7 we had to learn it because if we weren't able to rattle  
8 it off, you got a belting. So NaCl plus H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> gives you  
9 NaHSO<sub>4</sub> plus HCl.

10 That's everything we had to do, that was the way we  
11 did it.

12 I can remember in the literary class, if you can  
13 call it that, we had to learn Julius Caesar. That was  
14 the book in second year. And when I first read it, it  
15 came up with a paragraph:

16 "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears."

17 I thought, you could take them off, give them to  
18 someone, get them back when you're done with them. Very  
19 little was explained in how they taught you.

20 They taught you as though you already knew, which  
21 was a big part of the problem, and maybe we should have  
22 known, but because of what happened before that, we  
23 didn't learn it because of other complications. So we  
24 missed it.

25 Q. If you give us an overview then of the education that

1           you were given at Castledare and Clontarf, when you came  
2           to finish your education what was the position? Were  
3           you essentially uneducated as a boy?

4           A. Sometimes you were put out as a work boy. Your last  
5           couple of years there were to work the farm.

6                     For other kids, there was no special remedial class  
7           for anyone. You were either back-squadded or you stayed  
8           in the class you were in for the next year.

9                     You weren't actually moved up on merit, you were  
10          moved up on what they wanted you to do. You were  
11          controlled. They controlled who went to the next  
12          grades.

13                    I emphasise that by letting you know that I passed  
14          second year, or year 8 as it is now, in 1957. And I was  
15          told I've got to sit it again, so I did in 1958 and  
16          I passed again and, lo and behold, I'm back in second  
17          year again in 1959. I just wasn't one that was destined  
18          to go beyond. They decided that. This was the case  
19          with a lot of fairly clever kids that were constrained  
20          by the requirements of the school or the institution,  
21          I should say. It's inexcusable, really, that we were  
22          denied a proper and thorough education.

23                    Even in Scotland, going to a public school was  
24          a much better option than what was given to us.

25          Q. You do tell us a little bit about leisure time and

1 entertainment and in particular that on Saturday nights  
2 there were movies or films shown.

3 A. Can I go back just a moment to the wet-bed scenario?

4 Q. Of course.

5 A. [REDACTED] of Clontarf, MDI [REDACTED] was the one that came  
6 up with this idea of an electronic machine, right, to  
7 fix the problem of bed-wetting? And it was a machine  
8 that would fit on your never-nevers.

9 Q. Your penis?

10 A. Your penis. And when you started urinating, it would  
11 give you an electric shock and wake you up. The thing  
12 was, you needed to have an erection to fit this device  
13 on. And that was Brother MDI [REDACTED] thing. He would  
14 arouse the kids, and there were many that were put  
15 through this system.

16 He had his favourites that would fairly regularly be  
17 hauled into this; I think there were two machines there.  
18 The kids that were required to do that were taken into  
19 a separate room, that's where they slept and where the  
20 machine was fitted, so no one else could witness  
21 what was going on.

22 Whether there were any long-term impact from these  
23 electric shocks through the liver or kidney, who knows,  
24 we don't know. But it just struck us as being very odd  
25 that he was the one insisting on fitting -- it was an

1 easy enough device, apparently, to put on, it was  
2 a matter of fitting it on and switching, that was it.  
3 But he personally took charge of it every night.

4 Sorry, I wanted to ...

5 Q. But that didn't happen to you? You weren't chosen?

6 A. No, it didn't happen to me, but we were all aware of it.

7 Q. But it was MDI I was wanting to ask you about and in  
8 particular when you had film shows and how he behaved at  
9 film shows.

10 A. Oh yes. It didn't need a reason to punish you so you  
11 missed the film on Saturday night. If he found  
12 something wrong with you -- and usually every Saturday  
13 night you would have ten, 12 kids that were required to  
14 sit in front of him. He would sit in the middle aisle  
15 in a big lounge chair, the kids would be in their seats,  
16 200 kids down either side. He'd be right in the middle  
17 of the hall in his lounge chair with up to a dozen kids  
18 sitting in front of him facing him away from the screen.

19 He would be eating peanuts and just throwing the  
20 shells down at the kids, and he would exaggerate the  
21 laugh, if it was a comedy, so the kids would be tempted  
22 to turn round. And if he caught you turning round, you  
23 were there for another fortnight. It was just a very  
24 sadistic thing to do, I think, for little kids. It was  
25 totally unnecessary, but he seemed to get great delight

1 from it. It seemed to be a power thing.

2 Q. I think you told us that at Castledare there was  
3 a female presence in the sense that there were nuns  
4 there and I think the cook as well. What about at  
5 Clontarf, were there nuns at Clontarf?

6 A. There were nuns at Clontarf. Again, Hungarian nuns.  
7 They were quite nice people, but they couldn't speak  
8 much English. Their role again was the infirmary and  
9 sewing in the sewing room and putting the change of  
10 clothes into the lockers.

11 Every kid had a numbered locker in the building that  
12 they did the sewing, sewing room. They would put the  
13 shorts or the shirt or whatever into each of the lockers  
14 and then on a Saturday we would file through to our  
15 locker and pick up our clothes. That was the nuns'  
16 major role at Clontarf.

17 Q. Were there any other female staff at Clontarf?

18 A. There was an assistant cook, the cook's wife.

19 Q. But again, do I take it, just as with Castledare, the  
20 care of the children was in the hands of the brothers?

21 A. The catering?

22 Q. The care of the children.

23 A. Yes. The nuns had nothing whatsoever to do with the  
24 raising or the discipline of the children.

25 LADY SMITH: Did these nuns do any of the chores other than

1 the laundry?

2 A. I beg your pardon, my Lady?

3 LADY SMITH: Did these nuns do any of the chores apart from  
4 the laundry?

5 A. No, they didn't, ma'am.

6 LADY SMITH: Was there anybody else to do the chores, the  
7 cleaning and so on?

8 A. Us.

9 MR MacAULAY: Insofar as healthcare was concerned, I think  
10 we know that, as with Castledare, you did not have  
11 shoes; is that right?

12 A. That's correct, yes.

13 Q. Did that therefore have an impact on the condition of  
14 your feet?

15 A. I tell a little lie in the sense that we had a pair of  
16 shoes, but we were only allowed to wear them to church  
17 one Sunday a month. And then they were put back  
18 in the -- we had to wear a suit and a pair of shoes on  
19 the third Sunday of each month and then, after church,  
20 put them back on the hanger and put them back in the  
21 suit room.

22 Q. But apart from that, you were (overspeaking) --

23 A. No other footwear, no.

24 Q. And did that have an impact on your feet and what  
25 condition your feet would be in?

1       A. You should see the size of some of our feet. We're well  
2       hooved, I can tell you. Mostly flat feet, that was  
3       a big problem, but we've mostly got big wide feet, and  
4       it's very hard to fit modern-day shoes with the feet  
5       that we've got. It did have an impact.

6       Q. I think you tell us in your statement that in the  
7       midsummer, even in the midsummer, you'd be outside  
8       in the area you call the oval, exposed to the sun; is  
9       that correct?

10      A. There were no such things as hats or protective creams  
11      or anything like that. But more to the point was the  
12      quadrangle area, which was the main recreational area  
13      alongside the classrooms and dormitories, quite a big  
14      open area. And in the summer when you got your  
15      100 degrees in Australia, and above, we were out there  
16      on the concrete. We can't go on the verandas because  
17      that's where the brothers walk in the shade. But we had  
18      to stay out in the heat of the day and it was quite  
19      blistering.

20                It wasn't uncommon to have blistered feet, it wasn't  
21      uncommon to see blistered ears and blistered necks and  
22      shoulders. It was just part of the -- there was very  
23      little safety aspects to our welfare.

24      Q. And you tell us about a particular individual who was  
25      there and he was blond-haired and blue-eyed and he died

1 in his mid-30s with melanomas.

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Do you associate that with life at Clontarf?

4 A. I've got to be fair and say, being fair-skinned and what  
5 have you and Australia's climate, it's all played  
6 a part. But I have no doubt that the exposure during  
7 his childhood here would have had some level of  
8 involvement.

9 Q. Again, if I can ask you about Christmas, was Christmas  
10 celebrated?

11 A. It was, it was. We got much the same meal but cooked  
12 differently, if you can see what I mean. Again, you had  
13 the ten boiled lollies and the peanuts, but you also got  
14 one of these mini bottles of cool drink and they were  
15 all different colours. When you walked in, you saw all  
16 these different colours and it's a feast. You got the  
17 normal food, but there was just this bit extra and it  
18 made it such a celebration, I guess, for the kids.

19 Q. And presents? Apart from what you've mentioned?

20 A. Presents, yes, similar to Castledare. They had  
21 obviously shopped around, or maybe not shopped around,  
22 but picked up from second-hand stores or whatever, but  
23 most of the stuff that was given out was pretty useless  
24 by the time we got it. But for us, it was just  
25 something -- it was something we could still play with



1            anyway. We would just make out that it does work and  
2            just pretend and still had some fun with it. But in the  
3            main, yeah, it was an act that they felt as though  
4            probably had to do.

5            We had a tree. Again, very little decoration on it,  
6            but we have to be grateful for some mercies. That was  
7            the upshot of it all.

8            Q. At this time, from what you had been told by  
9            Brother <sup>AKG</sup> [REDACTED] when you left Castledare, you'd been  
10           given at least a date for your birthday, but was there  
11           any celebration on your birthday?

12           A. No. Even though I knew my birthday by that time, well,  
13           my other birthday that is, I didn't even know when it  
14           came round. It was just innocuous. There was no  
15           meaning to it at all. The first birthday I became aware  
16           of was when I was 21. 21 years old. I was in the  
17           military, and two soldiers came up to me, and we were  
18           in the middle of an exercise up in North Queensland, and  
19           said, "We know it's your 21st birthday, here", and they  
20           gave me a present. Well, you could have knocked me down  
21           with a feather that they even knew it was my birthday,  
22           let alone my 21st.

23           Q. You tell us in your statement, Johnno, that as with  
24           Castledare there was no emotional care or support at  
25           Clontarf?

1 A. No, there was little or no dialogue between the  
2 administrators, the carers, and the children.  
3 Everything was rote, everything was: you come here, you  
4 go there, siren, bell, whistle. We all knew and  
5 understood.

6 Q. What about friends, did you make friends there?

7 A. Other boys?

8 Q. Yes.

9 A. You made acquaintances. Trust was one of the first  
10 thing that went out the door. You couldn't trust even  
11 the kid that you thought you were a good friend of.  
12 There were things that you couldn't say to him for fear  
13 that he might be the one that's dobbing you in, so to  
14 speak. So you were very guarded, all the time, about  
15 who you spoke to even though they were your mates, and  
16 they were the same with you. So it was ... I don't know  
17 how you'd describe it. We got by.

18 Q. In the 9 years that you spent at Castledare and  
19 Clontarf, were you ever spoken to by a welfare officer  
20 or inspector?

21 A. No.

22 Q. But were there inspections carried out at Clontarf?

23 A. I was never there for an inspection, but we were, like  
24 Castledare, moved out of Clontarf in bulk and we were  
25 either taken to Castledare or a place called Clooney's

1 Park, which was a big pine plantation, or we went to  
2 Bindoon for the day and then -- Bindoon is 70 miles  
3 away, so a pretty laborious round trip on the back of a  
4 truck, because that is what we travelled with, an  
5 open-backed truck, with sides that came up to here  
6 (indicating) on us.

7 Q. To the top of your chest?

8 A. Yes, and we just hung on for grim death, 70 miles each  
9 way, sometimes in the rain, sometimes really hot.

10 Q. But were certain children kept back at Clontarf?

11 A. Selected children. We knew who most of the kids were,  
12 but there were some that hid their other agenda pretty  
13 well. But there were a number that we knew, not that  
14 they were ostracised by us or anything, they still  
15 joined our games and what have you, but we knew, don't  
16 say this to him, or, watch out for him.

17 Q. I think you say you never had any visitors when you were  
18 at Clontarf, but did some of the Australian boys have  
19 visitors?

20 A. Every third Sunday, people were -- families were allowed  
21 to come in and take one or two boys with them to their  
22 homes, but not everybody got that. That was the Sunday  
23 that we were wearing our suits and our shoes, so it was  
24 an image thing that we were all very well cared for and  
25 looked after. The kids would go away for the day and

1           then be brought back.

2           Most of the kids enjoyed it, some of the kids were  
3           abused even at the homes they were sent to, the private  
4           homes that the brothers approved of.

5           We'll get to the benefactor stage later.

6       Q. I'll come to that in a moment, yes.

7       A. I think most of us were very happy to have somewhere to  
8       go to. As difficult as it was, because for us it was  
9       even difficult for us to fit in with a family, we didn't  
10       know how to. We were guided again and in some instances  
11       bullied by the families to do their bidding and whatever  
12       it was they wanted because we just didn't have the  
13       wherewithal to be able to mix with it them. We had to  
14       be content to -- whatever they said, that's it.

15      Q. And work, chores, then. Can I just look at that.

16           You've mentioned it was the boys who kept the place  
17           clean but I think you also had farm work to do; is that  
18           correct?

19      A. The working boys did the farm side of things. Sometimes  
20       when we were required to fertilise the huge front lawn,  
21       we were sent out on the back paddocks because Clontarf  
22       was a square mile, remember, so we had back paddocks  
23       where the cattle roamed. We'd have to go out and pick  
24       up the manure and bag it and then bring it down, wet it  
25       all down, and spread it over the front lawn. But other

1           than that, farming was for the working boys only.

2           Q. But you do tell us in your statement that you were  
3           required to kill animals?

4           A. Yes, that was mainly during the holidays. If there was  
5           a feast, for example going on at Bindoon or Tardun,  
6           we would be the ones that had to kill the pigs, the  
7           chickens.

8                     You know, we'd have to hold the chooks while one of  
9           the kids had an axe -- and thank god they were good  
10          shots because we could have lost one or two hands in  
11          that. It wasn't a precise job, I can tell you. Then  
12          the chooks -- of course, we were too small to hang on  
13          and they would just fly around with no heads. Quite  
14          comical on some occasions.

15                    But when you've got a whopping great pig that's  
16          simply had its throat cut and you've got six kids  
17          working on it trying to get the prickly hair off the  
18          skin and all we had was our hands to do it, and hot  
19          water, and we weren't allowed to burn the skin, it was  
20          quite a labour-intensive treat. But we weren't to see,  
21          we weren't to get the benefit of it. That pig was then  
22          going to go to market or going to a party or whatever.

23          Q. But what age do you think you were when you started this  
24          sort of work?

25          A. Oh 11, 12.

1 Q. In paragraphs 290 onwards, you talk about some other  
2 brothers, Brother LZL, for example.

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. You say that he never had a strap when he arrived at  
5 Clontarf.

6 A. He did when he left, but at the time he arrived, he  
7 would just use his fist.

8 Q. So that's how he would discipline people?

9 A. Yes, if he saw a kid playing up or whatever, he would  
10 just call the kid over, look at him, he was the most --  
11 and I don't like to describe people, but he would be the  
12 most miserable looking person I've ever seen in my life.  
13 I don't think any of us ever saw a smile on his face.  
14 He didn't want to be there. At the end of the day,  
15 that's what it was, the dregs of the Christian Brothers,  
16 that's where they were sent.

17 But if the kid didn't respond the way he wanted, he  
18 would just whack them on the side -- he would put his  
19 knuckle out like that (indicating) and that's what would  
20 hit you in the side of the head.

21 Q. You also mentioned Brother MXD who was another  
22 brother.

23 A. When he first arrived, he was quite good, actually. For  
24 about 3 weeks. Then he saw, I think, the punishment and  
25 how it was being dealt out by the others and he very

1 quickly then got into the stride of it.

2 But he used to hurt us in the winter, he took great  
3 delight in getting the side of your face and he would  
4 just pinch it and lift you off the ground, and it really  
5 hurt, or he'd put his hand on your forehead and pull his  
6 finger back and go whack. He used to stun you. We were  
7 just little kids but that was his technique. But he was  
8 not one that interfered with the children as far as we  
9 know.

10 Q. You've mentioned Brother MDI on a number of occasions.

11 A. I could mention him for the next fortnight and not run  
12 out.

13 Q. If I can just focus on how he dealt with children who  
14 stained their jumpers because I think you do tell us  
15 about children who might have had a stain on their  
16 jumper.

17 A. Every Saturday -- in the winter we were given -- the  
18 extra clothing we got was a jumper and the jumpers were  
19 quite old, they were all hand-me-downs, so you could see  
20 through most of them, but that was the bonus we had for  
21 the winter months. But every Saturday we had to hand  
22 the jumper in for laundering.

23 To do that we had to present the jumper to  
24 Brother MDI, who sat on a chair where the jumpers were  
25 to be piled up and then taken off to the laundry. As we

1 walked up, he'd inspect it, "Yeah, right", and you'd put  
2 it on and walk away. If you had a stain on it, you had  
3 to go up on the stage in the quadrangle. Usually it  
4 probably finished up with 12 to 20 children up on the  
5 stage with stains on their jumper.

6 If I can explain how a lot of those stains got  
7 there, now might be better.

8 Q. Yes, please do.

9 A. The Monday mornings or the Monday lunches, we used to  
10 get what they called stew. A stew. It was the most  
11 abhorrent concoction of food you could ever think about  
12 shovelling into a child. It was gross. It was grey, it  
13 was greasy, it was congealed. Even the vegetables in  
14 it, and there were very few anyway, were things like  
15 potatoes with eyes still in the potatoes, hard lumps of  
16 pumpkin that didn't go through the steamer properly.

17 Then there was -- when it was first poured on to  
18 your plate, at least it's a bit watery, but by the time  
19 you got to sit down and eat it, it had congealed. It  
20 was a dull, grey -- I don't know if you've ever had --  
21 you probably have -- an old musty rag that may have been  
22 in the back of a cupboard somewhere that was wet at some  
23 time and you get that real musty smell. That's what the  
24 stew smelled like. It was vile. You could hear kids  
25 going, "Ugh!" trying to swallow some of the bits and



1 pieces that were in it --

2 Q. You're making a gagging sound there, I think.

3 A. A gagging sound.

4 But A lot of that came down on to the jumpers,  
5 greasy muck that they couldn't swallow, and a lot of the  
6 stains were from the Monday stew.

7 Anyway, back to the stage. Once everyone had gone  
8 through, we had to line up in our classes in front of  
9 the stage on the quadrangle and he was up on the stage  
10 with these 20 or so kids. And they all got three cuts  
11 of the cane. This is a big man, Brother MDI  
12 18 stone, 6 foot 6, and when he whacked you felt your  
13 arm had been ripped out from here (indicating), the  
14 impact of it.

15 Anyway, you'd get your three, you usually didn't  
16 feel the second and third one because the first one just  
17 numbed your hand anyway. But I took particular note one  
18 day because I was up there more on more than one  
19 occasion myself, and I watched this Australian boy who  
20 was about to get three, and he put his hand out, he took  
21 his three, didn't flinch, I don't know how he did it,  
22 but he took his three canes and because he didn't -- he  
23 then was told to put out his other hand and he got  
24 another three. We are looking at him.

25 Because he didn't start crying, he had to put his

1 hand out again for a nine, and he started crying. He  
2 said, "Get off". But that was part of the control that  
3 was going on. He wasn't going to let someone beat him,  
4 MDI that is.

5 Q. You do tell us about an incident when Brother MDI was  
6 involved with a boy who was in a wheelchair.

7 A. Sorry?

8 Q. A boy in a wheelchair?

9 A. Yes. He was one of the children, unfortunately, that  
10 lost both legs in the bus accident that Clontarf had in  
11 1955. He was a MDI lad that had very short fuse.  
12 He went through terrible trauma with the loss of both  
13 legs. I think he was 11/12 years old at the time it  
14 happened. Brother MDI apparently called on him to  
15 come to him and he either didn't hear or totally ignored  
16 it and MDI went over and he just lambasted this boy.  
17 The kid fell out of the wheelchair and he didn't even  
18 bother to help him back into it, just thrashed him,  
19 MDI

20 Q. Who --

21 A. Brother MDI That was the nature of the beast. We  
22 all knew that's what he does.

23 Q. The bus accident you mentioned, you were at Clontarf at  
24 that time when that accident happened --

25 A. I was, yes.

1 Q. But you weren't involved in the accident itself?

2 A. No, we were informed at lunch that day -- we all had to  
3 stop eating, stand up and say a decade of the rosary for  
4 the children that was hurt in Serpentine, which is about  
5 30 miles away.

6 It's interesting to note that Brother MDI was the  
7 driver of the bus. The bus was found to be in the wrong  
8 and yet there did not appear to be any punishment. One  
9 boy died, two boys lost both legs, and two boys lost  
10 one leg, and there were a multitude of other serious  
11 injuries to the kids on that bus --

12 Q. Were you present when there was an accident?

13 A. Oh yes -- no, I was not at the accident. I was at  
14 Clontarf at the time and we got a running report of the  
15 injuries that were going on.

16 Q. At paragraph 272, if we go back to that, what you say in  
17 your statement is:

18 "On two occasions when I was being transported in an  
19 open truck the sides cracked when we were going round  
20 a corner and over we went."

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. So those were accidents that you were involved in  
23 yourself?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And children were injured in these?

- 1 A. A couple of children got broken legs from the fall.  
2 They're quite high trucks and we were little people, and  
3 the brother drove the truck round a fairly sharp corner  
4 and of course we had nothing to hang on it, it was just  
5 an open truck with the sides, and everyone sort of  
6 swayed that way and the sides cracked and over we went,  
7 on to the road. The brother that drove the truck got  
8 out and he just stood off to one side, grinning. That  
9 was Brother MYK [REDACTED] As much as to say, well, you  
10 deserve it, you broke the sides. That was the image.
- 11 Q. But how many accidents were you involved in?
- 12 A. Two.
- 13 Q. Were children injured in both these accidents?
- 14 A. Yes.
- 15 Q. Was it the same sort of set-up with a truck?
- 16 A. Different area, but a truck, the sides breaking on the  
17 truck.
- 18 Q. You did touch upon a moment or two ago the role that  
19 benefactors would play and in particular that  
20 benefactors would visit the orphanage; is that correct?
- 21 A. Great emphasis was placed -- when we said the rosary,  
22 one of the decades of the rosary was dedicated to the  
23 benefactors of Clontarf, and that was every night of the  
24 week. So they were held in high esteem because they  
25 obviously did a lot for the institution.

1 Q. And you tell us a little bit about a particular  
2 individual and an encounter that you had with him. Can  
3 you tell us about that?

4 A. I mentioned earlier that every third Sunday parents or  
5 people would come and take one of the kids away to their  
6 house for the day and then bring them back. These  
7 benefactors had the same rights, but it was  
8 Brother MDI that decided who went to this particular  
9 benefactor, a man called LZM LZM was regarded  
10 as almost a saint in the eyes of the brothers.

11 Anyway, I was allocated to him, along with two other  
12 boys, for 3 weeks in a row. It was the second week that  
13 he -- right in front of the main building at Clontarf,  
14 there was a circular lawn right in front of the main  
15 building and we were sat on there. He came over, sat  
16 down, and he grabbed hold of me. I was 11. I would  
17 have been about 11 at that time.

18 He grabbed me and he was rubbing his unshaven chin  
19 into my neck, which was extremely irritating to me  
20 because it was pretty rough. Then he sexually assaulted  
21 me while I was in that compromised situation. I managed  
22 to break the hold and I bled as a result of that  
23 encounter, so much so that he tried to wipe his hands on  
24 the grass, we were on a lawn, and he ended up taking  
25 a hanky out and I could see the blood on his hanky.



1 I told him I was going to tell Brother MDI  
2 knowing full well that if I told him I would get an even  
3 bigger belting than what I got then, being one of the  
4 [REDACTED].

5 He then said, "My hand just slipped", and I said,  
6 "Yeah, right, your hand just slipped, what are you  
7 talking about?" I might have been naive but I wasn't  
8 dumb. And he threw me a pack of chewing gum. Wow.  
9 I mean, a whole packet of chewing gum. You were lucky  
10 to see one square in 5 years in those places, but to get  
11 a whole packet of chewing gum in the one hit, it was  
12 quite a treat. So I didn't do anything about it.

13 The irony is, the following third Sunday I was  
14 allocated to him again and I thought, "I know how to  
15 avoid this bloke", but he got hold of me again or tried  
16 to get hold of me again. But I managed to -- the minute  
17 I broke away, he grabbed one of the other boys and was  
18 starting to do exactly the same thing. I don't know how  
19 many kids he did this to, but it must have been a few  
20 because he had three or four kids every third Sunday.

21 Q. Were these children allocated to him by Brother MDI?

22 A. Brother MDI was the one that said: you, you,

23 Mr LZM

24 Q. You said in your statement this [REDACTED] would change  
25 the children's shorts.

1 A. He would bring three or four pairs of his own shorts,  
2 big, baggy bloomers they were. He would take your  
3 shorts off, insist on taking your shorts off, and put  
4 his shorts on, which gave him access, because we had no  
5 underwear -- it was all part of our dress code, no  
6 underwear, just shorts -- and that gave him access to  
7 our private parts.

8 Q. And when he touched you or interfered with you, had he  
9 changed your shorts before that had happened?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. I think you mentioned Brother MHZ already. He wasn't  
12 a teaching brother, he worked in the --

13 A. He was a lay brother.

14 Q. And he worked in the piggery in particular?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Do I take it from that that you had nothing to do with  
17 him directly?

18 A. That's correct.

19 Q. But you have heard things about him since?

20 A. Sometimes we were required to do extra work down at the  
21 piggery, not often, but enough times to know that a lot  
22 of the children that he had already interfered with had  
23 warned us to just keep our distance from him.

24 Q. Did they say why?

25 A. They couldn't say why.

1 Q. And MDF, who you've mentioned on quite a number of  
2 occasions, do you know if at Clontarf he had children to  
3 his room?

4 A. I don't. I can't answer that.

5 Q. Apart from what happened with the benefactor, did any  
6 other adult sexually abuse when you were either at  
7 Clontarf or at Castledare?

8 A. No, I was interfered with by a few older boys, but it  
9 was pretty basic stuff. It was stuff that -- when we  
10 knew what else was going on with the brothers, what the  
11 older boys would do to us was nothing compared to -- it  
12 was just general masturbation or you had to masturbate  
13 them. There was no penetration or anything.

14 Q. I think what you're telling us is there was  
15 inappropriate sexual behaviour that involved older boys?

16 A. There was. But it was done in a bullying way. It  
17 wasn't something you necessarily agreed to.

18 Q. No, I understand that.

19 You did mention earlier a particular boy who  
20 complained to Brother MDI about MDF

21 A. Oh, yes. He complained about MDF He  
22 confronted Brother MDI and said, "Look, sir, do you  
23 know that Brother MDF is", I'm trying to remember  
24 's words, "interfering with the children?" and  
25 of course got a hiding for saying that, but



1           shortly after that, MDF was transferred to  
2           South Australia.

3           Q. And is your knowledge of this incident because of what  
4           you were told by ██████? Is that how you know about  
5           this? Did ██████ tell you about it?

6           A. Yes.

7           Q. When did he tell you, was it at the time or  
8           subsequently?

9           A. No, in later years, because we just didn't talk about  
10          these things when we were kids. To keep your mouth shut  
11          meant you were keeping yourself safe. If you opened  
12          your mouth, you were inviting more attention and  
13          attention is something you did not want.

14          Q. Okay.

15                 You've told us already, Johno, about what  
16          Brother AKG said to you about your date of birth  
17          and, effectively, making you younger than what you  
18          actually were. Is it because of that that you did not  
19          leave Clontarf until you were in fact 16?

20          A. I suspect so, because I think when Brother MDI advised  
21          me that I was leaving Clontarf, he told me then: you've  
22          turned 15 therefore you've got to go. And at that  
23          stage, I just assumed that was my birthday but in fact  
24          I was 16. And it's recorded on my discharge papers from  
25          Clontarf, at 16, he's been sent off. But at the time,

1 he acknowledged me as having turned 15. His thing  
2 was: you're leaving because funding has ceased.

3 Q. Is what you're saying this: that having, as it were,  
4 given you a younger birthday, it meant that you were  
5 funded --

6 A. An extra year.

7 Q. -- an extra year?

8 A. Yes, and the funding levels were very good from what  
9 I understand. I think there were funds coming from the  
10 State Lotteries Commission, there were funds coming from  
11 the state government, there were funds coming from the  
12 Australian Government and, of course, the 10 shillings  
13 a week from the British Government. So it was a good  
14 income for the brothers, but we never lived to that --  
15 nowhere near that standard.

16 LADY SMITH: What about the farming activities? Do you know  
17 if they were bringing in an income?

18 A. I'm sorry, my Lady?

19 LADY SMITH: What about the farming activities? Do you know  
20 if they were bringing in an income?

21 A. There was an income coming from that as well. We had  
22 something like 1,000, maybe 1,500 chickens, but we never  
23 got an egg. The eggs were all sent off to the market,  
24 as with the animals that were killed as well. The odd  
25 cow was even killed. But the horses that were shot or

1           killed, the pigs got those, but we had to chop them up  
2           and cook them up in the big vat down in the piggery.

3           MR MacAULAY: In paragraph 323, which will come on the  
4           screen in a moment, what you say is:

5                     "I do now believe that MDI might have confronted  
6           MDF "

7                     I think you link that to speaking to MDI

8           Then you go on to say:

9                     "But all the brothers knew what was going on."

10           Why do you make that comment?

11           A. I think it was intuition. I think the brazenness of it  
12           all, the fact that the change around in brothers was  
13           just so obvious, they would transit through the  
14           different institutions -- when they were caught in one  
15           they were simply moved on to the next.

16                     I cannot believe within an institution the size of  
17           Clontarf, with nine Christian Brothers and the number of  
18           children that were involved to one degree or another --  
19           because more than one brother interfered with  
20           a particular child and that child would say, "But  
21           Brother so-and-so did this to me", and this brother  
22           would then say, " Oh, I'll do it to you too." That was  
23           the catalyst, I suppose, that gave us the view that  
24           these blokes -- there's a circuit going here and it was  
25           a very nasty one, a very bad one.

1           So I have very little doubt that the remainder of  
2           the brothers in those organisations, I don't believe  
3           they could ever say they didn't know what was going on.  
4           They even witnessed the brutal beatings that some kids  
5           got and just stood off and let it happen.

6           Q. You tell us then that you left Clontarf on  
7           St Patrick's Day in 1959.

8           A. Yes.

9           Q. And by then you were 16.

10          A. 16.

11          Q. At the time of your departure, did you have  
12          a conversation with Brother MDI

13          A. I was told on that morning to get into the new clothes  
14          that I was given -- when you leave Clontarf, they give  
15          you a little case and I got some working clothes and  
16          stuff. We had to go into a shop called Aherne's in the  
17          city, where you weren't fitted with anything, you were  
18          taken into the back of the store and stuff was just  
19          thrown at you to hang on to. You never got to try it  
20          on. The jeans I was given I could get into one leg, but  
21          they just offloaded the stuff they couldn't sell and  
22          that's essentially what we got.

23                 There was no money given to you on departure either,  
24                 you just got those clothes. In my case I got £22 worth  
25                 of clothes. Some kids got £24. It depended on what

1           they could sell and what they couldn't sell.

2           Q. And I think you tell us you also had a conversation with  
3           Brother MDI before you actually came to --

4           A. Oh yes, on the day -- after I'd come back with the  
5           clothing, Brother MDI said, "Right, there will be  
6           a vehicle here to take you down to the farm that you're  
7           going to be employed at tomorrow morning, so make sure  
8           you dress with your new clothes and leave all your  
9           Clontarf stuff here, we need it", not that I wanted to  
10          hang on to it anyway.

11                    But I got into the slacks and the reefer jacket --  
12                    and it's a reefer jacket I only ever wore once, I never  
13                    wore it again -- you don't want to know about it, but  
14                    I could see why they couldn't sell it, put it that way.  
15                    But thankful for small mercies once again.

16                    So I get dressed up and I walk down to the front and  
17                    this vehicle arrived, it was a Vanguard utility, and  
18                    Brother MDI and the driver of the vehicle, who was my  
19                    about-to-be boss' father was the driver of the utility,  
20                    were chatting. And I walked over and the boss' father  
21                    said, "Just check your case in the back, in the ute",  
22                    and there's all muck in there, there's straw and cow  
23                    dung and whatever else, grease, tools. So I put it,  
24                    very carefully trying to avoid getting it dirty, and  
25                    I went round the side to get into the cabin and he just

1 yelled at me, "No, no, that's the dog's place, you get  
2 in the back."

3 So I had to get in, and it was raining as well, just  
4 very light, just a sprinkling at the time. And  
5 I thought, well, I'm still not angry because I'm just  
6 happy to be leaving here. And just as the driver got  
7 into the front of the ute, Brother MDI leaned over and  
8 said to me, and his words exactly, "I guess the next  
9 time I see you will be in Fremantle Jail", and  
10 I thought, well, that is a lovely way to say, "Take  
11 care, son, look after yourself, keep your chin up." No,  
12 "I'll see you in jail." That was 9 years of  
13 institutionalised farewell. But what it said to me  
14 was -- it was an indictment on their inability to have  
15 done their job properly.

16 Q. And then in your statement, Johno, do you begin to set  
17 out what your life was like after you left Clontarf and,  
18 in particular, that you went to a farm, you spent about  
19 two and a half years working pretty solidly on that  
20 farm, in a location where there was really no social  
21 life of any kind; is that right?

22 A. There was nothing. You were 5 miles from any centre and  
23 the centre I was next to was called Waroona. It's only  
24 a very small town. The nearest picture theatre was at  
25 Pinjarra, 20 miles away. So there was no nightlife or



1 entertainment at the same time.

2 Besides, I had to work 7 days a week and there was  
3 no weekend for me. The only time I knew it was Sunday  
4 was they made me get in the back of the ute to go to  
5 church and I used that opportunity to do -- when they  
6 went up the front I would sit down the back and as soon  
7 as the priest came out I would nip out and do my  
8 shopping.

9 Q. You do tell us that you corresponded with the welfare  
10 department and eventually somebody came to see you  
11 at the farm and that led to a change of scene; is that  
12 right?

13 A. I think I was going insane. I had never felt such  
14 despair in my life. Even to this time I've never felt  
15 the despair that I felt on that farm. It was just  
16 absolutely profound and just overwhelming. Here I was,  
17 I hate being here, I don't want to be there, I did my  
18 job, I didn't shirk anything, and I can't leave. I'm  
19 stuck here for the rest of my life, I've got nowhere to  
20 go to, I've got no one to talk to, I'm getting £2/5  
21 a week for 100 hours a week, what sort of future have  
22 I got?

23 And it was then that I began to get these ideas,  
24 because one of the workers that came in for the hay  
25 baling season was telling me about these Italians that





1 (3.09 pm)

2 LADY SMITH: Are you ready for us to carry on, Johnno?

3 A. I am, thank you, ma'am.

4 MR MacAULAY: Before the break, we had come to the  
5 point where you had made contact with a welfare officer  
6 who came to see you and I think the upshot was you  
7 resigned from your job and you went to Perth; is that  
8 right?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. In Perth, did you then deal with the welfare department?

11 A. I did, but to go back to the farm for a moment, if  
12 I may, which is part of the reasoning: I was made to  
13 live in a corrugated iron shed, and it was a one-room  
14 shed that had holes in the floor, it had no windows, you  
15 couldn't close the door, you had to use a bit of string  
16 at night to tie it down to stop the wind from slamming  
17 it. There was no power, there was no water, and my  
18 blanket was four potato bags sown together for the  
19 nights.

20 When the welfare officer arrived, he wanted to have  
21 a look at where I was living, and he thought I was  
22 living in the house, the farmer's house, and I said, no,  
23 that little shed next to the dairy, that is where I am.  
24 Oh, all right, well, we'll go in there. And before he  
25 stepped in, he said, "You live in here?" And I thought,

1 well, yeah. Anyway, he came in, and the only other  
2 furniture in there was an old iron safe which I used to  
3 have a candle on.

4 He just shook his head and said, "Right." He asked  
5 me a few questions about the employment, the length of  
6 time I'd been there, the nature of the work I was doing,  
7 the hours I was working. Then when I told him there was  
8 no weekend or -- he was just ... he said, "Look, when  
9 I leave here you are to give your resignation."

10 I was a little bit dubious about that because of the  
11 inherent fears that I'd carried with me all my life up  
12 to that time, to actually hand my boss a resignation was  
13 a pretty fearful event for me, even though I was  
14 17 years old.

15 Anyway, I asked him what I need to put in the  
16 resignation. I knew what it was, but I just wanted some  
17 brief wordings, and he told me, he said, "I can't write  
18 it for you, I'm not allowed to, but as soon as I leave  
19 here, you hand it in and give 14 days' notice. That  
20 will give me time to get things organised in Perth for  
21 when you come down." I said that's fine. So I wrote  
22 out the resignation:

23 "This is to her by advise you [words to the effect]  
24 I will be ceasing work as of 16.00 hours, 14 days from  
25 now."

1           Anyway, I went up to the door, the house door, and  
2 I was about to knock on the door and I thought, oh God,  
3 no. So I backed off and I sat down for about 20 minutes  
4 and thought, no, I've got to do this. I got up again  
5 and I went over, backed away again. It was the third  
6 occasion, I just walked straight up and I nearly charged  
7 into the door, I was that determined: I'm going to knock  
8 on this door, right or wrong.

9           I'd only got one knock in and he flung the door open  
10 and he'd been waiting for me. He'd obviously seen me  
11 through the window. What annoyed me a little bit was  
12 he was aware that this welfare officer was coming up  
13 that day but didn't tell me. And anyway, I said, "I've  
14 been asked to give you this", and I gave him the  
15 envelope and he said -- he ripped it off me, ripped it  
16 open. "What's this? You've been lying." On and on he  
17 went and he just screwed it up, threw it at me and said,  
18 "Go and get the cows."

19           Milking had to happen twice a day, 5 in the morning  
20 and 3.30 in the afternoon, so this is about -- I started  
21 wanting to give him the letter at about 2.45, so it took  
22 until 3.30 to give it to him.

23           So it was the longest 14 days of my life, I think,  
24 that I then spent on that farm knowing that I can't go  
25 beforehand, but at least I've got somewhere to go to.

1           As far as the packing goes, I had been packed for  
2 that fortnight. I didn't own anything anyway.

3           So on the morning of my departure, my 14 days,  
4 I still had to get up and get the cows at 5.30 and  
5 I knew the train left the Waroona station at 8 o'clock.  
6 The milking didn't finish until 7.30 and I thought I'm  
7 not going to make it, I'm not going to make the train.  
8 Then I said, no, I'm going to make the train, so I kept  
9 badgering him and he let me go about 7 o'clock.  
10 Wouldn't give me a lift into town, I ran, because I was  
11 already packed, I raced straight past my room and  
12 I grabbed the bag and I was on my way to Waroona and  
13 I caught the train.

14           I got down there, reported in to Miss Sanderson, who  
15 was the child welfare officer in charge, and she said,  
16 "Okay, just take a seat, a family will be here to pick  
17 you up and take you to their place for your  
18 accommodation." And the most wonderful family it was.

19           It was an Irish family known as the [REDACTED] I'd  
20 never known life was so good. It was just -- the  
21 turnaround in their attitude to me was that I was  
22 someone. The way they treated me was something that  
23 I had never, ever been familiar with. And I thought  
24 they must have the wrong person. I really felt that  
25 inferior and I know I wouldn't be the only one that felt

1           that way coming from those institutions, but these  
2           people looked after me very, very well. They didn't  
3           know my background too much.

4           When I arrived at their house I went to go around  
5           the back of the house thinking there's probably a shed  
6           around there that I'll probably have to move into. And  
7           ██████ said, "Where are you going?" I said, "I'm going  
8           round the back." He said, "No, come in here." We went  
9           in the front door and I was quite apprehensive,  
10          I thought, wow, right. And I'm looking at a beautiful  
11          house, real old, the old style, with the archways and  
12          what have you, I'm looking around going, wow. And then  
13          he flung open one of the side doors and he said, "That's  
14          your room." And I looked in, there's polished floors,  
15          there's a bed with a beautiful quilt on it, sheets. And  
16          I was just absolutely staggered.

17          Then he showed me through the rest of the house and,  
18          that afternoon, when he came back from work, he said,  
19          "Come on, hop in the car." We went up to the pub, he  
20          had a beer, he asked me what I wanted and I said I a  
21          beer, but I hadn't drunk, and he said, "No, you won't,  
22          you're 17, you'll have a squash." So that's what I had.  
23          So he was looking after my interests as well.

24          And I stayed with them for about six weeks and I've  
25          never forgotten them and I never will. They're the most

1 beautiful family in the world and they're still alive.

2 Q. And you're still in contact?

3 A. Pardon?

4 Q. Are you still in contact?

5 A. I am.

6 Q. But during that period, did your mind turn to joining  
7 the military? During that period --

8 A. Oh yes.

9 Q. -- did your mind turn to joining the army?

10 A. I was asked by the child welfare department, this  
11 Miss Sanderson, to keep an eye out for a job and they  
12 would also keep an eye out. She found two positions  
13 that I was to go and check out or be interviewed for.  
14 One of them was to fit shoes on to the people, on to  
15 clients. I looked at that and I thought, I can't do  
16 that. But I didn't say anything at the time, I went  
17 back to the [REDACTED] but then I rung in and said, "No,  
18 I can't do that."

19 So a second job interview was made for me a couple  
20 of days later. I went to that down on Wellington Street  
21 and it was a place called Henry Berry & Sons. They were  
22 manufacturers. They said icing sugar and pepper. My  
23 job was going to be to lift bags of sugar, tip them into  
24 a hopper while this huge thing ground up the sugar into  
25 icing sugar. While that process was going on, there was

1 a further machine over the back that ground pepper. The  
2 dust and stuff that was in there -- because I have  
3 visual problems, eye problems. I'm okay at the moment  
4 because I've had cataract removals and I can see. So  
5 I looked at him and said, "What happens if one of these  
6 huge things breaks down?" He said, "Oh, you've got to  
7 fix it", "How do I do that?" He said, "You'll learn."  
8 I said, "Jeez, righto." So I didn't want to tell him  
9 and I rung them up and said no thank you.

10 On that second trip back I passed the army  
11 recruiting office and I thought, here's this finger  
12 pointing, "We need you." And I thought, why not?  
13 I can't get any lower, probably the lowest  
14 socio-economic position you could hold was a soldier  
15 in the Australian Army, but I had to get employment of  
16 some sort. It was not as though I had somewhere to go  
17 and be looked after.

18 So I went into the recruiting office and there was  
19 the sergeant major sitting behind the desk. "Son, give  
20 us your details, blah, blah, blah, your name, yes, date  
21 of birth", "Don't know."

22 Your mother's name, don't know. Father's name,  
23 don't know. Have you got a birth certificate? No. And  
24 he went through all this rigmarole of identity and I had  
25 none. He said, "Everyone's got a birth certificate."

1 I said, "No, they don't. I don't, and a lot of other  
2 kids don't." He said, "Look, who do you belong to?"  
3 And I said, "I guess I'm probably a ward of the state",  
4 or whatever it was. And he said, "Look, go back to the  
5 child welfare department and see if you can't get some  
6 information from them." So I went back again to  
7 Miss Sanderson and she said, "Oh yes", and that's when  
8 I found out my real name and my real date of birth.

9 Q. Did she have documents to --

10 A. She had documents --

11 Q. -- to support that?

12 A. Yes, she wouldn't give them to me, she said, "I have  
13 them." I said, "What do I do about these other dates  
14 I've got?" She said, "That's not you." She got a piece  
15 of letter-headed paper from the welfare and hand wrote:

16 "This is to confirm his full name [my name] and date  
17 of birth."

18 And I think she wrote on there "child migrant" as  
19 well. I thought, "Gosh, I could could've written that".  
20 I took it down to the old sergeant major and he said,  
21 "Yes, that'll do", and I was in the military.

22 Q. And you were in the military and served for 23 years and  
23 retired ultimately as a sergeant major; is that right?

24 A. That's correct, yes.

25 Q. You did a number of tours of duty, including active



1 service in Vietnam on two occasions?

2 A. I served in Vietnam in 1965/1966, and then went back as  
3 a member of their training team in 1970/1971.

4 Q. And I think you saw some things there that were very  
5 unpleasant?

6 A. I was wounded lightly. On the first tour [REDACTED]  
7 [REDACTED] and almost lost my life -- I was given my  
8 last rites anyway in hospital. And I was laid up for  
9 3 months in Hollywood Hospital in Perth. I was given my  
10 last rites twice during the time I was in there. The  
11 last rites I knew because I was a good Catholic boy and  
12 I knew what they were even though I couldn't respond to  
13 what the priest was saying.

14 I was asked to give some indication as to whether  
15 I was sorry for my sins and I thought, "How on earth do  
16 I do that? I can't move." All my nerves were dead.  
17 I couldn't blink. They had to keep watering my eyes  
18 because I had no control over that either.

19 After a minute or so, the priest went, "I saw it, my  
20 son," and I thought, you fibber. Anyway, I was forgiven  
21 for my sins, and I recovered, after being evacuated back  
22 to Australia in 1966.

23 The second tour I was wounded in a fire base that  
24 was attacked, albeit lightly, but nonetheless I was on  
25 the front line as a serving soldier of the Australian

1 Army but more importantly as a British subject. I was  
2 not an Australian citizen. None of us received  
3 Australian citizenship, which was a terrible, terrible  
4 thing to occur.

5 These young kids that lost their jobs after being  
6 put into temporary work after being shoved out of the  
7 institutions went to the government for help, only to be  
8 told, "You're not a citizen, you're illegal, if you come  
9 back here, we'll deport you." So that was our lot,  
10 another obstacle that we had to find our way around.

11 Q. If I can go back to the [REDACTED] incident, I think you  
12 do tell us in your statement that when that happened,  
13 there was a message sent back to Nazareth House, which  
14 ended up going to your mother; is that right?

15 A. I had listed Nazareth House as my next of kin because  
16 I certainly wasn't going to leave the Christian Brothers  
17 as my next of kin. As a consequence of that, the  
18 military powers that be contacted someone over here who  
19 then contacted Nazareth House, who then was able to  
20 contact my mother.

21 Q. And did you then get a message from your mother?

22 A. The postal orderly came to my bedside remembering,  
23 I can't move at this stage, I'm a vegetable, and he  
24 said, "I've got a cablegram here from your mother", and  
25 I thought, "Uh-oh, he's got the wrong person, I don't

1           have one of those." He read it out and it was a very  
2           sincere cablegram that I can remember, signed off, "Your  
3           loving mother, [REDACTED]" It wasn't until many, many years  
4           later that I realised that that was my mother.

5           Q. At the time, though --

6           A. At the time, no. At the time I thought, better go and  
7           find the right bloke, you're putting the wind up the  
8           wrong people. So yeah, it wasn't something that  
9           affected me all that badly because I just accepted that  
10          I don't have any family because the good people of the  
11          cloth told me so.

12          Q. Coming back to your military service, as you've said,  
13          you did a number of tours of duty, you retired in 1985  
14          as a company sergeant major, and what you did then is  
15          you joined the Returned Services League, the RSL of  
16          Australia; is that right?

17          A. That's correct.

18          Q. Is that an organisation that acts as an advocate for  
19          ex-servicemen?

20          A. It's actually where I believe I found my niche in life.  
21          Within the military, the military totally re-educated  
22          me. I went through their classes, class 3, class 2,  
23          class 1, which was equivalent to years 10, 11, class 1,  
24          which was more than what I wanted.

25                 Where did we get up to?

1 Q. You were going to tell me about how you found your niche  
2 in the RSL. I think what you were going to tell me was  
3 that --

4 A. I went for an interview. The job was advertised and  
5 I went for an interview and the RSL said, yes, that's  
6 all good. I went home and 3 days later, I got a phone  
7 call to say, yes, the job's yours if you want it.  
8 I thought I've never, ever done this work before but  
9 I'll have a go. I went up and the state secretary of  
10 the RSL just opened the office door that I was to work  
11 at and I looked in and here was this desk and there were  
12 just mountains of files sitting on there. I said, "What  
13 are they?" He said, "That's your job."

14 Q. And your job, just to focus on it, was to present cases  
15 on behalf of veterans --

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. -- who were seeking redress --

18 A. Compensation.

19 Q. -- from the army?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And I think you say you found your niche and that is  
22 because you were very successful as an advocate on  
23 behalf of the soldiers?

24 A. Yes. I was very -- it was a very rewarding job, not  
25 good pay, rewarding in the sense that you were doing

1 something that was never done for you. And as such,  
2 just to hear some of the stories that were told by  
3 World War I veterans, and I thought I had it tough in  
4 Vietnam, but oh boy, those guys really, really fought  
5 a war.

6 But that aside, the World War II veterans came  
7 through in their hundreds. We were very successful with  
8 them. And it was at that stage I was able to quite  
9 quickly assess a veteran that comes in as bona fide or  
10 otherwise. And I thought, well, that's a gift I never  
11 knew I had and I was very accurate with it. I'm not  
12 meaning to brag, it's not my nature to do that, I was  
13 just happy that I was able to say, "You're swinging the  
14 lead, mate", or, "You weren't there because I know what  
15 went on there and what you're saying didn't happen  
16 there." So in that sense, it was a big help to me.

17 Q. You tell us in your statement a little bit about your  
18 personal life; I'm not going to dwell on it. You did  
19 get married in 1976, you've got three children and you  
20 tell us a little bit about them and some information  
21 about what they're doing.

22 If I can move on to that part of your statement  
23 where you come across Brother **MDF** again because  
24 I think Brother **MDF** ended up in court; is that right?

25 A. Yes, he did.

1 Q. That was in the early 1990. Were you involved in that  
2 court process?

3 A. Yes, I attended the court.

4 Q. Had you provided a statement?

5 A. No.

6 Q. So did you --

7 A. We were never required to provide any statement for it.  
8 The police had already laid the charges, so they had  
9 whatever statements they needed.

10 Q. But I think he was deemed unfit to plead?

11 A. He had three appearances. I attended all three. The  
12 first one was deferred for 3 months. He was sent back  
13 to South Australia. The second one was also deferred at  
14 the lawyer's request for further information. The third  
15 time, which was -- there's about 14 months in between  
16 all three, so the third time he came round, he arrived  
17 on a walking stick, which is something he never did  
18 before and paraded in front of the judge and fell over  
19 in front of the judge and had to be -- he shouldn't have  
20 even been there, his place was over here (indicating),  
21 but the judge then consulted the lawyers, the police and  
22 also his lawyers, and then [REDACTED]  
23 [REDACTED].

24 Q. Can I then look at that part of your life that involved  
25 you tracing your family? You took steps to trace your

1 family in Scotland?

2 A. The fate of my family?

3 Q. To trace your family.

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. There came a point in time when you decided you would  
6 trace your family.

7 A. Yes. My young children then, I think they were aged  
8 probably 3, 5 and 7 or 8, anyway it was mainly my  
9 daughter who kept wanting to ... She was saying things  
10 like, "We know mum's side of things, what have you got  
11 on your side?"

12 Q. Before that, you've told us about the cablegram that  
13 came from the person you understand was your mother --

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. -- but had you had contact with a sister before then?

16 A. That came as a surprise. When I got out of hospital,  
17 probably about 2 years later, I received this letter.  
18 I thought, that's a bit weird, opened it up, had a read,  
19 and it was signed "your sister". In the letter, it sort  
20 of said things like: we don't know, we never knew who  
21 you were, mum never spoke about you, dad never spoke  
22 about you, welcome to the family. And I'm thinking,  
23 where's this coming from?

24 I did write a nasty letter back in the sense that,  
25 look, you don't know who I am and I don't know who you

1           are, what are you doing coming into my life at this late  
2           stage? It was just the way I felt.

3           Q. But did you believe it was your sister who had written?

4           A. Not initially, until I got a second letter. I got  
5           a second letter, saying: you're being a bit harsh on me.  
6           She explained a few things, which sort of calmed me down  
7           a little bit. So I rung her and we had a bit of a chat,  
8           gave her a little bit of history about how my life  
9           evolved, but nothing like what's been presented here.

10          Q. But then do I take it that after you'd had that  
11          conversation with your sister, later on, your children  
12          prompted you to see what you could find out about --

13          A. To go back there and just see -- no, no, it was before  
14          I got the letters.

15          Q. I see.

16          A. (Overspeaking) the second letter.

17          Q. Can you tell me what steps you took? Once you had  
18          decided to trace your family, what did you do?

19          A. This was the 1983/1984 period when the kids -- because  
20          remember, I didn't marry until 1976, so the kids came  
21          along at intervening times. When I decided to bite the  
22          bullet and go across and just check it out, I went to  
23          the births, deaths and marriages in London, only to be  
24          told after 3 days, "You're in the wrong place, you  
25          should be up in Edinburgh."



1           So I mustered my way up to Edinburgh, and as  
2 I mentioned earlier, within half an hour of being there,  
3 I've got relatives all over the place. So I contacted  
4 the first one, who was my first cousin, my mother's  
5 brother's son. He invited me around to his place and we  
6 sat and chatted and he recognised -- I look very similar  
7 to him, we were very similar in appearance. We chatted  
8 and he told me and I asked him if my mother was still  
9 alive. He told me that he can remember me as a baby  
10 in that his mum and my mum, or his family and my family,  
11 lived in the same house and he came down one morning and  
12 the nursery was empty -- I wasn't in the nursery, and he  
13 went and asked his mum where I was and she told him that  
14 the angels had come and taken me away. That's as much  
15 as he knew about me.

16 Q. But did he arrange for you to see your mother?

17 A. He said, "Look, I'll give you the address and phone  
18 number and what have you." I said, "Please don't  
19 contact her, I've got to do this on my own, I need to go  
20 down there and do this by myself, I've come over here,  
21 I want to do it." He said, "Yeah, no problems."

22           When I went down, I stayed in a hotel not far from  
23 her place and I did a reconnaissance the day before to  
24 see exactly where it was. She lived in Broughty Ferry  
25 in Scotland, and I went back to the hotel and then

1 I rang her and she answered the phone. I said, "Hello,  
2 is that Mrs [REDACTED]?" And she said, "Is that  
3 you, LZK [REDACTED]?" I nearly dropped the phone. I thought  
4 he was told not to tell her, how did she find out it was  
5 me? But I think he rung, I'd be silly not to think  
6 that, but it was very eerie and very confronting that  
7 that was the way she answered the phone, "Is that you,  
8 [REDACTED]?" I thought, wow.

9 I said, "I would like us to meet", and she said,  
10 "Yes, come around, come around." So I went around,  
11 knocked on the door, and it was a very -- oh, I don't  
12 know ... There was a gap. We just ... There was no  
13 bond. There was this lady that answered the door and  
14 I looked at her and she's up to here on me  
15 (indicating) --

16 Q. Up to the top of your chest.

17 A. -- and I'm looking down and I'm thinking, this is my  
18 mother. I said, "Look, I'm a bit uncomfortable, what  
19 would you prefer I call you?" She said, "Oh, mum", and  
20 I couldn't call her mum, I couldn't call her mum in  
21 front of her. And yet on the phone months later, once  
22 I got back, I could say, "Hello, mum." And we chatted  
23 and it was then -- she was very limited because she was  
24 a bit vague, she was getting on a bit. She was a bit  
25 vague in some of the things that she was telling me, but

1 she told me that she had been advised by Nazareth House  
2 that I had been adopted to a good English family and --  
3 what was her words? -- that she wasn't to pursue me for  
4 fear it would destroy any relationship I would have had  
5 with the new family.

6 Q. And do I take it from that she did not know that you had  
7 been sent to Australia?

8 A. No, no. I presume once she received the cablegram in  
9 1966, she would have had some inkling, but there was no  
10 further contact from her specifically after that time  
11 until I'd met her.

12 Q. And I think this meeting you're telling us about was in  
13 about 1984; is that right?

14 A. 1983/1984 is when I first met her.

15 Q. Did you ever see her again after that meeting?

16 A. No. I couldn't afford to. It was \$7,000-odd to get  
17 over here, and £2/5 a week didn't go far.

18 Q. I understand that. You told us you did speak to her on  
19 the telephone?

20 A. We spoke on a monthly basis. I rang once a month, she  
21 rang once a month and we wrote. I still have 100-odd  
22 letters at home from her.

23 Q. Do you think you developed a reasonably good  
24 relationship with her?

25 A. It took a long time for me to accept the signature

1 at the bottom, "Your loving mother." It was something  
2 that just didn't mean much, it still doesn't. I'm sad  
3 to say it still doesn't mean a great deal to me because  
4 the loving part is something I don't know much about.  
5 It was never there. What do you do? "Your loving mum",  
6 what does it mean?

7 Q. You tell us in your statement, Johnno, that she died in  
8 1991 at the age of 70.

9 A. 1991, yes.

10 Q. I don't think you were told about that until after her  
11 funeral.

12 A. My sister wrote to me to advise me that mum had passed  
13 away and that they'd had the funeral and that she'd put  
14 flowers on the grave on our behalf. I contacted her to  
15 say, "Why wasn't I told at the time she was even sick?  
16 I didn't even know she was crook." She said, "Well, we  
17 didn't know, it was a very sudden thing." And I said,  
18 well, I -- she said, "I did try and contact you, I went  
19 through Your Telecom", and I thought, "Well, that's  
20 weird because I'd spoken to her before through her  
21 network without any trouble at all", but she couldn't  
22 raise me.

23 Q. Had you met your sister?

24 A. Never met my sister.

25 Q. And I think she died herself at the age of 69.

1 A. 69, she died of -- I'm not sure what form of cancer, but  
2 it was cancer that took her life.

3 Q. But you also have a brother; is that right?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And you did meet your brother in about 2005; is that  
6 correct?

7 A. Maybe a little earlier than that, it may be about 2002.

8 Q. Where did you meet him? Did you come back to Scotland?

9 A. I came to Scotland through the Child Migrants Trust. By  
10 that time, the Child Migrants Trust was well and truly  
11 established in Perth and they did a lot of research and  
12 checking and investigating on my behalf to locate [REDACTED].

13 And on doing so, I was then brought across. Finally  
14 I could get here and meet a part of my family for the  
15 first time. It was very awesome in the sense that my  
16 eagerness to see him and to see what he looked like and  
17 see how he responded and what common factors we had with  
18 each other was sadly taken away in the sense that he had  
19 had an earlier stroke and was in a very debilitated  
20 stage and he couldn't speak. He could speak, but you  
21 couldn't understand what he was saying.

22 I did spend some time with him, I'm talking weeks at  
23 a time, when I was able to come back a few times after  
24 that, thanks to the work of the Child Migrants Trust,  
25 and the Family Reunification Fund that was made

1 available through the British Government, [REDACTED]

2 [REDACTED]

3 [REDACTED]

4 [REDACTED]

5 Q. That is another issue.

6 So you' met your brother, you think in the early  
7 2000s, but you've kept in contact with him?

8 A. With my brother?

9 Q. Yes.

10 A. Oh yes. I get on very well with my nephew and niece.  
11 They both have children and one of them, their children  
12 has children, so I've got quite a clan here in the  
13 Edinburgh area, particularly down through Livingstone,  
14 out that way, and I'm looking forward to catching up  
15 with them, hopefully tomorrow, all going well.

16 Q. You also tell us a little bit about redress in  
17 paragraphs 455 onwards, and you did apply for redress to  
18 the Western Australian scheme; is that correct?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And you've supplied the inquiry with the documents that  
21 related to that application.

22 A. Yes. The documents provided for that particular scheme  
23 don't differ much from what's provided to this inquiry  
24 because I can't change -- it's indelible, it's there.  
25 I just need resolution, I just need things to be

1 resolved. I've had a life of trauma, sadness and  
2 bitterness because of my childhood. My childhood's  
3 become part of my being, it's become part of my ethos.  
4 It's not as though you can go into a hospital and have  
5 that section removed and a good bit put in. You can't  
6 do that. That just grows with you.

7 The better you are coping with that or finding  
8 a mechanism to get around it, the better chance you have  
9 then of progressing, and that's where the army played  
10 a very key role in my welfare.

11 Q. You've also played a role with the Australian Royal  
12 Commission; is that correct? You've taken part in the  
13 Royal Commission.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And you've also taken part in the England and Wales  
16 inquiry?

17 A. The IICSA inquiry and [REDACTED].

18 Q. As you set out in your statement, paragraphs 473  
19 onwards, there have been apologies made to  
20 child migrants, and in particular, on behalf of the  
21 United Kingdom government by the Prime Minister of the  
22 day, Gordon Brown. What was your response to that  
23 apology?

24 A. I think it was a wonderful effort by the then  
25 Prime Minister of England in that he was able to

1           succinctly describe the nation's sadness at what they  
2           allowed to happen and took full responsibility for it  
3           happening.

4           The fact that in 9 years of institutionalised  
5           suffering in Western Australia I did not speak to one  
6           Scottish member, British member, Australian member or  
7           social welfare -- nobody asked me how I was, nobody  
8           wanted to know how I was -- and when I say me, I'm  
9           talking multiples of me that missed out.

10          Had these visitations or interviews been done the  
11          British Government speaks of -- pardon my elaborating  
12          a little.

13          The British Government speaks of things like, "But  
14          we got these wonderful letters back from the children  
15          that said they were being well looked after." What  
16          utter rubbish. We had to sit in the classroom and copy  
17          those letters off the blackboard, word for word, and  
18          then hand them in. They're what was sent to the  
19          different organisations back here in Great Britain. All  
20          lies. There was not an ounce of truth in any of them.

21          But had a British inspection team -- I mean, tell me  
22          something: why would you send an inspection team to  
23          somewhere like Australia to look at the welfare of the  
24          children from here? Why would you send them there and  
25          not interview one child? They came and looked at the



1 buildings and they looked at the kitchen and they looked  
2 at the toilets, but not one child in any of the records  
3 show that they were interviewed and spoken to by  
4 a welfare officer, either from Scotland, England -- or  
5 even Australia for that matter.

6 I would have thought that would have been the crux  
7 of having these inspections, to find out the welfare of  
8 the children. It didn't happen. Perhaps if it did,  
9 a few more truths would have hit home, but the truths  
10 were already home because the British Government knew  
11 we were being abused, so much so that several of the  
12 institutions were blackballed by the organisations  
13 concerned, but the British Government still continued  
14 sending us.

15 Q. Can I tell you --

16 A. That's the next part.

17 Q. That's an area that the inquiry will be looking at very  
18 carefully.

19 A. I'm sorry, I do get on rolls and I have to complete it.

20 Q. Absolutely.

21 But what I want to ask you now -- and this does  
22 apply to you as an individual absolutely directly, and  
23 that is: are you able to tell us what impact you  
24 consider having been a child migrant has had on you?

25 A. You'll have to ...

1 Q. What impact do you think on you has having been  
2 a child migrant had?

3 A. Oh, it's a profound ... I mean, if it never happened,  
4 and it's all supposition ... If it never happened and  
5 we were retained in the institutions in Scotland,  
6 Nazareth House, wherever it might have been, I genuinely  
7 believe that we would have had a much better chance in  
8 life in that the quality of life, I believe, would have  
9 been better.

10 Remember, Western Australia had only become part of  
11 the Commonwealth of Australia 49 years earlier. It's  
12 a very young country. Where was our future in there  
13 with no education? It was meant to be labour intensive.  
14 That's why we were sent there. Of course, the huge  
15 saving of £10 to 10 shillings. That's a big saving back  
16 then.

17 The impact? I could have been the Prime Minister of  
18 England, you don't know. I do believe that my abilities  
19 were stymied. I believe the abilities of most other  
20 kids that went through those places were curtailed.  
21 They were not allowed to exercise their potential in any  
22 way, shape or form without being beaten and ostracised,  
23 criticised, punished and whatever.

24 We were never meant to be clever people. That  
25 wasn't the aim of the migration system. We were meant

1 to be good, white British stock, to work the lands when  
2 we arrived there, so the Archbishop of Perth tells us.  
3 That is what we were told.

4 Q. Is it the case that because of what you experienced at  
5 Castledare and Clontarf that you have required to  
6 receive treatment, particularly psychiatric treatment?

7 A. I'm sorry, I missed that.

8 Q. Is it the case that because of what you experienced,  
9 you have required to receive psychiatric treatment?

10 A. I went to -- in the military, I'd had a bad accident and  
11 I injured my spine. The vehicle I was in went over  
12 a cliff and I was 3 months laid up.

13 As a background to that, when I went to work for the  
14 RSL, I was finding it intensely hurtful for me to sit  
15 for any length of time. I had to find a place to lie  
16 down, even if it was just for 10 minutes, to straighten  
17 my back.

18 I wasn't coping with the pain at all, so I was  
19 advised to seek a psychiatric solution. I went along to  
20 a psychiatrist, I think first it was about 1991, or  
21 thereabouts, and I spoke to a psychiatrist, believing  
22 that maybe Vietnam service might have had something to  
23 do with how I feel. He analysed me for, I don't know  
24 how long, quite a while, and then threw it back at me  
25 and said, "Look, your service had nothing to do with

1           what your problem is", and I said, "How so? Why do  
2           I feel the way I do?"

3           So he then took me back further. He said, "Where  
4           were you before Vietnam?" and I went back through and  
5           I eventually got back to Castledare, Clontarf, and as  
6           soon as I mentioned what had happened there, he just sat  
7           back in his chair and just went, "That's where your PTSD  
8           has had its manifestation and you've not been able to  
9           resolve the issues from that period in your life."

10          I was quite staggered by it and I said, "Well, why  
11          did the military accept me into the armed forces? They  
12          would have surely spotted it." He said, "No, you've  
13          masked those problems, you've been able to keep them to  
14          one side because of the nature of the upbringing that  
15          you've had. You had the ability to do that."

16          And I thought, wow, am I that clever? So I went  
17          back a few more times, he helped me with my back pain,  
18          I went on a course of very powerful medication and it  
19          did settle my problem, but continued to cause me a great  
20          deal of stress because by the time I'd stopped work in  
21          1996, I was at a stage where I didn't care about my  
22          future, I was just burnt out. Because I'd retired at  
23          that age and stopped work, a lot more of this  
24          intrusiveness of my childhood began to fill the vacuum.

25          I was losing my ability to control the anxiety

1 brought on by that, and with the continual refusal of  
2 the church and the various agencies about what happened  
3 to us, it just strengthened my resolve to get to the  
4 bottom of this and let it be known that, no, what they  
5 are saying didn't -- this is what happened to us. And  
6 it shouldn't have happened, it shouldn't have been  
7 allowed to happen. There were powers in place, there  
8 were people in place that could have stopped it, but  
9 they opted not to.

10 We were not people, we were a commodity that was  
11 made readily available to fill a need in Australia, and  
12 that's how we were treated.

13 Q. What you say in your statement -- and you're not just  
14 talking about yourself here, you're talking about other  
15 children -- is that:

16 "We all left those institutions with a lot of  
17 scars."

18 A. A lot of?

19 Q. Scars. That's in paragraph 507.

20 A. Left the institution with a lot of?

21 Q. Scars.

22 LADY SMITH: Scars, marks from injury.

23 A. Scars! Oh, thank you. My apologies.

24 MR MacAULAY: The reason I raise that with you was one of  
25 the particular scars you had suffered was the way that

1           you had been treated by Brother MIZ

2           A. Very much so. Very much so. The awful thing about that  
3           situation was the fact that I was nearly killed. It was  
4           the fact that that would have been put down and recorded  
5           as misadventure. It would not have been investigated.  
6           There have been several children died in these  
7           institutions where there were no investigations carried  
8           out. Some of the children are even buried at the  
9           particular homes where they died.

10           My incident in the Canning River would have been --  
11           I shouldn't have been there because Brother MIZ was  
12           nowhere to be found and there I was in the river  
13           drowning. I guess his hope was that I didn't resurface,  
14           but I did.

15           Q. Indeed, you also proved Brother MDI wrong in that you  
16           did not end up in Fremantle Jail.

17           A. It didn't give me any more resolve. I had no intentions  
18           of going to jail. I mean, I worked hard all my life.  
19           I got to where I am, but had I been given a little  
20           better a chance in my earlier days when I should have  
21           been educated to the Nth degree that would give me the  
22           potential to have gone on -- look, I have no doubt,  
23           firstly, I would never have joined the military, I would  
24           have had a decent enough education to have got a more  
25           rewarding job to say the least. I still feel that while

1 the military did wonders for me and turned my life  
2 around and give me reason to push on.

3 The other side that I don't know about, because  
4 I was never given the opportunity, the intellectual side  
5 of things, I look at what I was able to do as an  
6 advocate for the Returning Services League and I was in  
7 my absolute element doing that. I was taking two or  
8 three cases sometimes a day to the Veterans' Review  
9 Board, arguing the cases for compensation, for veterans  
10 because of injuries sustained in both the Vietnam War,  
11 World War II and World War I and doing it very  
12 successfully and doing it very easily --

13 Q. You do draw attention to the fact that your brother has  
14 a degree and was head of a university department and  
15 that your sister also had a degree --

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. -- and that clearly you must have been university  
18 potential?

19 A. I have very little doubt that I would have done very  
20 well at university. My three children, my eldest boy  
21 has two degrees, my daughter has a degree, and my  
22 youngest son has three degrees, including a law degree.  
23 So much of the periphery of my family have degrees.  
24 I got to year 8 and I don't believe that that was the  
25 sole of my ability.

1 Q. Well, can I now turn to the section in your statement  
2 that's headed, "Final thoughts and lessons to be  
3 learned". That's beginning at paragraph 524.

4 I'll just pick up some of the themes because some of  
5 the themes I think might be considered elsewhere. One  
6 of the themes that you raise is that:

7 "Children essentially should remain in their  
8 homeland."

9 That's your bottom line, isn't it, there should not  
10 have been any migration?

11 A. Without an absolute doubt. Children should never, ever  
12 be sent away from their country. Their country is --  
13 honestly, for years in Australia, whenever a Scottish  
14 thing came up, I would just go into ... I would just  
15 feel different. Every aspect of my life has always been  
16 to -- I'm Scottish, even though I don't speak it.

17 That was one of the first things we lost in these  
18 institutions, it was just hammered out of me. I was  
19 left-handed, I used to write left-handed, eat  
20 left-handed. The minute you picked up a pencil, whack,  
21 you copped it. So I now write right-handed and I eat  
22 right-handed, but I throw left-handed and I kick  
23 left-footed, so I've been able to keep both sides.

24 Q. Indeed, you say as one of your themes that:

25 "To [you], Scotland will always be [your] home,



1 [you] feel a connection with Scotland."

2 And that's the case, isn't it, you feel a connection  
3 with Scotland?

4 A. It's a connection that's very sad in the sense that  
5 I could never come back here to live.

6 Q. Yes, I wondered why you say that.

7 A. I can't. I think there's too much of me in the other  
8 country. My children are there, their children are  
9 there. I've spent 70 years of my life there and only  
10 seven here. But yet the 7 years here has a much greater  
11 impact than any decade or two decades over there insofar  
12 as my psyche is concerned.

13 I went to the Tattoo with young [REDACTED] my nephew  
14 here, several years ago, and it felt as though I'd never  
15 left the place. And I was, what, 60 years old or  
16 something at the time. It was just a weird sensation.  
17 Where have I been? I'm still here. I just felt  
18 comfortable.

19 But to come back here to live now, no. I'll come  
20 back here 100 times a year as a visitor, but not to  
21 live. I cannot live here.

22 Q. But at least you're in Scotland today and will be  
23 tomorrow when you'll be, I think, seeing your brother;  
24 is that right?

25 A. I'm hoping. My nephew is going to hopefully arrange to

1 pick me up tomorrow and we'll head out to Livingston and  
2 catch up with [REDACTED], yes. More so, my nephew has a new  
3 daughter, so I have a new grandniece to catch up with.  
4 She hasn't been named yet, but I'm going to do something  
5 about that.

6 MR MacAULAY: Well, Johnno, that's all I propose to ask you  
7 today. You've provided a very detailed account of your  
8 experience as a child migrant. I suspect it'll be of  
9 significant importance to this inquiry and thank you for  
10 coming to Scotland to do that.

11 My Lady, I think I have asked all the questions that  
12 were submitted as I've gone along.

13 LADY SMITH: Are there any outstanding applications for  
14 questions? No.

15 Johnno, that does complete today's questions. I'm  
16 very grateful to you for engaging with us as you have  
17 done. We have this very detailed information from you  
18 in your statement that's so helpful and you've talked  
19 about that today in a way that's brought your memories  
20 alive for me to understand better. I'm very grateful to  
21 you for that.

22 I hope your engagement with your family this weekend  
23 goes well. Did you say it was a grandniece? John might  
24 not be the best name for her, but good luck with  
25 encouraging them to find a suitable one.

1 A. If I may take the opportunity to summarise, my Lady. If  
2 things were done the way that they were supposed to have  
3 been done back in the 1940s and 1950s, we wouldn't be  
4 here today.

5 LADY SMITH: I know.

6 A. 

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13 They got together to send us out here, so why can't  
14 we get together and solve the ramifications of what they  
15 did? They not only destroyed our childhood, they  
16 destroyed our future as well.

17 LADY SMITH: I know. And I do hear what you're saying,  
18 Johnno. Thank you very much.

19 A. Thank you, my Lady.

20 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

21 I think I'm now able to let you go. I'll just deal  
22 with some routine matters about administration before we  
23 finish for the end of the week, but I don't think I need  
24 to trouble you to stay for that.

25 (The witness withdrew)

1 LADY SMITH: Mr MacAulay, it's 4.05. I don't think we've  
2 got time for a read-in today.

3 MR MacAULAY: No, I don't think so. We have an oral witness  
4 on Tuesday, just the one witness on Tuesday, so we'll  
5 probably get some read-ins done then.

6 LADY SMITH: A 10 o'clock start on Tuesday?

7 MR MacAULAY: Yes, 10 o'clock.

8 LADY SMITH: Very well.

9 A good weekend to everybody. Thank you very much  
10 for your attention this week and I look forward to  
11 seeing those of you who are returning next week on  
12 Tuesday morning at 10 o'clock.

13 (4.05 pm)

14 (The inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am on  
15 Tuesday, 10 March 2020)

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"JOHNO" (affirmed) .....1

Questions from MR MacAULAY .....1

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