

Magdalene Institutions: Recording an Archival and Oral History A project funded by the



Reference	e Code:	MAGOHP/50/ANON

Oral History of: Kate O'Sullivan

Pseudonym? Yes

Status: Survivor

Keywords: Good Shepherd Magdalene Laundry, Sundays Well; Residential

Institutions Redress Board; Inter-departmental Committee on the Magdalene Laundries; Magdalene Restorative Justice Scheme; lack of

birth certificate; missing records/destruction of records.

Date of Interview: 17th July 2013

Transcript: 65 pages

Number/Format of Audio Files: One .m4a audio file

Interviewer: Claire McGettrick

Records/Papers included: None

Access Conditions: Anonymised interviews are freely available to the public. Immediate

release of transcript; audio file destroyed on request; interviewee's identity

will not be revealed in the future.

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To cite this transcript:

O'Donnell, K., S. Pembroke and C. McGettrick. (2013) "Oral History of Kate O'Sullivan". *Magdalene Institutions: Recording an Oral and Archival History*. Government of Ireland Collaborative Research Project, Irish Research Council, pp. 1-65.

Notes on Redaction and Transcription Process

Interviewee Initials:KOSInterviewer Initials:CMcGInterviewee's Husband Initials:FOS

Key

... = Short pause (or where words are repeated or the speaker changes direction mid-sentence)

(pause) = Long pause

blabla = spoken with great emphasis

(blabla) = Additional audible expressions, body language

[blabla] = background information that might be helpful

Abbreviations used:

JFM = Justice for Magdalenes

Notes on Redaction Process

- Named individuals have been assigned pseudonyms
- The names of some locations have been removed to protect the interviewee's confidentiality
- Fictitious religious order name used to protect interviewee

List of Pseudonyms

Pseudonym	Status/Relationship to Interviewee
Kate O'Sullivan	Interviewee/Survivor
Frank O'Sullivan	Husband of interviewee
Sr Concepta	Third Party Religious
Paulites	Religious order
Sr Philomena	Third Party Religious
Sheila Fitzpatrick	Third Party Survivor
Anna Ganley	Third Party Survivor
Theresa Maguire	Third Party Survivor
Bernadette Williams	Third Party Survivor
Fionnuala O'Sullivan	Daughter of interviewee
Regina Bennett	Third Party Other
Sr Dolores	Third Party Religious
Moloneys	Local shop
Michael Murphy	Third Party Other
Richard Merrick	Third Party Other
Kate Andrews	Interviewee's Maiden/Original Name
Roisín O'Sullivan	Daughter of interviewee
Monica Stewart	Third Party Other
Agnes O'Sullivan	Sister-in-law of interviewee
Barry O'Sullivan	Brother-in-law of interviewee

Padraig	Solicitor
Susan	Third Party Other
Deirdre	Granddaughter of interviewee
Sharon O'Sullivan	Daughter of interviewee
Lorraine O'Sullivan	Daughter of interviewee
Jason	Grandson of interviewee
Nathan	Third Party Other
Veronica	Third Party Religious
St Ignatius Corridor	Area of hospital
Aidanstown	Town where Kate grew up
Broganstown	Regional town on bus network

Basic Data from Interview

Name/Pseudonym	Kate O'Sullivan
When Born	Didn't say
Born outside marriage?	Didn't say
Raised by	Family until twelve, then sent to laundry.
Education	Primary (until sent to laundry)
Order	Good Shepherds
Laundry	Sundays Well
From	1957
То	1963
Duration of stay	Six years
Age on entry	Twelve
Entered Via	Sister/family
House Name/No	Didn't say
Haircutting/punishment?	Yes, was aware of punishments
Circumstances of Departure	Sent to job in a hospital, had asked repeatedly to leave
Emigrated?	No
Physical ailments?	Not mentioned
Of Note	

[Interview begins] [Background noise of television in room adjacent] CMcG Okay, so we're recording. KOS Hmm. CMcG So, just to start off, I...I need you to give your name. KOS Ka...I'll give Kate? [Pseudonym] CMcG Yeah. KOS Kate O'Sullivan. CMcG And, before starting the interview, I'd like to ask you to confirm that you agree to participate in this interview voluntarily and that you are familiar with the information and consent forms that I provided to you. KOS Yes.

CMcG Okay, so I suppose really, could you just start by telling me something about yourself, whatever you're comfortable with telling me...

KOS Hmm.

CMcG ...about yourself.

KOS Well, I was reared in the orphanage in Cork, in Sundays Well and I came from there to [name of hospital removed], Paulite Sisters [pseudonym given to religious order], and worked there, and now – working there for so many years (laughs) – and now I'm retired...so.

CMcG And...and how did you come to be in Sundays Well?

KOS Well, me sister put me in there [inaudible whisper] well I do say nobody wanted me, that's why I say...I don't know is it right or wrong, is it? CMcG Well it's... KOS Yeah. CMcG ...there's no right or wrong about... KOS Yeah, yeah. CMcG ...about...well, in...in terms of if it's...it's...if it's how you feel it's real... KOS Hmm. CMcG ...it's not... KOS Yeah. CMcG But...so was it a family circumstance that...that caused... KOS ...yeah... CMcG ...that to happen? KOS Yeah, yeah. CMcG And...and, are you happy to talk about that or...or are you... KOS No, not really...talking about it... CMcG Okay.

KOS ...I mean, you know. CMcG Okay, okay, and...and ...and do you remember like, going to school and stuff before you went to Sundays Well? KOS Not really like, we were always...had no clothes or nothing, rags. CMcG Okay. A...and what age were you? KOS I went in at twelve. CMcG Twelve. KOS Hmm. CMcG Twelve. But you would have had a primary school...would you have had a primary school education? KOS Oh I had yeah, down...yeah, in Aidanstown [pseudonym of town in which Kate grew up]. CMcG Okay. KOS Yeah. CMcG Okay. And...and so, you kind of don't want to really talk about much up to ...up to that point. KOS No, no. CMcG That's not a problem, no, no, you only tell...tell me what you're... KOS Yeah.

CMcG

...what you're comfortable with.

CMcG So I suppose... I mean...so Sundays Well, you're in Cork.

KOS Yeah.

CMcG And can you tell me a little bit about...

KOS The Good Shepherds.

CMcG ...going in there and...and what that was like when you arrived and stuff like that.

[Sound of interviewee tapping finger on table in background.]

Oh, put in there and the doors were closed, keys...behind me and you were...whatever clothes they had they gave you and you were put straight to the laundry and that was it. Then you were told to be up at seven...start work at seven...and seven in the evening. Work all day, even in the heat like this now. [Interview took place during a heat wave.] Big rollers and sheets and then you had steamers to pull down to it...do the clothes, they used to do the...the pyjamas and shirts and that, wherever they came from, but they never told us where they came from, they all came in baskets, we were never told. And we always had the nun like at...sitting on the desk from early morning until late in the evening. But, you know, you couldn't run a bit...there was walls...couldn't get out and that was it...you'd no clothes...you were luck...to get shoes, that's all I had...sometimes you'd have to do without them if they weren't there, available. And what we got to eat was nothing, bits of bread and dripping that was it...

CMcG Hmm.

KOS ...you know. And you had to go into the kitchen then, you had to help, she'd give you one potato, you'd have to go and pull it out yourself out of this big stone [bag]...you know the big stones that you pull out, and that was it. You got no present at Christmas, Easter, whatever, none of the...nothing like that...

CMcG Hmm.

KOS ...no, it was all work, work, work all the time.

CMcG Right.

KOS You know.

CMcG And...and do you remember your first day in particular?

KOS First day, you just...couldn't speak, you kept your mouth...your...that was it. Put your head down, do the work, that was it. You couldn't move.

CMcG From the first day that you were there?

KOS From the first day we went into the laundry, you couldn't speak to anybody. You had to go to the toilet – like I said to your man – she'd be sitting there, they didn't have to move their heads, she'd watch you going in. Yeah. Bars, that...the soap was that size (indicates about 12 inches in length), right, like I said...cut it down and she'd throw it at you.

CMcG The soap?

KOS Soap, we had, we had no fancy things like they have today now, that was it.

CMcG A...a...and...and when you say the soap, was that for washing the clothes with?

KOS That was for washing yourself! (*Laughs*)

CMcG Washing yourself?

KOS Yeah. But they had big machines out...

CMcG Okay.

KOS ...in the other side of the laundry, so we had to go out there and pull all them out. All day.

CMcG Right.

KOS Then, someone...if you were sick... weren't seen to, you'd get the cod liver oil and that was it.

CMcG Right.

KOS You know the big bottles? God I'll al...I'll never forget that, big cod...big spoon of that, that was it, that was your medication.

CMcG My God.

KOS Hmm.

CMcG No matter what you had?

KOS Oh yeah, I used to often see it down in Super Valu [supermarket] now, yeah.

CMcG God! And, and tell us, were the doors and windows locked?

KOS Everything was locked Claire, you never got fresh air, everything was...the girls that was out in the laundry, if they sat down for a minute...they'd be afraid. It was always...one [nun] in where I was in the...doing the sheets and that, and then she'd tell you, 'go down and do that,' and the heat used to kind of kill us like. And if you sneaked in to the toilet for a minute, because the toilet was beside where the laundry was, they'd be in after you, you know. You couldn't lock the door because, if that...if you locked it, she'd say, 'well they were bound to stay in it' but you couldn't and then you had to go then in the evening and get a bit to eat, straight to bed, start the same thing all over again from seven in the morning [to] seven in the evening. And the Sundays we had to do scapulars [religious objects worn around the neck] but I didn't sew...I didn't like sewing.

CMcG Scapulars was it?

KOS They used to sew, we used to sew scapulars, [that] they wear around the neck?

CMcG Yes, yeah.

KOS Yeah. Sew them on a Sunday

CMcG And...and was...was that sort of considered lighter work or...?

KOS More work.

CMcG More work.

KOS More work. They'd bring you into a room then, you had to do that on a Sunday. No such thing a...they'd bring you out then just out the back and there'd be a nun standing there.

CMcG And would there be any kind of recreation at all?

No, you'd sit down...your recreation was on a Sunday, to sit down and sew scapulars, that's no lie. So they must have put scapulars all over the country, I don't know, yeah. And anyone then that was able to sew, had to make dresses and they never seen money for them either. No, no, no there was no outings, no nothing. Nothing. No. No.

CMcG And would you get fresh air much, or anything like that?

KOS About 10...maybe 10 minutes. And you'd have to stick together, there'd be a nun in front of you and a nun behind you, you were *never* on your own in case...and then when he [Martin McAleese – see pg 22] said to me, 'escape' – how could you escape with a wall like that?

CMcG How high?

KOS Oh jeepers 'twas like Mountjoy [prison]! You know when you pass through there, or...in Kildare, where your man is (laughs), you know, did you see that wall, that was that high, no word of a lie, it was that high. Hmm. 'Cause they showed it on the news this morning and I said to Frank [pseudonym of husband], 'look at that now, that was my place'. I say...you go

in the front door and then there's all, all out the back and there's all...big huge wall. Now. And then she had the lady...they used to have a lady doing tomatoes, you know, a hothouse?

CMcG Oh right.

KOS And we'd go over and ask her for 'em, but she couldn't give them to us, 'the tomatoes were for the nuns'. Everything was for the nuns. Everything came in the convent on the other side, nothing came to us. No. It was d...

CMcG And was there a difference between the food you got and they got, what was kind of...

KOS Oh I'd say the nuns were...well....we didn't see what they got...

CMcG Oh okay.

KOS Nah they were cut off...we co...

CMcG But, you didn't see any of the tomatoes?

We never seen a tomato and that poor I...wo...lady was seventy-something and we'd say we'd help her like, 'oh, you're not!' Frank...l don't know...probably she's dead now, the créatúr [creature], big glasshouse and all them went over she had to bring big baskets, you know, *fill* the basket, and she'd have to carry it over to the convent. And the girls would be saying, 'give us one, give us one!' but they were counted. You know, they had so many trees of tomatoes, they counted them. *Everything* was counted. Yeah, it's no lie.

CMcG And c...so can you...other than like the seven-to-seven, can you recall much about your daily routine, what you did first thing, was it the same all day?

KOS Same all day. You'd get up in the morning, you had to wash yourself over a sink and maybe the other girl had to join you because you had no...no space. There was three sinks in the dormitory right, and the beds were back-to-back. You get up in the morning and...and you wash yourself and they gave you this...thick vest and you had to wear it and they might come in with a dress to you, you know, in the laund...but that was it. You'd go down and get a bit of

breakfast, straight into the laundry and you'd stay there all day until seven o'clock in the evening, until they said it was time, *they* turned off the machines. The machines were huge! *Huge!*

CMcG And what kind of work were you doing?

KOS I had to put them through the roller and there was another girl, she had to...the other girls...when I had to start out with came in, you know, sort out for the pyjamas and whatever was there, they had to sort there, they had another nun standing over them. The nuns were there the *whole* time, from the morning until evening. And then when you go to bed, there was no light and they have a nun, she had a room out in the corridor and she'd be sticking her head in like that, (*leans head as if looking around a corner*) that's no lie, we had one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight...we had sixteen beds in the one dormitory, back-to-back, iron beds, and a grey blanket – we hadn't quilts like they have today! Yeah...and....

CMcG It wasn't comfortable then, no?

KOS Sure what could you do? And then in the morning you'd have to turn your mattress and if you didn't, she'd just fling it on the floor for you to go up and pick it up. And the other girls had to clean the dormitory and if there was a spick on it, you had to go down on your knees and clean it. Hmm. She'd be in the cell watching. And she'd have this big bell, 'get up!' Hmm.

CMcG A...a...and what kind of age...girls were there with you, were...was...were...were...were...w...

KOS Ah they were all the one age God help them, what could they do like...

CMcG Hmm.

KOS ...they'd all be whispering, you couldn't talk. You were in the dormitory, you open your mouth...come in...

CMcG A...and would you have been with the same sort of ageput with the same sort of

KOS ...same...

CMcG ... age group?

KOS ...yeah, same yeah, yeah...

CMcG But th...were there older women elsewhere or...

KOS They were in the other...the other side.

CMcG Right.

KOS Hmm. They had a children's place as well now. Off of the laundry, over on the other side, they had an orphanage over on the other side, the Sundays Well are well off, 'cause they had orph....orphanage...children and if...you know, and when they were [a] certain age they had to come over to work with us.

CMcG Right.

KOS Yeah.

CMcG So, you were on the...the ...I...the laundry side...

KOS ... I was on this side, yeah I was on the laundry side...

CMcG ...but sort of with younger aged...

KOS ...yeah, yeah...

CMcG ...girls?

KOS Yeah, yeah. Do you remember...I can't say it now on that [points to recording device], I'll tell you later, but...

CMcG It's okay, you can say it and we can take it out if you wish.

KOS Do you know that lady that came in...that she went down to [name of location removed] to get...remember she was sitting down and she was asking [Martin] McAleese to get her brother's... [Referring to survivor who was present at a meeting with Senator McAleese in Leinster House]

CMcG Oh yes.

KOS Yeah.

CMcG Yeah I do.

I think she was in the laundry. You know, I think she was in our laundry, because her face...now I didn't like to ask her...but I think she was in the laundry, that's what she was explaining to him...she was in the same laundry as me, we were all in one side. And then they had others on the other side. But I remember they having [sic] this lady, and I'd say she had cancer and she used to fold serviettes, oh I used to pity her, they wouldn't leave her sit down and her legs were swollen, and we used to help her and she'd go over and she'd come like that with the hand and the next...'move!' [Indicating what the nun would say] Yeah.

CMcG And, she had cancer?

KOS (Whispered) I'd say she had, because her legs were very...do you...her hands were sore, oh God help her, you know.

CMcG And, and she...did she receive any kind of medical treatment?

KOS I never seen it anyway. And we came then...down in a few months, she was gone, they never told us.

CMcG And, and you don't know what happened to her...

KOS ...never...no...know what happened, that girl, that woman, never!

CMcG And what age would she have been do you think?

KOS I'd say she was about seventy, you know, she was barely able to walk like, and she had a hump on her back, said she was in there all her life...

CMcG Right.

KOS ...you know. Oh I pitied her that day.

CMcG A...a...and those of you that were younger, would you have been given any kind of an educational opportunity in there at all?

KOS It was work, work, they wanted the work done, because they wanted the money come in, as you saw the...it on the DVD, I showed that to Frank that time, 'that's no good,' he says, I says, 'are you blind?' in my own mind, I'm a bit cheeky! You know. [The DVD of *The Magdalene Sisters* showed] [w]here they [the women] were in [the laundry] and that and your hair, and you never had a hairdresser!

CMcG What did they do with your hair?

KOS Cut it, themselves. Yeah.

CMcG When you went in like, first did they, or was it...

KOS Yeah, yeah. And if you had a dirty head you were...you might as well stay in the corner.

CMcG Oh right.

KOS Hmm. Yeah, because you were only getting the cod liver oil you see, you were getting nothing else, do you know...

CMcG Right.

KOS ...they'd give you nothing else, that's no lie. I'm sure the girls [other survivors] told you the same thing, but I think that girl was in with me but (whispering) I didn't like to go over and ask her. If she was, she was the one that was stuck in the hot...they had this machine and you'd put the shirts on it and I'd swear...she was always on it or else she was the other lady use...used...there was a lady used to sit on the floor and the nun would come in and tell her, 'get up!' (Whispering) She was tired! I'd say the...that girl that was on the machine, or the other girl that was in the laundry. And you know when you pull out the sheets, they used be all tangled, because I worked in the laundry down here in [name of hospital removed] (whispering) and they were all tangled and she'd go over and she'd push, trying to keep wa...she'd...l'd...l'd go over and give her a hand...push me as well, you know, you had to pull out all...the machine was that size, you'd have to pull out, to get them all out. And everything had to be smooth, I said...Claire, I'd fold a sheet, you wouldn't know, 'cause, it...the girls would say here to me, 'Mammy how do...how...your sheets are so neat?' You'd be so used to it, you had to put pillows in one side out and then you had to put the sheets on the other side, and if there was no room, you had to go to another place. And then we got a new roller and the heat would kill you and it was...it was some...down the garden that length (indicates about 100 meters to the end of her garden).

CMcG The roller?

KOS Yeah. And you'd lift all the wet sheets Claire, on your...on your shoulders and bring them back, to re-do them. Yeah. And the nun would be in the laundry, Sr Concepta [pseudonym] and oh God forgive me, she thought she was...kind...God she'd walk in in the morning and make sure we were all in the laundry. But I think that girl was on that machine, that poor woman that was there, or else she was the girl...there was one girl that used to sit on the floor, she worked hard, and they'd go over and hit her!

CMcG Well...well I can...I can ask her permission to ask...or to...you know, to...I can ask questions for you if you wish and...

KOS Nah, no but...I know, but I think she was in that laundry, she did say like, because you went down to get her...she did say she was in that laundry, yeah.

CMcG Yeah, there's a very good chance she probably was.

KOS Oh she was, but she didn't want to say much, do you remember you went down... CMcG Probably not in front of people... KOS Yeah, yeah. CMcG ...no but in private she might talk to you. KOS I'd say she was in that laundry, yeah. CMcG And...and what kind of role did religion play? Was there...was it...was it...was there much in the way of prayers and? KOS You'd go to Mass in the morning... CMcG Every... KOS ...after getting up at, at six...half-six, you'd go down and the nuns would be on that side, you were on this side and their heads would reach over the top, I still can remember them, to see were we all there. You'd come out then and straight to...the work, you g...give you a bit to eat, that was it – go! Yeah. CMcG Every day? KOS Every day! CMcG A...and...y... KOS I'd say they wouldn't do it now – people! CMcG And were you praying while you worked as well, or...or...?

No, they wouldn't say prayers when we were there now, she...the nun would be sitting there and she'd go to her break – we never got a break – what was a break? We didn't even know until we came out! She'd sit on the desk, the desk and she had no...they...they were...very cold weather now, they'd leave all the doors open, it was *freezing*...but she'd have...covered in on her desk, did you ever see the nuns' desks did you?

CMcG No?

KOS A nun's desk, like, it was like...when they'd go up...the judges go up like...that (draws a square) that's where they used to sit on.

CMcG Kind of enclosed kind of a thing?

KOS Yes, exactly.

CMcG Okay, so she wasn't getting a draught on her?

KOS Oh she wasn't getting a draught is right! We were getting a draught! (Laughing) We didn't care! So the summer was deadly.

CMcG My God, I can imagine.

[Dog barking in background]

KOS And they had...sh...the laundry was *huge...*the ceilings...and if they opened the window it wouldn't be too bad, they wouldn't open the window, no, 'you're here for your sins,' that's what we were told.

CMcG My God.

KOS Yeah.

CMcG My God.

KOS That's what they said to us. CMcG Were there many accidents there, do you remember? KOS One...there was...in the laundry, we...we...you...you'd just have to mind yourself because you wouldn't be brought to the doctor. CMcG Right. KOS No. You couldn't say nothing. CMcG Right. KOS You know, if you had a cut finger you'd just have to get a bit of a thing and wrap it around it yourself, they wouldn't bring you anywhere. CMcG Right. KOS No. CMcG Right. A...and, and what happened if you didn't want to work, if you...if you couldn't work, or you didn't want to? KOS They wouldn't let you get away with it... CMcG Right. KOS ...you had no choice! CMcG Right. KOS You had to do it.

CMcG

Right.

KOS And they'd leave you starve, you know what I mean, they'd leave you starve...

CMcG A...and...

KOS ...or else you'd go out and wash down the...polish down all the stairs. They had two stairs, big long corridors, they all had to be polished and cleaned Claire...

CMcG Right.

MOS ...every week! There was no such thing as...you know, the other girls would be up and they'd say, (whispered) 'I hope' they said one day, (whispered) 'I hope the fucking bitch falls down the stairs!' (Laughs) The nun. Oh she'd come down, they'd big...they had their white and their brown...veils and they never had to move anything, no, no...they'd wear the cross around here [neck] then and one [girl] said (whispered) 'I hope it breaks her fucking neck!' (Laughs) I said, 'say nothing, she's on her way down'. Yeah. And there was nowhere you could escape, everywhere they had it locked, nowhere...but that's...

CMcG And did anybody ever not work or refuse to work?

KOS Oh they did.

CMcG Right.

KOS They did.

CMcG A...and what happened?

KOS They tried...they left them out on the stairs all day, sitting on the stairs.

CMcG Right.

KOS But sh...she was up and down the corridor watching, the windows were so high, if she jumped she was killed.

CMcG Right.

Yeah. Remember where we had it...now...or...up there in the thing, you see when we came out here at the back (points to back wall) it was all them...they reminded me of them, she fell, she was gone out through the roof, yeah, and she escaped. They never came back, I remember that girl escaped and never came back, we don't know what happened her, and they wouldn't tell you. And they'd say then in the morning, 'this goes for ye all,' you'd be tol...we were told nothing...we were like, just sit there, be dumb, that's it. Hmm.

CMcG And did you see her escape, did you actually see her go out over the roof or was it a rumour or...?

KOS She wasn't able...there was...you see, she didn't come up to bed, do you see, and she hid, and we were looking for her. And she said, (whispering) 'I'm going to try to get out now, we'll try it and we'll all get out'. And the next thing we heard all this st...beating and whatever it was, they must have beaten her down...down in the other place. But we never seen her since! No! She never arrived...with us, so they said...we'd better keep quiet and see how someone might get out. That's how I got the job up here, because the Paulites, like I said, Sr Philomena [pseudonym] knew that nun, that was always sitting on the desk and that's how I got it, and the very word she said, 'don't you come back here,' she said, 'with a boil'. 'Don't you come back here,' she said, 'if you get a boil!' Never explained...circumstances or anything, you know.

CMcG What did she mean by a boil?

KOS Probably 'if you get pregnant, don't come back'.

CMcG Right, right.

KOS You know, but I didn't know at the time but that's the very words she said to me, that's what she said to me. And I got a coat, bag, dress and a pair of big shoes and £20. Well I didn't know it was money at that time, I never got it! I n...I never had it, like. 'Don't come back with a boil' that's the very words she said.

CMcG 'Don't come back with a boil'.

Yeah. And...got the bus into Broganstown [pseudonym of regional town on bus network] right, and the...one of the nuns met me there, that was it. And the very words the Paulite said just, 'you'll be starting work first thing in the morning, and you keep your mouth closed'. I said, 'here we go again'. And there was Sheila Fitzpatrick, Anna Ganley [pseudonyms] and a few of them from here. So we used to stay up in [name of house removed] up the road, the Paulites owned it. [Sound of door closing] They were, we were all stuck together we'd, we'd be hearing [name of town removed] saying, 'oh look at them, orphans'.

CMcG Right.

KOS 'They're used to nothing'.

CMcG And they would know that...where you'd come from?

Why wouldn't they with the...oh sorry (*knocks something over*) when you...were with the nuns like, you know, 'oh where you from?' Now, we didn't say nothing like, Sheila Fitzpatrick, Anna Ganley and another girl, we used to, we used to stick together, because...I won't...can I say that on that [recording device]?

CMcG You, you can, I can...

KOS Anna Ganley...I was at a wedding – Th...Theresa Maguire [pseudonym] now, lord have mercy on her she's dead, she was very good to us – and Anna Ganley said to me, she said, 'Kate, did you get your money yet?' [Speaking about the Residential Institutions Redress Board] Because she was reared with the Mercy nuns, and I said, 'no,' but she said, 'we got it,' she said, 'I came back from England,' she said 'to get a letter from the Paulites, and we got our money,' she said, 'you're entitled to your money' she said, 'you are entitled to it'. 'And they needn't bother,' she said, 'putting you through all this,' she said, 'we got our money'. So I'd say Bernadette Williams [pseudonym] she's living in town, I'd say she got it, and I know lads got it, that were with the brothers [Christian Brothers] because I was working with one of the girls that was in hospital she told me (whispered) her father got €70,000 and he paid for the

house on hand [up front] that's as true as I'm sitting here, I heard...his daughter told me that. But I never said I was fighting for anything and it's thanks to Fionnuala [pseudonym of daughter] she was like, I told you about that when she was down in Mayo, she said...ma...and then there was one girl, Regina Bennett [pseudonym], she was a very good friend...she said, 'look, some of them are doing them [inaudible]' she said, solicitors were doing it, solicitors were cheating them and I was afraid to say anything like you know, just in case the nuns would shift you, you know what I mean? It was alright for them, they were...had their parents, we had nobody, we had to stick together.

CMcG Hmm.

KOS Yeah.

CMcG Hmm. Right.

KOS Yeah.

CMcG So those of you that went to [name of hospital removed]...

KOS Hmm.

CMcG ...that were ...that were from orphanage situations...

KOS Yeah, yeah...

CMcG ...you stuck together and...

KOS ...yeah we stuck together, yeah.

CMcG Right, right.

KOS In [name of house removed] yeah.

CMcG Okay, and...and this is where you lived together, yeah?

KOS That's where we were...lived together yeah, we lived there together yeah. CMcG Okay. KOS Hmm. Up there. CMcG Right. KOS Well I suppose it was...it was taken out of our wages like that... CMcG It was... KOS ...now they did pay us down here in all fairness, they gave us our wages yeah, so we had to pay for the room like, it was only a small little place but at least you weren't locked in, do you know that type of a way... CMcG Yeah, yeah. KOS ...yeah. But you still had a boss up there all the time, no matter where I went I had bosses! (Laughs) CMcG I know, I know. A...a...and just to briefly go back to the laundry, d...did you ever witness any kind of punishment while you were there? KOS They wouldn't punish...in front, they go...bring the person out, yeah. They'd bring the person out. Yeah. They'd bring the person out. Yeah. CMcG And, were ... were you told what happened then when they came back or anything? KOS No, no, no, no you'd never know, the nuns would never tell you. CMcG Right

KOS You'd just, they'd bring you out, that's it.

CMcG And, and would the person tell you?

KOS She would be gone, shifted somewhere else, because they had a place in Waterford as well.

CMcG Right.

KOS Hmm.

CMcG Right, right.

KOS So that's what we were saying, 'say nothing and we'll get out sometime, we'll get out'.

CMcG Okay, okay.

KOS That's what McAleese was saying, 'how do you get out?' How *could* we get out? Did he ever visit the wall...he never seen them, oh you know, oh Jesus it was a huge wall, I'd say it was an old jail one time, you get down you could see all the things, you look over and if you fell you were dead...

CMcG Hmm.

KOS ...they wouldn't get your body. I'd say half of them that were...beaten up there, they never bothered burying them I'd say. No. The nuns down here were very cruel as well, the Mercy nuns.

CMcG And can you remember anybody dying when you were there and what happened to them?

KOS They'd never tell you sure, you'd...march you into work, 'get into your work' and march you in for your...your whatever you'd get to ate [eat].

CMcG So you don't remember any funerals or anything like that?

KOS No. We never saw funerals. CMcG Right, right. KOS No. CMcG Right. KOS They never told us. CMcG And how many years were you there with th... KOS Twelve...I was there since I was twelve and I came out in 1963. CMcG Right, right. KOS And all that time was work. CMcG Right, right. KOS Hmm. CMcG How many years was that? Sorry... KOS Six. CMcG Six years, wow, wow, gosh. KOS Hmm. Oh I'd say the laundry...I seen it on television sure it's tore away sure, it's gone. CMcG That's right. KOS Burned everything, 'cause they knew probably people would...they were hoping people wouldn't. It was that girl that started it, the girl that wrote the book...and...and she was on the Gay...Gay Byrne show [radio show] a good few years ago, she brought that out, that's how it all started. Yeah. And she was [talking about being] thrown in with the pigs. Do you not remember that?

CMcG I think I do, I think I do.

KOS She interviewed her and she told it and she said, 'I'm sure,' she says, 'I'll be...I'll be very popular,' she says, 'with the Good Shepherd nuns' she said, I remember [inaudible] on the tape. Yeah. I remember...she...saying that.

CMcG Right.

KOS Hmm.

CMcG And, did you make any friends when you were there?

KOS Oh we did. We'd be out talking...we weren't...couldn't really talk to one another...if they weren't looking, do you know what I mean? 'Cause they'd think we were planning to do something, do you know, to run away. *Oh.*

CMcG And would they kind of stop you if you were?

KOS Yeah.

CMcG Right.

KOS You couldn't talk at meals anyway....if you g...in the morning or in the evening. No, no, she'd be *still sitting there*, she was like an apparition! God forgive me for saying it!

CMcG Right, right. And do you remember any visits...v...visits from say, relatives or...

KOS No...

CMcG ...other people or anything like...

KOS ...we got no visitors anyway. CMcG Right, right. KOS No. CMcG And do you remember like say other visitors, like say doctors or government officials? KOS I never seen any man coming in to our place, he never...I never saw a man entering that laundry, that's as true as I'm sitting here. CMcG Right, right. KOS I never saw. CMcG And did you have any contact at all with the outside world? KOS No, no, no. CMcG A...and did you know about any news, what was going on in the outside world? KOS No! Maybe once a month they'd pull up this television for you to see a funny film and they'd be still there - the nuns were always there Claire. You couldn't get them out of your head! They were terrible! CMcG A...and how would you describe in general how you were treated by the nuns? KOS Treated very badly. Treated like *slaves*. That's what we were treated like now. CMcG Right. KOS Hmm. Hmm. Hmm.

CMcG And did they ever show any affection or anything like that?

KOS No.

CMcG No. And in terms of yourself like, what kind of...what...what...how did you survive in there?

KOS I just kept my mouth shut and kept working.

CMcG Right, right. Yeah, yeah. That's...and...and did you rebel?

KOS (Crying) Not really.

CMcG Are you alright, do you need to stop for a second?

KOS No, I'm fine.

CMcG Sorry now, that...

KOS You're alright...just...they'd annoy you...everywhere like.

CMcG I know, I know.

KOS They didn't care, no one cared Claire. As simple as that. They are what they are [inaudible].

CMcG I know.

KOS Can't stand them. (Pause) Paulites had that...you know, we couldn't say nothing because they were probably corresponding with them [Good Shepherds] down there. I don't know. I'd say that was it.

CMcG When...this was when you came out, you couldn't say anything to...anything to the Paulites...

KOS No you just did your work, sure when I came out then I had the same. St Ignatius Corridor [pseudonym of area of hospital] I had a bump [type of mop] to polish [with], you know, there

was all these things, we had all them you see, we hadn't what they have now, machinery...probably said, 'well, keep your mouth shut,' they said. That was it.

CMcG Right.

KOS Yeah. We always stuck together though, Anna Ganley and all those, yeah, we were always...stuck together.

CMcG Good for you.

KOS Yeah.

CMcG Hmm, hmm. Absolutely. And, (referring to interview guide) we've covered that. And so, the...when you, when you were saying you were leaving [the laundry], did they just...how did that come about?

KOS No, wait until I tell you now, how I was leaving. I asked them could I go out...get out...

CMcG You asked?

KOS ...and 'we'll see'. Yeah, you had to ask, you had to make an appointment with the head...one [nun] – 'l'll see'. But you had to go back, keep working. But, one morning I was sitting down, having a bit of breakfast, I was wondering how I got an extra bun, said, 'God, I never got a bun,' I...you know, got a bun like that, I said, 'God how did I get a bun?' And the next thing they were all gone back to work and I was left sitting there and I said, 'oh Jesus Chri...' And this woman came in and she said, 'you're coming with me'. And I said, 'where am I going?' And the girls were saying, (whispering) 'where are you going?' 'I don't know,' says I. 'We'll, we'll keep an eye out'. So I was brought into the office then. She said, 'you can take off that,' (whispering) I had no bra or nothing, put on this coat thing on me...dress, and a big pair of shoes. She said, 'this lady is going to bring you to...you're going to go back up,' she said, 'to work in [name of town removed]'. Put me on the bus and – 'you sit with the driver' – sit beside the driver the whole time. Got off the bus and the Paulites met me then. 'You come with us now'. I didn't know where I was going, if they told me, I didn't know. That was...what

day did I come up on...the...was it...the Tuesday, and I was working the next day – that's no lie. Yeah.

CMcG A...and they...the...you...you were kind of using a particular tone there when you were talking about how the nun spoke to you, the Paulites, were...they...were...were they kind and nice in any way?

KOS They were alright but you had to say nothing because you'd be afraid they'd...you know, if you stepped out of line they'd...back below [to the laundry] again and I didn't want to go back there...

CMcG You were afraid of being put back?

KOS Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

CMcG Right

KOS That sort of way.

CMcG Okay, okay.

KOS Yeah

CMcG And, how...how did you cope with like...being, you know, out of there and...and...getting used to being in the outside world?

KOS Oh Claire it was great to get fresh air! Do you know that? Best thing was fresh air. And when I got my wages I bought a lovely skirt and top and a bra. Anna Ganley said, 'come on and we'll go down and get this'. Sure they were the same like, you know.

CMcG And did they leave at the same time or a different time to you?

KOS Hmm, around the same time, they were in a different [place] now. Sheila Fitzpatrick was in Clifden... [St. Joseph's Industrial School, Clifden]

CMcG Right, right, right...

KOS ...they were different, we just happened...we were all from different places like but (whispering) they thought the Sundays Well was the worst.

CMcG Right.

KOS Hmm. Hmm.

CMcG Right.

KOS It was the worst place...

CMcG Yeah.

KOS ... 'twas, really and truly...

CMcG Right.

KOS ... 'twas.

CMcG Yeah.

We hadn't a...no thanks, no nothing – they hadn't it in their heart. I just...I'd say they were people that were *put in* by their parents and just...that was it, you know, didn't know any better I suppose, than we knew no better, but I don't think they knew any better, I'd say they were thrown into the religious like, you know, 'well I've someone in religion in me family, that's great, they'll be all about me'. Maybe I'm wrong now, I don't know, but you learn a lot when you come out like. You know, you'd see like...yeah...

CMcG Tell us about that...what...what...tell us what you mean by that?

You know, but I remember...well, I'm not saying...(Whispering) I don't want to mention the Paulites, you know, they were alright, but there was this nun and the girl was work...looking after priests – oh priests – and she was kind of opening the door – she had to do the cooking as well – and this nun came up and threw the soapy water on her feet, that's a tru...no word of a lie. Yes! (Whispering) Don't put that on that! [Recording device]¹

CMcG (Whispering) What did she do that for?

KOS Yeah! She done it. And...she's dead now...and I often s...the lady said she had to get a change of...she had to go over to the person in the office he...he was over and told him, so he contacted the...the boss, that time they were running it, and...did nothing about it. I'll never forget it to this day...she was telling us.

CMcG So this woman goes to the priest's house...

KOS She worked in the priest's house you see...

CMcG Right.

KOS ...and (whispering) but this was the Paulites...

CMcG Right.

KOS ...don't put that on that [recording device], they were (whispering) she used to work for the Paulites...

CMcG Hmm.

KOSshe was a married woman, the nun...the priest's house was there at the back. And she was trying to open the door...

CMcG Yeah.

¹Interviewee gives permission below for this section to be retained once the name of the order was given a pseudonym.

KOS ...do the cooking and do everything and the nun said, 'will you open the door?'

CMcG Hmm.

KOS And she said, 'I'm busy,' you know, and by God, the soapy water, she threw it on her feet. Hmm! And I always say that they were put in just...because nobody wanted them as well, but they hadn't...couldn't come out and say it to us.

CMcG The nuns, you're talking about?

KOS Yeah. All nuns. I think so, all of them to be honest with you, I think so. I remember that now, that's a good few years ago.

CMcG Now, if we took the name of the order out of that, is alright to leave the rest in?

KOS Yeah...

CMcG Yeah...

KOS ...that end of it.

CMcG Yeah, once you don't identify that it's the Paulites...

KOS Yeahthrowing soapy water...no, no, no, do not... do not...

CMcG ...no... just once if...if...nobody knows...

KOS No, they were alright now...

CMcG ...what order it is, it's okay is it?

KOS Yeah. They were alright now, at least we got paid, every fortnight, we got paid now, I'll say that much for them. That time we got a cheque, Sr Dolores [pseudonym], she's dead now,

big tall nun, and I'll tell you one thing, she had brains to burn, that nun, you know. She'd always come down on a Friday evening and see was the place clean. I worked in the private department in...thing [the hospital]...and you always got your wages, she'd write out the cheques and that was it. Sure we didn't know where to go to change it, we hadn't a clue about money. We used to go up across to Moloneys [name of shop anonymised] that time they had it and we used to change it there.

CMcG Right.

KOS Yeah.

CMcG And did it take you long to figure all that kind of stuff out?

KOS It did, it took a good bit...now, me daughters are very good to me, very good to me, you know. I'd t...I was living in a flat and then I had...living in [name of housing estate removed] and that time me husband was working, I was working, you know...trying t...but he looked after them, but I had to look after them in the evening time, put clothes on them and everything, you know. But I always said I wouldn't let them go back.

CMcG Hmm.

KOS (Sighs) Yeah.

CMcG A...and how...how has it affected you in general, the...the...being in the laundry like, how has it affected your life and your outlook and...

KOS Well, like I say, you were stupid, I was stupid like you know...

CMcG You're not...

KOS ...they never told me nothing or, you know, helped you with anything, never helped us with anything.

CMcG You were told you were stupid, is that it, you were told...

KOS Yeah. And you were...you were here for your sins, I still have that... CMcG And... KOS ...but I've moved on now... CMcG ...and you've been...you've carried that...you...you...do you carry that still with you? KOS Yeah. CMcG Right, right. KOS Yeah still. But I've moved on now. Fionnuala is very good to me. CMcG Yeah, yeah. Your family has been important... KOS Oh they're very good to me yeah.... CMcG ...yeah. KOS ... yeah. CMcG And, and has it...has it affected how you...you have approached family life do you think? KOS Yeah, yeah it would yeah. Like you know, other people it would be, 'where is their parents?' and all this and that like. (Begins to cry) CMcG Yes, yeah, yeah. I don't want to upset you. KOS No, you're alright.

But...so, only...only answer what you want to answer...

CMcG

KOS Yeah.

CMcG ...kind of thing. A...a...and did it affect your...your religious beliefs at all?

KOS Yes it did.

CMcG In what way?

KOS I don't believe.

CMcG At all?

KOS No! No, no, no. Oh very...for people that took the...the veil and the priests that used to run the church. No...no. I'd say, they had a feeling...I knew...the priest that was the chaplain down below like you know...

CMcG Yeah.

KOS ...I'd say they had a feeling where I came from. I never had any time for them. No.

CMcG And...so, it's...it's...it's coloured how you view...

KOS Yes.

CMcG ...the clergy and the religious and...but your own beliefs in...do you believe in God and that sort of thing yourself?

KOS Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

CMcG You do, okay, okay.

KOS Yeah.

CMcG And...and, so it hasn't affected you that way? KOS No, no, no, no. CMcG And would you still be like...would you still consider yourself Catholic? KOS Oh yeah. CMcG Right, right, right. KOS Hmm. Hmm. Hmm. CMcG Right, I just wanted to make sure... KOS (Laughs) CMcG ...I was, I was checking to...to see was I understanding you right! KOS Yeah! Yeah! CMcG And have you had...kind of...other effects like, in terms of health effects from it? KOS No, thanks be to God, no, no, no. Just had my womb out, and that. I kind of looked after myself because I didn't want to go back in there again, you know, didn't want...wouldn't go back to them. CMcG Is...and...is that...I was gonna ask you what you...you know, how...how...like what would you say has helped you survive all these...these years...from...from... KOS Me girls and me husband.

CMcG

Yeah.

KOS You know, out to work that...the girls below in [name of hospital removed] but only a few of them knew, you know.

CMcG Yeah, yeah. And keeping that privacy, has that been important to you to...

KOS How do you mean?

CMcG ...to...to not tell too many people about what happened to you...

No I wouldn't tell too many people, no...but they don't understand Claire like ye [Justice for Magdalenes]. They don't understand. Like I say, you have to be in a place to understand a place. That's what I think. And McAleese, if he was in there, he'd know what we were talking about. But I know...when I was reading the [name of regional newspaper removed] there what was it...when all this came out...there was this...I think she was a nun...she came over, and she stood with the survivors, said she was going to stand with the survivors because she knew what the sisters were like...read that in the paper, I should have cut it out. [Inaudible]

CMcG I think I know who you're talking about...

KOS Do you?

CMcG ...I think I do, I think I do...

KOS I read that in the corner of the paper, that's no lie. And she was with them, she was with us [supporting Magdalene survivors] like, she said, 'I...for everyone, I know what they're like', she's probably herself you see. But I think they went in and that was it, there was no one else to be bothered.

CMcG Yeah, yeah.

KOS And they didn't care about nobody once they had the work and the money was flowing in.

CMcG Hmm.

KOS You know, if you've someone working for you...

CMcG Hmm Hmm.

KOS ...you hope that the money keeps flowing in every week. And that was pounds that time now Claire. Punts.

CMcG A...and is it your sense that they were making a lot of money?

KOS Oh they were making a lot of money. Oh we never knew...

CMcG And what makes you say that?

KOS What?

CMcG What makes you say that?

KOS Because I saw it on the...on the DVD.

CMcG Oh right. Okay.

KOS Hmm. It's all on the DV...you never...where they locked their money or nothing...you couldn't get to the convent you see, 'twas like breeze block and you couldn't get in...they'd the keys all the time, they'd carried bunches of *keys and keys and keys*.

CMcG And when you say the DVD, what DVD are you talking about now?

KOS I showed that to Michael Murphy [pseudonym of solicitor] wait 'til I see, I have it there somewhere but I don't know where it is now. I brought it down to him that time to see about...do you know, the laundries and that and you could see the nun counting out the money.

CMcG Okay, okay, okay.

KOS I'd say now they put their...the money was in...their shoes and everything else...

CMcG Hmm.

KOS ...you never know. Sure they had big pockets, they had big veils...

CMcG Hmm.

KOS ...and they'd have a light veil then for the...for the summer and we had to wear the heavy things when the sun was splitting the stones.

CMcG Right.

KOS Yeah, you'd see them with the...the light thing coming in, but no such thing as, 'good morning' or 'are ye alright today?' No. 'Carry on'.

CMcG Hmm. Hmm.

KOS And their hands would be underneath their thing [habit] like that, 'carry on'.

CMcG Right.

KOS Hmm. They never took out their hands, because they...or if they wanted to hit you they had this thing, the rope, the old white rope you see, I'm sure the Mercy nuns wore it too, if I'm not mistaken.

CMcG And you'd be hit with that would you?

KOS Oh you would yeah. They had...they didn't...no apology.

CMcG Right.

KOS They had the rope because the cross then would hang down over it and the rope was around their waist.

CMcG And would that happen often?

KOS Well, it would. When they'd see you standing up for one second. When I see them now, all the breaks they take, *oh my God!*

CMcG Hmm. Yeah, yeah.

KOS Hmm.

CMcG And tell us, do you think it's affected how...how you approach relationships and stuff like that, your...your family, you know, like...with...or with other people in general, do you think it's had an effect on...

KOS Ah no, no, I talk to...I speak to everyone, but I...

CMcG Yeah.

KOS ...you know...I don't tell them nothing like, you know...

CMcG Yeah, yeah, yeah.

KOS No.

CMcG No, no, I know what you mean.

KOS No, no I tell them nothing. None of their business.

CMcG Yeah.

KOS But I wouldn't let anyone hurt a child.

CMcG Really?

KOS No.

CMcG That's...

KOS Any abuse, that's it. Hmm. Which...it's going on in the world now today...

CMcG Of course it is.

KOS ...and I'm sure we'd opened many doors, have we...have you for a lot of people...that was...that was in them, won't you...couldn't open it themselves, couldn't say anything.

CMcG Hmm.

KOS Hmm. A lot of them.

CMcG Hmm. Hmm.

KOS Yeah.

CMcG Yeah. Hmm.

KOS But a lot of them you know when were in there [industrial schools] and then they knew that they could apply for those things [Residential Institutions Redress Board], but I didn't know that, it was Fionnuala that said to me about that young lad in Mayo, Fionnuala was working in Mayo cheffing, [sic] because she's a qualified chef as well, and she told me, 'Mammy you look for that,' she said. Went down to him [solicitor], six years. Hmm.

CMcG A...and nothing happened?

KOS Nothing happened, no. No.

CMcG And...did...did the solicitor give a reason why nothing happened?

KOS Oh...I...oh I've all his letters upstairs...I must see...what was it, the way he put it ah sure...I...oh yeah, he did boast and he said, 'I did it a lot for people in [name of town removed]'. Well...and then Fionnuala was with me and then he was saying, 'oh we'll go on the City Link [bus service] and go up to Dublin'. I never went up there.

CMcG And what did he want you to go to Dublin for?

KOS Probably thought I suppose we'd get the money and he'd get the...thought he would...well I don't know what he meant...I never s...seen the bus. And then he wrote out saying, 'well, they're not paying out', you know.

CMcG A...and were y...you weren't given a reason, no?

KOS No. No. See that time they would...I suppose if he done...he didn't do anything for me anyway.

CMcG Okay.

KOS No.

CMcG A...a...and do you mind me asking, did you get charged for that?

KOS We went down to…he said he did papers in [name of town removed] – €600 – I didn't do any papers in [name of town removed]. I never went to [name of town removed]. I don't know where he got this [name of town removed] business. I remember him…going into him one morning – I had an appointment – and the next thing was anyway it was…the secretary, that was lovely…and next thing I went in, and he gave me these…he just…he was like a ghost when he opened up this paper. And I said in my own mind…he said nothing, and then I seen the secretary bring me in a cup of tea like that and then he handed me…and he said, 'you don't…I can't help you with that'. So unless he had the mistake, you know, I don't know…

CMcG But did he make you pay for...

KOS (Calling to husband in next room) He did Frank, didn't we?

FOS Sorry? KOS Michael Murphy? FOS What about him? KOS Do you remember when we went down and he said he signed papers for [name of town removed] and it cost €600? Because Frank... FOS Ah that was a case he took...that was...no, what...what that was, that was a case he was taking against the Magdalene Laundries, that time...taking against the Good Shepherd Sisters. KOS Yeah. And I remember Frank...we didn't...Frank said to him, 'oh why didn't you send out the bill and we would have paid for it?' So F...I had to get it for Frank then, go down to the Credit Union and pay it back! CMcG So he did charge you for... for what... KOS He did Frank didn't he? I have the let...do you want me...do you want to see a few letters? [FOS enters the room] FOS No...what he s.... CMcG Ah no, I'm just curious to... FOS No, what happened that time was, you went in...Fionnuala brought you in to Michael Murphy...

KOS

Yeah.

FOS ...to get the story because they were on about...you know...they...they had a...a... redress system at the time...

CMcG Yeah.

FOS ...and I think she saw it on the *Ireland's Own* [magazine] or something like that it wasn't too late that if you went...

CMcG Okay.

FOS ...you know so we went to Murph...she went into Murphy and I obviously told him the story like you know...

KOS Yeah.

FOS ...but...he went to Richard Merrick [pseudonym] that time...went to say that the story was a horrific story and how would he go about it like, so then they went on and the only thing they could do that time then was...I think was to take an action against the Good Shepherd Sisters.

CMcG Okay.

FOS I think that's what happened that time and...

KOS Sorry now Frank talk to Claire a minute...[inaudible]

[KOS goes to other room to search for paperwork]

FOS [Inaudible] I think that's what happened that time because they took her and...and...they took...kind of went to take an action against it like.

CMcG Okay.

FOS But when they went down to...like we went down to Roscommon [General Registrar's Office] to get her...her birth certificate...she had to get that...

CMcG Right

...because her birth certificate wasn't on...you know like she hadn't...it kind of got lost then because I remember when we went in, we went down to Roscommon and we got the birth certificate, we gave her date of birth and we told them that and they looked it up and they came back saying, 'well we don't have like a Kate Andrews [pseudonym of maiden name] at this date, but we have her a few years earlier'. There was a ...so what happened was like Kate had the wrong birth date herself and she wasn't sure of her birth date. As I said to Murphy I remember saying it to Murphy I said that 'she couldn't be...she's not going to be too happy, she's a few years older than she thought she fucking was!' (Laughs) You know, so they went on and took the case then but what happened was there...there was a fire down there or something, there was a fire in the Good Shepherds that time because her files were...her files were lost...

CMcG Hmm.

FOS ...yeah, well that's what they're saying anyway like because, I know you sent down a form [JFM Survivor Guide to Magdalene Restorative Justice Scheme] there to fill it in and send it on and I said, 'sure didn't they tell you that the files was lost?' You know like, they were burned in the fire that time like, you know.

CMcG I'd be pushing for that now, I'd be...

FOS Yeah now, well you can say it to her to maybe...

CMcG ...try again, absolutely...

FOS ...try again. But (coughs) he went on and took the case and then obviously it didn't go any further, you know, it didn't go any further because we went in a f...while back over something else and then he said that there was a bill here for 600, that was obviously expenses he was after using I'd say to....

CMcG But...but he just didn't take it any further than that, he just left it?

FOS He kind of left it at that then like because I remember saying to him like when he did say to me...the bill I just said, 'Jesus Christ sure why didn't you tell me you had the fucking bill here?'

CMcG Hmm.

FOS Because one thing I don't like is bills over me head.

CMcG Okay.

FOS You know, so like...like that was... that was over a completely different thing like.

CMcG Okay.

FOS So I gave him the £600 [sic] anyway, we paid him the £600 [sic] anyway.

CMcG Okay.

FOS And we...and we left it like that like you know.

CMcG Okay.

FOS So there was no more about it after that then until...then until Fionnuala brought her into...until ye [Justice for Magdalenes] came on the scene, there was no more about it until after that then so that was that.

[KOS re-enters the room]

CMcG Right.

FOS That was the story there like.

CMcG Right. (Coughs) FOS KOS This is my secret bag! (Indicates bag containing paperwork) CMcG (Laughs) KOS There's Michael's [pseudonym] I just want to show it to Claire now (indicates solicitor's bill). FOS That was...that was the expenses I'd say that he incurred... KOS I don't know which one is that, I have so many letters Claire...just have a look... FOS ...but he kind of left it at that then, like you know. CMcG (Looks at letter) That's...yeah... FOS [Inaudible] CMcG It says here – and this is dated October 2006 – it's saying that they're not prepared to deal with the claim, the...the R...the Redress Board aren't prepared to deal with the claim as it wasn't filed on time but I do know that there were cases who were dealt with... FOS That's right... CMcG ...after that... FOS ...yeah, that was, well...now that could be the one, he told me that...that they weren't prepared to deal with the claim, that's when he decided to go to Merrick as far as I know and then see about taking an action against the Good Shepherds like, you know.

KOS

Here do you see all the letters I have Claire...

FOS Because I know Merrick advised us to go with it and get some barristers and [inaudible] like that...

KOS ...my secret!

[Sound of papers rustling in background]

FOS ...they said they'd follow it up, there was no ...there was no joy there anyway so...

CMcG Right.

FOS [Inaudible] He...I suppose...I presume he put 600 into it and he didn't want to incur any more costs for himself in case it didn't work out. Now in fairness to him, I'm not saying he kept the bill hidden, I'd say there would have been...we would have heard nothing about that...

CMcG Really? Okay.

FOS ...until we went into ...

CMcG Okay.

FOS ...you know, I'm not saying that he...he done it...that he slapped it on us...I'd say he... [inaudible]

CMcG Fair enough.

KOS (Shows a document) That's the house, our housing deeds...

FOS ...and he knew we had a few pound coming and he decided to charge there was a bill there for £600! (Laughs)

KOS Yeah the money we got yeah...[inaudible] ...Frank had got his cheque.

FOS (Laughing) [Inaudible] CMcG Okay. KOS And then when...everyone now...I was dead, I was supposed to be dead! Oh my God, do...do you know I'm walking...I was a walking dead person! CMcG And...and (laughs) tell me about your...your birth cert, Frank said you'd the...you'd ...you'd a problem with your birth cert? KOS Oh stop! Frank had to go down, because I was working down below... FOS I was telling her you are a few years older than what you are! (Laughs) KOS Sure they gave me nothing like! (Shows a document) Wait until I see, wait until I give you the name of...Michael, there, Michael again. CMcG And did you... KOS (Shows a document) That's the housing thing there. CMcG ...so were you...were you...had you been using a birth cert that had the wrong date on it for years or... KOS Michael Murphy had it, he never gave it back to us. FOS No she never had a birth cert until... KOS No. FOS ...she never had a birth certificate... KOS

No.

FOS ...until...until we went looking for it, you know... CMcG Right, okay and... FOS ...but then like, she came straight from...where she was up into [name of hospital removed] hospital like... CMcG Right. FOS ...you know, so... CMcG Okay so...yeah...the...right... FOS There was no need for a birth cert that time, do you know... KOS (Shows a document) That's for the house. FOS ...not that we went looking for it. KOS I was unknown to you Claire. Now... FOS We did actually...we did apply to some place in Cork wasn't it and they said... KOS Yeah. FOS ... they had no record of you. KOS No. FOS So it was Roisín [pseudonym] me daughter like, that put us on to... KOS Roisín. FOS ...she said try Roscommon [General Registrar's Office] the...the...

CMcG Yes, that's where the office is, yeah, absolutely. FOS ... [inaudible] so we went down there then and... CMcG Right. FOS ... when I gave the date of birth and ... and 'oh yeah but we've one a few years earlier!' (Laughs). KOS (Shows a document) That's the bank things. CMcG Gosh. KOS Isn't that terrible Claire? [Because she can't find the document] CMcG Oh no, don't worry about it... KOS No, no, no I just want to... CMcG ...I just...I'm just...interested in...in your e...your experience with having tried to go to the Redress Board before... KOS Yeah (shows a document), they're my tax things... CMcG ...and, you know and...and what happened there, because I know that happened to a lot of survivors and that's...you know... KOS Yeah, nothing. CMcG So...and...

KOS (Showing bag with paperwork) This bag! Sure I was just gonna let you see the...the letters that he did write out like you know...Michael...I have this bag, and I said I can't burn them until I make sure I get...get...me...me money.

CMcG You're fine.

KOS Never seen so many letters.

CMcG A...and tell me about what happened with the records, we were just talking there while you were out of the room about the...about the...the...the Good Shepherds said there was a fire and that your records were lost?

KOS Yeah. Burnt, yeah.

CMcG And when was this, that they claimed that there was a fire?

KOS (Shows a document) That one now came in for these...

CMcG Right.

KOS ...this yeah.

CMcG I...I...the ...the other form that Justice for Magdalenes sent to you, I...I...the one that you can use to apply for your records, I would advise you to try again...

KOS I don't think Claire...

CMcG ...just in case, you know, it...it would be worth trying again...

KOS Yeah about...

CMcG ...because I know people that have gotten their Good Shepherd records...

KOS Yeah.

CMcG ...so they can't...you know...they can't all have been destroyed!

KOS (Referring to a letter) Michael Murphy.

CMcG But... and...did you...did they say that in writing to you or did they say it over the phone?

KOS They didn't...the Paulites?

CMcG No, no, the Good Shepherds.

KOS Yeah, that's what Michael said, they were destroyed, he did look for them now in all fairness...

CMcG Right, right.

KOS ...he did now...I'll give him his due there, he did.

CMcG Right, right.

KOS Yeah.

CMcG And other than when you went to the solicitor that time, have you ever kind of done any other kind of complaint about your time there?

KOS Michael?

CMcG No like, did you ever kind of say, gone to the Gardaí or written to a TD or...

KOS No, no.

CMcG ...written to the nuns themselves?

KOS No, no.

CMcG No, no. And, I suppose, other than that, I mean is there...is there anything else that you...you'd like to...to say as part of...of your...your story like, is there anything that you feel you...you haven't covered, that...that you'd like...

KOS Just that we were wronged and we were...we had to work for nothing. You know, what else can I say like? You...you know. Worked for nothing

CMcG A...a...and what does the apology mean to you?

Well, like that, the apology was alright like, you know, you know. He [Enda Kenny] did do what he had to do like, in all fairness to him. And the nuns should have [telephone ringing in background] come up with him then and apologised, do you know what I mean? But he did do his best [coughing in background] maybe after that he probably [FOS answering phone in background] maybe he had you know, you don't know what trouble he had either like.

CMcG Enda Kenny you mean?

KOS Hmm. I thought it was genuine now you know, maybe it wasn't genuine, maybe ye didn't think it was genuine but...

CMcG I think what matters is what you think.

KOS What?

CMcG I think what matters is what you think.

KOS Yeah. But I think that McAleese...he just...l'll sit down (sits down) I think he...to me, I said afterwards to Fionnuala, 'he was more on their side, the nuns' side than on Claire's and the other girls that was fighting for us,' I...he didn't give them any...he didn't give ye any credit like you know. That's me, you know and I wouldn't be up to date with all that but I...

CMcG No, you're entitled to your opinion. And have you ever seen McAleese's Report?

KOS No?

CMcG Have you been given a copy of it?

KOS No, we didn't.

CMcG No just...

KOS No, no.

CMcG But you...you but you were part of...you gave your testimony didn't you?

Yeah, he listened now, but the girl that was sitting beside Fionnuala he didn't listen to her. [Referring to daughter of deceased Magdalene woman who attended a meeting between survivors and Martin McAleese] He didn't listen. Well Fionnuala was saying to me after, she said, 'Mammy if it's a thing her mother was in there, and I know she was adopted, why didn't she go in,' you know. And she was saying how she came out in a box like you know, and he kept staring at her and everything like, you know? They didn't want her. Only I got out and got the job, kept my head up and didn't go alcoholic and all I went through, living...always kept the place clean, always said that, I had Monica Stewart [pseudonym] and a few good friends in the hospital you know that knew and that was it, kept me head down and did me work. And I bought this house off me sister-in-law and she didn't want me at all, bought this, looked after me father-in-law, because otherwise he'd have to go out and he was always good to me now, but I never told him [about the laundry]. I bought this house, put heating, electricity, everything into it.

CMcG So you...you...you...you...do you feel strongly about that...about you...you having done that, got...bought your own home and...

KOS Oh yeah! (Calling to husband in next room) Didn't we Frank? Oh he's on the phone. We bought this house here [from] Agnes, [pseudonym] his sister. There was nothing in it Claire, there was no central heating, and we built on. That's...I want...I hope to get the money to build on a bathroom! See, out there (points to back yard) because they were sm...they were

small bathrooms you see, because these houses are old houses, but they're good houses. So, I looked after my granddad [father-in-law], he was very good to me and then I had a brother-in-law, Barry, [pseudonym] he was very good to me and he died.

CMcG Right.

KOS (Whispering) Killed himself. Hmm. Do you know what I mean? So we had all that.

FOS What?

KOS No, I was just saying, she was saying about the house, I said we bought this house off your sister, but when we bought it there was nothing in it there, you had to put in heating and...

FOS Oh yeah.

KOS ...the whole lot into it.

FOS Ah yeah.

KOS You know, and that time he had no job like, we had to do things. But we owe no money to no one.

CMcG And...and that's something that's important to you?

KOS Now it is...they're all paid off. Because we went down to [name of city removed] and I remember this dwarf girl came and she said, 'Kate and Frank', she said, 'you don't owe nothing,' she said to us, handed over the deeds and I said, 'thank you very much,' and she said, "twas the interest you were paying,' – I was paying it every fortnight we got paid from the Paulites, I...'twas coming out of the money. And if he got a job then he'd be paying.

CMcG A...and is that something like...that...is it a security thing for you...

KOS That you own your own house.

CMcG ...that you own your own house?

KOS That's what they were saying about houses, I didn't...didn't want it...

CMcG Right.

KOS ...you know. That was the form that went down to him now, the [Magdalene Restorative Justice Scheme] form that came out went down to...your man with the book [Quirke Report] down to Padraig [pseudonym of Kate's current solicitor] Padraig.

CMcG Oh right, right.

KOS Did you get that form, did you?

CMcG The...the Quirke Report is that what you're talking about?

KOS Yes.

CMcG Yeah.

KOS That's down with him [solicitor].

CMcG Okay.

KOS But he was in Galway that day and Susan [pseudonym of solicitor's secretary] said that, do you know, he comes in and checks every bit of it, but he was gone to [name of city removed] to a court case, but she said there was a purple book [Quirke Report] in it...

CMcG Yeah.

KOS ...that's what she said, 'I will give it back to you,' you know. Things went to him and that's the way I had it done like that.

CMcG Right.

KOS Go to him.

CMcG Okay. A...a...and you...you feel very particularly about your solicitor dealing with these things, do you?

KOS Yeah, he's very good Frank isn't he?

FOS What?

KOS Padraig?

FOS Well, so far so good.

KOS Ah, he is now, in all...you...you read the letters yourself.

CMcG Hmm. Hmm.

KOS But then, everything is in both names you see and I went down I...oh she was very good to me like you, great time for ye [Justice for Magdalenes] and Susan s...you know, said to me, 'well don't you still,' you know [have an account] 'in the bank' because I have to pay out bills and that out of it and he...all I want...all they [Magdalene Restorative Justice Scheme] wanted was something with my address on it.

CMcG Right.

KOS On my own address, nothing to do with Frank like.

CMcG Yes.

KOS So anyway, I went down to the bank, Susan said, 'I'll wait for you,' and...because he [solicitor] was in Galway and he had told her like. I went down and I met this girl and I said, 'excuse me,' – now the Bank of Ireland has changed down there – and I said, 'excuse me, I'm just wondering would you print out my name, "Kate O'Sullivan [address removed]"?' I said. 'And

who am I saying,' she says, 'is it cons...is it for?' 'Excuse me, it's private and confidential,' I said, 'my solicitor sent me down'. 'Oh,' she said, 'it's in both names,' she said. I said, 'I'm not saying anything about that,' I said, 'my money is in here,' I said. An...all I want was 'Kate O'Sullivan [address removed]'. Just said, 'no'. I came back then and I said it to Susan she said to me, 'well oh my God almighty!' she said. All I wanted was me own name on something, so they can go up to...Quirke like. [Magdalene Restorative Justice Scheme] – No. So, that's when Susan wrote out this, I said, I have a...(laughing)...a bit with me own name on it!' We had both names...we had to have both names on everything here, I said, 'I know that, I'm not asking you that, I'm just asking you for me address, put my address on a bit of paper,' 'oh we couldn't do that,' – isn't that terrible?

CMcG Yeah.

KOS Frank was going to put the phone bill on my name then, because we paid...both of us paid...€300...ah...(calling to husband in next room) wasn't it Frank?

CMcG My God.

KOS Wasn't it €300 to put my name on the phone bill? Just to get my...

FOS Ah that was just to get the phone bills changed yeah.

KOS Now!

CMcG God almighty.

KOS That's no word of a lie, just goes to show you. I said I'd get the money, I said, 'thank you very much,' and I walked out, I won't be going in there again...in me own mind, what would you want it for? I think I was going to say something, but Susan said it back to Padraig. I haven't seen him since now.

CMcG A...and you were talking about...about keeping the place clean, is that important to you as well? Is that...is that kind of stemming from your background as well do you think?

KOS Yeah, yeah, yeah

CMcG Just that...taking pride in your house?

KOS Yeah. (Calling to husband in next room) Don't I Frank – clean?

FOS What?

KOS Don't I clean?

FOS Yeah.

KOS (Laughs) 'Yeah,' he says. Clean! Yeah, bed linen once a week and I have to keep the rooms clean and everything.

CMcG Yeah, yeah. It's important to you?

KOS Oh yeah, to keep it...l couldn't stand clutter.

CMcG Right.

KOS Oh don't ask me...clutter! Oh clothes! I do say, I never had any – clutter – couldn't stand clutter! I do cut the grass, the garden and all.

CMcG It's beautiful.

KOS Love it. Oh he does that himself, puts down the flowers and that but if I'm here now in the evening, I cut the grass, I've no problem with it, keep it clean.

CMcG Right.

KOS That's what they used to say below, the Paulites, 'there's one thing about ye, the place is spotless'. And then when I worked up in paediatrics then they said the *same* thing.

CMcG Right. KOS Ye do a job...I said, I do it right, do a job [or] don't do it at all. CMcG Right. KOS Hmm. CMcG Right. KOS Yeah, when Fionnuala comes... CMcG It's stayed with you this whole time? KOS Yeah, when Fionnuala comes [home from England] she'd have the case above, 'Mammy,' she says 'I'm going back tomorrow'. 'Oh tidy it up!' I say to her! (Laughing) 'Fionnuala tidy it up!' Yeah, tidy it up. But Fionnuala is very tidy, they're all tidy, taking after me like, oh hate clutter, oh...it's...oh! CMcG A...and...did...did...in that sense did it affect how you were rearing them in that way like getting them to... KOS Yeah. CMcG ...tidy up and stuff? KOS Yeah, they had to keep things clean, do things for themselves, like I said, 'you go out in this world, men can take advantage,' I said. I said, 'and they're gone and you're left holding the baby'.

Right.

CMcG

KOS

Hmm. That lady now next door gave me them (points to flowers) last night! (Laughs)

CMcG Beautiful.

KOS I said...someone to talk to like. I'm not a lover of flowers inside now.

CMcG And why is that?

KOS I don't know

CMcG Right.

KOS Don't like flowers inside. And [inaudible] she said to me, 'Kate I just want to say thank you,' she said, 'for helping the...me there the other day'. I said, 'ah you don't have to buy me flowers,' I said. You see we're...two bungalows there are council. This is our own, we bought this ourself [sic].

CMcG Uh huh. Uh huh.

KOS I do say, this is my...our house Frank and myself. It was hard to pay it but at the end of the day...'look,' I said, 'we'll have to paint it' and that. You see they were all coming in...we do have...Deirdre [pseudonym of grandchild] is supposed to be coming from [name of place removed], now me eldest grandchild, she's doing...she's doing Irish [summer school course] down there. So she goes up there to [name of school removed] her school is up there and she does Irish and all...the two of...two of them went to [name of gaelscoil removed] across the way, Sharon [pseudonym of daughter] sent both of them. That's why I said, 'Sharon give them the education I never got'. See they were all in college, all the girls, four of them in college.

CMcG Right.

KOS Roisín is a solicitor, Lorraine [pseudonym of daughter] is a chef and Sharon is a hairdresser and Fionnuala is a chef and a bar lady, she can do bar...

CMcG Is that important to you...

KOS Oh yeah they done...

CMcG ...to have done that?

KOS Exactly!

CMcG Yeah.

KOS They done that. Yeah. I said, at least...say...I saw something out of it like, you know...

CMcG Uh huh.

...that they...not be hanging around the town and sitting down...you see people...I do see the people, my God, I see them after getting the dole, sitting down drinking, young girls, and I say, the child is left in the middle. With me...with children, the *child is left*...I do say. Oh I'll have another chi...they say...no...I say, it's like this, I do say to Fionnuala, 'Jason [pseudonym of grandchild] is the priority, not you and the boyfriend,' Now Nathan [pseudonym of daughter's boyfriend] is very nice...I said, 'he's the priority, he needs his education,' I said, 'that's it'.

CMcG Hmm.

KOS Because I never left my kids on their own, I never went out Claire. When I...when I used to live in [name of estate removed] I never went out. I stayed in, I wouldn't trust anyone with them. No, no, no. Trust no one with them. That's...say now if Sharon wanted to go out, very seldom she goes out, she'd send them on up to me or Deirdre to stay overnight like. No, no, no, never...I wouldn't trust them. And I see kids, the way they're...abused...I seen a family over there now...drink all the time. Drink, drink, I used to *never* and they're only getting €300 week, I don't know how she's able to drink, and we working all our life, and the kids left there. Oh we do see it, but the grandfather's good to them like, but I'd say if he...if anything happened to him they'll be gone. Drink all day, all night, mortgage around her neck. Oh I'd hate if I had – have you your own house Claire?

CMcG (Nods)

KOS ...if I had a big mortgage and...you know....no. We got a small mortgage. Well, I will say...I says to Veronica [pseudonym] below in the Paulites...very fond of her, she was very good to me. She's over in her own place down below now, she always said, 'start small and work up,' she always said that to Roisín, Roisín was there, Roisín...they worked down there to...to send themselves to college, in the Paulites, the girls.

CMcG Right.

KOS You know. That she...Roisín had to go to Kil...oh Kilkenny...ah no, no, D...she had to go to Donegal, and then you have to go to Cork...

CMcG Right.

KOS ...all the...then she went to America, if you wanted Law, it takes six years like a doctor, oh six years yeah.

CMcG My God.

KOS Hmm. Six years. And I do say...she said, 'Mammy, leave them...this and that,' and I do say, 'there you are now, you have your big job, your own house,' and I said, 'now you'll appreciate it won't you?' I said to her. Will I make you another cup of coffee now?

CMcG Well, if you're...are you...are y...no...only if you're happy enough [to end the interview] that you're...

KOS Oh yeah, yeah,

CMcG ...you're...

KOS ...just a cheque, goodbye and get my bathroom and I'm happy!

CMcG ...you want to...I suppose is that...is that a note to end it on, that you want to get on with your life?

KOS Oh yeah, yeah. CMcG That's what you want. KOS Yeah. CMcG What we were talking about earlier yeah. KOS Hmm. Hmm. CMcG You just... KOS Just get on with my life, forget about them, pay the money and everyone will be left alone wouldn't they? CMcG Yeah. KOS What do you think now? Would I be right there now? CMcG Well, I think if it's your opinion, it's absolutely right, what's most important is what you think. KOS Well I'm not going up to the High Court and sitting there again and all that. CMcG You don't feel... KOS No... CMcG ...you don't want to go to court with your case? KOS No, no, no, no. I remember that time we went in...Michael. Now, they did what we ca...they...thing and pay half and that's it and give it to us where we can use...me bathroom, get me bathroom done! (Laughing) You know.

CMcG Kate thanks so much for doing this...

KOS And you too Claire, you're as good!

CMcG ...no...it's ...it's an honour to have you...

KOS [Inaudible] ...you can see where I said....about the Paulites throwing the water there... [inaudible]

CMcG No, no, well....

[Question was asked as recording device was being shut down, explanation was given about redaction process and interviewee agreed to leave that portion of interview in once the religious order was given a pseudonym.]

[Interview ends]