



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



Reference Code:	MAGOHP/34/ANON
Oral History of:	Kathleen
Pseudonym?	Yes
Status:	Survivor
Keywords:	Sisters of Our Lady of Charity Magdalene Laundry, High Park, Drumcondra; death and burial practices of Sisters of Our Lady of Charity; Legion of Mary; Residential Institutions Redress Board; Section 28 (6) of Residential Institutions Redress Act, 2002; An Grianán Training Centre, High Park; psychiatric assessments; threat of being sent from Industrial School to Magdalene Laundry as punishment; sexual abuse; Gardaí returning girls to High Park after escape; black habits (auxiliaries/consecrates) as part of regime; institutionalisation of black habits; Martanna House; All Hallows College; Aislinn Education Centre; stigma of unmarried motherhood and being in a laundry; self-education; survivor groups.
Date of Interview:	3 rd July 2013
Transcript:	91 pages
Number/Format of Audio Files:	One .wma file
Interviewer:	Dr Sinéad Pembroke
Records/Papers included:	No
Access Conditions:	Anonymised interviews are freely available to the public. Immediate release of transcript; audio destroyed on request. Interviewee to be identified in 30 years.
Conditions Governing Reproduction:	Interviews can be reproduced, however the citation below must be used at all times.

To cite this transcript:

O'Donnell, K., S. Pembroke and C. McGettrick. (2013) "Oral History of Kathleen". *Magdalene Institutions: Recording an Oral and Archival History*. Government of Ireland Collaborative Research Project, Irish Research Council, pp.1-91.

Notes on Redaction and Transcription Process

Interviewee Initials: K
Interviewer Initials: SP

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

Notes on Redaction Process

- Interviewee has been assigned a pseudonym.
- Some locations have been removed to protect the interviewee's privacy
- Interviewee did not wish to name the Industrial School in which she was raised

Basic Data from Interview

Name/Pseudonym	Kathleen
When Born	Interviewee did not provide an exact year. Approximately 1947/48
Born outside marriage?	Yes
Raised by	Industrial School
Education	National school (formal education stopped at twelve); self-educated.
Order	Sisters of Our Lady of Charity
Laundry	High Park
From	1964
To	1967/8
Duration of stay	Approximately four years
Age on entry	Approximately sixteen/seventeen
Entered Via	Referred by nun from Industrial School. Interviewee was met at the airport by the Gardaí, who brought her to High Park.
House Name/No	Yes
Haircutting/punishment?	Yes, beatings after escape attempts; hair was cut on the night interviewee arrived at High Park.
Circumstances of Departure	Was sent to live in hostel accommodation within the grounds of High Park, where she lived while she worked in a department store.
Emigrated?	No
Physical ailments?	Didn't say
Of Note	Interviewee had to pay for the hostel accommodation provided by the religious order on the High Park campus Interviewee has managed to maintain strong relationships with her extended family.

[Interview begins]

SP *So thank you very much Kathleen. So today is the 3rd of July. So...first question I'd like to ask you is can you just tell me something about yourself?*

K Well my name is Kathleen and I was reared in an Industrial School and I was there for sixteen years. And my mother found me after sixteen years and I went to London with my mother and was there for nine months but things didn't work out for me. My step-father would have been cruel to me and...in lots of ways that I wouldn't have understood was going on and...I was very unhappy and the nun from the Industrial School...my mother got in touch with the nun from the Industrial School and told her how unhappy I was and I didn't fit in with the family. And she decided – this is the nun in the Industrial School – decided that I would be brought back to Ireland and that I would be going to a training centre. And I was very happy with that because I was unhappy where I was. So I was put on a flight in London and brought to Dublin on my own, I was sixteen. And I was met in Dublin Airport by two members of An Garda Síochana [Irish police] and I was driven to High Park in Drumcondra. When I arrived, I was brought into this room, it was quite late at night, the place was in darkness and there was a nun who was in charge of the whole procedure and she told me I had to take my clothes off me and that I would be known as another name, so she'd be giving me a religious name. And I had to stand there, naked while I waited for other clothes to be brought to me. Now as I said, I was sixteen, I was no baby. So I was brought through this...through the...this very large building, up a lot of stairs and I was brought into this very dark room, it was like a big dormitory and there was three, four big rows of beds there, and they all had curtains around them. And I had to kneel down and say prayers before I went into bed and I think I must have cried quite a lot with fear, I was very fearful. And I was awoken at about six the next morning and I could hear people praying very loud and I had to kneel down as well and pray with them. And there was one toilet in this particular dormitory and you had to queue, and if you didn't get to the toilet you just didn't go. And I do remember getting dressed in these...this particular uniform, it was kind of a darkish, grey colour, I'm not...I can't really remember. I know it was...they weren't *my* clothes, you know. And we were...myself and all the other women, they were very elderly women...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...well now they may have been young but they looked...compared to me, they looked quite old.

SP *Yeah.*

K And I remember one woman in particular and she was to...taking charge of me. And we went over to the Mass and the Mass was there and that was fine, that was all okay I suppose, at the time I didn't know any better. Then we had breakfast, which was...it was adequate enough you know. And I was brought to the laundries after the breakfast. And I was put in front of a massive, big sink and I do remember I was quite small and I couldn't reach the sink and there was these big boards under my feet. And I remember clearing out all these very large baskets and pulling them in from a back room and they all had to be emptied and sorted out. And I remember s...washing things by hand with these big scrubbing boards. And when that was done then I do remember going to the big laundry room where the big machines were and you've to fill the machines and then the clothes were wet coming out and you...you know, it was constantly laundry work. And you went from the laundry where the sinks were into where the machines were, the big washing machines and then in the afternoon you went into a room where you done all the hand ironing. Now you couldn't speak and there was a nun would sit at the top of the Ironing Room as it was called and she was either sewing and she was telling you holy things or she was reading a book, there was something religious going on. And if the nun wasn't giving you religion stuff, she was sewing and it was coming out through amplifiers in the room. It was all these prayers and you have to keep answering the prayers as they were going on.

SP *Jesus.*

K And then it would be time for dinner, which was bad food, it was...you know not good food, but you were hungry, you ate it. You returned to the laund...oh you had somebody in the...it was called the Refectory, you had an elderly lady would be there while you were eating as she read from the Bible. Now you were not allowed to speak, she read from the Bible and then you went back to your laundry duties and you really, really worked hard. So that went on I s...think until...oh and the Angelus would ring then and you'd have to stop to say the Angelus, that was at twelve o'clock, six o'clock the Angelus would go and you'd have to stop and say the Angelus along with all the other prayers.

SP *Uh huh.*

K And then at six o'clock it would be tea time. It could be...consist of maybe bread and butter or whatever, it was never anything fancy anyway but 'twas food. And after that was over you went into a recreation room and you sat around in this big room for about an hour. And then I suppose about maybe half seven, I'm not too particular on the time now, but it would have been early, you got an hour's television, and then the nun came out and you knelt...we all knelt in front of chairs, there was chairs that you sat and we knelt down in front of them and we said the night prayers. That was fine. Then you...of course you had no bath, there was no washing before you went to bed, there was no bath, it was straight to the bedroom, and the nun would come in and she'd go around to all the dormitories and she'd check that you were in bed and that everything was in order and there was prayers going on and prayers going on and the door was *locked*. So once the door was locked – there was bars on the window – the door was locked behind you, you could've been there, sick, anything and there was...there was no protection. If there was a fire you were just a goner. So that was the same routine...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...like, day in and day out. And I remember there was a few young girls...I think I would've been the youngest there at the time, I was sixteen I would've been the youngest there, and I remember this particular nun, she used to give us cigarettes...three cigarettes a day. So we were kind of...got used to the cigarettes and I remember if you were lucky to get the laundry basket with the doctor's...hospital stuff in it, you'd know there would be cigarette butts in the pocket, you knew that, and you were always anxious to get...and we'd collect all the cigarette butts from the...even from an...any pocket, we'd...we'd go through the pockets, if you found the butt of a cigarette, God you were in heaven. And you might find a cigarette box and we'd take the paper off of the silver that's when they'd be paper and we'd make up our own cigarettes. So that...to me that was wrong because at sixteen you shouldn't be getting a cigarette anyway.

SP *Yeah.*

K And...

SP *And you had never smoked before?*

K No, no wouldn't have known anything about cigarettes...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...knew nothing about anything really, it was innocence, that...my...at that time you were innocent at sixteen. And on Saturday...Saturday was cleaning day, you just cleaned, you were down on your knees – nothing was done unless you were down on your knees. Like you scrubbed wooden floors in the laundry, it was all tiles in the corr...the corridor was so long. All that had to be done, all day Saturday it was all constant cleaning. And on Sunday it was retreat day, you just had nothing to do, I mean you were silenced and you prayed. So that would have been the gist of it.

SP *Yeah.*

K And I do remember when...we'll say an old lady, she mightn't have been old, she might have looked old, might have been dying and I remember being brought up to the Infirmary and we had to sit around the bed, I would have never seen an old woman like that.

SP *And how did that make you feel?*

K It was very frightening...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...it was frightening because you were sitting there and everybody was praying around this lady that was dying and you were actually there when she died. And I do remember the funeral and there was never any...now that I think about it, it was just a bit of land at the side of the Magdalene Laundries...there was no identification to say this is such and such a one...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...it was just a kind of a...grass.¹ And I do remember them coming in and burying...

¹ Interviewee is possibly speaking about the consecrated Magdalenes' graveyard which was located on the grounds of High Park until 1993, when the women interred there were exhumed, cremated and reinterred at Glasnevin Cemetery. For further information please see: http://jfmresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/JFMR_Critique_190215.pdf

SP *Yeah. And did they a...did any relatives of that lady for example...*

K Well I...there was really no relatives went into...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...went into the...into High Park. I know it was...I had a lady come to visit me every...first Sunday of the month, but she was from the Legion of Mary.

SP *Okay.*

K That would have been the...the first...but you weren't allowed to tell her *anything*. This was the reason you were allowed to have a visitor. Now I did ha...I did have two ladies that were in the Industrial School with me...that would have been working in Dublin, come to visit me, and that was the proof that I was there. And I also had a nun from the Industrial School – and I'm only saying 'Industrial School' because I don't want to say...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...where I was² – and I did have a n...a nun came to visit me from the Industrial School, who would've been up in Dublin doing a course. So you know, the proof is there that I was there, even though the nuns are saying that I was in a training centre [An Grianán Training Centre at High Park].

SP *Yeah.*

K Training centres do not have bars on windows.

² Interviewee is possibly fearful of Section 28 (6) of Residential Institutions Redress Act, 2002, which states:

A person shall not publish any information concerning an application or an award made under this Act that refers to any other person (including an applicant), relevant person or institution by name or which could reasonably lead to the identification of any other person (including an applicant), a relevant person or an institution referred to in an application made under this Act.

SP *Uh huh.*

K They do not have *every door* locked behind you. They do not work in laundries...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...so this is what...the thing what was...it was a Magdalene Laundries [sic] and...and that's...

SP *Hmm, and...*

K ...so I was there, sorry go on...

SP *Sorry, were you ever told if you were going to be released?*

K Not then no.

SP *Or, you know, were you given a release date you know?*

K No, not until...I think it would've been late '67. As I said in my papers, I was still there late '67...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and I do remember being sent to see...for an interview for a job, but that would...I never got the job for some...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...even though it said that...who I was, I was sent for clerical work interviews so they must have known I had something. But in late '67 I was sent to see a psy...a psychiatrist,³ is that what you...

SP *Yeah.*

³ See also MAGOHP/49/ANON: <http://jfmresearch.com/home/oralhistoryproject/transcripts/survivors/angelinamayfield/>

K ...is that what...them...

SP *Or a psychologist.*

K But I don't remember...yeah, I do not remember that, but I do have a letter stating that I saw this person on the...around the 17th of December in 1967.

SP *Yeah.*

K But I cannot recall ever meeting anybody.

SP *Hmm.*

K So I...I have no idea where this came from.

SP *Yeah, yeah would you feel comfortable t...saying what that letter said about you?*

K Yes.

SP *Because I think it's very interesting.*

[Brief pause and sound of papers rustling while interviewee retrieves letter]

K *(Reads out report) 'The National Organisation for Rehabilitation' and it's 'The National Rehab...Rehabilitation Placement Service, Vocational Report. Kathleen, High Park Convent, Drumcondra, Dublin 9. Kathleen was referred for psychological assessment by Sister... (pause)*

SP *Leave that blank.*

K *...in charge, High Park Training Centre. She was originally referred to the training centre by her mother and step-father because of uncontrolled behaviour. She is a well-dressed, neat girl and she speaks rather well. She seems immature and lacking in confidence. From the referring letter it seems that this girl spent her childhood in (pauses to leave orphanage name blank) Orphanage*

under the care of the Sisters of Mercy. She appears to have been troublesome in school. At the age of sixteen her mother took her to England to live with her...her. She did not get on well with her step-father; she felt that he was hostile towards her and did not want her in his home. She returned to Ireland and seemed to have settled down in the training centre where she has established a good reputation as rather [regards] efficiency and reliability. This girl's education attainment is fairly good; she completed six standard programmes in national school but did not sit the Primary Certificate examination. She reads well at thirteen-year level, but her level of sentence construction is rather naïve, with spelling reasonably good, arithmetic ability is poor. [inaudible 14:14] On the WAIS [Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale] record of intelligence, Kathleen's scores place her on the upper level of the borderline mental handicapped category. The Rotter Incomplete Sentence Blanks [psychological test] indicates immaturity, anxiety and over-preoccupational [sic] with the past. She seems to have specific anxieties centred on the psycho-sexual area, together with anxiety concerning a traumatic experience in England. It is recommended that she may have psychiatric appraisal? (Inquires whether she is reading the word correctly)

SP *Appraisal.*

K *Appraisal. She would probably be suitable for minor clerical work, laundry work or domestic work. Demanding secretarial work would, it be felt it would be too difficult for her.'*

SP *And that was a report from a psychologist, we won't give a name.*

K Yes, yes.

SP *And...like I was wondering Kathleen if you can tell us, how do you feel reading that? What do you think about that report about yourself?*

K I think it is *absolutely disgusting* how somebody would assume that this is the person I am. And I would have no reflection on anybody who has this type of disability.

SP *And do you want to actually say now, we'll talk more in detail about this later, but just say what you did become after you left?*

K I was self...I self-educated...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and I went on to do clerical work in a very important job...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and I had to be very capable because I was dealing with the public as well as people in the establishment that I worked with.

SP *Yeah.*

K And it was *very* high clerical work.

SP *Which they told you...*

K And...

SP *...you couldn't do.*

K And th...these...this person decided that I wasn't capable.

SP *Hmm.*

K I mean I was capable of laundry work, because if I was as they said in a training centre, did...I did train how to iron a shirt, I was trained to do laundry work. I was not trained to do schooling, like reading, arithmetic or whatever, but I was trained to do laundry work...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...that's it. And I'm very adamant about that, it was *laundry work*.

SP *Yeah. And were you paid?*

K I was not paid.

SP *And so just to clarify, how many...so you were h...there how many years?*

K I was there from 1964 until I think the very end of 1967, maybe going into '68.

SP *Yeah, yeah. And do you...what y...yeah, yeah so...and sorry ignore me there, I just want to rewind just a little bit...*

K Hmm.

SP *...just to talk a little bit about before you went into the laundry. So you were in an Industrial School...*

K Yes.

SP *And we won't...we won't name it...*

K Yes.

SP *...but I just wondered if...so how old were you...or what were the circumstances behind you being put into the Industrial School?*

K My mother was an unmarried mother...

SP *Okay.*

K ...and she was very young...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and she had been working and was sent home because she wasn't well. And it was established that of course I was the...you know, because of me you know, she was pregnant on me. And we had a neighbour next door, a brother and a sister...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and I lived with them for I suppose maybe two years.

SP *Okay.*

K And...

SP *After you were born?*

K Yes, and...because my mother was put out of the house.

SP *Okay.*

K And they wanted to adopt me...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and I have papers to state that and because they were not a married couple, the courts decided it wasn't suitable and the courts put me into the Industrial School.

SP *Yeah.*

K I was about...I must...I think I was two and a half.

SP *Yeah. And your mum was gone at this stage?*

K She was gone...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...my mother was gone to Li...L...London, I don't know where...she was gone anyway...

SP *Yeah, she was gone.*

K She was gone at this stage, she was put out.

SP *Okay. And what was it like in the Industrial School?*

K Shocking.

SP *Yeah.*

K *It was absolutely...* I got so much beatings, so much punishments, starved of food, it was the punishment if you done something you thought was wrong. The biggest punishment was a beating and no food...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and I suffered quite ill-health because of it you know, I...I would have suffered from very bad anaemia and I would have been getting injections at the time – they were known as liver injections at the time – because I was very ill.

SP *Hmm.*

K Now in saying that it was in my family anyway, my mother would have suffered with it.

SP *Yeah.*

K But I w...I was hungry, I was very hungry; that was...that was the big issue in the Industrial School was hunger because you got your breakfast, dinner, tea but you got nothing else.

SP *Hmm.*

K And the dinner was *appalling* because supposing there was twenty of us in the dining room and we didn't eat such and such a thing, it was all put into a dish...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and it was put into the oven and this was what you got the next day. The food was *absolutely*...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...it was no...there was nothing nourishing about it. On a Friday and a Sunday we got bread and butter and that was a treat because it was nicer...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...than the dinner we got during the week. Bread and butter was a treat. But you were limited to the pieces of bread you got, you were limited, everything you got was limited. Like if you had two slices of bread and you wanted another one you didn't get it. So you were hungry.

SP *And you were just in the one...from the age of two and a half, you were just...'til sixteen*

K Yeah it...

SP *...it was just the one...*

K ...the one...

SP *...Industrial School?*

K ...the one Industrial School, yes...

SP *Okay.*

K ...yes.

SP *Yep, yeah. And just...yeah like...like in terms of...so you would have been...like how would they punish you or how...what...how would they discipline you there?*

K Discipline with a very...they had...it was called...it was a massive, big...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...weapon, it was called a slapper at the time – I know i...it sounds funny now – it was so thick, and the nun carried it in...inside her habit, she carried it, and you g...you really got such awful...aw...and while you were...while this particular nun was beating me – I'm speaking for me – she would have your hair in one hand and she wouldn't stop beating you until she wore herself out.

SP *Okay.*

K And then you had this woman who had been there herself as a child and went on to work there.

SP *Hmm.*

K She would carry the wooden spoon or if she didn't have it she would send somebody for it.

SP *Yeah.*

K And she was worse than the nun, she was absolutely...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...because she...she didn't even stop when she was tired.

SP *Yeah.*

K Now she...*very cruel* and I mean there was no such thing as being *bold*, because you weren't *bold* then...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...you were *afraid* to be bold. And I do remember being asked to do vulgar things, like if there was a bad smell...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and you'd be asked...a load of girls would be asked to line along the...the...the – this is the Industrial School now...

SP *Hmm, yeah.*

K ...we'd be asked to line in a room and we had to...a girl had to put her hand up to see was her pants wet, to the girls that were there...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...because they would have nearly known the girls who would wet their pants because they would have been the same girls who wet the bed.

SP *Of course, yeah.*

K And I would have been one of the lucky ones that I didn't.

SP *Yeah.*

K And the girls who wet the bed then would have to bring their sheets down over their heads and put them on down in the fields to dry without washing them.

SP *Yeah.*

K So, I wasn't punished because I didn't wet the bed, which was great but I would have been severe...the beatings you got in there were...they were uncontrollable.

SP *Yeah.*

K They were absolutely...now, it was cruel and then the nuns in the classroom would do the same with you. Now I remember being in the classroom and maybe I...I...they said I was disruptive, I don't know.

SP *Hmm.*

K I...there was a special seat made for me and I had to sit in the corner, which meant I couldn't see the blackboard because once my glasses were broken I didn't get another pair.

SP *Oh.*

K And I could never see the blackboard, and there was times when I was put under a cl...an enclosed table in the classroom and all I could see was the nun's black habit. And I would have been left there all day.

SP *And why would your glasses be broken?*

K Could have been playing...

SP *Right, yeah...*

K ...could have been doing something.

SP *...yeah, and they just wouldn't replace them?*

K They w...they were never replaced...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...which meant as a result my eyes being...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...not...you know, I had to have surgery on my eyes...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...when I came to Dublin. But thank God I'm okay, you know, I'm fine with that now. But you just didn't get the glasses again and that was it, you broke them end of story.

SP *Okay.*

K Now, if you were really, really sick they did...you were looked after...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...if you were really, really sick. But I suffered very bad with a blood condition and I wasn't looked after. I mean I was sent out, one...I was working...when I was sixteen or when I was twelve I was sent to the convent kitchen to work, which was a joy, it was *absolutely*...because you got proper food, and it was different, you were a working girl but you didn't get paid for it...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...but you...you were happier – I...well I was happier there.

SP *And your education, did it stop there?*

K My education stopped at twelve.

SP *Hmm.*

K I...I went to work in...in the nuns' convent...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...with other girls...did as well. And I worked there from eight o'clock in the morning until nine at night...

SP *Wow.*

K ...seven days a week. But it was better than being in the Industrial School...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...you felt you had that little...more, and you were well fed. But oh, I...yeah, we used to have to work in the morning as well in...when I was in the Industrial School, before your breakfast you had to go to the convent and do all your jobs, before you had breakfast in the Industrial School. You had to go to...I might have to do the chapel, someone else done something else, but we all had our jobs...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...before you had your breakfast. So you came over, had your breakfast, got ready for school. So that was...that was tough, doing a day's work, a day...young children...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...before you went to school.

SP *Yeah.*

K So it was...it was very cruel, the Industrial School was absolutely...it was *shocking*. Now, it has left me traumatised, I wake up at nights and I'm actually crying because this nun is...is there and she's not being nice to me...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and I still get that...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and that is really the truth. I get...I've often woken up crying and I've said, oh you know it's a dream...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...thank God.

SP *Yeah.*

K So that...that affect...that has affected me to this day.

SP *Yeah. And did you receive any visits from people while you were there?*

K No, not until I was sixteen, when my relatives were told I was there.

SP *And so up until that point...*

K Up until that point I had...

SP *...you thought you had...*

K ...no, no...

SP *...no family?*

K ...no, no, nobody.

SP *Did you have a...*

K No, I was a nobody.

SP *...did you know what a family was?*

K No.

SP *Yeah.*

K *Not* an iota.

SP *Yeah.*

K But I knew that some of them in the Industrial School would have had visitors...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and like, the way it was they would share stuff with you, it was always...we all shared, it...whatever we had we shared.

SP *So, did you get on with the other girls?*

K Oh yes, oh we were like...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...one big happy family...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...you know, it was...I'm still friendly with a lot of them to this day.

SP *Yeah.*

K It was...it was that sort of...we knew they were our sisters...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and we had our own special friends that we played with and another one had her own special friends. Yeah it was...that was fine, the playing was fine but the brutality was...was uncalled for.

SP *Yeah.*

K Like you wouldn't do it to them in a prison because you wouldn't be allowed!

SP *Yeah.*

K Like you really wouldn't.

SP *And you were telling me earlier as well th...they would threaten you...*

K Oh yes...

SP *...with...*

K ...if you were...if you done something *they* thought was wrong...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...I mean we wouldn't have seen...

SP *Of course.*

K ...now we might have seen it was wrong because we mightn't have been happy to do it but it wouldn't have been bad.

SP *Yeah, yeah.*

K We might have went down to the swings and you shouldn't have been down there because it was in a different area.

SP *Hmm.*

K And you'd say, 'the nuns are over at the con...convent having their prayers,' and you might go down and go on the swings and to them that was...you disobeyed them.

SP *Yeah.*

K And you were brought into a room and you got an awful hiding and you were told, 'when you go to the Good Shepherd you'll get worse than that'. So we were threatened with... 'my God we're going to the Good Shepherds, what are we going to do if we're going to the Good Shepherds?' And this was a big fear and I do remember girls being sent...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...a bag being packed and sent to the Good Shepherds, but this was the thing, 'you'll get worse in the Good Shepherds'.

SP *Okay.*

K So that was shocking, you know.

SP *Yeah.*

K So it went from all that to a nine months break in England where I was treated very badly...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...that's why it came into the psychosexual problems...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...because of what happened.

SP *Yeah.*

K And it wasn't...it wasn't my mother and my step-father who sent me, they would have known nothing about a so-called training centre, they would have known nothing.

SP *Yeah.*

K It was the nun herself said she would bring me back, so th...saying that my mother and father decided – they didn't decide anything.

SP *Yeah.*

K And really once I was gone from the Industrial School the nuns had nothing to do with me...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...nothing at all. They should've minded their own business really.

SP *And I was going to ask as well, the day that you were released from the Industrial School, I mean, did you feel prepared?*

K No, no, no.

SP *Like...like how did you feel that day?*

K I cried the night before...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...I was terrified. I'm going...I'm getting on a plane, I've never been on a bus never mind a plane and I was doing it all on my own.

SP *Yeah.*

K I do remember that somebody came on the train with me to the airport, I do remember that.

SP *Hmm.*

K And I got on the plane on my own, and I mean...I don't think you can do that at sixteen like, go on a plane on your own. I think you have to have...once you're under eighteen you have to have some...I'm not sure about that but times changed. But I do remember doing all that on my own and I was absolutely terrified.

SP *Yeah.*

K And they told me a relative was going to meet me...

SP *On...*

K ...on the other side.

SP *...and they didn't even say your mum or...?*

K No...

SP *No.*

K ...it was a relative. I was going to...but I had met this particular relative when I was sixteen so I knew who I was meeting...

SP *Oh.*

K ...I had met her the previous six months. But now the...the Industrial School wouldn't...I was supposed to leave we'll say a certain year. We'll say I was admitted in nineteen...whatever, I've it there somewhere, in nineteen-fif...I was...I was admitted in 1949 and I was to be released in 1963. But I wasn't released in 1963 because my mother wouldn't bring a priest to the house and they were not sending me to a Protestant country as they called it – England – unless the priest came to the house. But my mother wrote back, and I do have the letters...

SP *Uh huh.*

K ...and said there was never a priest in the house and there never would be. So, it was all new to me, leaving the Industrial School after...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...we'll say from a baby to sixteen, didn't know anything about the outside world.

SP *And actually I meant to ask as well did you celebrate birthdays?*

K No, I didn't know my birthday. *(Laughs)*

SP *Hmm.*

K I knew nothing about birthdays at all, no.

SP *And...and what about Christmas, and like what did Christmas mean to you?*

K Well, Chris...the week b...the week before Christmas we would have had a very big celebration and it was down to the...an organisation called the GAA [Gaelic Athletic Association]...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...which I absolutely adore to this day. I...I'm just a great follower of the GAA and I do remember they came once a year and we were dressed up in beautiful clothes and it was a big day and there was Santy, there was parcels and there was presents. And it went on for a whole day and we got lovely food. And as soon as the day was over your presents were taken from you and there was a big press at the end of the room and all the presents were in there but you couldn't touch them, it was locked, everything was taken from you. You might...you might just get a deck of cards, you might get a game of Ludo...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...but they were taken from you, once Christmas was over. I often wondered where all them things went to, and I do...I do know that if somebody had a visitor and there was a child with the visitor they got the present that you got, it was given to them. Like you could come with say with an aunt...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and you got the present that was...that Santy was after giving and we'd be so excited about the presents. So that...that disappeared, the present disappeared once Christmas Day was over...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and that was the...that was it. But we did get...I think we got a good dinner alright, Christmas Day, I do remember getting a good dinner.

SP *Hmm, yeah, okay.*

K On...on Christmas Day, yeah.

SP *And were you given a number as well and...?*

K Now, I had no number.

SP *Oh you had no number.*

K No, but on my papers there was a number.

SP *Okay, but you just weren't aware of it?*

K No, we were never classed as a number. On our clothes...but I can't remember...on our clothes you had a number but that's the number...we were never ever referred to as it, but we'll say my t-shirt was number 19, that would be...probably be my number.

SP *Yeah.*

K Now I have it somewhere, it's on file somewhere...

SP *Yeah, yeah.*

K ...but we would have been...our clothes would have been a number, it wouldn't have been my name.

SP *Hmm.*

K So you knew your clothes by a number.

SP *Yeah. And tell me, when you were in there did you know what a Magdalene Laundry was?*

K No.

SP *No.*

K No.

SP *You had no id[ea]?*

K Just knew of Good Shepherds...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...but didn't know who they were...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...just knew they were not nice people.

SP *Yeah, yeah.*

K We were afraid of them...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...I was actually afraid...fraid of the Good Sh...the word 'the Good Shepherds,' the Good Shepherd nuns.

SP *Hmm.*

K 'They'll do worse than we're doing,' so that was fear.

SP *Yeah. And tell me, when you were in the Industrial School, like h...how did they make you feel like, psychologically? Do you know like, did they humiliate you...*

K Oh they did...

SP *...did they insult you?*

K ...oh, oh they did, you...yes they did, when you...as a teena...I mean as youngsters you all stood, there was a bath once a week, there was two baths...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and they were in the one room of course and first person to the bath was lucky but the tenth person wasn't lucky...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...even the fourth person wasn't lucky. So the same bath was used for everybody, like the water got cold and they would've been...the person in charge would be standing there, even as an adult, you know, you'd be fourteen or fift...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...when you would be maturing, and the woman would come out and humiliate you about your monthlies, anybody who has...in front of everybody...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...like you don't...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...have a bath. And at that we only got rags; they made up cloths for us that we used and you had to wash them...to wash them yourself. But the bath was once a week, hair washed one week, same water as the person before you...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and the bath was the same. There was two baths and there was no division. So you could see who was in that bath and there was two of us in the bath at a time.

SP *Yeah.*

K And the woman in charge would be there supervising the whole thing. So that would've been *awful, awful*. I mean I remember just c...trying to cover ourselves...

SP *Yeah.*

K ... you know...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...as a young girl.

SP *Because you would've been growing up.*

K Of course you would...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...yeah, yeah. And then we had to do the nuns' laundry as well. Like every Sunday morning after Mass we had to go to the convent and bring...bring down these *massive* heavy baskets and we had to wash the nuns' towels by hand. *(Pause)* So that...it was...

SP *So they had...there was a laundry in there?*

K There was a laundry in the Industrial School...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...that the bigger girls in the Industrial School used [to] have to work in as well.

SP *Okay and that would be kind of doing nuns'...*

K Our own personal...

SP *...laundry and your own?*

K ...the nuns and...yeah.

SP *Yeah, okay.*

K And that would...that was heavy work too.

SP *And did they make you feel worthless?*

K Oh they did *of course*, God almighty.

SP *What kind of things would they say to you?*

K Well they would tell you you were stupid, they would tell you that you...you were going nowhere...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and that...you know, the sort of insults that you would...you would...you wouldn't...you wouldn't even understand it, it was just that you would get out the classroom, you're no good, you don't know how to read or write and you'll never learn how to read or write and you'll never get on in the world.

SP *Yeah.*

K You were just stupid, you were a dunce, it was a dunce actually...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and you wore a hat with 'D' on the front of it. Now that you've asked me, yeah.

SP *Hmm.*

K You were a dunce and everybody knew you were a dunce because you had to parade...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...with the dunce's hat. I would never have considered myself to be a dunce...

SP *Hmm, yeah.*

K ...i...my lack in class was that I couldn't read because I didn't have glasses and that has all been proven when I went to different place to get my eyes done, that there was no way...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...that...that there's no way I could have been able to study because I couldn't see what I was doing anyway.

SP *Yeah.*

K So that w...that was humiliating, the going around...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...with the dunce's hat.

SP *And what kind of fears and anxieties did you have inside the Industrial School?*

K How...how...what?

SP *Did you have any fears and anxieties inside...?*

K You'd fears all the time. You were afraid of your life that you had done something and you were going to get a hell of a beating...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...because there was...there was times when there was a lot of girls there who would have been treated as special, and they might say you done something when they had done it...

SP *Right.*

K ...because knowing that they would get away with it and they would have been believed.

SP *Right, yeah.*

K As a matter of fact I was talking to somebody about that one day that was there and she said, 'God, I remember putting the blame on someone else because I knew that they would believe me. And she admitted it and she said, 'I often think about it now and I feel bad'.

SP *Yeah.*

K And she would have had a relative coming to her and she might have had some sweets or something and she'd say that somebody took some of her sweets when they wouldn't have had...

SP *Oh.*

K ...because she knew she wanted to get, we'll say me, into trouble or someone into trouble.

SP *Hmm.*

K And she would run to the nun and say, 'such and such a one...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...took my sweets,' and she's often...she's admitted that to me. We've often sat down and...and...and she'd say, 'God I've done that too,' she said, 'I'd tell them, that...that we'll say you maybe took the sweets, and I'd be aft...and I hadn't [sic] eaten them myself. So that did go on...

SP *Okay.*

K ...there was favouritism there...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...if you had a relative at all coming to visit you, you were...

SP *[Inaudible]*

K ... treated special, yeah.

SP *Okay, ok so go...so getting out of the Industrial School kind of time. So we're now...we're going back into the laundry...*

K Yes, yeah.

SP *...again. So the day when you were being tak...so...okay...so when you were leaving England and you flew over, how did you feel...like what were you thinking you were going over for, you know, when you were coming back to Ireland?*

K What did I think of when I was coming back, is it?

SP *Yeah...*

K I didn't...

SP *...from Lond...from England, sorry.*

K ...I was a child, I...I...I didn't...

SP *Yeah.*

K ... I just didn't.

SP *Yeah.*

K I did not...I...I just cannot be lying to you and say...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...I just can't figure...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...all I know I was coming to a safer place...

SP *Okay.*

K ...than what I was coming from.

SP *Yeah, yeah.*

K I was not in a safe environment where I was in England...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...because I was not wanted. Now my mother wanted me, but at that time the men were the bosses anyway, but I knew I was...I was going and I was happy. But other than that I couldn't turn around to you and say...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...how I felt...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...but I...I do remember feeling happy to be gone...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...because I do remember he put me into a room downstairs and put a bed into it, an old mattress and he used to come into me. I do remember that.

SP *Yeah, okay.*

K Now I don't ever remember having actual sexual intercourse...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...but I do remember him...I remember that part of his body...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...you know...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...I do remember that.

SP *Okay.*

K *Yeah.*

SP *And so when you saw the two guards like, the two policemen standing...you know, did you think anything about that?*

K I didn't know who they were.

SP *You didn't know...*

K No, no.

SP *...you just thought they were...*

K I didn't have a clue...

SP *...yeah, you didn't...*

K ...they were bringing me to a safe place. I...I just...

SP *Okay.*

K ...at that time I really did not know I was very innocent, I didn't...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...you know.

SP *Yeah.*

K Besides having no education, I...I c...I certainly didn't know, I just know that they brought me to this place...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and the nun opened the little shutter on the door, little tiny little...in the door and the guards never said nothing, they just...the nun just brought me in, the guards went about their business and that was the end of that. So the guards knew...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...what was going...I mean I ran away from there. I ran out of the place with other girls and we were brought back by the guards.

SP *Do you want to tell me about that actually?*

K I do remember queuing up outside the...the conv...the church was up near...was nearer to the Industrial School, which meant you had the easier way to get out, because you were on...you were out in the open...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and the Industrial School was there, the church was near the Industrial School, the Magdalene Laundries was further down so you had no way of running out of there, but once you got up near the church you had an easier way. And I remember we had it planned the night before, and there was three of us and we ended up on O'Connell Street, we just ran out and the gate was open and we ran out. You see the gate would have been open because the laundry vans were coming in and out.

SP *Yeah.*

K And we ran out and we thought we were great. We were down the middle of O'Connell Street, didn't know what we were going to do, but we'd run away and I remember the guards coming to us on O'Connell Street, because the clothes were a giveaway anyway.

SP *Because you would have been wearing the uniform?*

K We were wearing the uniforms...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and they would have been a given away [giveaway] and I remember the guards bringing us back...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...bringing us back to High...to the Magdalene Laundries in High Park – I don't mind mentioning High Park – and brought us back.

SP *Okay.*

K And you weren't...every month you would get...you would have to make a list that you might want, a little few bits every month. Now you were allowed four items; you might want something personal for yourself, you might want a tube of toothpaste or whatever. But you were allowed four items. But if you done something wrong you didn't get them.

SP *Oh.*

K You didn't get your four items...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...so you had to wait.

SP *Okay.*

K So there was several times when we didn't get our personal things because we didn't obey the rules...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...you see, it was all rules.

SP *Yeah. And actually what happened to you when you did come back? Did anything else happen, did the...when you...when...?*

K Oh you got a beating, you got a beating...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...oh yeah you g...you got walloped across...I mean, slapped across the face here and there, and I remember her saying, 'you're getting no cigarettes,' but I thought, 'God I love my cigarette now,' because I got used to them.

SP *Yeah.*

K As a matter of fact we used to...when you'd get your messages we used to order cigarettes but then you wouldn't get the packet of cigarettes, the nun would give them to you. So they weren't buying the cigarettes really, they were...it was part of my package.

SP *I see, yeah,*

K It was part of my package. And you'd get a b...I remember getting terrible slaps across the face...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and, 'you won't do that again'. Now you were never deprived of your work, as a matter of fact you got harder work if you ran away.

SP *I can imagine.*

K You had to stay back in the laundry room longer; we'll say the laundries closed at six, you'd have to stay until seven.

SP *Okay.*

K And you might have to iron very hard stuff for the...the priest's vestments or whatever. But you had to do extra work for running away.

SP *Okay. And did they do anything to your hair or anything?*

K Oh my hair was cut short...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...the night I went...when I went in, my hair was cut completely.

SP *Oh so the night you went in...*

K Oh yeah, my hair was...

SP *...they cut your hair?*

K ...my hair was cut yeah, yeah my hair was cut that night.

SP *Okay.*

K And I was given the clothes and – it was like prison – I was putting my clothes...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...I remember bringing the clothes and I was told to go to a certain nun the next day for shoes.

SP *Okay.*

K I remember going to this particular nun and...she was a...she was actually a nice old nun, she was nice. And I remember her giving me...she brought me to this room and there was loads and loads and loads of shoes, somebody might have worn them before me.

SP *Hmm.*

K They certainly weren't new shoes.

SP *Yeah.*

K I never had new shoes anyway...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...never. And I remember getting a pair of shoes that were kind of like, as we used to call them, nun's shoes, you know. The youngsters today love them! *(Laughs)* We used to call them nun's shoes with laces on them.

SP *Yeah.*

K So I remember...I remember all that; getting the hair cut, the uniform, and you only had clean underwear once a week.

SP *Hmm. And you know those beatings that you got for running away, were they done in public or were they...like were they done in front...*

K Oh no...

SP *...of the other women or...*

K ...no, oh no...

SP ...*in private?*

K ...no you were brought into the office.

SP *Okay, yeah.*

K Oh no, nothing was done in front of anybody else...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...it was in an office..

SP *Okay.*

K ...as it was called, 'her office'.

SP *Yeah, yeah.*

K And she stood there, she...*ugh*...you know...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...you just got it on both sides and, 'you won't do that again'.

SP *Yeah.*

K And we had to go down on our knees and apologise as well, yeah.

SP *And were you beaten any other times while you were there?*

K I wasn't...there wasn't a lot of beating there, only if you really, as they thought, deserved it, which was mostly across the face and they pulled your hair...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...whatever hair you had was pulled. I remember having very little hair and I could still feel the nun's nails in my head.

SP *Yeah.*

K And I do remember one nun bringing my head down to my toes, I do remember that, that was on one occasion.

SP *Yeah.*

K I think I was cheeky to one of the black habits⁴ as they were known as. The elderly women were known as the black habits.

SP *Oh I see, the kind of...the consecrated...*

K Yeah, yeah they were the black, they were there...you know...

SP *They were known as black habits, yeah.*

K ...yeah, and I remember I must have been cheeky to one of them, or didn't do what I was told and I remember a nun getting my head and she dragged me right down to my feet. That was one thing I do remember.

SP *Yeah.*

K And I was pleading with her that I was sorry, but then I had to go down on my knees and apologise to this black habit woman.

SP *Jesus.*

K I...I've a good memory of all of that.

⁴ Also known as auxiliaries or consecrated Magdalenes.

SP *And you said there were a lot of rules and that you'd sometimes not obey them, what...what kind of...can you give some examples?*

K We'd try to avoid the prayers...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...y...y...y...there was five or six young girls and we would...we just hated the prayers and we used to try and avoid the prayers. We wanted to watch television...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...rather than the prayers and if you could avoid the prayers, that would've been severe punishment. I mean you would get a right wallop for that but there again you were brought to the office.

SP *Hmm.*

K Or there was...there was this big room with a stage on it and it was closed over, you could be brought up behind that particular thing and you would have been...got a right beating up there.

SP *Okay.*

K Prayer was important, silence was important.

SP *Hmm. So you did all your work in silence?*

K All your work...everything was done...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...through...you had to listen to everything through amplifiers...that...there was an amplifier in each room.

SP *Okay. And you said there was a TV, did you get much time to see...*

K No, about an hour.

SP *...the TV? Yeah.*

K I do remember one woman and she lost her hand on a machine, and as a matter of fact she never came out of the laundries because I remember going up years later – the innocence of people going up to the club⁵ – and she had the false hand, and I said, 'I remember,' I said, 'when you caught your hand in that machine'.

SP *Wow.*

K I mean I'm sure that woman would've been entitled to compensation for that...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...you know.

SP *And did you have any accidents?*

K Well you'd get lots of burns...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...but there was never...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...there was never anything done about it. Y...oh you would of course, you're working in hot ironing rooms all day and...

⁵ See page 61

SP *And did they continue to make you work after you had been burned?*

K Oh yeah, I worked...I...I used to come...I used to have to go to the doctor to get these injections because of my blood...

SP *Hmm, yeah.*

K ...and I had to work when I came back. And actually there was...the heat was the worst thing for me. If you have a blood condition you shouldn't be in too much heat.

SP *Yeah.*

K And I do remember coming back and...and a black habit...I remember going up to this place up in Larkhill and I used to have to get injections...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...because my blood was very bad, I was always fainting.

SP *Oh.*

K And when you came back then you had to go to the laundry to work, there was no rest for me.

SP *Okay.*

K So things like that, I do remember a lot of the cruelty...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...because I can't remember any kindness.

SP *Yeah. And how did the nuns treat...treat you or what was your kind of contact with the nuns?*

K In...in the Magdalene Laundry?

SP *In the laundry.*

K You see there would've been only very few nuns involved in the Magdalene Laundries. There would have been...there was one nun that's mentioned on that [item in file] she would have been in charge of the younger girls. That was...that was...that's why she's saying the training centre. She would've been in charge of the younger girls and there would have been another...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...nun that would be in charge of the laundries and there was a nun in charge of the washroom and...

SP *I see.*

K ...but it would...maybe five nuns in all would've been in charge of that particular...and there was a nun in charge of the infirmary where the sick were, but the convent nuns were in the convent.

SP *Yeah. But...and then...*

K It was the same as the Industrial Schools; the convent nuns...

SP *Hmm*

K ...were in the convent. But there was a select few that would've been involved...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...in...in the Magdalene Laundries.

SP *And then you said there was the black habits?*

K Yes.

SP *And would you say that they had a bigger role in kind of...*

K Oh they would've had, oh they...they...you had to obey them.

SP *In...in...in...in looking after the laundry and the...the whole operation?*

K They woul...they would have been there I'm sure from [when] they were young girls...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and they would have been...a lot of them would have died...that...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...I...I was there for their funerals, and a lot of them would've stayed on for the rest of their lives...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...moved onto a place that they built for them up...up...up near the convent.⁶ And they would've been more in authority, the black habits would've been in authority over the younger girls.

SP *Yeah.*

K And...you know, but they were okay I think, but if you did something wrong you had to answer to them...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and they would report you to the...the nun that was in charge.

SP *Okay.*

⁶ Beechlawn Nursing Home: <https://www.higa.ie/areas-we-work/find-a-centre/beechlawn-house-nursing-home>

K So believe me, it was not a training centre.

SP *Yeah.*

K *Oh!* I'll take it to my grave, you know, it was *not* a training centre.

SP *And in fact...because you were mentioning like, the dormitory, you...you shared a dormitory with all...*

K The...*oh* there must...

SP *...all the ladies...*

K ...there must have been...there must have been about 40 more people in the...in..in the...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...every...of each...

SP *All the ladies...*

K ...yeah, yeah...

SP *...who worked in the laundry?*

K ...yes...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...everybody...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and we all in the one dormitory, the...there was...I think there must have been about three big dormitories...

SP *Yeah, yeah.*

K ...and you would have shared...there was curtains around the beds alright...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...but that was...you know, because they were very worried about your bodies and that the others would see you.

SP *Yeah.*

K But they didn't care what they saw, the nuns themselves. I mean, you stood naked in front of them.

SP *Yeah.*

K So the black habits would've had...were really the helpers more than anything, they were there from I suppose young girls...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and they were institutionalised.

SP *Yeah.*

K I'm sure none of them would have ever wanted to go outside, they were kind of in authority.

SP *Hmm. And did you ever get to go outside other than that time when you ran away?*

K I do remember once a year I think we went to the seaside...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...for a couple of hours and that was nice...

SP *Hmm, yeah.*

K ...once a year, I do remember that, yeah.

SP *Yeah.*

K But it would have been localised, it would have been maybe Malahide, it would have been whatever...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...the...the...the local [beach].

SP *And did you get any visitors in there?*

K No, just the Legion of Mary.

SP *Oh, so the Legion of Mary...*

K Apart from...

SP *...came again to the laundry?*

K ...every...once a month they came.

SP *Okay, because I know they came to you in the Industrial School, so they came...*

K No, no the Legion of Mary didn't come to the Industrial School.

SP *Oh sorry, sorry...*

K ...no, that was...no, no visitors in the Industrial School...

SP *Sorry.*

K ...nobody was...

SP *The Legion...*

K ...no that's fine.

SP *...of Mary was...*

K The Legion of Mary were...were...

SP *...in the Magdalene Laundry.*

K ...yeah, they were the Magdalene Laundries.

SP *Yeah, okay.*

K They were...there was no visitors...I *never* had a visitor until I was sixteen...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...in the Industrial School...

SP *Okay.*

K ...but I did have two women from the Industrial School in [location removed] came to visit me in the laundries and a nun from the Industrial School...

SP *Okay.*

K ...came to visit me in...in the Magdalene Laundries.

SP *And what were the visitations like?*

K Well they wouldn't...they didn't bring you anything anyway, that's all I know. They just...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...I know that when they came...even to this day they'd say, 'God I remember the nun opening the little thing and I remember coming in and locking the doors and all the bars on the window and...'

SP *Hmm.*

K That's a memory they have of it.

SP *Yeah. And were they supervi...like, was your visit...*

K *Oh of course...*

SP *...supervised?*

K ...oh God yes.

SP *Yeah.*

K Oh be God...sure our letters were censored...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...you couldn't...if you wrote a letter....all the letters my mother got had 'training centre' on them, sure I have the letters.

SP *Yeah.*

K So everything was 'training centre,' everything was...my mother wrote to me and the letter was opened when I received it.

SP *Okay.*

K The letters my mother got were...were open, I mean they would have sealed them...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...you had to leave it open, you couldn't do that.

SP *Yeah.*

K So all that was taken from you.

SP *Yeah. And I forget if I...I know we talked about it, but I can't remember if I mentioned it earlier or asked you or if you mentioned it, but what was the laundry you were doing in...like...what kind of laundry were you doing in there? Who were you doing the washing...the laundry for?*

K You did ask me. It was...

SP *Oh I did ask you, okay.*

K ...yeah well...it was for the public...you asked me over there...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...it was the public, it was for the colleges, every college...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...in the country, it was for the...all the hospitals, it would have been personal...personal laundry, it would have been the laundry from the Industrial School that was there and from the convent.

SP *Yeah.*

K So, the army, they have already verified that, that they...that they went there to the laundries...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...with their stuff, where...whichever was the nearest laundry to the barracks at the time. So it would have been all that, from hospitals, colleges, any type of an institution at all, they came from there, and personal...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...laundry.

SP *And did you ever have any contact...you know like, there would have been men...I think you would have had men working like, with the vans, would it be to deliver the...*

K Yeah, but we wouldn't see the men...

SP *Okay.*

K ...because when the laundry came in early Monday morning it was out in a room next to the laundry where the...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...sinks were. And when they...they would drop that off and the men were gone then, you went into this room and you brought out all the baskets.

SP *Okay, okay so you were never allowed...*

K You...you...

SP ...contact?

K ...you saw the van but you never...no contact with the men, no, *none* whatsoever.

SP *Okay. And did you ever feel that...did you ever think you'd get out?*

K Never dawned...never crossed my mind.

SP *Hmm.*

K I was there and that was it.

SP *Yeah.*

K Never, never crossed my mind.

SP *Yeah. And...because they never gave you a release date or anything?*

K No, I was just...I remember just one day the nun coming to me and she was saying to me about going where...they'd built a hostel on the grounds...and that I would be getting...I was going for interviews and I would be going to the hostel. And I think that was early sixt...there was something about early '65, but I won't do nothing here until I'm sure, you know, about the stuff because if I was there at the end of December I was surely there...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...early '65 and I do remember getting a job in a large department store – can I mention it?

SP *No...*

K No.

SP *...oh...oh no you can mention it, yeah, yeah.*

K I remember getting a job in Roches Stores...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...at the time, it was Roches Stores...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...in Henry Street, at the time and I was staying in the hostel. But we were under very strict rules in the hostel, like you had to be home for ten. For the first year you couldn't really go anywhere...

SP *Okay.*

K ...you were confined to time.

SP *Yeah. And this is a hostel on the grounds?*

K Yeah and it was an...a hostel for outsiders as well, you could've come to...

SP *I see, okay.*

K ...yeah, it was money making...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...there was...people paid their way.

SP *Yeah.*

K And the hostel was built there, it was called Martanna House.⁷

⁷ Maps are available on pages 42-43 of the JFM Research critique of Chapter 16 of the McAleese Report, available here: http://jfmresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/JFMR_Critique_190215.pdf

SP *Okay. So the day that they decided...or...or how did this...your release day happen like?*

K I can't remember.

SP *You can't remember, yeah.*

K I just remember going to...getting case...clothes...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and I remember going to...the clothes I went in in...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and I got my case and I remember going to we'll say, the hostel the day before. And I was terrified...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...*absolutely*...and I was going to work...make my own way...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...to work in Roches Stores.

SP *And you wouldn't have been used to the outside?*

K Used to nothing, used to nothing, used to nothing.

SP *And...and who got you that job? Was it...*

K It would have been from...from...from High Park.

SP *Okay.*

K Yeah.

SP *Yeah. And so they never ex...so you never found out like what...why they released you...*

K No.

SP *...or...yeah.*

K I...I just personally think myself that things were changing...

SP *Hmm, yeah.*

K ...like it was...it was in the...

SP *Because this was the late sixties...*

K ...sixties...

SP *...now, yeah.*

K ...and I think things must have been changing then...

SP *Hmm, yeah.*

K ...because there would have been girls there a long time before me and they never got that opportunity...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...to go out to work, they stayed there.

SP *Yeah. And I meant to ask you but were there any inspectors or did anyone ever come to inspect?*

K No, no, no, no, no.

SP *Okay.*

K But I do remember being friendly with other girls in the Magdalene Laundries...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...who were there before me and I remember them going to the hostel bef...well before me and getting work and...

SP *Okay.*

K ...and you know, that...that was it, I do remember that.

SP *Yeah.*

K That o...older girls went there...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...but they would've been about maybe eighteen, nineteen...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and they would've got their jobs and they would've went to the hostel.

SP *And actually when you left the laundry like, were you allowed to be in contact with any of the women that were there...that were still there?*

K No, no.

SP *Okay so you lost contact with them?*

K I lost contact yeah, but there was a club I used to go to, you'd meet some of them, you'd meet the nuns, but that was a club because you needed...but the club was actually run by All Hallows Priest College.

SP *Okay.*

K So that would...that's why that...the club would've been there...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and that was okay, it was an outing...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and it was getting to know yourself and getting to know how the world actually worked.

SP *Yeah, yeah.*

K Because I would have had no experience of...of outside world.

SP *Hmm.*

K I mean you're talking about me being twenty...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and I had no experience of an outside world.

SP *Yeah.*

K Because when I went to England I couldn't get a job because I was only sixteen.

SP *Hmm.*

K I wasn't experienced to do anything. So...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...that...that would have caused a lot of...of problems as well.

SP *Yeah, yeah.*

K So I c...I c...I have a vague memory of what...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...went on but I...I can't remember how it came that I was...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...leaving.

SP *Yeah.*

K But I do remember asking several times, because a lot of my friends had gone and I do remember asking, 'am I going, am I leav...' I do remember...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...asking that question because when I went back to the club, I remember saying it to the nun, 'I was always asking you when was I going'. 'Oh you weren't ready for the world, you were troublesome and...' I mean there were a lot of assumptions there.

SP *Yeah, yeah, okay. And so how long were you in this hostel and working in Roches...*

K I was...

SP *...Stores?*

K ...I don't think I was that long in Roches Stores. I went to school myself.

SP *Oh.*

K I went to a...a...c...a secretarial college in Abbey Street...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and I learned myself.

SP *Was that your own decision or did someone else enrol you?*

K It was my own decision that I wanted to do...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...night school and I think maybe...I think that they may have helped me when I went into the hostel, I think the nun there...

SP *The nun...yeah.*

K ...the nun that was in charge of the hostel might have encouraged me.

SP *Hmm.*

K And I remember appl...applying for a job, it was...when I say the job I worked in, the clerical work I worked in, and I remember getting the job. But it was only very minor, it was working in...in an office that you would as a beginner.

SP *Yeah.*

K And I...I worked my way up and...and was able to do whatever had to be done...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...in the particular...and I was there...I can't remember, I just moved from job to job at that time, it was sort of...you could move...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and I remember working in a television company doing...that time you rented televisions...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and people...you'd...you'd have to do their accounts and make sure that it was paid up, whatever.

SP *Yeah.*

K Even though I wasn't good at sums I was able to do that...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...you know.

SP *And how did you find the whole thing of working, like...?*

K Well I...I got on, I...I...I...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...just made friends then I suppose, and I got on with my life and I...I don't know how...how, it just worked out for me.

SP *Yeah, like...like, I mean, even in terms of finances, so you would never have got a wage packet before, did you find that...any difficulties there or...?*

K I can...I can't remember how I felt...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...about that, I just can't, because even in the hostel you had to pay your way, and I...I just can't...I really can't remember how that...

SP *Yeah. Oh so you had to pay the hostel as well?*

K Oh God you had to pay your way, and then I remember when I left the hostel I w...went to digs...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...because it was time for me...and I went into digs, it was to get your way in life.

SP *Yeah.*

K So really I struggled, I done it on my own...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...really. Once I left the hostel I got on on my own.

SP *Hmm, yeah.*

K I mean I do remember...I do remember I suppose, saying to the nuns, 'I need to get out,' or whatever and my time was up in the hostel and I remember going to digs...

SP *Hmm, yeah.*

K ...and staying there for a while and it was okay. I mean, I...I...I will never know how all this happened but I know it happened...

SP *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*

K ...do y...do you understand where I'm coming from?

SP *I do understand, yeah, yeah. And...*

K Like I took in a lot.

SP *Hmm. And like I actually I wanted to know is how did you...do you know how you survived in the out...like how did you survive in the outside world, do you think?*

K I...I don't know, it just happened.

SP *Yeah.*

K I really don't know.

SP *Yeah.*

K And I've survived up to this day...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and I think too because I had met my family and my relatives and I built up a great relationship with them...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and I built up a relationship with my sisters and my br...I built a great relationship with all of them as the years went on.

SP *Okay.*

K And I think once I got to know them and then I was working, I was able to go down home and I was able to be with my family and like, they would've been very upset of what happened to me.

SP *Okay.*

K They would've been really upset about the whole thing.

SP *So yes, actually I was going to ask you about...*

K Hmm.

SP *...your contact with your family...*

K Oh I just...

SP *...so...*

K ...I get on so well with them, you know.

SP *...so you established contact again?*

K Yes, yeah, yeah.

SP *This is with your mum...*

K My mum's sisters...

SP *...in England?*

K ...and...and brothers and all...

SP *Your mum's sisters...*

K ...yeah.

SP *...like in...in Ireland was it, yeah?*

K Yeah, yeah, yeah.

SP *Okay.*

K And to this day I am just...I'm...I'm top dog with them.

SP *Yeah. And what about your mum? Did you ever...*

K Well my mother died shortly after...

SP *Oh, okay.*

K ...my mother died after...sh...I mean my mother would have died...very shortly after I met her, was only...

SP *Oh I see.*

K ...she would have died in March and she would have been forty-one in April.

SP *Very young.*

K So she was very young but I had the contact with her all the time...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...when I...when I came back...

SP *Okay.*

K ...the contact was there. I even went over when she died because one of her sisters...and I was over for that and I was there for the funeral and that was all lovely with the family, I was accepted.

SP *Hmm.*

K And she was very young...

SP *Yeah, yeah.*

K ...so that was...that was...because I had really got to know her and I got to realise, even though I had...I would never have called her mother...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...you know. And the thing is I would have got on okay with her.

SP *Yeah.*

K So she died very young and that's...but I'm *very, very* close...even all my aunts, their children no matter what's going on I'm invited. I'm the only one, they...do you see a lot of my...my aunts they thought I was a sister to them because I came in the middle of seventeen...

SP *Hmm, yeah.*

K ...and they would have thought that I was a sister and all my cousins to this day think I'm their aunt. And they...I've been at every wedding, I've been at *everything*. I was over in London a couple of...of months ago when one of my aunt's husbands died, you know, it's...I'm just...no matter *what happens* they're on the phone to me, you know, 'we're doing this...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...Kathleen we're doing this and Kathleen we're doing that,' and they're onto me about every single thing, 'are you coming down,' and...so I was never excluded. From day one...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...I got to know the family and it was lovely.

SP *Yeah.*

K *Yeah.*

SP *And actually I find that interesting because you didn't have any contact...or you didn't know what a family was.*

K *No.*

SP *So did you...I mean like, did you take to the family life...*

K *I did.*

SP *...or did you find any difficulties?*

K *No I had no problem.*

SP *Interesting, yeah.*

K *There was one aunt in particular who gave me her home...*

SP *Ah.*

K *...and unfortunately she died as well and I...I miss her to this day.*

SP *Yeah.*

K *And she would have...when I go down the country for a couple of days break...*

SP *Hmm.*

K *...she would... I would stay with her and we'd be...we just got so close, people thought we were actually sisters.*

SP *Yeah. And...*

K And when I go home today people say, 'God every time I see you I do think of herself,' you know and, 'you were always together and 'tis unusual'. So I built up a *great* relationship with my family.

SP *Yeah.*

K Like I would be the one, of all the cousins, that's invited to everything. I mean I go to weddings and I'd say, 'how comes I'm the only...' my nie...my cousin's getting married, I'm the only one there, the rest are...you know.

SP *Yeah.*

K So that...that's nice.

SP *Yeah.*

K I...I just got on very well with them all...

SP *And....*

K ...to this day.

SP *...what about a family of your own? Did you never want to have a family of your own?*

K I would have liked a family but there again, I...I had the operation, I was very young...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...so I couldn't have any...I couldn't have any children because I...I had problems...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...so I couldn't...

SP *But you...you did want...you would've wanted a family though?*

K Well, I...I...I don't know...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...but I think I would have loved a son.

SP *Yeah.*

K I would have loved a lad, yeah but I was in...only in my late thirties...

SP *Yeah, yeah.*

K ...you know, when I had the surgery, and they told me that...it was...I would have never had ch...children anyway with the condition I had.

SP *Yeah, okay. And in terms of like...so I'm...I'm not just going to talk about the Magdalene Laundry, but in terms of what happened to you in your whole life, your Industrial School time as well, what kind of effect has this all had on you? Both physical and psychological – has it had any effects on you?*

K I would have a lot of anger towards people, a lot of people and I had a lot of anger...about four or five years ago my anger would have been really...really...bad. But when I went into the Aislinn Centre, and I saw people who were very bad and I thought, 'I'm not that bad'. So I suppose they helped, the Aislinn C...they...suppose they did help me a lot. And then I became a survivor, but I have...I still I'm very angry with certain people in the religious orders.

SP *Hmm.*

K They're not with us anymore but I have *this terrible anger* about this person and when I speak about her I actually get so bad that I say if she was alive I would do it myself. So I have this awful

anger about this person and I'll *never*...and people say to me, 'you should forget about her,' but I can't forget...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...what she done to me.

SP *Yeah. And how...like did you receive counselling or anything...*

K I did...

SP *...for...*

K ...I did, through the Industrial Schools, I did...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and I...I went to see a psychologist who was really...like yourself, he listened and I felt, *somebody listened.*

SP *Yeah.*

K And somebody believed me, like you.

SP *Hmm.*

K Somebody has actually said, 'forget about it,' they never said, 'forget about it now,' *they actually listened.* And I think this is what I wanted. I was able to express how I felt about this particular nun without somebody saying, 'ah forget about it Kathleen, forget about it Kathleen,' you know. And I thought, 'this is great'.

SP *Hmm, yeah.*

K Nobody...like, you have not said to me, 'forget about it,' and that was the best thing ever.

SP *Yeah.*

K I didn't hear them words, and that would make you believe that you *are* better than that person and that you'll *always* be better than that person and it makes me feel – *oh yes!* But my anger would be there *with her*...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and I...I know I will never...there's no point in saying...I'll...I'll never get rid of that, the *hatred* I have for that person.

SP *She's a nun from the Industrial School?*

K Yes.

SP *Yeah, okay.*

K There's *nobody* will ever understand what that person did to me, *nobody!*

SP *Yeah. And do you still suffer from nightmares?*

K Oh I do from this particular person...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and the lady that was in charge. They are...I don't have any nightmares from the Magdalene Laundries...

SP *Hmm, yeah.*

K ...but this particular nun...and you...t...it mightn't happen every night of the week, it might happen once every six months, and I actually...I'm fighting with her and I'm scared of her and I actually wake up crying. And there's nothing worse than to wake up in your sleep crying...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...it's an *awful...it's an awful sensation...*

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and it's the *one thing...*it's the one thing that does it for me...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and I'm cursing myself above in the bed that this is going on.

SP *Yeah.*

K So it does...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...it...it...if you can get that, if you like to call it a nightmare.

SP *Hmm.*

K I'm not one for using the word nightmares but that...if that's what it's supposed to be...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...but 'tis this...just this one person and her helper...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...that does that to me.

SP *Yeah, and actually maybe, because you would have gone through the redress process [Residential Institutions Redress Board]...*

K Yes.

SP *...what did they say in your psychological report? Did they say anything that you'd suffered anything or...I presume you would've done a psy...a psychology report or...for the...for the redress...*

K Yeah it would, it would have given out how I...how I had expressed my feelings, it would have.

SP *Yeah, okay.*

K It w...it would have done that alright. I'll know more now tomorrow when I...

SP *Yeah. (Laughs)*

K ...because you know, you know you forget...

SP *Of course yeah...*

K ...you...you forget stuff.

SP *...yeah it's a long document.*

K Yeah.

SP *Yeah, yeah.*

K Mo...mo...most of the stuff that I would have was referring to my mother...

SP *Okay.*

K ...and the Industrial School, I would have a lot of that...

SP *Yeah, yeah.*

K ...what went on there and, 'she can't go today, she won't be going until this happens'. So I would have a lot of that, there was a lot of that there. But, no it was just these...these two people...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...have actually destroyed me.

SP *Yeah. And do you feel that you've suffered educationally?*

K Oh yes.

SP *Yeah.*

K I would have loved to have been a nurse...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...that's what I would have liked.

SP *And why didn't you become a nurse?*

K I didn't think I was capable of it at the time. I mean I got a job...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...the...the...the Magdalene Laundries got me a job, that was it and...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...th...that w...that was it.

SP *Yeah.*

K So I suppose at the time I would have liked it because a lot of my family would have been in the medical profession and I felt I would have been able for it.

SP *Hmm, yeah.*

K So that's wh...that would have been my choice...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...I would have *loved it, absolutely loved it*. Because I feel I'm good with...with...with...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...people anyway.

SP *Do you like caring for people?*

K I do.

SP *Yeah.*

K I do.

SP *And is there any particular reason why you like caring for people?*

K I think it's just drawn to me...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...they...they're drawn to me...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...you know, and I feel...that person now is coming up there with a...a load of messages and it's my place to say, 'would you like me to give you a hand with them?'

SP *Yeah.*

K It's yes or no for an answer, but I feel I might be glad if somebody some day...and I would say, 'I hope somebody would do it for me'.

SP *Hmm.*

K They're just drawn to me, people who are not able to do things are drawn to me, is that...

SP *Yeah, and of all your...kind of...your accomplishments in life, what are you most proud of?*

K That I done it on my own...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and that's it.

SP *Very good. And tell me, so did you tell your family about...about all of this? Did you...you know, the family that you're in touch with, did you tell...?*

K Oh they know everything, yeah.

SP *They know about everything...*

K Yeah.

SP *...and what was their...kind of reaction?*

K Well they have congratulated me on what I...what I did and...and all this...laundries, they have said, 'well done and we hope that they look after you, well deserved'.

SP *Yeah.*

K Because they would have not been responsible...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...you know.

SP *And would they have even known anything about...*

K No.

SP *...the...the Magdalene Laundries...*

K No.

SP *...or what was going on in there until...*

K No.

SP *...it all came out?*

K I never spoke about the Magdalene Laundries until I heard it on the radio programme.

SP *Okay.*

K I had *never*...nobody knew anything, because I was *ashamed* – and the word *ashamed* is very strong with me – that I was to tell anybody that I was in the Magdalene Laundries because of the stigma that it had.

SP *Hmm.*

K Nothing wrong with being an unmarried mother. *I'm not* an unmarried mother and there's nothing wrong with it...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...if it happened, but it was the way it was portrayed in people, 'oh sure they were fallen women...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...they were prostitutes,' and this is what was said on certain newspapers, I'm sure you have seen it.

SP *Hmm.*

K I was none of them, I was just a child that was born out of wedlock...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...I had no say in my life, for 20 years I had no say in my life. And that's the way it was and I had no say in it. I have plenty of say now and I'm proud that I'm able to stand up and say, 'I'm a survivor,' and that I'm getting on with my life and I got on with my life and that I've worked, I was a worker.

SP *Yeah.*

K And...and I think that's...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...what I've achieved in life.

SP *Hmm. And how do you feel towards religion?*

K I base religion on myself.

SP *Hmm, yeah.*

K I'm not going to Mass because somebody says you must go. I'm going to do these things because if I feel it's right at the time I will go.

SP *Hmm.*

K So I base my religion on myself.

SP *Yeah.*

K Does that make sense?

SP *Yeah. And do you feel that you question things in life?*

K I do.

SP *Yeah.*

K I do question things, yeah.

SP *Yeah, very good.*

K I even want to know where the word sandwich came from, that's how I question things.

SP *Yeah, yeah.*

K If I'm not sure about a word I look up the dictionary. I don't want anyone behind my shoulder saying, 'you're stupid, you don't know this,' I will do it for *myself*, I will find out where this thing came from, where that word come from and I will look it up and I will ask a question, 'where did that word...' and I heard...I know where it came from, you know...

SP *Hmm, yeah.*

K ...because I've asked the question.

SP *Yeah.*

K I'm curious about things, yeah.

SP *Good. And just very, very lastly about...so I just want to talk...just a little bit about this recent kind of...the redress process now that all the things that have come out. So firstly I just want to ask, were you happy with the redress process for...for the Industrial Schools or were you...*

K I was.

SP *Yeah. So you had...did you...*

K There again because I was believed...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...it's believing that makes me happy.

SP *Yeah, yeah, okay.*

K That is very important to me because I would hate to wrong anybody and I hate to be wronged and it was because I was believed...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...that I was happy.

SP *Yeah. And can you tell me a bit about...so as we know the Industrial Schools, all of that came out and you know, the compensation thing happened...*

K Yes.

SP *...but the Magdalene Laundries were left out of that.*

K Yes.

SP *So can you tell me about what happened from...in th...in that time, like to get us to here, like what were you doing, you know, were you part of any groups or...?*

K *(Pause)* You mean how did I feel about...

SP *Yeah, how did you f...*

K ...the laundries being excluded?

SP *...exactly, yeah.*

K Didn't...I didn't take too much heed of it...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...because when I was getting my compensation for this, to me it was for the whole thing.

SP *Hmm.*

K And up to the time...about the Magdalene Laundries, I still had assumed that this was the whole thing because I had my papers from my solicitor about the Magdalene Laundries and the Industrial School and I assumed.

SP *Yeah, okay.*

K So there was no question of it...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...until I would have heard it on the radio...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...ten years ago, it was 2004.

SP *Yeah.*

K And I thought, 'oh sure didn't we get paid for that, but sure we were compensated'. And then as the years went on it got into deeper...that we actually weren't...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...it was a separate issue.

SP *Yeah.*

K And I was delighted to be able to say then, well at least they're going to look into this now. I didn't think anything would come of it but there again, it's to be just *believed*.

SP *Yeah.*

K I want people to believe what I'm saying.

SP *Yeah.*

K I mean, I remember going into a...a court one day for somebody and I...I happened to be a witness for somebody, and it was put to me that, 'but you're going to side on...on this person,' and I said to the judge, 'no I'm here to tell the truth, regar...'. At the end of it she was summing up she said, 'well I listened to what Kathleen said there and I admired her, she said, "I'm here to tell the truth"'. So that's always been that with me is to believe and tell the truth.

SP *Yeah.*

K Now I was delighted to get the compensation and I would lie if I say I wasn't, *of course* I was delighted...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...to get it. But I was *believed*.

SP *Yeah.*

K I went to the psychologist, I went to another doctor, I don't know what...what that was for, believed me.

SP *Hmm.*

K And I thought, '*this is great*,' you know.

SP *Yeah.*

K They believe you in the Aislinn Centre.

SP *And what's been your experience now with...did you meet the ju...the judge, Quirke?*

K I did.

SP *And what was your experience?*

K I found him very pleasant.

SP *Hmm.*

K I...it was very easy to understand him, he assured me that I would be okay for the rest of my life and I was never to be ashamed of my time in the Magdalene Laundries. He assured me it wasn't my fault. I found him...and he told me to address him by his name. I just found him very pleasant.

SP *Yeah. And then you hav...wh...what do you think of the current, kind of...his report, or...I know you haven't read it...*

K I haven't act...I haven't read it no.

SP *Sorry I mean the actual redress scheme, kind of...the details that are coming out?*

K Well it was fair for me...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...very fair for me because I...I would have thought I was already settled for that.⁸ So I would be happy with...with me but unfortunately I can't speak about [how] other people feel or think about that but for me I...I am personally quite okay with it...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...he was very fair to me.

SP *Yeah. And what do you think about sort of...how it's all been...all the kind of different campaign groups or the different survivor groups like, and their role in this?*

K I think a lot of group...group settings, because I would have been a member of a group and...I felt that the groups were not listening to what they wanted themselves but it was what the person leading the group wanted, does that make sense to you?

SP *It does, yeah, yeah.*

K And I was not happy with that...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...so I...I went independent then.

⁸ This interview took place prior to the implementation of the ex gratia scheme at the Department of Justice. Thus far (August 2017) women who were in An Grianán Training Centre at High Park have not been compensated under the scheme. The Department of Justice's implementation of the scheme is currently being investigated by the Office of the Ombudsman.

SP *Yeah.*

K And that would have upset me greatly that there was...people would have been...would have come to me and said they were afraid of this particular person and they wished they had been like me, that I was able to stand up...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and say what I thought. And then people I feel sorry for because they're stuck with that now...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...and they can't get out of it. *(Pause)*

SP *Well...*

K Does that make sense now, to you?

SP *...oh it does...*

K *Yeah.*

SP *...yeah, yeah.*

K And that would be...that would be honest...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...the honesty of it because I've been there...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and seen what went on, and it's, 'what I say, not what ye say. I say you don't say this, you don't say this, you get ten minutes in here,' which was wrong because you didn't get ten minutes you got the whole day if you wanted it... [see below]

SP *Hmm.*

K ...you know.

SP *Yeah.*

K So it was this person telling *vulnerable* people...

SP *Yeah.*

K ...'you don't say this, you don't say that'. But that wasn't going to happen to me. And when I was being interviewed, (*whispers*) *can I mention Martin McAleese?*

SP *Oh yes, oh yeah, yeah.*

K When I was being interviewed by Martin McAleese and I was saying...saying, 'ah sure I have to make this fast, I...I'm talking fast because...' and he said, 'no Kathleen, there's no need for you...I have the whole day'. And I said, 'well I was told that you only had so much time'. And the man was shocked that there was somebody telling me you only had we'll say ten minutes. But I mean, Martin McAleese was saying, 'no you have the whole day, I'm...I'm not going anywhere...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...take your time Kathleen,' you know.

SP *Yeah.*

K So...

SP *No that's great, I...I have no more questions, is there anything else you'd like to add?*

K I just want to thank you...

SP *Thanks.*

K ...for giving me the opportunity to express how I felt about the whole thing, and you've been very gentle with me...

SP *Hmm.*

K ...and again you let me speak and you believed me and thank you very much...

SP *Well I want to thank you...*

K ...Sinéad, for that.

SP *...well I want to thank you Kathleen...*

K Yeah.

SP *...for that. Thank you for being so honest...*

K Yeah.

SP *...and I really appreciate it...*

K Yeah.

SP *...because I know how difficult it is...*

K Yes.

SP *...so thank you.*

K You're more than welcome.

[Interview ends]