

MAGDALENE INSTITUTIONS: RECORDING AN ORAL AND ARCHIVAL HISTORY



Oral History of Pearl

Reference Code:	MAGOHP/19/ANON
Pseudonym?	Yes
Status:	Other (Survivor)
Keywords:	The Sisters of Mercy, Dublin Magdalene Asylum on Lower Leeson St (Baggot Street laundry); St Patricks Mother & Baby Home, Navan Road, Dublin; St Philomena's Home, Booterstown, Blackrock; Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, Grand Canal St, Dublin; rule of silence: food deprivation: transfers between High Park & Baggot Street; Residential Institutions Redress Board; The Cedars Hospital, Rochestown Ave; Miss Carr's Children's Home, Northbrooke Road, Ranelagh.
Date of Interview:	15 th February 2013
Transcript:	66 pages
Number/Format of Audio Files:	1 x .wma files
Interviewer:	Dr Sinéad Pembroke
Access Conditions:	Interviews are freely available to the public. Immediate release of transcript and anonymised audio.
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Notes on Redaction and Transcription Process

Interviewee Initials: P
Interviewer Initials: SP
Present at Interview: Nuala Smith

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

- Named individuals have been assigned pseudonyms
- Certain locations have been removed to protect the privacy of the interviewee and third parties
- Dates have been accurately transcribed

List of Pseudonyms

Pseudonym	Category
Whites	Family that the interviewee worked for
Miriam	Interviewee's husband's ex-girlfriend
Francis Burke	Man who brought the laundry into Baggot Street
Charlie	Foster brother of interviewee
Sr Jude	3rd party religious order
Sr Agnes	3rd party religious order
Rosemary Fallon	Person who accompanied girls to Cedars Hospital
Sarah	Daughter of Interviewee's friend Nuala
Barney's	Neighbour's house
Lily	Niece of the White family
Raymond	Lily's son
Bob	Interviewee's husband
Thomas	Nuala's partner
Pearl Doyle	Interviewee's mother
David O'Neill	Person who assisted in search for records

Basic Data from Interview

Name/Pseudonym	Pearl
When Born	1931
Born outside marriage?	Did not say
Raised by	Eighteen months/two years of age with her mother in St Patricks Mother & Baby Home, Navan Road, then St Philomena's, Booterstown, Blackrock until seven years of age, then fostered out to a family in Shankill until fourteen years of age.
Education	Interviewee cannot read
Order	The Sisters of Mercy
Laundry	Dublin Magdalene Asylum on Lower Leeson St (Baggot Street laundry)

From	1945
To	1947
Duration of stay	Two years
Age on entry	Fourteen years of age
Entered Via	Foster family
House Name/No	No
Haircutting/punishment?	Did not say
Circumstances of Departure	Interviewee went to The Cedars Hospital, Rochestown Ave, (TB Hospital), then transferred to Beaumont & The Mater Hospitals for three months in total.
Emigrated?	No
Physical ailments?	Lost all of her teeth
Of Note	<p>Beaten by her foster family.</p> <p>Worked in laundry from 9am until 5pm Monday to Saturday.</p> <p>Washed clothes from Carysfort's Boarding School in Blackrock.</p> <p>Scrubbed steps and Mother McAuley's gravestone in Baggot Street laundry.</p> <p>No toothbrush was ever provided for the interviewee.</p> <p>Witnessed a nine-year-old child in Baggot Street laundry.</p> <p>Pearse Street Library Archives.</p>

[Beginning of consent process]

SP *Okay.*

P The light came on.

SP *So thank you, Pearl, for agreeing to interview. I just need to ask you first of all if you confirm that you agree to participate?*

P Yes.

SP *And that you are familiar with the information and consent forms that I provided to you?*

P Yes.

[End of consent process]

[Interview Begins]

SP *Thank you very much. Okay, I think first of all I just want to ask just a very general question. Could you tell me something about yourself?*

P I was...(pause)...oh God. What's the name of that place, Nuala? The home?

N The Sisters of Mercy in Baggot Street.

P No.

N Oh, St Patrick's, the Navan Road.

P I was born in the Navan Road.

N St James's Hospital known as The Union, you were born there.

P I was born in St James's Hospital.

SP *Don't worry about the recorder, the recorder can hear you so.*

P And I was born there and then I went to the child home.

N St Patrick's.

P In Navan Road. I left there and went to St Philomena's in Booterstown, I think that's where it is, Booterstown, Blackrock. I stayed there till I was seven years of age, left there and I was adopted... I was fostered out to people in Shankill. Their names is Whites [pseudonym]. I was there till I was fourteen. There was people... I wet the bed and I was brought up to a shed where there was a barrel and I was put into it because I wet the bed. Then I was brought... when I was... I went to school, didn't learn much there and then I went to Baggot Street at fourteen years of age. I didn't know where I was going. I thought I was going shopping, which they used to do every Thursday. I was brought in, told to sit down. So the two, nun and the person was talking. She was leaving and I went to leave with them. I was pulled back and told to sit down. She went. My clothes... I was crying. My clothes were taken off me. I was put into a frock and an apron and a pair of shoes. I was brought out then to a crowd of girls. I was crying at night-time. I was told to shut up. We have to be up at six o'clock in the morning. We went to Mass, then we went for our breakfast and then I had to go to the laundry. When I got down to the laundry, there was ST's in a wooden sink. They all had to be washed out and boiled. Then you wanted to do other clothes and sheets and you had to wash them. You had to wash guimpes belonged to the nuns and their clothes, except their habits. We went... we stopped at five o'clock, got our tea, stayed in the rooms. One room with all of us. All doors were locked, then we went to bed 'round half past eight or nine. There was no papers, no books, no nothing. Went up to bed. We were told not to talk, to go asleep, we'd be up at six in the morning. I was crying. Next morning, we got up and we went down to wash ourselves in cold water. We went then to Mass and then on to our breakfast and down to wash, every day. We got no teaching, nothing. The food was hardly anything, bread and dripping sometimes. The soup was terrible, the cocoa was water. Anything we got, we had to take it because it kept us warm. I left there in two years and went to The Cedars in Rochestown Avenue, which was a TB hospital, which I got terribly sick. My legs were full of red lumps. I don't know whether I had TB or not, but then I was sent to Beaumont, where I stayed for three months. I left there and I went to the Mater Hospital. Was

there, I don't know how long, and I left there and I went to a place in Foxrock. They were Jews. It's a place very near, I can't think of the road now.

N I think it's Westminster Road.

P Westminster Road, just on the corner, there was a willow tree in the middle of the grounds. There was a man and woman lived in it. They had a chauffeur. Didn't go to bed till after three o'clock in the morning. They were playing cards. I had to bring in the tea. One morning, I woke up and I found a man in my bedroom. There was no locks on the door, so I told him to get out. He said he wanted a hot water bottle. I said you needn't have come in to my room. You could have knocked. He went out. I didn't get him the hot water bottle, but I filled up my case with my clothes and I brought it out and put it behind a tree in the grounds. I left there and I went to a house in Knocksinna where I got a cup of tea and some bread. I left there and I went to Shankill again. Stayed there for a while, then I got a job in Bray, which I loved. I enjoyed it. I don't think there's any more I can say now. Thank you.

SP *Okay.*

P That all right?

N Very good, very good.

SP *That's great, that's great. And may I just say you have a wonderful memory? Excellent memory.*

P Oh, it's still, yeah.

SP *Can I ask you a few more questions?*

P Yes.

SP *As we were talking about earlier, can you talk to us more about your time with the foster family, what that was like for you?*

P Terrible. I couldn't play. I couldn't go out. If I went out to play with children, I was called back in again. I'd be watching them playing and I'd be sitting at the window crying. They didn't want me, maybe some, *one* did, the other didn't, but I tried to keep up with them. Maybe I was there when she wanted me, when she was lying in her bed in Loughlinstown. I used to go and see her from Foxrock on a bicycle, whether it was lashing rain or snow, I went to see her.

SP *And did you have your own room when you were there? Or where did you sleep?*

P I slept, no, I slept in a chair bed in the same room as one of the aunts stayed in.

SP *Okay.*

P Sometimes their niece might come and she'd sleep with her, but there was only one double bed and my chair bed.

SP *Okay. And do you have any memory of St Philomena's?*

P Not very much.

SP *No, okay. And how long were you in St Philomena's?*

P I'd say from three or two until I was seven.

SP *Okay, and then you were fostered out?*

P I was fostered out from there.

SP *Okay.*

P And I think we went from a hospital. I don't know whether it was from Patrick Dun's or not, whether we were waiting on something to collect us or what, I don't know, but there was another woman in it waiting as well that had adopted a girl. She's already dead.

SP *Okay.*

P I don't know where she came from, but I knew her. I think she'd four children. She went to England. She died in England.

SP *Okay.*

P But I never told my husband. He asked me, the night after he asked me to marry him; 'tell me your life story'. I turned round to him and I said, 'you know all about my life. What do you want to know now?' There were relations of the people I stayed with, second cousins.

SP *Right.*

P They didn't want me to marry him.

SP *Oh really?*

P Didn't want him to marry me either. He wrote to me once and told me he wasn't going to get married. I don't know what happened that he did ask me to marry him because he asked me three times! Said nothing the first two. It was out of the blue one night he asked me to marry him and I said yes.

SP *And why did you say no the first two times?*

P I don't know. Can't remember that.

SP *Okay. And how long were you with your husband for?*

P *(Laughs)*, a long time. Well, I met him at sixteen.

SP *Oh, wow.*

P But I was off and on.

SP *Yeah.*

P Like you know, I was in Dublin and he used to come into Dublin. I met him in Shankill a couple of times. He asked me to go to an excursion one time to Glendalough. He got two tickets. I asked them in Whites could I go and they said no. They said where was Miriam? [17:05]. He was supposed to have another girlfriend, so I said right I'm not going. Nearly broke my heart to tell him I couldn't go. They wouldn't let me go. I went to bed early that night and I waited until I saw him coming up the road. He'd a fairly good sup in him because he got sick. What's the question?

SP *How long had you been with your husband?*

P Nearly forty years.

SP *Wow. How many years after he first met you did he ask you to marry him? How old were you? Sorry, I meant to say.*

P Oh, God. I'd say I was around twenty.

SP *Good.*

P Around that.

SP *Yeah. That's lovely. And can you tell me when you were growing up, had you heard anything about the Magdalene laundries? This is before you went into?*

P No. Never.

SP *You never heard?*

P Never heard of them.

SP *Okay. And can you tell me then, did your foster family, did they ever explain to you why they brought you to the laundry?*

P No.

SP *No. So you were just brought that day.*

P And that was it.

SP *That was it.*

P That was it.

SP *Yeah.*

P And it was never brought up after.

SP *Okay. And yeah, of course, as you said, you thought you were going shopping, isn't that correct?*

P That's correct.

SP *Yeah. Yeah. Okay. And so can you tell me what year this was?*

P 1945 to 1947.

SP *Yeah.*

P Now, I'd say it might have been June that I got out.

SP *Yeah. Okay.*

P Now, I'm not quite sure if them's the dates, but I don't know whether it was the Queen, or Prince Charles was born, or whether the Queen was getting married, I don't know which of them.

SP *Okay.*

P That's the young Queen now.

SP *Yeah. Yeah.*

P Not the grandmother.

SP *No. And sorry to interrupt.*

P It's all right.

SP *And you were fourteen?*

P I was fourteen.

SP *Okay. And so were you given any information like the length of time that you would be in there, your rights?*

P No.

SP *You were just brought in?*

P Just brought in.

SP *No information?*

P No information at all, nothing.

SP *So you had no idea when you were going to come out?*

P I'd no idea where I was going.

SP *Okay.*

P Or when I was coming out or going in. I didn't know where I was going, even when I left.

SP *Yeah, and can you remember how you felt about being sent to Baggot Street laundry?*

P *Terrible. Terrible.*

SP *Yeah. And so you've already described the daily routine, so we don't need to go in to that again. Can you tell me about the living and the working conditions?*

P *Where, in Baggot Street?*

SP *In Baggot Street, yeah.*

P *Shocking. Shocking. Boilers, the smoke, the heat the cold, it was absolutely terrible.*

SP *Yeah. And where would you sleep?*

P *In a dormitory.*

SP *Okay. With all the other?*

P *With all the other girls.*

SP *And where would the other nuns be?*

P *In cloisters.*

SP *Okay.*

P *With their hot water bottles.*

SP *(Laughs). So they had their own rooms?*

P *They had their own rooms, yeah.*

SP *Okay. Okay. And was the door locked and the windows? Like can you tell me a little bit about that?*

P No windows were open.

SP *Okay.*

P There was bars on windows.

SP *Yeah.*

P And still are.

SP *And the doors were locked?*

P The doors were always locked, back and front. You couldn't get out.

SP *Okay.*

P The only one that used to come in was one man. His name was Francis Burke [pseudonym]. He used to bring the laundry. That was the only man that ever came in.

SP *Okay.*

P And he only came as far as the window of the door before you went out the front door. That's as far as he went, and back out again.

SP *Okay. Was he allowed to? So yeah, he couldn't see in and could he see any of you, any of the women that were working there?*

P Oh, he saw them all there.

SP *Yeah. Was he able to...was he allowed, were you allowed to speak to him?*

P No.

SP *No, okay.*

P No, no.

SP *Okay, so no interaction?*

P No.

SP *Okay.*

P And no one ever, no...heard on the programme somebody used to come and inspect it. No one ever came, no men, no nothing, no women.

SP *Okay. Yeah.*

P No one.

SP *And in fact, can you tell me while you were there, do you remember anyone leaving?*

P No.

SP *No.*

P You were never told. You were just called, put into a room, change your clothes. It was like the nun's story at the end. You walked out with the case, and the person that was with you never spoke a word from the time we left Baggot Street until we got to our destination.

SP *Okay.*

P Cedars.

SP *Yeah. So on the day that you were released, you didn't know that it was going to happen?*

P No. I didn't know.

SP *And going back to your work, can you describe to me what work you did in the laundry?*

P We washed ST's.

SP *Yeah.*

P Guimpes belonged to the nuns, little caps they had in the front, their underwear, their stockings, everything. We washed other people's clothes. We even done clothes from Carysfort, a boarding school in Blackrock. Some of the things was shocking in it, but we had to get through them. The work was terrible and the cold was awful.

SP *Yeah.*

P But I'm glad I made it.

SP *Yeah, you most certainly did.*

P Thank you.

SP *And can you tell me, do you have did you have a name? Did they give you a different name when you were there or a number?*

P Can't remember.

SP *Okay. And were you paid?*

P No.

SP *Given pocket money?*

P No money.

SP *Okay.*

P Even when I left, no money.

SP *Yeah. And how many days and hours did you work per week?*

P We worked from eight o'clock till five o'clock from morning till evening.

SP *Yeah.*

P Up to Saturday. From Monday to Saturday.

SP *Yeah.*

P Then we had to scrub floors, steps, and Mother McAuley's [26:30] gravestone out in the garden.

SP *And what did you do on a Sunday?*

P Just sat around, people waiting, girls waiting for people to come in to see them.

SP *Yeah.*

P I used to wait, but my Sunday didn't come. Once it did. Then another Sunday, they came, but that was all.

SP *In the two years that you were there?*

P Two years I was there.

SP *And can you tell me about that story you told me about the roll, about the bread?*

P Oh, they asked me could they bring me in anything. And I said, 'Yes, could you bring me in a Vienna roll?' They did bring that the next time they came. They brought the Vienna roll, wrapped

in very, very fine brown paper. I tried to hide it, but I was made a laugh at when I brought it in. So the girls kept laughing at me, calling me bread. But I didn't care. I was hungry, so that's what I asked for.

SP *Yeah, thank you for sharing that. Do you remember any recreation or exercise while you were there? Did you...? No?*

P *No (laughs). None of that! Exercise! (Laughs)*

SP *And you already talked about the food and how...just, can you describe, a word, one word to describe the food...?*

P *Shocking!*

SP *Yeah.*

P *Shocking.*

SP *And were you given any opportunities for an education?*

P *None whatsoever, not even religion.*

SP *Yeah. And actually, in terms of religion, how did that play a part in the laundry?*

P *Didn't play any.*

SP *Did you go to Mass?*

P *Oh, I went to Mass, oh yes.*

SP *Were there other religious rituals that you had to do?*

P *No.*

SP *No, okay.*

P Only that.

SP *And tell me about Mass. Where would you sit when you were there?*

P We went in the side door. The nuns went in the front. The nuns got the Holy Communion before us. We went after them. There was lay sisters there. They went after the first crowd. They had more money than the others had. They were called lay sisters. They wore greyish aprons over their habits when they were in the kitchen. When they went to Mass, they wore little white aprons with pleats in them.

SP *And actually, did you wear a uniform?*

P No, just a grey frock and a...

SP *Yeah.*

P That's all.

SP *And did you have to wear that for the...was it the same frock for the full, for the two years you were there?*

P Well, there was never any change.

SP *(Laughs) yeah. Okay. And just do you recall any accidents happening in the laundry?*

P No.

SP *Okay. And were you ever ill and did you receive treatment?*

P What do you mean?

SP *Were you ever ill? Did a doctor ever have to come?*

P No. Never.

SP *Okay. And can you tell me how were you disciplined and punished there? Or you as in the women. If someone was behaving, and I say this, 'behaving badly' in their eyes?*

P Well, the other ones would make it hard for you, but you never got...the girls didn't speak to you, but that was all.

SP *Okay. And do you recall any beatings or verbal abuse?*

P No.

SP *Okay. And you never received verbal abuse?*

P No.

SP *Okay. Were you ever made to feel bad about yourself?*

P Could have been.

SP *Yeah.*

P Although I mightn't remember.

SP *Okay, no problem. And can you tell me anything positive about the laundry?*

P Only what I told you.

SP *Yeah. Okay. And just in terms of, you know, friendships with other women, did you have any friendships?*

P None.

SP *None. Okay.*

P No.

SP *And so was everything done in silence?*

P Everything was done in silence.

SP *Okay. And why do you think there was no friendships between?*

P I don't know.

SP *Yeah. And do you remember, I guess you wouldn't remember anything else about any of the other women that were in Baggot Street?*

P No.

SP *Okay. Do you recall anyone dying while you were there?*

P No.

SP *No, okay. And do you recall any other visitors to the laundry, say government officials?*

P None.

SP *Okay. And in fact, when you were, actually I meant to say this earlier, but with your foster family, did someone come to visit you from the government?*

P Yes.

SP *Okay. Can you tell me about that?*

P She came and I was called in, and she just looked at me and that was all. She didn't ask me how I was, was there anything wrong or anything. No, she never asked me. She got a pot of

jam and she got apples, so something. But I was there one day when she came and they said they didn't want me! And I kept looking at them, and they said we're getting two children. One was a boy of three months and the girl was two and a half. They idolised the little boy and the girl too. She was very brainy and he loved them, and when they died, it broke his heart. (*Gets upset*)

SP *Aw, here, I'll pause. Okay.*

N Thinking of the time, are you? Worrying about Charlie? [Pseudonym]

P Yeah.

SP *Okay. Yeah, we'll leave it there.*

N Okay.

SP *Okay, so could you tell me was it possible to tell where the items of clothing, sort of the contracts, were there contracts with certain people or government, do you know, for the laundry?*

N Oh, like Carysfort?

SP *Yeah, so Carysfort was one of them.*

P Carysfort was one.

SP *Yeah.*

P And I think Goldenbridge was another.

SP *Okay.*

P I don't know whether any came from High Park or not.

SP *Yeah. And did you do hospitals as well? Did you wash?*

P Yes. Yeah.

SP *Yeah, okay. And so how were you treated by the nuns?*

P Well, we only saw two of them.

SP *Okay.*

P Three of them! One in the kitchen and the senior nun and there might be one in the kitchen or in the laundry. Very nice. She never spoke, never chastised. She was nice. I met her afterwards.

SP *Did you?*

P They weren't cruel.

SP *Okay.*

P But I didn't know why we were there. She went on...the nun that was in the laundry, she used to stand there, the fur coat with the big sleeves.

N Oh, yeah.

P And her two arms like that. She never spoke, never chastised. She just kept looking. I don't think she minded whether if the girls looked in mirrors or anything. I met her afterwards, running up a stairs, and she let a shout at me and I said, 'what are you doing here?' 'I'm going to the surgery,' she said. 'I'm in the surgery'. So she went to the Mater. Her name was Sr Jude [pseudonym].

SP *Okay. And were some girls treated better than others or were you all treated the same?*

P We were all treated the same.

SP *Okay. And do you know anything about what the nuns ate or?*

P No. No, no.

SP *No, you never ate with them?*

P No.

SP *No, okay. They were separate?*

P They were separate.

SP *Okay. And did you have any fears or anxieties while you were there?*

P No.

SP *No, okay.*

P Sure where else was I to go?

SP *Yeah.*

P I knew no place in Dublin.

SP *So you never tried to run away?*

P No.

SP *No.*

P You couldn't from Baggot Street.

SP *Yeah.*

P It was locked.

SP *Yeah.*

P Sr Agnes [pseudonym] locked that door and to the table where we used to sit, she had a table up at the top. I don't know what she was doing there, but she never said anything to us or nothing.

SP *Okay. And did you try to fit in or rebel? What did you do while you were there? Did you just try to fit in?*

P I tried to fit in.

SP *Yeah. And did you remember any other girls trying to run away when you were there?*

P No one tried.

SP *Okay.*

P I think there was one girl that was in the laundry and her name was called out and I heard someone saying she's going to High Park. And she was dragged up a stairs. You had to go upstairs.

SP *Yeah.*

P And there was two people waiting for her at the top of the stairs.

SP *Okay.*

P There was railings.

SP *And tell me something, actually, I'm curious. How did you have your hair? Like how were you...?*

P Straight and a fringe.

SP *Okay, and did you have to do anything with your hair?*

P No. No.

SP *No, okay. And can you tell me one word or phrase that best describes your time there?*

P Shocking. My life was taken away from me.

SP *Did you have any hopes and dreams while you were there?*

P None.

SP *Okay.*

P I never knew where I was going.

SP *Yeah.*

P Where would I go?

SP *Yeah. And so you've already described leaving and what that was like. So you had a nun take you to Cedars, was it?*

P To The Cedars.

SP *To The Cedars.*

P No, she wasn't a nun.

SP *Okay.*

P She was over us in the...her name was Rosemary Fallon [pseudonym].

SP *Okay!*

P She lived...she was over the girls.

SP *Oh, okay. Was she a lay person?*

P She was.

SP *Okay! Oh, so was she the only lay person that was?*

P That's all.

SP *Okay.*

P That's all.

SP *And she was in charge of ye?*

P Yes.

SP *Yeah. Okay. Why was she in charge?*

P I don't know!

SP *Okay. Okay, and that's interesting just why there'd be...why not a nun?*

P Hmmm. She was in charge.

SP *And what did you think of her?*

P Well, she didn't interfere with us.

SP *Okay.*

P She never spoke to us, just come along, girls. Do your work, no talking.

SP *Okay. Yeah.*

P You know, she was that sort.

SP *Yeah, and then she brought you to your work place before you left.*

P Yes. Yeah.

SP *Okay. And were you explained where you were going?*

P No.

SP *No, okay, so just told to pack?*

P Yeah.

SP *And did you have many possessions?*

P I'd none.

SP *Oh, okay. So what were you wearing actually on the day you were leaving, do you remember?*

P God, I don't remember. I remember the blue coat.

SP *Yeah.*

P I got rid of it, soon as I got a couple of shillings. Yeah.

SP *That was the coat that you came in?*

P The nuns bought.

SP *Oh, the nuns, oh okay.*

P Oh, they didn't give me back the new coat.

SP *Oh, okay.*

P That I got. I bought one like it.

SP *Yeah.*

P I think it was in the '50s. They were the long coats then.

SP *Yeah.*

P It was a biscuit coloured coat. I loved it.

SP *And tell me something actually, because obviously you would have been wearing very grey clothing.*

P Mm-hmm.

SP *Do you like to wear very colourful clothing now?*

P Colourful, yeah.

SP *I noticed because you're wearing a lovely red top so. Can you tell me how did you find it being outside, outside of the laundry? How was it?*

P Oh, terrible.

SP *Yeah.*

P Terrible. I'd no friends, I'd no one. I used to walk up and down reading a book. I'd walk from The Cedars maybe to Shanganagh, up to Shankill Church and walk back again.

SP *Okay.*

P To pass the time.

SP *Was it a live-in?*

P It was a live-in, yes.

SP *Okay. Okay. And you talked about where you were after Cedars. Were all your jobs kind of live-in jobs?*

P Except Bray.

SP *Yeah.*

P I didn't stay in Bray.

SP *Yeah.*

P All the others were indoor.

SP *Were you more comfortable? Why did you choose live-in jobs?*

P Well, I don't think there was anywhere in Shankill I could sleep.

SP *Yeah.*

P So I had to stay in.

SP *Yeah. Yeah. No, I was just wondering if it was a decision of yours, but it's obviously because you had nowhere else.*

P I had nowhere else to go, you see.

SP *Yeah. Yeah. And how did you find the other jobs after Cedars?*

P The nuns got them.

SP *Okay, oh, I see, so they found you all the other ones?*

P Except the one in Bray.

SP *Except Bray, okay.*

P They didn't get that one.

SP *Right, yeah, the good one! (Laughs)*

P Yeah, it was.

SP *Yeah. And we're just going on to sort of the last section, just to let you know, so you know that we're finishing up. I just wanted to ask the effect that it had on you after. So I just wanted to ask, do you feel that your time in the laundry, did it psychologically affect you?*

P It did!

SP *Can you tell me how?*

P *(Pause)*. Well, I don't know what way to put it, really.

SP *Yeah.*

P *(Pause)*. Oh, God.

SP *I can ask you can you make friends easily?*

P No.

SP *No, okay.*

P Don't make friends. I've no friends, only Nuala.

SP *Yeah. And why do you think that is?*

P I don't know!

SP *Yeah.*

P Maybe it's because I tried to make friends in Shankill.

SP *Yeah.*

P They wouldn't let me make friends. Made my Confirmation, everybody was going round in their Confirmation clothes. The minute I came home, I was told to take them off and go down for the milk. I never saw them after.

SP *Yeah. Can you trust people?*

P I think so.

SP *Yeah.*

P I think so.

SP *And what about do you have nightmares or anything like that?*

P No.

SP *No, okay.*

P No.

SP *And you already said before the only person you told was Nuala before about your time.*

P That's right.

SP *Yeah.*

P I don't know how I got to tell Nuala.

N I think it was because at the time, because I have Sarah [pseudonym] my daughter's, as you know, another bastard, if you like using the word (*laughs*), that we had that in common.

SP *Yeah.*

N I think that sort of started our friendship unknownst to us really.

SP *Okay.*

N Of course, but you were just a great neighbour for a start and a friendly person to me, but I'd say that kind of brought us together. And then do you remember you heard my thing on the radio? That was a stepping stone.

P Oh, yes that was at half-eight at night.

N Yeah, that was a kind of a stepping stone for us, I think.

P Yeah. Yeah.

N Because, I don't know if you want to...?

SP *Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah!*

N I had the unfortunate experience of having had an abortion...

SP *Okay.*

N ...before I had my own, my daughter.

SP *Yeah. Yeah.*

N And I was in something or other that I went in to talk about it on RTÉ.

SP *Yeah.*

N And Pearl heard it on the radio, not surprisingly, says you! And I remember you coming up, I think you came up the next day or that, first thing after.

P No, I came up at night.

N At night.

P That evening.

N Yeah.

P And I asked you what time was it on at.

N Yeah.

P Because I had cut part of your hedge outside!

N *(Laughs)*. Oh yeah, that was another story.

P Another story.

N I was going ahead.

P And Nuala didn't want people looking *in*.

SP *Yeah.*

P She was very private.

SP *Yeah.*

P And one day I saw a big load. There wasn't that much. I think it was sixty pounds worth of trimmings off the trees. And Nuala had paid a man for to come and collect it. And I didn't know that Nuala had paid and I said, 'oh, I'll clip the hedge outside for Nuala'. So when Nuala came back, there was more than what she thought. So I said it to Nuala and Nuala...*(laughs)*.

N My hedge was stripped.

P She lost the rag! *(Laughs)*

N I'm very sorry, God almighty.

P Oh, he apologised, ah for God's sake. And I didn't say anything to her then.

SP *Yeah.*

P And I went down home. So I came back up and I *(laughs)* rang the bell, and Nuala came out, and I said to her; *(laughs)* 'what time is the programme on at?' Never minded the tree or anything! And she said, 'half-past eight,' so I was standing at the sink I think washing up when I heard it.

N So I think that in that sense, it kind of brought us closer together,

SP *Yeah.*

P Closer, yeah.

N We had our own experience.

SP *Yeah, and it's interesting to see, as you were saying before, the kind of the generational kind of...*

N Yes.

SP *...like difference, like in the same situations, do you know.*

N Yes, how it was so much easier for me in my time than it was for your mother and you.

P Yeah, I don't know. When you asked me to mind Sarah, I was afraid. I really was afraid to look after a child.

SP *Right.*

P Maybe it was because I was in Baggot Street.

SP *I meant to ask you actually if you'd had any children.*

P No.

SP *No, okay.*

P And I hemmed and hawed at Nuala. You were standing at Barney's [pseudonym].

N Was I?

P Yeah, you were in making a phone call or waiting on a phone call.

N Oh yeah.

P And you asked me because I think you were going out that night. I either said yes. I think I said yes in the end.

N Yeah, well, you often babysat. That's the start of it probably.

P I was afraid.

N And then when my daughter was seven then or six.

P Five!

N Five.

SP *Yeah.*

N So she was fairly sturdy like.

SP *Yeah. Yeah.*

N Not a small baby like.

SP *Yeah.*

N But she used to love being babysat.

P She used to ask me to read a story, and I'd read a story. 'that's not right!'

N *(Laughs)*. She was precocious.

SP *Oh.*

P And I'd read again. 'that's not right!' *(Laughs)*

P So in the end, I said, 'Sarah, I can't spell or read'. And she looks at me! She didn't say a thing!

SP *Wow.*

N It just shows you.

P So I don't think she ever told you.

N No, I have no memory of hearing that, no.

P You know.

SP *Yeah, aw..*

N The funny thing is how connections...

SP *And did you ever want children?*

P I don't think so.

SP *Okay. Yeah.*

P I don't think so.

SP *Okay, and why do you think that is?*

P Well, I was in Whites, I was living in Whites. I was working in Bray and their niece was going to have a baby. I was told not to tell anybody and be sure and not to tell Lily [pseudonym]. I told Lily and I was in Bray working. I got a phone call and I was told to leave the house. Up till near March of '63, I think, I came home from work, there was no one in the house. Good, says I, I'll go to bed. I hadn't a date that night or any. It could be lashing rain or something. And Lily had told on me. But I didn't leave the house. I waited and her aunt asked me would I be her bridesmaid. She says I want no rows. She was getting on. So I said all right. So she had the child, God love him, and she got married and she had a baby boy, Raymond [pseudonym]. Darling little boy. Then she was having another one two and a half years after. I was there when she got the pains. Oh, she did say to me, I hope you'll never have any, when I told the young one. So I was there and she said to me, 'I'll put you off having children'. I said, 'what about it?' I didn't mention to her about what she said or anything else.

SP *Yeah.*

P The first child died eight years ago and the second one is still alive and she's ninety-one.

SP *Wow.*

P She's 91 years of age.

SP *Wow.*

P You were at the 90th birthday.

N That's right, at a party.

SP *Very good. And just to go back to you, do you know, did time in the laundry have any long lasting health effects?*

P None on me!

SP *None, okay.*

P I never got sick 'til 2011.

SP *Very good, I wish I was like you!*

P And Nuala nearly died when she heard. She was in Dublin, she was with her partner, and I think they'd only come out of going to seeing a doctor or something and they were having a meal. Now, I was up at three o'clock in the morning, a nose bleed, but I didn't bother ringing Nuala. I rang no one. I was on my own. So at about eleven o'clock, I rang a woman because I had run out of tissues, toilet paper, everything. So I rang a woman that does my hair on a Wednesday. And she said to me...I said to her...she says, 'there's something up?' and I said, 'could you bring me over some cotton wool and I'll tell ye then?' So she brought over the cotton wool and I told her. She rang back and she rang the doctor. I had an appointment at two o'clock.

He sent me to Loughlinstown, I begged him for tablets. He wouldn't give them to me. I went to Loughlinstown. Nuala, no, I was getting ready for Loughlinstown when Nuala rang me to know how I was. Now, she didn't know anything about it. 'I'm on my way to Loughlinstown,' I said., 'well, I'm on my way out to you,' she said. Now, she had just left her table, left her partner, got into the car and came home and brought me to Loughlinstown. She was there till half past...from...we were there at five. And she was there 'till half past ten that night.

SP *Wow.*

N Oh, she had a rough time. I thought she was gone (*laughs*).

P She thought I was on my way out.

SP *Aw.*

N Thought I'd get rid of you, thought I'd get a bit of peace!

P I told her to get...to tell the people that I wouldn't be back, to tell...

N The dog was...

P ...Benny that I wouldn't be back. So they looked after the house. Nuala took my belongings in with her to her house. I wanted the dog left there so. I was in Loughlinstown for five days, what doing, I don't know.

SP *Wow. Yeah.*

P Because I was up the next day...no, I asked...I got a bed in it at twelve o'clock and there was another lady, there was two beds, and there was another lady already there, and I kept asking them could I go home. So Nuala came in to see me on the Friday. She says, 'are you coming out for a cigarette?' And I said, 'yeah'. I had them with me. At that time, you could smoke outside the hospital. So instead of going out to have a smoke, we decided to go for a meal! And I was in my dressing gown. 'we don't serve patients'. Asked to leave.

N Oh yeah, the canteen, we were in this damn canteen. *(Laughs)*...raging.

P We went for the smoke anyway. But I got out on the Monday.

SP *And what was wrong with you?*

P Just a nosebleed.

N Oh, very bad nosebleed.

SP *Oh really?*

P Oh, it was very, very bad.

N Oh God, it went on for hours, yeah, it was fierce.

P But you see, it came across the two nostrils.

SP *Oh.*

P Because I got skin cancer there.

SP *Okay.*

P You can see the mark.

SP *Okay.*

P And I got it in the '50s. And the woman I worked for in the guesthouse saw just a little pimple.

SP *Wow.*

P She must have been watching it for a while and she said to me, 'you'd better go to the doctor about that'.

SP *I see, okay.*

P And I went to the doctor.

SP *And it was skin cancer?*

P And he gave me an injection and he said, 'come back to me in a week'. It wasn't gone, so he gave me a letter for St Patrick Dun's. And at that time, you had to pay half a crown for to get a ticket to go in.

SP *Okay.*

P So I saw the surgeon. I saw the doctor and he said I want to get another opinion, so he got another lady doctor in. And they didn't look at that.

SP *Yeah.*

P They went at the back of the neck, around here. He says come in tomorrow morning and he says I'll operate at half-eight.

SP *Wow.*

P So I was in the next morning, got operated on, the recovery room, yeah, right as rain, got up. Don't think I had the fare to go down, so I walked down to the forty-five and got the bus, and went in to work!

SP *Wow, after all of that!*

P After that!

SP *Jesus. Actually, there's something I'm just after remembering that I think is very important and I think it is a long-lasting health effect. We talked about your teeth. Maybe you'd like to tell the tape about how you lost all your teeth.*

P When, my gums were getting bad and my teeth in the front was getting bad and I was losing a lot of weight.

SP *Yeah.*

P And they thought if the teeth were out, that my weight would come back. I was very thin.

SP *Okay, and this was when you were in the laundry or when was this?*

P This was when I was in Castle Park.

SP *Okay.*

P I think. Was it? Yeah?

N Well, yeah, you were out of the laundry then.

SP *Yeah.*

P Yeah, I was away out of the laundry.

N After Cedars.

P I wasn't in there at that time.

SP *Yeah.*

P And I went to a private dentist. That's why I had to pay every week before I got my teeth.

SP *Oh. And you said it took two years to get dentures?*

P It took two years to get dentures.

N It's unbelievable, isn't it?

SP *Yeah. And I remember you saying that, is it true that you weren't given a toothbrush when you were in the laundry?*

P No, you'd no toothbrushes!

SP *In the laundry?*

P Not at all!

SP *Yeah. Yeah.*

P You barely got soap!

SP *No, I think that's really important because it shows a lack of care for you.*

P Yeah.

N Gosh, yeah.

P And you couldn't stay long down getting washed either.

SP *Yeah.*

N And maybe I shouldn't ask, but did you get STs yourselves?

P Pardon?

N Did the girls get STs? You used to have to wash them in the laundry, but did you get them?

P I never got them.

N The girls themselves didn't use them?

P I never got them. Sure I got mine at ten.

N And how did you manage if you'd nothing to put on?

P I got...the Whites gave me a piece of a sheet.

N But in the laundry? When you were working, what did they do? Did the nuns give you something?

P No! No.

N So just drip away down your legs? Pardon my crude remark.

SP *That's a really good question, actually.*

N What did you do?

SP *Yeah.*

N All these girls? How did they manage?

P No.

N I mean that was a constant problem, wasn't it?

SP *Yeah.*

N You know, for everybody.

P I know they used to make them, try and make them.

N Out of what though? Sure ye had nothing.

P Well, I had nothing anyway and I'm sure they had nothing!

SP *Yeah.*

P And they'd no needles or threads.

N And did you have toilet paper? Maybe they took toilet paper? But that wouldn't even work.

P God, I can't remember.

N I know it's a very crude problem, but I wonder how you managed that.

SP *Yeah.*

N It's such an awkward thing for all young, especially young girls, you know, sixteen, seventeen.

SP *Yeah.*

P But sure you didn't know. You didn't know what that was for or anything, Nuala.

N No, no.

P Well, I didn't anyway.

SP *Yeah.*

N No, but you still had to cope with the mess every month.

P I was sent home from school and I didn't...I was afraid to go home in case I'd done something.

N Oh.

SP *Actually, I was wondering actually, yeah, how you knew what a period was?*

N Yeah.

P I didn't even know.

SP *Okay.*

P They didn't tell me in the foster place.

SP *What did you think when it started to happen?*

P I don't know!

SP *Yeah. Yeah.*

P I was at school when I got it.

SP *Yeah. And no one ever explained to you.*

P No.

SP *Nothing. Yeah.*

P I didn't even know when I went to The Cedars.

SP *Yeah. Wow.*

N And you were seventeen, eighteen nearly then?

P I saw one girl and went out with her, went down to a shop and she met somebody out of the hospital. And I wouldn't leave her on her own. I was watching the two of them kissing one another on the...at the side and I was standing there.

N Sure you didn't know what was going on even.

SP *Yeah.*

P I didn't know what was going on.

N You see, no one ever gave them any information.

P No.

SP *Yeah, so you got no information?*

P I got no information, no nothing.

SP *Yeah, nothing. Wow, and yeah, no, that's actually, I just wondered in terms of periods, did you find that your period...did you have a regular period?*

P No.

SP *Yeah, okay. So you'd have a very... because I was wondering, especially if you weren't eating a lot, that that would affect.*

N Yeah.

P Yeah. Well, I wasn't eating very much.

SP *Yeah. Yeah.*

P I'd just have a cup of tea.

SP *Yeah.*

P Even when I was working in the guesthouse, I never had a dinner.

SP *So even now?*

N Well...

P Even now. Well, I had a dinner here with Nuala.

N But it's only out of politeness really you eat when you're with me (*laughs*).

SP *Yeah.*

N Yes.

P That's true, Nuala, I'm not cold.

SP *Yeah.*

N No, but I'm just making sure it doesn't go out on us. Yeah, now.

SP *Yeah, so yeah, so your food, like you've been affected by it. You don't eat that much food now.*

P No, no.

SP *Okay.*

P Because we didn't get much in there anyway.

SP *Yeah.*

P But there was always meals in the guesthouse, but I never took them.

N No, you eat very little. I mean that's a phenomenon.

P Very little.

SP *Yeah.*

P Is all I took in Nuala house was a cup of tea.

SP *Yeah.*

P Even the daughter, even at five years of age, 'Pearl [pseudonym], do you want a cup of tea?'
She'd go out and make it and bring it in.

SP *Yeah. And tell me just very quick about religion, how does religion play a part in your life?*

P I've no time for it.

SP *Okay.*

P Tell you the truth.

SP *Yeah, and can you explain why?*

P I can't believe them.

SP *Yeah.*

P There's no religion. There might be some good priests and good nuns, but I don't believe them.

SP *And how have you coped with the effects of being in the laundry?*

P Terrible.

SP *Yeah.*

P It keeps coming back.

SP *Yeah. And who do you blame for it, or I don't know if blame is the right word, but who do you hold responsible for what happened to you?*

P Well, maybe them people weren't able to keep me if they were getting two more! Or maybe they were getting more than I was getting that...

N Turn on the light there for you. You can't see. I'll just...

SP *Can you tell me one of the most memorable events in your life?*

P The day I married my husband. That was the only memorable day.

SP *Very good. And of all your accomplishments, what are you most proud of?*

P Oh God. What does that mean?

SP *Of your achievements, of things that you've done in your life.*

P What would you say, Nuala?

N I'd say the way you've survived. You've got your own house.

SP *Yeah.*

N You've a fine set-up that you provided really.

P True.

N A home for Bob [pseudonym], a fabulous home, a very, very wonderful wife to him. He used to come to me and say, 'she's a good girl, she's a great girl. I don't know what I'd do without her'. He did.

SP *There you go, that's an achievement.*

N That's definitely. He was a lucky man to get his hands on you, so you did provide very well for him.

SP *Yeah.*

N I would say, and your whole set-up, your home and apart from the friendship you've given me, you should be very proud of that.

SP *And from what I hear, you're a very good neighbour as well.*

N Oh, terrific, absolutely.

SP *From what you were telling me earlier so.*

N Oh, very good.

P Yes.

SP *And I just wanted to ask, sorry, actually I have asked that, sorry. Actually, what I wanted to ask was about what you were telling me earlier. Have you made an application to the redress board, you know, for compensation?*

N Well, that was me.

SP *Yeah.*

N And I think I have seemed to have slipped up there because at the time, whenever that was, a few years back, I sent off that letter. I don't know if you can remember. A pity I can't get the file.

P I think that was before you left out Bray, Nuala.

N It was, it was, and that was the redress board for the industrial schools or whatever and at the time when I wrote in, I definitely got a reply to say that your places weren't on the list. Now, I can't swear to the wording because it's in the file that I couldn't find in the attic. I have a house that I rent out.

SP *Yeah.*

N And it's in the attic there.

SP *Okay.*

P It's in the attic and she has a file.

N I can't get at it, and it's definitely in there. But anyway it's in that, that letter's in there, and it was a very long involved letter, but it definitely said that the only suggestion they had was to take it up with the Minister for Justice.

SP *Okay.*

N And I took that as good as no.

SP *Yeah.*

N Because it wasn't on the list.

SP *Yeah. Yeah.*

N So that's as far as we got. Now, maybe I should have done otherwise, I didn't realise. I'm raging if that's the case, but anyway.

SP *Oh, it's not your failure.*

P No.

SP *It's not your problem.*

N I went the wrong way obviously.

SP *It's their..they should have told you.*

N Well, I don't know how I slipped up, but I was very keen to get in on it at the time for you.

SP *Yeah.*

N And I was mad when I thought that and somewhere along the way, I'd picked up or somebody must have said to me somewhere, not the letter now, but someone else must have said, 'oh, your day will come. They'll widen the remit out to other places. It'll widen out as time goes on. It won't be just those ten'.

SP *Yeah.*

N And maybe I was thinking in time, they'll get around to the laundries, do you know, I mean that's something I'm just remembering.

SP *Yeah. Yeah.*

N It wasn't in the letter, but there was some indication somewhere that there would be another round kind of thing.

P Well, there was books written about the laundry and the people being put in. There was a girl brought in and she wrote a book. I think I have it at home still.

N Probably, yeah, they will.

P I didn't throw it out. She was in her First Communion outfit.

SP *Wow.*

P And she was brought into a home.

N God.

P Not Baggot Street.

N So many.

P There was a child about nine in it, but she was going to school outside of school.

N Was there really?

SP *Okay.*

P Yeah, there was a child in it about nine years of age.

SP *A child of nine in Baggot Street?*

P In Baggot Street.

SP *Okay.*

N And did she sleep with ye and did she eat?

P No, no.

N No.

P No, no.

N And where would you see her?

P She'd come in, like there'd be some girl looking after her and she'd come in and then they'd bring her off.

N To school.

P Never saw her after that.

N Oh gosh.

P She used to go outside to school.

N Because there is a school right next door. Thomas's [pseudonym] sister went there and Thomas, my partner, went there as a child to the school right next door.

P I can't think of her name. I often tried.

N It's a long time there, that school.

P You know.

SP *And tell me, what would you say, because it was termed I think as a training college or a training school?*

P No training school at all!

SP *Yeah.*

P You were always at the sink. What's that?

SP *Yeah, and you received no qualifications.*

P No qualifications or anything. And if you...do you know the guimpes? They're called guimpes.

SP *Yeah.*

P Them yokes they wear.

N Bib thing, yeah.

P You get a crease in that, you had to wash it again and wash the starch out of it.

N And start all over.

P And start all over again and if you got the same crease, you had to do the same.

SP *Oh, Jesus!*

N Lord.

P It was cruel.

SP *And tell me, why did you never tell anyone else other than Nuala about what happened to you?*

P I never even told the people I was working with.

SP *Yeah, and why not?*

P I don't know! I did leave her a couple of times because she kicked the bucket of water away from me.

SP *Yeah.*

P And on the floor. I said that's it, I'm off.

SP *Yeah.*

P I left her. He had to finish it, but he was down the next morning looking for me.

SP *Yeah.*

P Yeah.

SP *Did you feel ashamed?*

P I did, to be put in there.

N It's terrible, isn't it?

SP *Yeah.*

N On top of everything else like.

SP *To feel shame.*

N On top of the misery and the awfulness of it, to actually have to be, you know, the feeling of shame that you were there is terrible.

SP *Yeah.*

P Shock.

N It's terrible and yet if it's in your bones, what can you do if you feel ashamed?

SP *And then why, oh sorry, sorry.*

P You'd ask, oh, I'm going to be a nun. I don't know why I said that.

SP *Yeah.*

P To the three of them that came in on Sunday to see me.

N The visit.

P 'Oh, you can't be a nun'. And I said, 'why not?' And that kept in my head. I couldn't be a nun because I was adopted.

SP *Oh God (gasps).*

P Or I was fostered.

SP *Jesus.*

P Well, I said I could go out foreign!

N Good for you.

P I did, I said that.

SP *Yeah.*

P You can go foreign to be a nun. Yeah. The same question was put to me. 'You can't get married in white'. I said, 'why?' They thought I was pregnant. That's as true as God, Nuala.

N Who said you can't get married?

P [Inaudible] White.

SP *Jesus.*

N That's ridiculous, unbelievable!

SP *Were they very religious, your foster family?*

P They were.

SP *They were, okay.*

P Hang medals out their coats.

SP *Okay.*

P Religion.

SP *Yeah.*

P You were hauled to the church. They didn't bring me very often because my stockings wouldn't stay up. I couldn't find my garters! And they had corsets then years ago and they had sort of blades in them. They tied at the back and they tied at the front. But they had yokes for...

N Oh, suspenders.

P Suspenders.

N Yeah, I remember suspenders.

P But them yokes they had.

N Like bones.

P The bones.

N Oh, they'd stick in you.

P They used to catch me in the leg.

SP *Oh!*

P And I was afraid of my life that I'd get into trouble and I used to try and get a needle and a bit of thread and stitch it up again. Sure every time I stitched it, it went out.

N Oh God.

P I was afraid I'd get...I got a new coat another time and I was coming back from a friend's house and didn't the pocket...there was a piece of the...the play green is still there, but the surroundings are gone. It was a paling and wasn't it sticking out and didn't it catch the pocket.

S *Oh!*

N The coat, oh no.

P Oh my God. I think I sat in the toilet for an hour.

SP *Oh.*

P Thinking what would I do, where would I get a needle and thread?

N Oh God.

SP *Why did you feel so afraid?*

P Because I'd be beaten!

SP *Really? Yeah, they'd beat you?*

P Uh huh.

SP *Okay.*

P Things were so bad.

SP *Yeah.*

P God, Nuala, it's getting dark. No lights on.

SP *We're finished, definitely finished now, but I just wanted to ask very quickly, so you never made contact with your natural mother?*

P No.

SP *No, but did you find out any information on her?*

N Well, we did. I started this bit of a search thing about ten years ago, would it be maybe or?

P Uh huh.

N When I lived over beside Pearl and we went to see the Sister.

P Oh yeah.

N The Sister of Mercy, she was, wasn't she?

P She was a Sister of Mercy.

N We found our way to Northbrook Road in Ranelagh where they had a home and she was an elderly nun who had actually worked in St Patrick's Home on the Navan Road. Anyway, she told us, she looked up a register, I mean we went once, but she had got this out for us when we went.

SP *Yeah.*

N And in the register it showed Pearl Doyle [pseudonym] and another Pearl Doyle her mother, in the Navan Road, and it said, beside her name, it said released to work at a date that would have been Pearl being eighteen months to two years old.

SP *Yeah.*

N I've forgotten now. That's in the file. And so we know that they were together there for nearly two years.

SP *Okay.*

N And that's all we found, released to work.

SP *Yeah.*

N And then I did a bit more searching around in Pearse Street Library and the archives and I was on the trail and I found a reference to her working out in Dublin mountains, but there wasn't an address. It was up around Stepside. Do you remember that?

P Uh huh.

N But it was just like a townland and we went up there and drove around, but it didn't mean anything to us. And the last bit I got was a letter showing an address for her in Manchester.

SP *Okay..*

N And subsequently long after Pearl would have been in homes and wherever. I've forgotten the date, but it was several years and the address in Manchester, I rang the police station that I traced down to the nearest one.

SP *Yeah.*

N And they told me that that road didn't exist.

SP *Okay.*

N So I was told perhaps it was a fictitious address or nobody knew was that ever a road, was there ever a road there. The police station didn't and the only way to find out was to actually go over, and at the time I couldn't go over.

SP *Yeah.*

N None of us could go.

P Uh huh.

N So that's all we found.

SP *Yeah.*

N But we knew that she was thirty when she had Pearl.

SP *Yeah. Okay, okay. And nothing about your father?*

N Not mentioned at all, just the mother.

P No, nothing.

N A space, yeah.

SP *Okay. Okay, very good.*

P Only somebody brought me to get baptised, I think.

N Somebody stood, you know the way it's...?

SP *Oh yeah.*

N Yeah.

P A sponsor.

SP *Yeah.*

N And it was a woman's name, isn't it?

P It was a woman's name.

N Yeah.

SP *Yeah.*

N We have that certificate too.

SP *Okay.*

N They're all in the file.

SP *(Laughs). Very quickly, about just getting your records from the laundry, could you tell me a bit about the process?*

N Well, this is me.

SP *Yeah, yeah, or either.*

N Yeah.

SP *Whoever, you were doing most of it, weren't you, Nuala, the search?*

N Yes. Well, we went on our visit once about ten years ago or eight years ago when we went into the place.

P Yeah,

N Just more out of curiosity than anything.

P That's all.

N And well, maybe we had it in our heads that we'd get some evidence she was there. I've forgotten the sequence of this.

SP *In the Sisters of Mercy laundry?*

N Yeah.

P And they said there were Americans.

N Yeah. We got no...I don't remember did we go in looking for a document. We went to see it anyway. We wanted to have a look at it, but I'm trying to remember was I thinking of that as evidence for the redress board, but I can't honestly say.

SP *Yeah. Yeah.*

N But then recently, when all this latest bit started on the papers and everything and then I saw the reference to your office and your people, then I thought well, if anything happens and they do have an apology and everything, Pearl has to be in on it this time because we missed the last boat by the looks of things for the redress board. So I sent an email. I started ringing up those Sisters of Mercy. On the Internet, I was looking up their number and I got a number in Sallins in Co. Kildare.

SP *Okay.*

N And that lady, who was quite pleasant, told me to ring David O'Neill [pseudonym]. And David O'Neill then rang me back and gave me a phone number for him when he came home from abroad, wherever he was. And then I rang him again and he said to email him my request, which I did, and at the same time, I emailed the Sisters of Mercy in Sallins again...

SP *Yeah.*

N ...to say please help with information.

SP *Yeah.*

N So he then replied and said I will pass on your request to the Sisters and at the same time, they emailed me back, so I don't know whether he told them to email me or they replied to my email.

SP *Yeah. Yeah.*

N And they emailed back and said we will help with information if you tell us where to send the form.

SP *Okay.*

N Which I was amazed at! And then I sent this address and it came within a couple of days.

SP *Very good.*

N So that's as far as we've got.

SP *Okay.*

N So I couldn't believe how it came after, you know, you had told me about the Good Shepherd people.

SP *Yeah.*

N And the people who won't give you any information.

P Uh huh.

SP *Yeah.*

N So it seems that they're quite willing to give information now.

SP *Okay.*

N But it says on it that it takes approximately two months to get a response to the research.

SP *Okay. Well, I wish you the best of luck with getting that, getting all your information.*

N So hopefully, yes, yeah.

SP *It's very important.*

N Oh, it is, yeah, definitely.

SP *And how would an apology, how would that make a difference for you?*

P It'd make a good...if they apologised, especially the Mercy nuns.

SP *Yeah. Yeah.*

P Especially them.

SP *Yeah.*

P They treated the girls there like dirt, which was wrong, very wrong.

SP *Yeah.*

N And myself, if I could just say, I feel the apology would go some way towards relieving this feeling of shame.

SP *Yeah.*

N Because if somebody apologised for the fact that you were in this ghastly place, then you'd realise there's no need to be feeling ashamed!

P And you didn't know you were going there.

N I mean that's so unfair!

SP *Yeah.*

P That's what I can't understand. Who put me there?

SP *Yeah.*

N *Yeah.*

P Was it the Social Welfare that didn't want to bring me in or did the people I was with? The people I was with...gone. Afraid that I'd kick up an awful row and they didn't want the neighbours to know.

SP *Okay.*

P That could be it too.

SP *Yeah. And just, oh sorry, sorry.*

P Because they had other children before me and I think that other girl they had was a bit...

N She was, and we found evidence of that, yeah.

P ...she went to Cabra.

SP *Oh, okay, yeah.*

N They had a girl who was...

P And she died in Cabra, I think.

SP *Oh wow. Okay.*

N ...she was mentally sick, yeah.

P Now, these, when we made our Confirmation, they went in to see her, but I wasn't brought because I'd want to go to the toilet, and they wouldn't bring me anywhere.

SP *Yeah.*

P Didn't want me, but there was only two of them brought, a boy and a girl. That's all.

SP *Yeah. And actually, just to confirm, so when you were in the laundry, no one, as in no one from the authorities, came to visit you?*

P No. No one.

SP *Because, yeah, I'll tell you after, but I think that someone should have come if you were a ward of the state. Anyhow, we'll discuss that.*

N Yeah.

SP *Yeah. But no, if you've got nothing else to add?*

P No.

SP *No, I think you've spoken for...*

N You've done very well. Great.

SP *You've done very well and thank you so much for sharing everything.*

P Not at all.

SP *Thank you.*

N There now, great.

[Interview ends]