



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



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| <b>Reference Code:</b>                    | MAGOHP/27   |
| <b>Oral History of:</b>                   | Phyllis Morgan  |
| <b>Pseudonym?</b>                         | No  |
| <b>Status:</b>                            | Key Informant   |
| <b>Keywords:</b>                          | Activist; Irish Women's Survivors Support Group; St Philomena's Convent, Stillorgan; Lakeland's Convent, Sandymount; St Patrick's Mother and Baby Home, Navan Road; industrial schools; discrimination because of industrial school background; emigration; survivor support groups; alteration of birth certificates; domestic violence; long-term impact of family separation; Residential Institutions Redress Board (RIRB); difficulties with solicitors at RIRB; Irish Women Survivors Support Network; memorials; survivor interaction with religious orders. |
| <b>Date of Interview:</b>                 | 29 <sup>th</sup> April 2013   |
| <b>Transcript:</b>                        | 78 pages  |
| <b>Number/Format of Audio Files:</b>      | One .wma file   |
| <b>Interviewer:</b>                       | Dr Sinéad Pembroke  |
| <b>Records/Papers included:</b>           | None  |
| <b>Access Conditions:</b>                 | Interviews are freely available to the public. Immediate release of transcript and anonymised audio file.   |
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To cite this transcript:

O'Donnell, K., S. Pembroke and C. McGettrick. (2013) "Oral History of Phyllis Morgan". *Magdalene Institutions: Recording an Oral and Archival History*. Government of Ireland Collaborative Research Project, Irish Research Council, pp.1-78

## Notes on Redaction and Transcription Process

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Interviewee Initials: PM

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

- Named individuals have been assigned pseudonyms
- Locations and dates have been accurately transcribed

### List of Pseudonyms

| Pseudonym      | Status/Relationship to Interviewee |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Sr Frances     | Third Party Religious              |
| Sr Mary        | Third Party Religious              |
| Mr Fitzpatrick | Interviewee's former employer      |
| Mrs Jones      | Social worker                      |

### Basic Data from Interview

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Name/Pseudonym             | Phyllis Morgan  |
| When Born                  | Didn't say  |
| Born outside marriage?     | Yes, born in St Patrick's Mother and Baby Home, Navan Road, Dublin. |
| Raised by                  | St Philomena's, Stillorgan<br>Lakeland's Convent, Sandymount        |
| Education                  | Industrial school   |
| Order                      | n/a, wasn't in laundry  |
| Laundry                    | n/a   |
| From                       | n/a   |
| To                         | n/a   |
| Duration of stay           | n/a   |
| Age on entry               | n/a   |
| Entered Via                | n/a   |
| House Name/No              | n/a   |
| Haircutting/punishment?    | n/a   |
| Circumstances of Departure | n/a   |
| Emigrated?                 | Yes   |
| Physical ailments?         | n/a   |
| Of Note                    |   |

[Interview begins]

SP *Okay so thank you very much Phyllis for agreeing to...to the interview today. First just to start it off could you just tell me something about yourself?*

PM My name is Phyllis Morgan, and I'm a survivor as we...we seem to call ourselves nowadays. I was born in a Mother and Baby Home, St Pat's in Navan Road. My dear mother wasn't married so she had to be punished for her sins, so she had to spend three years in St Pat's in Navan Road with me. And then around three years of age I would have been transferred then because my mother had said she did not want me adopted or fostered out to strangers or anything like that. So the oth...the only other option for me was to be placed in a convent, which was St Philomena's in Stillorgan, where I stayed...lived in fear in that place and the brutality that we suffered, it was just dreadful. I was there until I was about thirteen years of age and then at thirteen years of age then I was moved to Lakelands Convent in Sandymount in Dublin, which I found – strange enough – I always used to think it was a bit of a dump but yet I liked it. There was a sense of *freedom* about the place. There wasn't that feeling of living in fear that I always sensed in St Philomena's. I...i...it was more open; it was a bit rough, there was children from every walk of life there and you know i...it certainly was a culture shock to anyone coming from St Philomena's because we would never have had people coming in and out in St Philomena's, where in Lakelands you'd just get to know someone and their family come and take them again. And you know that...the people were in and out in and out you know...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...it would be only some people like myself that would have stayed there until they were sixteen and then you'd be removed from the convent the day...the day before your birthday because the government stopped paying for you.

SP *Hmm. Yeah, yeah. And can you tell me a bit more then about your time in St Philomena's?*

PM St Philomena's was a place run by a few sadistic nuns, *very, very* cruel you know, when you think – we were only children, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten you know – and you know, the impression you know, my...my young life was, you know, this sense of fear all the time, waiting for the next beating, you know. We...they used to beat us with hurling sticks, you know,

that...the workmen who done the painting and repairs around the convent and the...and the big farm had tapered the...the hurling stick so it just tapered down instead of that lumpy bit on the side. And you know that's what we used to get beaten with you know; you'd have to hold your hands out, you know, you were too terrified to be 'bold' as it was called. But you know, many, many, *many* occasions you would be called out, you...nothing would be explained why you were being called out but you knew, your name being called out, you're going to be beaten. And you'd be told to hold your hands out and if you didn't ha...hold your hands out, right straight out, you'd get the wallop under the elbow first and then the whack on the hands.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And you know sometimes you...you think, 'my God is this nun ever gonna stop?' They'd be frothing at the mouth, you know, and you'd think – God! You...you'd be nearly fainting your hands would be so painful from the beatings. But you didn't dare not still stand there because it would...you felt like you know you were going to get worse if you ran away or...so you just stood there and *took it!* Yeah.

SP *And can you tell us about your education experience?*

PM *Oh!* That was appalling! There was *never* any encouragement for to do anything you know and like to play with a doll even and make clothes. I can remember my mother bringing me up a doll once and she had something like...you know that I perhaps could cut a little pattern and make a dress for the dolly and of course you know, I had it five minutes and then it just disappears.

SP *Yeah.*

PM But I remember I saw a thing and gosh I would have loved to have made them new clothes to put it on the dolly. So I...I felt like I had that interest and I wanted to do sewing. And so then many a time I would sneak off to the sewing room and we had a deaf and dumb lady, used to...was our dress-maker and she always...would love it if, whenever I used to go in there. And even though I...I used to feel she was concerned because she knew I'd be in trouble and yet I'd still go back and she would often say you know, 'go, go' you know, 'you'll only be in trouble'. And then sometimes she would think oh it's a bit safe to – she would say, you know, I used to see, watch how she cut the dresses out and then sometimes she would give me a bit of fabric

and s...show me how to do a hem and you know just working through play because I was dying to get on the sewing machine. And...so she'd give me a bit and she showed me how to just sew a bit of fabric and I used to be really excited you know, I'd be on that sewing machine and I'd be in my element thinking, 'oh God I'm really enjoying this'. And next thing, someone would grab me by the back of my neck and *lift* me out of the chair and just drag me – my feet couldn't even touch the ground. And I'd be locked in the sewing...the shoe room...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...to polish 100 pairs of shoes, which funny enough I never saw as a punishment I used to just get on with it and I used to like the idea of making the shoes nice and shiny and it gave me something to do.

SP *Yeah.*

PM I never sort of went in there and started crying like I'm being punished. I used to enjoy it and I'd be *locked* in that room, so God help me if I wanted to go to the toilet, I couldn't get out.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And I would have to stay there until th...the nun...you know, I always had a pair of shoes by me and you know she would come in, you know, 'are you finished them shoes?' and I would say, 'oh sorry I'm just on the last pair Sister'. And...'put them back in the...the...the cubbyhole' and then she'd say, 'right you can go down to the rest of the children'. You know, so yeah, so it...education certainly nil...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...it was like you know, doing even the Primary Certificate you know, I could remember, you know, I remembered it so well and...and that was the first time I ever heard that word, 'coffee'. And I remember Sister Frances [pseudonym] coming in and saying to Sister Mary [pseudonym], 'oh Sister, would you like to now go and get your cup of coffee? I've had mine and if you'd like to take the Cigire [school inspector] with you, if he'd like to go as well. Would you like a nice cup of coffee? It's all ready down there for you'. And the two of them went off

and left Sister Frances in charge and she reassured the...the Cigire that she would keep order and everything would be hunky dory. And the next thing then she's giving us the...she's gone around, 'right, give these,' because we're looking at them thinking, 'my God we've never...we don't...don't even understand what we're looking at'. And even though I could read and then she said, 'Right, get your ruler, mark it there; just put "R" and work there. And, right now, first question...' And she would give us all the answers and we just had to copy it all down and it...it was amazing the way it was timed so perfectly that by the time the Cigire came back you know, they...they...we were ready for the bell, we were to pretend that we were still writing when the Cigire came back and for him to ring the bell for us to stop because the time was up. And we all had to – but we had to pretend – hea...our heads down letting on we were still doing something.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And you know...and, yeah I think most of us passed our Primary Certificate. But it certainly wasn't for the work we had done...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...because we didn't even understand the questions. That's how poor our education was.

SP *Yeah. So what kind of...what...what was your routine like? What did you have to do?*

PM O...our routine would have been, we got up at some ungodly hour in the morning, we would queue in *freezing* cold passages, waiting to go down to the church to...to Mass. We'd go into ch...the chapel and we would do Mass and one thing I can always remember were these bang, bang, bangs where children used to collapse and fall and would *really* hurt themselves! And the nun would just pick them up by the back of their neck and *drag* them out of the church or e...either that or would make them sit down on...on the preacher type bench a...a...and you know and say, 'I'll see you after'. So the poor child would have been beaten badly for *fainting* in the Mass.

*(Pause)*

[Inaudible whispers]

SP *The routine?*

PM Yes then we'd go to the Mass, so then after Mass then you know we'd know that some of the children would be...you'd always have that fear of the other child and think, 'oh my God they're going to be in so much trouble now, they're going to get such a beating!' And you know the nun would keep threatening them you know. And then we'd go down to the breakfast room and we would get a mug of cocoa and a slice of bread and butter I think it was, nothing else, just a slice of bread and butter and a mug of cocoa. And then we would after that, we would go up and make our beds, and then we would be ready then to go to the classrooms, then we'd all run...run over and go to the classrooms or I suppose go to the toilet or whatever we had to do and our beds would be all made and then off to the classroom. And then we'd come back around lunchtime for our lunch, which would be...we used to call it slop! (*Laughs*) It would be this brown mess, yeah thick brown stuff you know with a couple of spuds used to be sticking out of it you know, you used to just always call it slop. And you know I'm sure we...we must have eaten it because we used to be *starving* and you'd get 'sago' or one of them type of puddings, which was *horrible*. But I'd say we did it eat but I was a fussy eater and would turn my nose up and s...say, 'I don't like it, I don't like it'. Oh I think sometimes we used to get a dollop of jam in it and I would s...I don't...and you know the nun would give me a clout across the head and say, 'get and eat it!' And I was just, 'I don...I just don't want, I just don't want it'. And I wouldn't eat it and then you know, I'd be sent back to the classroom...get back to the classroom and then I think by half-three you had a break. And then you will get a...again another – I can't remember what the drink was – I don't think it was cocoa but we got some sort of a drink, I don't know if it was just water and then we would get a slice of just bread and jam, no butter on it. And I used to think that was horrible...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...I hate bread that just has jam on it, it's just horrible! I like it with butter...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...and jam. Cream w...would be nice as well (*laughs*) but that never happened! But you know and then, you know we would have that and then we...sometimes we'd go out into a playroom, the play area – depending on the weather – and we would hang around this playroom, just sit around. Sometimes...I don't know, it...we never seemed to have proper games like skipping or you know, we just hung around.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And then, we'd have the rosary and I think six o'clock the angelus would go and we'd do the angelus and the rosary. And then we'd go in for our tea, which again would be a cup of cocoa...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...and a slice of bread and dripping or something like that, and that would be your tea. And then you know...upstairs, by seven o'clock we'd all be in bed. You had to have a wash and that was another opportunity for Sister Mary to just decide, 'Wall, [interviewee's maiden name] come here!' Grab my ear, 'look at them spuds!' And she would hold your ear in such a way and she'd say 'look at them spuds in your ears!' And then with such force she would send you *flying* across the bathroom! And when you think of the health and safety issue there, them basins would have been really...supposing you cracked the side of your head on them? She would send you *flying*, 'get them spuds out of your ears!' And then she'd call you back up to check again and the way she would *pull* at your ears, your ears would be sore. And then you'd just go to...into your beds and cry if you were upset, but cry quietly...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...because if you were heard to cry, you'd be in *more* trouble!

SP *Yeah.*

PM So...and how many times you'd hear that over the years, children weeping in their beds. You know.

SP *And did you ever...how did you...how did you...did you conform or rebel or how did you feel that you survived?*

PM Yeah, I never rebelled, I was too terrified...

SP *Hmm.*

PM The...I...you...because of that fear was always in me. I was too terr...I used to see sometimes someone would really...it was like you know, that they had enough of this fear that they lived in. Where I always seemed to have a rein on it that I...yeah I did keep control, just kept...kept a low profile as best you could, which was hard, a...a lot of girls have said it to me. I just tried to keep a real low profile hoping that the nun didn't pull me out.

SP *Hmm.*

PM But I think I always had that...there was always something in me that...I always liked to be there doing you know...I wanted to see what was going on, I want to be...so I always had that in...there was something in me that made me inquisitive and you know, I wanted to be up there finding out things and different things like that. So yeah, so no they didn't break...they didn't break me because I always had that feistiness when I used to hear them say to me, 'oh you'll never be anything, you'll be *nothing*,' you know...you know, the way I used to hear them say to other girls about...'you'll be walking the streets like your mother, you'll never be anything. You'll be walking the streets with a shawl around your shoulders'. And you know, different verbal abuse like that you would *constantly* be hearing this *every single day* from a couple of diff[erent] nuns you know. Abu...and, you know, I saw...still knew some of them girls in later life when we were all in the UK and they still always ha...I always used to feel they still had that like, 'ah well sure the nuns told me I'd never make anything of myself and sure that's why I only do what I do'. And yet they were very good workers. They w...do you know, th...th...th...these certain women that I know that were with me, that every one of them went into the care profession.

SP *Hmm.*

PM You know, they never passed exams but they were carers...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...and by gum did they do a good job!

SP *Hmm.*

PM They done a *wonderful* job and I used to say that to them, 'but look what you do, you're caring for other vulnerable people'. And I said we all...a lot of us, not every survivor, but a lot of us had that about...we had to mind somebody else.

SP *Yeah.*

PM And I said, 'don't ever,' you know I said, 'I know you always think [Sister] Frances used to say that to you, "you'll never be anything, you'll be walking the streets like your mother"'. And I said, 'but you be proud of what you've done. That is a wonderful job to do...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...to care for older people because so many people don't want to care for older people'.

SP *Exactly.*

PM And yet I saw that in some of the ladies that I grew up with, that...you know they never went on benefits or nothing, they *worked* and to k...you know keep their families together and you know...they worked, they never failed their family and yet they always had this when w...us as a group would get together all through the years in London. We'd often get together which...and funny enough, I used to arrange – I would often say...ring all the girls, 'right it's about time we had a reunion'. And sometimes I would have some girls coming over from Ireland and we'd all meet up because at the time I had the biggest space, because I ran the pubs.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And so I used to do it about four times a year and make sure...even though I'd be in touch with a few of them much more regular. But some of these girls would always have that in the back [of their heads] about the nuns you know, 'that's why I c...could never go back to college or university'. And I'd say, 'but you're doing a wonderful job; you hold your head up, you're doing a wonderful job,' you know. And just encourage them that...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...you done alright you know, considering the abuse, the verbal abuse you got.

SP *Yeah.*

PM *Yeah.*

SP *And why do you think it is that you've come out feeling...not feeling like that? Why do you think some survivors are more institutionalised...*

PM *Yeah.*

SP *...than...than others?*

PM I think you know, because I...you know I'd done 16 years and you know people sometimes say, 'oh well I done five or six years,' you know, 'you wouldn't understand,' you know, when they don't know I'm a survivor. And you know, I sort of think to myself, well you know, 'I done 16 years,' and I don't...I...I have this thing about...stop crying about the past, you can't change it...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...move on! Make a difference, *you* can make a difference to your life, *you* make that difference and *you* do what *you* want to do! Okay I never went down the education route because I always had that thing that anything to do with education was duress and it would...I just felt it would bring all them feelings back to me. I remember once trying it, going to...I...I wanted to learn French because my mother spoke French fluently and I was trying to...I used to ask her to teach me and she said, 'no, no, no go to classes,' and but...I used to think I'd learn more, I

learnt a bit from her because it was a language that I loved, you know I loved...I liked sort of European languages...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...you know, the Italian and French. And you know, she said, 'no, no, no,' she said 'go to...go to college,' you know. But I used to find, it used to bring all them feelings back to me and I just thought, 'no it's not for me, I can't do it, just something is blocking me,' you know, I just couldn't do it. I didn't understand at the time...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...because I was still quite young – would have been in my twenties – you know, and I *really* wanted to learn but I couldn't. The classroom situation...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...just didn't work for me.

SP *Yeah.*

PM And you know...so I learned a bit but, you know, I can't speak it fluent the way my mother did...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...so th...that was an interest I really had you know.

[Inaudible whispers]

SP *Oh yeah no I...I think you've answered it...*

PM *Yeah.*

SP *...I was just asking...*

PM Yeah.

SP *...about education...*

PM ...education, yeah...

SP *...and...and all that, no I think you've answered it...*

PM Yeah.

SP *...perfectly.*

PM Yeah.

SP *But, no actually I was going to ask as well about your experience leaving...what was it like...*

PM Leaving the convent? *Oh!*

SP *...when you were leaving...*

PM The convent?

SP *It would have been Lakelands wouldn't it?*

PM It was in Lakelands, yeah, yeah, yeah well, just one day you know you don't even know you're...you're going away. Well you don't...you don't understand anything and just a...a nun called me and said, 'can you go...go up to the f...infirmary at such and such a time'. They might have said it to me the night before after benediction, 'can you come to the infirmary about ten or half-ten that morning,' and I think, 'oh God, I'm in trouble again'. Even though I never felt that fear in Lakelands, it was so different. There was encouragement with your education; they sent me to Ballsbridge Tech [technical school] for a year and they wanted me to learn short-hand typing – I did *not* want to do that. So I...I sort of had a mind of my own, I was getting to that, and I just...I knew that I could say that without getting a beating and I said to the nun, 'you know oh

Sister,' you know, I didn't even know what...what she was talking about, saying short-hand typing. And I didn't even understand about – that was a commercial course – and then there was the...oh God, to do with sewing and cooking and...

SP *Or...*

PM ...domestic science!

SP *Yes, yeah.*

PM And I didn't even understand what those words meant either and then when the nun said to me, 'oh no Philomena, go for the...you c...you...you'd be...you'd make a great secretary'. So anyway, somebody took me down to Ballsbridge Tech and then I met the...the h...head mistress and so she showed me and she said, 'now this is a commercial course; you'd learn how to work on this machine, it's called a typewriter'. And I thought, 'oh God, I couldn't, jeeppers I don't want that!' And then she says, 'and the other course now would be domestic science,' and – similar to the nuns – and so she says, 'and that would be sewing and cooking'. And I said, 'oh that's what I want, that's what I...I'll have the sewing!' And she said, 'no, no the nun says you've got to learn domest...you have to...have to do the commercial course'. 'No, no, no I don't want to do it!' And I went back to the nun and I said 'Sister, please I want to do the sewing and the cooking'.

SP *Hmm.*

PM So she said, 'well, I can see you're not going to...you're...you're adamant that's what you want to do,' and she said, 'I know you like the sewing'. So she says, 'yeah alright then, I...yeah but' she said, 'you'd get a better job at the...being a secretary'. I said 'oh Sister no, I want to...I want to *do* something,' you know. So anyway they let me do the commercial course [sic] and I just enjoyed it; it was heaven! But I was always in trouble because I just had this thing, I hated tacking things and I had to tack it before I sewed it. And I used to think to myself, 'sure I can do that on the machine no problem!' And I remember the teacher – you know, [she] was teaching me a lesson – she says to me, 'Philomena, there is *no* way you've done that without tacking it'. And I didn't say anything, and I didn't say yes, I didn't say no. And she says, 'right now,' she says, 'okay you've stitched it all together, *now* you can tack it!' So she made me tack it and she

says, 'I'm not passing it until you tack it'. And I had to go and tack the whole blasted thing! So I thought 'I've learnt my lesson, tack it before you do it,' you know.

SP *(Laughs)*

PM And it did make sense later on, it did, especially with certain fabrics. It is better to tack it before you machine it you know, so yeah...

[Phone ringing in background]

SP *Do you want to...*

PM No. I...I won't take the call. I'll ring them later. I...I'll switch it off.

SP *Yeah.*

[Interview briefly paused]

SP *Okay and so yeah so when you were leaving, what happened?*

PM Yeah so when I left, yeah I was called into the infirmary and the nun says, 'right Philomena, put these clothes on, put your other ones into the little basket there,' and...you know, 'there's your little suitcase, there's a...a change of clothes,' was what she said, 'change your clothes there,' and, 'your mother is in the parlour waiting for you'. So you know, I think 'where am I going now?' Anyway we went up and my mother was waiting for me and you know, just the hall door was opened and, 'good bye, you...you're on your own-oh'. So I walked down the avenue with my mother and got the bus back to Leeson Street and you know, went into...she had a big, big room in 74 Lower Lesson Street, which she had been living there for many years, she was a waitress in the Metropole. And she sort of said to me, 'put your bag in the corner,' she was quite stern so I f...I felt like, 'oh God here we go, the nuns again!' And you know, then she sort of smacked me across the face and just said, 'you get out and you start working and paying me back for all I've done for you!' And I d...I thought well, 'what does that mean?' You know, I didn't understand, 'go...go out to work' you know, because you weren't prepared for anything like that!

SP *Yeah.*

PM You weren't warned that you'd have to go for an interviews [sic] or things like that. And then, you know within I'd say maybe the...say...say, the first week I'd say, I...I had a job around the corner, well it was only the neighbours downstairs, her daughter was working in a place that was just packing sanitary towels and I thought it was a very odd thing to be doing, you know but...didn't understand that they were sanitary towels and I worked there for a little while. Then managed...my mother actually got me this job with a high-class tailors where I started working there and learning all aspects of you know, good tailoring and how clothes should hang and all that sort of stuff. And so I learnt a lot working there and I was working there *very* happily, bringing my wages home, giving them to my mother – I wasn't allowed to open them up – I just handed her the closed envelope. Didn't dare – and I didn't! I didn't dare open it and nick out 10 shillings or anything.

SP *Hmm.*

PM She used to have to open it and she would give me...two and six I think it was, and she'd keep the rest. And yeah, so I was working away quite happily, you know really I was enjoying it and the next thing, I...I can't...I don't know the length of time, but I was there a good while learning so much. And then the...the woman who ran the business called me into her office one day and said to me, you know, something she was saying about, 'where...where were you brought up?' And she says, 'you...that's not really a Dublin accent you have'. And I said, 'oh...oh yes Miss,' – I can't remember what her name was – 'Miss...oh yes Miss, I was brought up in Dublin'. And she says, 'with an accent like that of course you couldn't have been brought up in Dublin!' And I said, 'of course I was in Dublin!' I said, 'I was brought up in...in Stillorgan'. She said, 'whereabouts in Stillorgan?' I said, 'oh St Philomena's Convent'. And then she...she sort of like, gasped, 'oh my God!' she says, 'we can't have your sort working here...*oh, oh!*' This was the way she was, and she had this – which is your P45 as we call it today – and she sort of just threw it over the desk at me and says, '*oh!* We can't have your sort here! Do you realise the type of people I'm dressing here! *Oh!* We can't have your sort!' – even though I never saw these people! But anyway she just said to me, you know, 'there's your cards and get out!' And that was it! Yeah, and you know I did get a job down in Grafton Street in another lovely...a lovely man he was, a Mr Fitzpatrick [pseudonym] and I worked for him for a while, just a

little...one of the small roads off Grafton Street and you know, he was very nice, he really was! And I worked with him for a little while and then again, it just seemed like I was being attacked by some of the other women who were quite rough. And, you know, he...he caught them a couple of times, you know *working me* you know...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...and I just didn't know how to retaliate you know. And he w...he was...he was real...I remember that day, he was so *angry* with...with the...it was just only a couple of women and they kept saying to me, 'you're not Dublin, you're a bloody culchie!' you know that *carry on*. So he put me in another room to work with about two other women that were okay. But you know he caught them again attacking me and he...he ended up having to sack them and you know, he says, 'I will not tolerate this behaviour from anybody'. And you know, so he was very kind...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...you know, and he really used to look out for me, but he was a lovely man. His name was Mr Fitzpatrick and he had beautiful brown eyes...

SP *Uh huh.*

PM ...I remember that. And then I think you know, I worked for...with him for a while and you know, I think then eventually you know, a couple of friends of mine were deciding to go to America and I said, 'oh I'd love...we...we'll all go together'. And I was doing...we had to go for some medicals, I remember that. We were sort of gathering whatever information we had to have for the agency and then we all went for a medical and I was turned down because they said I had kidney problems, you know, I don't know to this day why I had kidney problems. And you know, so they went off to America and then I bumped into another girl who was living in England, I met her on O'Connell Street and she said – I knew she was in England – and she says to me, 'oh where are you now?' I said, 'oh, I'm living with my mother in Leeson Street'. And I said, 'oh I hate it,' you know, I said, 'I have to call her my aunt,' and you know...and she said, 'why don't you come to England with me?' And so I did! I kept my wages that Friday because I th...I thought to myself, 'God, I think I'm going to need money for this'. And then sh...something she

said to me...must have said to me about money and I said to her, 'oh I don't have any money, my Mum takes all my money out of my hand...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...takes my money off me!' So she says to me, 'what you do is, you...you just keep your wages on Friday, meet me and then you can stay where we're staying and then we're going back the next day'. So that's what I done; I...I think we got the boat back and she took me to the job, which was a Nestles College where a few other girls I knew were working there. And she told me to hide behind this bush and you know I was so...really feeling nervous, 'oh God what's going to happen,' you know? And then, I...you know, there was a kitchen and she said, 'that's just the kitchen there, so just stay there,' she says. And...but one of the windows was open and I could hear her saying...him saying, 'oh yeah, yeah you're back now? Oh great, did you have a nice holiday?' 'Oh yes Mr So and So,' you know, I could hear her saying, 'oh I got another...another girl, another friend of mine, brought her over from Ireland and she's looking for a job, live-in,' – because they all lived in – 'she's looking for a job'. And I heard him screaming, '*I am not taking another of you convent ones! I don't want any more of you convent ones!*' And I was trying to think...and, 'oh my God what am I going to do?!' Really scared you know like, 'what am I going to do,' and I heard him saying it. And she said, 'no can she, oh can she not stay?' He said, 'no, no, no,' he's going, 'no, no! Take her down to Father So-and-So he'll look after her. Don't worry he'll look out for her. He'll get her a place to live and he'll get her a place...get her a job'. And he did, you know and he...he seemed decent enough and he found me a place to live and found me a job in Woolworths stacking shelves. And, you know, then I...I knew another girl and we...we came to London and you know, found a place you know, got a job – we took a walk around and I saw a...a place, it sa...advertised a machinist. I thought, 'oh that's me,' and it was around from where I lived – that would be handy. Went in the next morning, lovely Jewish man and...and there was a Mr and Mrs – they were a brother and sister who ran the company – it was only small, there was only four of us working there. And said, 'oh you...when can you start' And I said, 'tomorrow morning' and he said, 'yeah, yeah that would be great' you know. And so he puts me at this odd machine (*laughs*) and I w...I was sitting there thinking, 'oh Jesus I've never seen this type of machine before!' And I...he...I...he must have been...I...I knew they were watching me out of the corner of my...their...my eye. And then he came over and he very kindly said to me, 'have you not seen this machine before?' And I said, 'oh they're different in Ireland!' And he said, 'don't worry, don't worry,' he says. So he said, 'I'll

show you how to do it'. So he showed me you know and I...I picked it up quick and he showed me the little stick he'd made into a little ruler. So yeah, so by the end of the day I got the idea or the gist of it. And yeah and I worked for...with him for many years, very happy years working with him. You know I got married, had my children...was having children and you know I could always still go to...go there and work and earn a wage. You know and he was...he was always very kind you know...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know.

SP *And did you...actually being a parent how did you find being a parent?*

PM Difficult, very difficult. I didn't understand, I didn't understand how...how you do things you know, because we...you know, we didn't have a role model did we? Yeah it was confusing, you know, I had a great what would...they...they were called then – like a social worker – and she was a really nice lady, English lady, she was a Mrs Jones, Jones [pseudonym] or something like that and she was really sweet and you know, I think she seemed to understand, you know and she said, you know, 'you obviously didn't grow up in a family'. And I said, 'no but I was reared with a hundred children'.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And she says, 'oh yeah, but,' she says, 'oh don't worry you'll get the knack, you'll get the knack' you know. And you know she really did support me and you know, and yeah you...you it just begins to flow after a while doesn't it?

SP *And what aspects did you find difficult to begin with?*

PM I found I was very hard on my child. My husband often used to say, 'you don't have to be that harsh,' you know, and I really was severe you know and you know, I feel bad about that you know. That...yeah I can remember a few times I would clout him across the bum you know...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...whack, whack...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know, not...never with a stick. And you know a couple of times my...my husband sort of saw me and said, 'what...what was that for?' 'Well,' and I used to say, 'well I used to get it and it didn't do me any harm'.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And I had that thing that that's how you...you dealt with children...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know...th...and...you know, I fe...I feel ashamed when I say it now but I...that's how I felt that you had to be...that was the way you...you...you were with a child that if they were bold you gave them a slap, you know. I soon learned...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...these...these are things you *don't* do, but I can remember you know and I used to think well, 'that's the way it was for me!'

SP *Yeah.*

PM Yeah

SP *And actually you know when you were like...in forming relationships with the opposite sex, how did you find that?*

PM Very difficult, *really* difficult. I didn't know how to talk to them!

SP *Yeah.*

PM Yeah, yeah I remember my husband used to say to me, 'God,' he says, '*don't you ever talk?*' I never really talked you know, it...it *really* was a struggle for me to talk...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know, to...to even discuss something...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...or if something was bothering me. I just didn't know how to...to express it...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know. It took...it took me a few years to learn...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...learn that.

SP *And actually I forgot to ask this before but to do with actually going to England, why did you go to...or like why did you decide that you wanted to leave Ireland?*

PM Well, I think I felt...I was beginning to get that feeling that there was – 'oh you're one of us' or 'you're one of them!' And there seemed to be this, there was something wrong with the way I was brought up; the way people used to *recoil* from me like I was dirty or something! And it was that feeling of the way they used to veer away from you like, '*oh God*' you know 'you're poison,' or something, 'can't...can't be near you!' And I thought [to] myself, I didn't know whether it would be any worse in England...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...but I thought, 'I have to get away from this,' you know, and yet I didn't understand what it...what it was. And yet I found when I came to England, nobody ever asked you where you

came from, who you are, what county you came from. It was just, 'can you do the job?' 'Yes I can!' 'Well come on let's see how,' you know, 'we'll give you a chance, I'll give you a try' or whatever. And they would let you, you know and they would show you how to use the machine and you know, once I'm shown how to do it, I can do it! And even to this day, if I'm...*show me...you know, what to do and I can do it!*

SP *Yeah.*

PM But don't sort of rattle off something into the air to me, you know, 'what...what are you talking about?' But show me and I can do it.

SP *Yeah.*

PM And you know, I...I just found that it was a breath of fresh air; never being asked about your background.

SP *Hmm.*

PM 'You...you can do the job? – Great! You're employed!'

SP *Yeah.*

PM It was great!

SP *Yeah.*

PM Yeah.

SP *And did you ever tell...or...your husband like, about like...your past?*

PM I never...I never sort of told him, I...no I never really used to talk, I didn't...never really wanted to talk about it because I always had that feeling because I know when I was in Ireland that you know, a few times a couple of the older girls that worked around the corner from me, took me to Barry's Dance Hall for dancing. And I remember men [would] get you up to dance you know

and in those days you didn't drink at these dances, it was Coca-Cola – it was very exciting, a bottle of coke – if someone bought you a bottle of Coca-Cola, you know, you'd feel, 'wow I've pulled!' (*Laughs*) And you know, it was such a delicious drink because it was something I'd never tasted but they'd say, 'oh, would you like a coke?' and I wouldn't know what it was and I'd say, 'yes please,' you know. You know, I'd get this coke and I'd think, 'wow this is a lovely taste!' But you know I found that when men used to say to me, '*what?* You're from Dublin? No you definitely aren't, you're a fecking culchie!' And I used to say, 'I'm not a culchie, I'm from Dublin,' you know. And then they would say, 'well how have you got an accent like that?' And I used to say, 'well I suppose I was brought up in the nuns,' and straight away you would see, '*what? Oh* you're one of them!' And they would say that to you, '*oh* you're one...' and the look on their face of horror, 'you're one of them!' And they...they would just walk off and leave you on the dance floor. Yeah, just walk off and leave you and you'd be there like a...you know, sidle back to where your friends were and like...oh didn't...you know, and, 'he says to me, "you're one of them" – what does he mean by that?' Yeah.

SP *And this was like with Irish men in...in...*

PM Irish men in Lon...in Ireland.

SP *...in...Lon...in...in Ireland...*

PM In Ireland.

SP *...yeah.*

PM So yeah, so I...I think then I just seemed to steer away from anything Irish. I...I never...I never went to any Irish agencies, I n...I never went to anything. I just got on with my life, married an English man. He...you know, as far as he...he used to...funny enough, he often used to say because when, you know we were in the pubs and he used to often say to me or he'd say to one of the customers, 'the convent gang are all meeting!' You know, and...and we'd have a great day you know and even the customers used to say, 'we love when you all get together because we love your sing-songs'...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know because we'd sing a load of songs – we always ended up with a sing-song. And then sometimes my old man would go then when he'd be a bit drunk and then he'd go, 'feck off you bloody convent ones, sick of the lot of yez!' (*Laughs*) And I'd say, 'does that mean me as well?'

SP (*Laughs*)

PM And, you know and you know, he'd say, 'get out the lot of yez!' you know. But, no, he...and he often used to say to people, 'oh she's posh, she was brought up with the nuns!' (*Laughs*) And I used to think to myself, 'if only he knew!' But no I never really...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...I think, 'what's the point? He can't...he can't change my past,' you know. And I...I think now I think I was a bit embarrassed by it that I just kept it quiet.

SP *Did you tell your children?*

PM No, there was no need to, I...I never felt, because funnily enough I've seen that and I thought thank goodness I never did. You know, as...because they always, they all knew all this group of girls that we'd all g...get together four times a year and I was always arranging. And they used to love the...all the different women coming down and meeting up you know, even though we'd be in regular touch with a good few of them. And you know, they'd often come down and spend the weekends with me and different things like that. And no, no it was a thing I...I never really had time to be talking to my children about my past. I was brought up in Ireland, I was brought up by the nuns, end of subject you know. And...mind you, I have a new life now in England and I'm...I'm happy with the way I am now. And you know things are sort of okay. [It would] be nicer if I'd had a nicer husband, but things were okay you know, I could cope with him you know, and I used to often think to myself, *reassure* myself at times that, 'well if you can stand all them years in an institution you can cope with that!' (*Laughs*) That's the way I used to see it, I used to say, 'you can cope with that,' you know.

SP *Yeah.*

PM But I suppose eventually you get to the end of your tether and you think, 'I'm not going there either,' you know.

SP *Yeah, yeah.*

PM Hmm.

SP *And actually in terms of the friendships actually as you were mentioning there...*

PM Yeah.

SP *...so I was actually going to ask about friendships in the institution.*

PM Yeah.

SP *Were...were...so...so did you form very...?*

PM There wouldn't have been....yeah there were people you always knew and you just had an affinity with certain girls that you know, you...you...you know, our pathways seemed to still stay in touch over the years. And then when I went into the pub trade I...I thought you know, one time, I think a few of the girls were coming over to stay with me and, you know, and I had a lot of space, and I thought to myself, 'it would be a good idea to do...get a reunion going,' you know, and for all the girls to get together. And I always wanted...I always seemed to have that thing in me that I wanted us all to stay in touch so that we...we weren't so isolated. That...and...and I found that every one of them was sort of all doing their own things. We didn't go to Irish centres, we didn't really even...not many of us went to the Irish dance halls. My husband and I in...in the early days would have gone dancing because we both liked dancing and we would have gone up the West End, to dance halls up the West End. But I never thought to go the...all the Irish you know...that I'd hear about but it never seemed to draw me to go to them type of...where it'd be all Irish people. It always seemed I wanted that cut-off even though I didn't realise that I had cut myself...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...off from Irish people. And yeah even when I ran pubs people used to stay, 'oh why haven't...haven't you got a full Irish pub?' And I said, 'no I like it this way, I like the...the mixture of the English and the Irish,' you know, there was always only a few Irish, the...the majority would have been English people.

SP *Yeah.*

PM Yeah.

SP *Yeah.*

PM And...and I was always very happy with that...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...and yeah lots of my friends ran Irish pubs but they wouldn't have been in the convents with me.

SP *Yeah.*

PM And I used to often think to myself, 'oh, no I don't think I could run a pub full of Irish people'.

SP *Yeah.*

PM Yeah, so I...I did in a way separate myself...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...from Irish people.

SP *And how did you keep in contact with the women that you are still in contact w...?*

PM Well, we would always be on the phone to each other so we...you know, the...the...there'd be little crisis in different people's lives and you know...

SP *Sorry I meant, how did you know that they were in...I presume they were all in the UK then with you?*

PM Yeah, yeah well I suppose in those days...it just seemed like we all congregated around Holloway Road, Highbury, all around there...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...and we'd bump into each other...

SP *Oh, okay.*

PM ...and you know, then you know and we were all getting on with our lives, we were all having our children and all these sort of things. And then when I sort of went into the pub trade then I thought to myself, 'well I've got space, let's try and do...get, get a get together'. And I thought it was important that we all had a contact with somebody because you know there...there was a crisis. Well you know thank God it was only maybe one girl that you know, had...had [a] crisis of being quite ill – the lady I was talking about that had the cancer. And you know, there was a crisis around when she was about thirty or thirty-two, thirty-three and she had one daughter and you know, and it was worrying times...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...we thought she could die, and who was going to look after her child and I said, 'well I'm flipping taking her!' You know, there was no question about it, I said, 'I'll take her, I'll look after her,' you know, 'bring her up as my own,' because I had known the child!

SP *Yeah.*

PM And I loved her as well you know, and...and...it's...there was no problem. She would be well looked after, she would come and live with us, you know. And if I had to adopt her then I w...I

would do whatever it is I have to do. But oh no, she's not going into any care, she would come to live with me. And that was just the way it...it was you know and I would have done it for any of the girls if that had been the case. I would have said, 'I'll take the child...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...and I will look after it'.

SP *Yeah.*

PM You know it's just really weird the way, you know...so yeah so we're always...we're on the phones to each other and yeah we still y...you know, it wasn't only the four reunions a year it would be other things...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...we were always in touch. You know and we were...we were like a family...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...that you know, we supported each other through good times and bad times and you know, and you know, and there was always someone you could talk to you know, and air your views or...or cry on their shoulder or whatever. So there was, that way it was good for all of that and you know we all went to our children's Holy Communions and the Confirmations and you know, so there was always some excuse to g...to have a little get together.

SP *Yeah.*

PM *Yeah.*

SP *And tell me how did you then get into working as...working at what you're doing now?*

PM *Yeah, well it was really strange the way that happened because I'd just packed up the pub trade the year before. It was 2000...*

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...and I started working with survivors 2001, January 2001. And you know, I...I wasn't aware of all of this going on because I was so busy with my life, even though I was in touch with...you know...all...a load...a group of people and you know I sort of became aware that they were involved in this Redress Scheme [Residential Institutions Redress Board (RIRB)] and all of this because you know, Sally [Mulready] who I...I...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...knew all my life, I...I hadn't realised that she was, because she was doing another type of work to my work and she was...I always thought she just worked with Irish pensioners and I knew she had her own office at the Irish Centre and I knew she'd do some sort of work to mind older people. And then I became aware...I think we met up one time and I...she was talking about this Redress Scheme and I said, 'oh never heard anything about it, wha...what's that all about?' And she was saying about you know, that there was going to be services for survivors and...but then like...you know, I never sort of thought of myself as a survivor.

SP *Hmm.*

PM But this was a word that seemingly other people seemed to have been using. And then you know, I...I said to Sally you know...you know, 'I'm looking for...' and then she said to me, 'oh what...what are you doing?' And I said, 'well no I decided I was going to take a whole year off and do nothing, just please myself'. So I said, 'I'm having a gap year'. So it was a standing joke in the pub, 'Phyllis is having a gap year!' I said, 'I'm having a gap year like all these people do; I'm not going to do anything, I'm not going to work. I'm just going to please myself and do what I want, do what I want for a change! And not trying to look after a hundred and one people'. So then I thought to myself, 'I'm getting a bit bored with this, this isn't going...suing me, not working,' you know. It was the first time I'd never worked and I thought you know, it's all very nice but my finances were drift...ugh! And I thought 'no, must...must get myself a job'. And I thought, scratching my head, 'flipping hell, what can I do,' you know? You know, I've run pubs for years, I thought, 'I don't want to go back into that trade, ah jeez, what can I do?' Then I thought...what I thought...I'll do relief managing in pubs...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...and you know, it was good money and I thought you know there'd...you have breaks in between, if you're looking after a pub for two weeks or sometimes three week holiday. And I thought, 'that's what I'll do, I'll do relief work'. And Potts Brewery and they said, 'yeah we'd love to have you on board, yeah'. So I thought, 'oh great,' you know, and they said, 'well what we do is we give you a ring to take over such a pub'. And they said, 'you're happy to move everywhere?' and I said, 'yeah, yeah wherever, I don't mind'. And you know so...so I had that in place and the next thing I met up with Sally again and we were talking about things and then she said to me, you know, 'what are you doing now?' And I said, 'well funnily enough,' I said, 'I'm looking for a part-time job, I need to be doing something,' I said, 'I'm...I'm getting a bit bored not doing anything'. And then she was telling me about this work that was going on and she...she sort of said to me, 'I think you'd be perfect for this work,' you know, and, 'especially because you...you are a survivor and you...you know, you'd know the needs of survivors'. And so I said, 'oh, I suppose I'll give it a try,' you know. And yeah that's...you know...I...I went for the interview and I got it you know, and it was a nice panel and they...you know...they...different questions, like they were asking you know...and I...I sort of had answers for them and I suppose I just thought, 'yeah, yeah,' you know, 'I've...I've...I...I'm a real people's person,' you know. And I said, 'yeah,' I said, you know the only thing I...I didn't understand was computers and I'm thinking, (*whispered*) 'oh Jesus!' you know, having to work a computer and I thought jeepers you know! So in the meantime...oh before that funny enough, I had started doing computer classes, I thought you know, 'this is the way to go and...I'll have to start learning'. So that was it, I was doing some classes for compu...to...to understand this thing on my desk, and so I had the gist of it when I started. So, yes so I started there and you know, started part-time you know, Sally said, 'oh just do it part-time,' you know but within three months you know, flipping hell, you know, the...the doors just...just opened and there was loads of people coming in and you know, within six months I was on full-time...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know, because that's how quick it took off, you know.

SP *That was yeah...at the height of the redress.*

PM Oh it was yeah, in 2001 yeah.

SP *Yeah.*

PM People could start applying yeah.

SP *Yeah.*

PM And it just sort of went from there you know, and...and it just...I built up such a rapport with...you know as...as a lot of survivors, especially when they came in the first time...day and they would sort of be meeting me and you know, they'd be so *terrified* and I would sort of put my hand down and say, 'there's nothing to be frightened of,' you know, and it's...you know, 'don't be scared,' you know, 'I'll help you whenever I can,' I said, 'don't be worrying about it,' you know, even though I didn't really still understand what exactly was en...entailed. But, through meeting everybody and just...I think they've always felt reassured that I was a survivor as well because often they would come in, they'd be chatting away. And I always had that thing about, you know...forget about the paper work, let's come in, let's sit down and have a cup of tea and just let's talk...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...let's talk. And that's the way I...I worked then – let's talk. And you know...and sometimes I would spend the whole afternoon...I remember the co-coordinator calling me and saying to me, 'Phyllis, we don't work like that i...in this business'. And I said, 'work like what?' And he says, 'you spending all afternoon with one client'. And I said, 'why? Why would I not work like this?' And he says, 'oh, no, no, no, no, 20 minutes and the client's got to be out'. And I said, 'well you do it your way, I'll do it my way, there is *no* way I'm going to work like that with these people!' I said, 'they need a whole day,' and I said, 'and that's the way I'm going to work!' And I thought, 'God! Go away, 20 minutes,' and I said, 'no way!' And some day...sometimes we would spend the whole day...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...because they needed to talk and it was important that they talked. And I used to let them talk and cry and I used to say, 'I've a big box of tissues there,' and I used to say, 'cry let it out – don't keep it all in here, cry about it'. And you know, you know, how many times over the years that people have come back to me and said, 'do you know that was the greatest day [when] I met you!' It's...I...I...they used to say the...you know, at the time I...I...maybe I'd think 'God,' you know, where I used to say, 'you've got...you've got to stop crying about the past; you can't change it! Look to the future and see what you can enjoy in the future,' you know, 'use the Education Fund [administered by the RIRB], take up...what do you like to...what do *you* like to do?' If it was sewing, 'why don't you go to do sewing classes, learn sewing,' if it's something - because I said, 'it's great...I get great joy out of touching the fabrics, working with them'. And you know, and I suppose I was inflicting my passion on, on them, just trying to say, 'look there is better things you could be doing than crying about the past'. You know, and I used to say, 'what is your hobby?' And say, 'look with the Education Fund you could use that to...to...to learn more about it you know...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...like sculpturing'. So another man, lovely man he used to say, 'I'd always love to do sculpturing'. He was a great artist! He still is on to do the picture he was to do of me because I kept bring...forgetting to bring a photo into him and he kept saying...kept saying, 'hav...w...do you...have you your photos?' 'Oh I forgot, I forgot'. And he said, '[I would] love to do a picture of you'. And he does beautiful sculpturing work now you know and it's just beautiful work, you know, and then to be creative with your hands.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And that has given him such inner peace, that he can create this beauty around him...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know. And it's just trying to show them, this is...you know, you *can* do something for yourself and get pleasure out of it, you know.

SP *And what was the kind of...what did you...what did...or what do you do for your survivors...*

PM Well...

SP *...the survivors that you work with?*

PM ...I would...well again in the...in the beginning it was about the Redress Scheme and...getting them through the Redress Scheme and the first thing I always used to check [was] ID, [identification] because so many...so many...this is what makes you laugh about the institutions, they didn't even give a damn about that child in the institution, that they made sure that they were registered at birth. So I had hundreds of people come in to me and say, 'Phil I've never had a birth certificate'. 'Don't you worry I'll get you a birth certificate'. I'd apply for the birth certificate and it come back, 'sorry no such person'. Now I always used to...because another thing they did in the institutions, they changed your date of birth. Now, my birthday was the 10<sup>th</sup> of August, but the nuns decided because it wasn't...didn't fall on a holy day, it had to be changed to the 15<sup>th</sup> August because that was the Immaculate Conception or something like that. So your birthday, your birth date was changed, so whenever I used to apply for a birth date you know, with the...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...because the client would say, 'I...I got papers and my...it's...that's not the...the b...my birthday, *that's* my birthday that's what it was in the convent'. And I'd say, 'don't worry about it'. Yeah, with some documents we'd get from the courts there'd be a different...and it would be because it's on a...you know, in the...in the early days I used to have a holy calendar so I could show the client and I'd say, 'see that was your...' you know, because the...it was such and such saint's [day]. Honest...that...that is...this is true, so m...so many clients would come into me and say...I'd say, you know, they'd ring me or sometimes they'd even turn up and I'd say, 'next time you come now, give me...can I see your birth certificate, just take a photocopy of it..

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...and...so that we have a...a record of it'. And...and you know and then to get them proper ID, to get them a passport, which so many of them never had a passport. I remember one man coming into me and saying to me, I was...the passport office told him he couldn't have a

passport because he was brought up in Artane [St Joseph's Industrial School, Artane]. And I said, '*for God sake, no way did they say that to you!*' I said 'I will get you a passport...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...I will get you your birth certificate and I will get you your pass...' So what I had to do with a lot of surviv...was *register* their births, which is a *palaver*...

SP *Jesus.*

PM ...when they don't even know their mothers, they don't know their fathers, they don't really know what county they hail from – it was a nightmare! But hopefully everyone's got proper ID now. But there was all that in the early days...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...of not knowing...you know, okay you...you'd write to the different schools for records...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...and see if you can find out any information there, or if they went through the courts, 'oh well right so that's where you were living'. So get that bit of information, which you'd have to get some sort of proof of where they were or get baptismal certificates...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...you know, they were good on that. They were baptismal, 'must be baptised,' but to get the...the person registered, no such thing! So...so that had to be done...

SP *So you had to be a detective?*

PM Oh yes, it was great, it was great fun you know and I loved it you know. It...the work was so varied and I just thought, 'this is great,' you know, I'm just doing so much and then someone else would come in and say, 'I have a sister,' or, 'I know I have a sister, I did have a sister...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...I can't find her'. So we would work with Barnardos and find...trace that family. But the sad thing I've always found with tracing siblings, there's no connection, there's no connection, it's so, so sad.

SP *Hmm.*

PM I...I see it, and I never yet seen a real good result of, 'God where have you been?' And, you know it's...they go their way and you know, they've met, they...they sort of know each other...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...they'll say they'll keep in touch but they don't.

SP *Yeah.*

PM The...the...and the clients would say to me, 'I just feel nothing. That's my brother or my sister and I feel *nothing* for that person,' they're *strangers* you know.

SP *Yeah.*

PM And then there'll be so much around mental health issues that the...one sibling might be sort of okay and the other sibling wouldn't be...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...and the fear of, 'oh what am I taking on? I ca...oh I...I would...I'm coping with my own life, I wouldn't be able to take it on'. So they just close the door again on that chapter you know. And p...and I do...I do think to myself, 'oh Jesus,' you know, 'you could be a good support to each other,' but they're not able because they're...they're cop...they're...they're struggling to cope themselves.

SP *Hmm.*

PM You know, so there was all that tracing and you know, and find...for survivors to know *where* do they come from?

SP *Yeah.*

PM Where...which county did they hail from and try and find family...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...but very seldom...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...very seldom does...did it work, you know. You know, now they know where they come from and...and yeah and there's a lot of them have said to me then over the years, 'sure Phil, what I've never had I'm not gonna miss'. So, and they accept it like that you know, 'I never knew them so why should I...' you know...you know, and, 'now I know and I was inquisitive and I found out' and you know, 'but...it's...now I know it means nothing to me...'

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...you know. So it was just guiding them through the Redress Scheme...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...and getting records and you know, and giving them a bit of information about their background, finding out you know, because so many of them would say to me, 'if I had a Mum and Dad, why was I put into a home?' And you know then we would find out that you know, the child would have been put in through the courts, that maybe the father was an alcoholic and the poor mother couldn't cope and there was no money going into the house. And more than likely the poor mother was up kissing the altar all the time and, 'oh Father, you know me husband he's drunk all the time,' and the priest said, 'ah don't worry Mary sure I'll get your kids into a

convent and they'll be well educated so they...at least they have a chance'. And you know, the poor child would be put into these places and be abused and sent out broken and damaged and so many things like that, just so sad...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...to see that they...they betrayed th...these parents who...who were ignorant and not...I m...and I don't mean that in an unkind way...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...but were so brainwashed by the church that they just believed whatever the church said, not realising that that child was being put into a home to be sodomised and things like that and *break* that child. And you know as...as so many children have said to me over the years, 'I was a happy child before I went in there. I used to...okay I ran around the streets and I done a bit of mitching...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...from school, but I was happy, we were poor but our Mum was okay and the next thing we were taken away in a van or we were frog-marched to a court. We're terrified and we're scared, we're, "what's going on, what's going on?" And then we'd lose our parents, we'd lose our home. We were put into this place of fear and scary things happening and things happened in the night'. You imagine the trauma of that on a seven year old child?

SP *(Whispered) Exactly.*

PM You know, that child has never recovered – I used to see it!

SP *Hmm.*

PM That child has never recovered from that trauma...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...that *fear* and you know, I heard what they said to me, 'I was put in that van,' I...one person...another person I know, her Mammy said to her, I think she was...she...you know, she says, 'I was a little bit wild, but...never knew when to come home,' you know. And so Mammy I suppose went to the priest or the nun and said, 'can't control her' and again the nun is told...the child's mother is told, 'ah, we'll put her into...and she...she'll get a good education,' that sort of stuff. And this other lady who tells me that, you know, she was about seven and the nun...the...the...her mother said to her, 'we're going to a party' and she said, you know, 'next thing we were going into the chap...church to light a candle,' and she thought, 'Mam, I thought we were going to a party?' And she was all excited, 'I'm going to a party and we're lighting this candle and I'm thin[king], "I don't want to be here, I want to get to the party!"' And then she come...the...the...her Mam [was] at the church, the child...somebody is waiting outside, they take the child, put her into a van and...and banged the doors on her and she's *screaming* in that van for her mother, thinking that she was supposed to be going to a party. She's taken to a convent, she's put into this place, she...that night she's so terrified – because she was used to sleeping with her sisters – she's found in the bed sleeping with another girl because she thought that was the norm.

SP *Yeah.*

PM She is dragged out of that bed, beaten badly, told, 'you don't do that in here, you sleep in your own bed!' And you know she still suffers that trauma today.

SP *Yeah.*

PM I've tried to get her into counselling. She starts, then she gives up, she just...she's not able...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...to...to do so many things. But she's still i...is traumatised...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...by that...that particular day.

SP *Yeah. And actually is that also, was that...is that also part of your...*

PM Yeah...

SP *...role is to...*

PM *...to s...to...*

SP *...get counselling?*

PM *...get counselling, oh yeah to...you know, I'm...I'm never going to make anybody go to counselling...*

SP Yes.

PM *...they have to want to hav...have it, you know. I...I know the counselling service sometimes has said, 'oh,' you know, 'you should just refer them'. I'm not going to do that, that's not the way I want to work! And I was...you know, they...they often used to come into me and they would talk and cry to me and we'd have a cup of tea together and they'd often used to say to me, 'can you not be my counsellor?' And I'd say, 'I'm not a trained counsellor,' you know, 'but you,' you know, 'I can direct you to a trained counsellor'. And they'd say, 'oh no, no, no, I don't want to go, no, no, if I can't...if it can't be you I don't want to go'. And you can't make people, you know and yet I...I have seen a lot of my clients take up the counselling...*

SP *Hmm.*

PM *...eventually. And it really has helped them you know, they still are...they're still living that trauma of being placed in there around that age of...I...of the...five to seven to eight, nine, ten because I think in my case I was born in them [institutions]...*

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...so I knew no different. But I always have seen...I have sussed this out over the years I've been doing this work, that the children who left Mum and Dad at home and left a home and were placed in there around five, six, seven, eight, they are more traumatised than I am.

SP *Yeah.*

PM Yeah, I've really seen that over the years, they are more traumatised...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...because they've lost their home, their Mum and Dad, their siblings. You know, they've lost th...th...*everybody* and the connection is never there when they meet up with that sister when they're sixteen, it...the connection is broken.

SP *Hmm. And also you have support...do you have a support group as well...*

PM Yes...

SP *...that you meet...*

PM ...yeah...

SP *...as well as...*

PM ...then...yeah, that was another thing I...I star...I...I...you know, I sort of suggested to Sally that you know, maybe we should... because I used to go...I...I wanted to observe how these solicitors were coming over from Ireland, 'roll up, roll up, roll up,' which was absolutely disgraceful...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...the way these...some of...some of these solicitors in Ireland treated survivors. You know, where I would witness an elderly lady, would spe...the solicitor would be talking to her for a minute and this eighty-year-old lady is sitting on a chair by a table with a recording machine,

and, she...but she'd be wanting to look at the solicitor and the solicitor would be going, 'oh it's okay there Mary, just talk into that machine'. And she's looking confused like, 'what, what? But I want to talk to you, you...you're the person I want to...' I...you know. Like, 'what? I have to talk to this machine,' and you know, he'd be going, 'I'll be with you in a minute. Now Mary, no, j...just continue talking into that machine'. And the poor woman would be sitting there like, 'what? But I need you to ask me questions, I need you to talk to me'.

SP *(Whispered) Yeah.*

PM You know, and this poor, vulnerable lady giving a...*oh* it...it used to be disgraceful and I used to turn up at these meetings.

SP *Yeah.*

PM And you know, often I was...com...people would come over to me and say, 'excuse me would you mind leaving?' And I used to say, 'why should I leave?'

SP *Hmm.*

PM And they used to go, 'we don't want you in here'. And I used to say, 'but why should I go?' And they'd say, 'this is only for survivors'. And I'd say, 'but I *am* a survivor!' And they'd go, 'oh are you sure you...?' I'd say, 'yes, yes, yes, yeah,' I'd say, 'how many years did you do?' And they would say, 'oh five or seven'. And I'd say, 'well I done 16 years, is that good enough for you?' And I...would go, 'oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, I didn't know that y...oh, I didn't know you were a survivor'. And I was...became aware of observing men and women, always these meetings were around drink. So the men were getting quite drunk and you know, I have to say the majority of the women didn't really drink, they'd be drinking teas and coffees.

SP *Hmm.*

PM But I felt like they were inflicting their pain on...on...on the women and so many of the women never married, so live quite isolated lives.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And you know, Sally and I then decided...we set up this women's group just to support the women because I felt...I just felt there was a need there for the women to come together. So we started off a women's group, you know it started off I'd say, about eight of us...the first meeting and now you know, it can go up to 100 at...at each...each meeting. You know it can go from 40 up to 100.

SP *Hmm.*

PM It w...last meeting we had last Saturday, 71 turned up.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And you know I've had so many emails, 'I...I didn't know this meeting was on, I didn't know this meeting was on'. Because I wouldn't have a lot of my old clients because I had to leave everything in the Irish Centre [London Irish Centre] when I left, I couldn't take anything with me. So these are all clients I ha...would have known...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...when we started the Redress Scheme and you know, they have other different things that come up in their life, like loads of housing issues you know where I like to try and get people in...into decent accommodation, like sheltered accommodation. So there's someone keeping an eye on them and we've managed to move a lot out of single rooms...board, lodging houses that would have to share toilets with a load of strangers. And we managed to get them into their own little apartment and they have the support and they're on the right benefits and they know if there's a problem they can come and see me and I will deal with that for them because every now and then the benefits goes all AWOL...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...and you know, you have them all coming the...they're needing help because they're not able to do it themselves. What else do I do? I do the ID, I do the housing, domestic violence, I've managed to get a few ladies away from...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...dreadful domestic violence and are now very happy in their new way of life and in charge of themselves, in control of themselves. And they're new women you know, they gained more confidence and look forward to the women's meetings and just...and again at the women's meetings, what I was saying to them, now, you know, 'when you get your redress, not to broadcast it to your children. Please don't tell your children that you're getting...there's no need for them to know! That, you know, it's just between you and your solicitor that you deal with it and you know, if you're on sp...means-tested benefits that it can be put...we set up trust funds for a lot of our clients, you know, and take them to the solicitor and have the right documents and you know they always say of course, 'that was easy'. You know when they think, 'oh trust fund, oh God that's very difficult!' But you know we've been doing it for so many years...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...it's easy once you have this...have it all rolling. So you know, we...we helped with that. A lot of clients had...well every client had to have a psychiatrist's report and a lot of clients could not have gone on their own. So I accompanied them to...to go and have the psychiatrist's meeting.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And then when they come out you know, we would go and have a coffee and a sandwich and...and talk about it and you know, and...and just...you know, you can't just...you know, have someone going especially if they're very nervous...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...about the whole experience. And again that...that brought up a lot of feelings for survivors that, you know, 'are they saying we're all mad?' So I...I heard that from hundreds of survivors, 'why do I have to go and see a psychiatrist?'

SP *Yeah.*

PM And I said, 'what it is, they want to see how i...it affected you...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...being placed in these places'. You know, and it did affect everybody...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know. So i...it did so th...so there was, I was busy around all that as well you know, in the early days you know, I'd have about five or six a week to have to go over to, where I would take the...the...the person because they just couldn't have done it on their own. So it was all about giving them that support, wherever they needed it, you know. And you know, like even with the benefits system, a lot of my...you know, they are all coming up to pension age now...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...so you know, they're nearly all there as pensioners but there's still a small group that are under pension age who are being called in, their benefits are being stopped, 'why aren't you working?' You know, 'you must get yourself a job'. And I have to go with them to appeal their cases and say, 'look because of their background,' and I do a...an...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...in-depth letter about...you know...with permission from the client I always...you know. because of confidentiality and all that...that I ha...I always ask the client. I think the...the different boards need to understand why you can't hold down a job. So I put in a letter to [say] why this person has never been able to work and because of the...maybe, mental health issues that they have because of the traumas they suffered as a child. So it...you know, so it...my work is so, so varied...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know it's just so, so varied...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know, that's just some of the stuff. And like, with the women's group then you know we thought we...what we would do, you're...you're going to be coming into a little bit of money and it's about you spending some of that money on *you*, not about your children. You know, but I was talking to them all because they still told their children and with...th...a lot of them, the children just took the money off them, sad to say. And you know, i...it just breaks my heart to see it...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...but what can you do? You can't interfere in families and you know, but what I...we started then was doing, sort of seven minute therapies with the women. Get your nails done, have a head and shoulder massage, things to treat *yourself* to, that...you should be able to do that you know, if...if you still had this money, to be able to pamper *yourselves*. And pamper yourself, we never got pampered as children. So you know, this is the time...and you know, 'you got the bit of money,' but sure not many...so we give them, we...so we pay for a therapist to come in and to do diff...in the summer now we will do reflexology and that's just lovely to get your feet done.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And yeah, so there's all...things like that. You're trying to show them how they should be minding themselves. And you see...and that's where it comes to that...I sort of want for survivors, a stand-alone service for survivors in the UK...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...because the majority of survivors live in London, the greater London area. There is a few dotted...Manchester, but I've noticed, and the...they...they seem to be mainly north of the river. And what I...I...I feel would work so, so well that...if we got a centre for survivors that we could have one day a women only day, another day a men only day, another day a mixed group and...so that...you know, and it's cutting the isolation – they can befriend each other. And you know, because we also have a Christmas party...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...I've always insisted on a Christmas party every year. It's been a battle but, you know with...with Sally's help and myself...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...you know, we've...we've...we've managed to do it, we've never not done it. Albeit, it might be just a cold buffet or...something like that but we've managed to get the gang together. To...you know, and you know, and it's always a great day, you know, and it's...it's Christmas so it's...you know, and I was always so aware of the way all our moods go very down around Christmas time. And it was about getting everybody together to link in with different people, swap phone numbers, to be able to talk to somebody, that you're not on your own on Christmas Day. And you know, lots of them over the years have formed great friendships, that they go to each other's houses at Christmas now...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...and go on holidays together. So i...it has created a lot of friendships, but it's not big enough, the space...the space I need is not big enough to do...you know, because I...I'd started then...the men's support group, I...we started that and then you know, I...I wanted a man to be able to try and do it, a survivor...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...to be able to do it. And we...you know, we were trying to get that...that off and running even though, you know, myself and Sally would be at the meetings to support him, the man that we did get to start to do the meetings, w...Sally and I were really doing it before...

SP *Was this still while you were in the Cam...in the Irish...*

PM ...with the Irish Centre yeah...

SP *...Centre?*

PM ...and so we were doing that and this was all on our own time on a Saturday...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...we used to do this and get all the men together, you know, and then you know, and you know, we were sort of working out...well, who would we think could chair the meeting you know and you know, we sort of did pick on a particular person but it never seemed to...you know, it just didn't gather...what I was seeing it should be doing. And then of course then I'm...you know, the funding cuts and all that you know, we were being told by the Irish Centre, not enough money to be having all these meetings and...you know we had to cut them down. So, sad to say I...I sort of neglected the men's...I did you know and I really want to get that back up. And a lot of the men you know still keep in touch with me and say, 'Phil,' you know, 'when you going to get...' you know, 'because we used to look forward to them'. And so I *really* need to get that going and the mixed group...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...to...and that helps with cutting the isolation because so, so many of us survivors are isolated.

SP *Yeah. And...and now that you're not in the Camden Irish Centre...*

PM Yeah.

SP *...how does it work? Are you still linked...like the work that you do is...is it...?*

PM No, I'm working...you know, I've been working now with a lot of news [sic] clients that have turned up...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...that...you know, because a lot of my clients never liked going to the Irish Centre.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And I used to encourage them and I'd say, 'look, you know, you're just...you're...you're just passing through, you're just coming in to see me'. But sometimes they would be adamant, 'Phil, I've always said I'd never step in that Centre and I won't'. So I...I do ha...I do a lot of outreach work as well...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...I would go to their houses because, again some people are housebound, and so I would go and see them and see what the needs are for them, and get them a place, get the occupational therapist in to make sure that...you know I...I would see the difficulty climbing the stairs and think well, 'you could do with two rails here,' and you know, just observing them going out the back door, there's no...no safe handle to hold onto and I think well, 'could do with a handle there,' and get the occupational therapist down to just look over the house. Handle by the toilet so they could hold on there and, just...you know, because I can see a lot of my people now, I...they're...they're getting older and...and they're getting very frail a lot of them. And so you know, you need to go around to their home and just assess what I see they really do need. And like if...if they needed a special type of chair, that they can't sit in a normal settee because they can't get out of it, and so you...you know I just assess...you know, what I see the needs are.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And to keep them in their homes, and you see that's the idea, to keep them in the homes as long as we can.

SP *Yeah.*

PM You know, I do not want them going into an institution because that will be trauma straight away especially if they're still *compos mentis*...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...but they're disabled, that they can't do for themselves and you know, social services then start saying, 'well,' you know, 'we haven't got the man power to be sending people in three

times a day to you, so we'll have to put you in a care home'. And that's where...you know, we're going to have a lot more problems around that, the care homes and just...God you know I don't want to ever see...so the secret is to try and keep them in their own homes and let's see how we can do things to keep them in their homes...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know, as long as we can.

SP *That's...that's really...*

PM Yeah.

SP *...important.*

PM Yeah it really is, and that's wha...and that's what the Statutory Fund, I'm hoping, is all about...is...

SP *For the Magdalene survivors...*

PM M...Magdalene...

SP *...or is it for everyone?*

PM ...y...you see they're all survivors as well...

SP *Yeah, yeah.*

PM ...so you know, they're...they're...they're under the same umbrella...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know I...I never sort of, separated them that...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...'oh, oh you're a Magdalene lady so you...you don't belong to my women's group'. To me, any woman who was in an institution in Ireland whether they're on the [Residential Institutions Redress Board] schedule or not, you are welcome to the women's group. That's the way I saw it, because you suffered the same as everybody else. And you know, and you know, it...it...it has...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...worked well you know...

SP Yes.

PM ...and I've always said to the other women, you know, 'she suffered the same and sad to say she didn't get any redress because her...her convent wasn't on the list'.

SP *Yeah. And actually how...because you...as you've been around since...*

PM Yeah.

SP *...the beginning of that...*

PM Yeah.

SP *...and dealing with survivors and doing all the wonderful work...*

PM Yeah.

SP *...that you are doing, how did you feel when you heard that, that you know, Magdalene Laundry survivors weren't going to be...*

PM ...be included in the redress [RIRB].

SP *Yeah.*

PM Oh I thought it was awful, you know, and Sally I have to say...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...really fought hard...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...to...to get that included but there was...they were saying, 'it had *nothing* to do with us, the government wasn't involved'. Sure we all knew the government was involved! You know, to me, you know, even just doing the...the Martin McAleese Report [Report of the *Inter-Departmental Committee to establish the facts of State involvement with the Magdalen Laundries*] you know, I thought to myself, well me personally I was thinking, 'well that's a waste of time and money!' We all *know* the State was involved, you know, you don't have to do a report on it to...you know, but thank goodness he...he...he said what we've been always saying – they were...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...involved, they were heavily involved...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know, in keeping children who had no parents. So there was no one watching out for them...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...and locking them away in these institutions, Magdalene places just to be skivvies for the rest of their lives...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know. It was so unfair...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...so unfair!

SP *And how many Magdalene Laundry women do you...*

PM I...

SP *...sort of deal with?*

PM I...I have 52 now...

SP *Yeah, yeah.*

PM ...about 52...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know, and I'm sure there's a lot more...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...out there. Again now I don't know if the Magdalene Fund...because that's a separate...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...fund again, but I don't know whether they will be advertising in the UK. Because I know when the Redress Board were talking about advertising in the UK and...different suggestions...they...they wanted to hear the suggestions from myself and Sally. I remember sort of saying because I...I was aware, so many survivors can't read or write.

SP *Yeah.*

PM So how do you...how do you get that message out and I had s...thought, I...well I...I...I did do it...draw a picture of two children at convent gates and that in itself would remind someone. And funny it did work because I sent it around to all doctor's surgery within the greater London area and...and you know amazing, a child of a survivor would ring me up and say, 'my...that was a great poster, I saw it in the doctor's surgery'. And they s...they said, 'that was a, that was a really good way to do it because my Mum looked at that poster and said, "oh my God that's just brought a memory back to me of me going into a convent!"' (Coughs) And I had underneath:, 'Please phone Phyllis,' you know. I didn't...I purposely didn't put my surname...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...because I knew a lot of people when I was in the pub trade and I often used to come across people like that, that I thought, 'I bet you're one of us!' But I never would ever say anything to them and I thought to myself, just in case, in the greater London area that someone might think, 'oh God no, I couldn't go to her because I know that person'. So I was aware of that so I thought, 'I'll just say "Ring Phyllis"'. And, yeah so a couple of children said to me, 'God when my Mum saw that she started crying and she was, "oh my God" she said, "that's reminded me of the day...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...I was taken from my parents and put into one of them places!" So it did work, you know but the Redress Board didn't seem to want to do that. And you know, I...another daft idea I had was that, well the best thing to do would be to do it in the adverts between Coronation Street, you know, a lot of our clients would...would, you know...they don't r...they wouldn't buy newspapers, they don't read newspapers.

SP *Yeah.*

PM They were advertising in Irish newspapers, the majority of my clients don't read an Irish...*would not buy* an Irish newspaper! So there was all this...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you'd think...*listen* to what we're saying, you know, 'they don't buy a paper! End of!' You know...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...and they were saying, 'oh advertise in The Sun and in The Mirror,' I thought, 'God sake!' And when I used to be travelling back and forward to Ireland, I'd get into a taxi, I would hear the radio in...in...you know, and that was another word that they changed, where I always thought...brought...the majority of my clients would say to me, 'I wasn't in an institution, I was in a *convent!*' And I would you know, and I would...you know I remember saying to...when we had these meetings with the Redress Board, 'but you're using the wrong words! It's a...we were brought up in *convents, not institutions* – that's a new word to us'.

SP *Yeah.*

PM And yet they *still* insisted on using the word institutions! And you think to yourself, 'for God sake! Hear what I'm saying,' you know! But it was, 'were you in an institution?' And the people used to come in and say to me, 'I was in a convent, I was *not* in an institution,' you know.

SP *Yeah.*

PM And were *adamant*, 'I was *not* in an institution!'

SP *Wow.*

PM And as I say, but that's the way they say it now. These are these new words that they like to use nowadays.

SP *Yeah.*

PM So you know, a...a lot of people said to me, 'I didn't understand the advert, when it said an institution! I didn't understand that word, I knew I was brought up in a convent'. So then there were late applicants for redress when they realised that an institution was a convent.

SP Yes, *yeah*.

PM You know, and then the headache around trying to get the Redress Board to keep...keep the doors open...

SP *Hmm*.

PM ...because so many people were turning up with things like that. 'I saw some paper, they said, "were you in an institution?" And it was only when I was talking to...or I happened to be somewhere and someone said, "oh do you know about this?"' And sh...said, 'but I wasn't in an institution,' and they thought well only if you were in *these* sorts of places you could apply for redress. So there was all this confusion around *understanding*...

SP *Yeah*.

PM ...how the advertising was done.

SP *And how did you actually feel about dealing with...like what was your experience dealing with, say...like members of the government...*

PM *Yeah*.

SP *...or...?*

PM I always found them very respectful, yeah I have to say, you know, I never found them condescending or...they did have a nice manner about them you know, and I...I have to say that you know, because I always still have that thing about the way they...oh Irish people look down on you because of your background. And you know, I...I never ever felt that, I always felt Sally and I were treated with great respect and you know they...they did, they...they listened to us. But sometimes I used to think, 'but you're not *hearing* us, what we're saying about the wording of institution and convent'. Just things like that, and you used to think to yourself, 'don't you get it? You're...you're all highly educated people and we're...we're working with a group of people, you know, we're not stupid but these were words that weren't around...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...when we were children’.

SP *Yeah, yeah. Hmm. And what about applying for documents and things? Did you find...how...was that easy...*

PM That was...

SP *...or difficult?*

PM ...that was very traumatic for a lot of my clients, m...a lot of my clients would’ve said to me...or you know sometimes they would insist that, ‘Phil,’ you know, ‘can you apply for them, but I want it sent to my house, I...please, I want...’ I said ‘that’s fine, that’s fine’. And then the next thing they’d ring me up and they’d say, ‘Oh I got, I got,’ you know, ‘and I got a...a...a few A4 pages of...’ maybe sometimes they’d only get two A4 pages.

SP *Hmm.*

PM So they’d be really upset, ‘is this what my life was? Two pages, A4?’ And there’s...they’re...they’re not even full, the pages, and then there might be the A5 where the...some of the...the convents would send out the years you went to school, which to me did not reflect...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...you know, you...they...you were ticked off, you might be in a classroom, but you weren’t schooled you know...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...do you know what I mean?

SP *Yeah.*

PM You know, you were ticked off, oh the Cigire [school inspector] comes, checks the book, 'oh yeah, yeah oh they were all in school all present and correct,' but hello? You weren't being educated, you were knitting socks maybe for the nun's family or something like that. But...you kn...so it was all that hypocrisy...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...as I like to call it. Yeah, so...I've forgotten...?

SP *Oh it was just about the application form documents...*

PM Yeah...

SP *...and things...*

PM ...yeah...

SP *Did you ever encounter any sort of resistance?*

PM No, no.

SP *Like from...like...did you get the documents quite easily?*

PM I got...th...yeah I did, I got them yeah, oh yeah, yeah, yeah I did. But there was never much on them, so that's where clients used to break down and cry. They used to go to me, 'Phil,' because I'd ring them and say, 'look,' you know, 'I've...I've got some documents...'

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...and they'd be dying to come in to see and I...I...they'd go to me, you know, I...I'd hand them maybe two A4 pages and they go to me, 'is...is that it?' You know, I...I'd take it out of a folder like this and then, you know, I...I'd say, 'this...this is what we got...'

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...you know, and the folder would be like...and they'd be going, 'is that it?' And I'd say, 'yeah,' you know, 'that's...that's it really' you know.

SP *Hmm.*

PM Might get another A4 from the nuns, but it wouldn't be much.

SP *Yeah.*

PM So sad, but it wouldn't be much. And then other times then you'd get this...a few pages of these A5 pages and there'd be a load of black, black, black, black, black, black [redactions] and the...the person would ring me up *crying*, 'they've blacked out my whole life!' And I'd have to explain to them it wasn't...they were all the other people who were in that classroom with you and th...they...you...they...you can't see their names, you know, to bring any memories I suppose, back or whatever and of course it was you know, confidentiality as well.

SP *Hmm.*

PM So everyone else's name...and I used to say, 'no that...that wasn't about you, that was about all the people that were...there was a ro...thing, a roll call done that day and these would be all the names of all the children that were in the convent at that time'. And you know, you'd have to explain, but that was *really* upsetting.

SP *Yeah.*

PM And then they would go to me, 'so that's my life'. You know, 'there's *nothing* there! There's nothing there,' and you'd see comments that the nuns would write...what would it be? 'A *bold* child, a *sneaky* child, a *dishonest* child'. Thing...things like that you would see on a document about...you know, and you'd think to yourself, 'God sake, where were these nuns? What were they thinking?' You know these were children, little children...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know, and this thing of, 'caught...found wandering,' and the...t...the...the...the...and sometimes the clients would say to me, 'Phil I was only three months old, how could I be wandering?' You know, so there'd be all these different things...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...that you know, the way they worded things...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...you know.

SP *And in terms of...yeah, so in your survivor group, just to...I know we don't distinguish, but just to bring with the Magdalene...*

PM *Hmm.*

SP *...Laundry survivors, what kind of problems do you encounter amongst...or feelings or...?*

PM Frailty. Frailty's the word that comes into my...when I look around at...at them when we...how frail they are. Some of them quite broken, broken women even though there's a...a dignified manner about them all. They...they have a lovely manner, very dignified....but frailty is...I see because of the hard work and the trauma of being locked away, never knowing when you were going to get out. Because if you went to a prison you knew the date you were going to come out. These ladies never knew. I've...you know I heard some of the women say, 'God, I was watching women dying around me thinking "oh my God, is this how I...is this how I'm going to end my life?" I don't want this, I've...I've got to get out of here!' And some of them did escape and managed to get away and come over to England, you know, you...lucky that luck was on their side.

SP *Hmm.*

PM It wasn't about the dear God above being on their side, it was *luck* was on their side that some kind person paid a fare ticket for them to get them to England, get them out of Dublin or where...wherever. So...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...some of them weren't so lucky and were picked up by the Garda [Irish police] and just taken back and you know, maybe sent to another Magdalene Laundry that was worse than the other one they were in.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And it was just that isolation they all felt, just felt abandoned you know, they...they just thought, 'this is it, the rest of our lives, we're just gonna all live and die in these places being skivvies for the nuns'. But I see the health issues with them, the...there are serious health issues with them all.

SP *What kind of health issues?*

PM Cripples. The...the...their walking is very bad, they're all *crippled* with arthritis, just not able to get around as quick...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...as they'd like to...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know.

SP *And what about psychological problems?*

PM Oh, that never goes away you know they...they...they, you know, they would say to me, often they'd wake up sweating thinking they was...they were back in there you know, and realise it's

only a dream. You know, but you know, even after they left they said they...God, for years, they'd *wake up sweating* like they'd been arrested and they're back in there and be so upset and wake up crying think[ing], 'oh my God' and then realise that they're not there. Some of them did marry and their husbands would say, 'God I can remember you know, when we got married first, oh, she'd wake up screaming and screaming, *let me out, let me out, let me out!*'

SP *Yeah.*

PM You know and they...they...they would say – the husbands even – would say to me, 'it took *years...*

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...for her to settle'.

SP *And actually in terms of forming relationships, was there any pattern in the kind of relationships...did...did the women that you've encountered have they formed good relationships with men or...?*

PM No, the majority no, the majority no.

SP *Okay.*

PM And so many of us I think are on our own now, so many of us and I think it's about...we're tired of being controlled...we do not...that's the way I am you know, I...I...I...I've divorced my first husband, my second husband died...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...and I often sort of think I would *never* want to be in another relationship with a man. I do not want to be controlled anymore. I like the way my life is now, you know, might have less money in my pocket but I don't care. It's...I'm doing what I like to do.

SP *Hmm.*

PM But I often sort of think, if I was still married to my husband I *couldn't* do this work, he'd be on the phone, 'what time are you coming home?' 'When is dinner ready?' 'Da, da, da, da, da!' 'What are you doing?' 'Are you going over to Ireland again?' 'What are you doing in Ireland?' You know, and all this carry-on and the...the, and the stress that puts you under...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...when...when all you're doing is trying to do some good...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...and all they want to do is control you, control you, control you.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And so many of the women now say to me, 'oh,' you know, 'once my husband died, oh I couldn't be bothered! I just...I'm happy the way I am now...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...I am in control of me'.

SP *Okay and in terms of the...so the current...the Mc...with the McAleese Report and everything, can you tell me your experience of that since...?*

PM In...in which way?

SP *Just what's...what's been happening since, since the government decided to carry out...or before that?*

PM Yeah, you know just as I say, you know Martin McAleese was...you know, he was *great* when he met the women you know. I...I don't know if you know, but he met up with a...a group of our ladies and he was just *wonderful*, and his...the lady who worked with him – Nuala – you know,

they were just so sweet. So we had a few meetings with them, about three, three or four meetings we had with them. Where we...I don't do all the organising, I guess they just turn up, and you know I have to say they were very, very respectful to every lady, every lady and every lady was *delighted* yeah to...to have the privilege of meeting Martin McAleese because they knew of him and, you know, he was the President's husband and you know, he...he was, he was *so sweet* with them he really had a lovely way about him you know, because always our clients like, they're...they're terrified of people in authority. So it's like they always had this fear of...that that person could lock them away or something...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...again, which funny enough happened when the Judge came over, Judge Quirke, who had met some of the ladies and some of the ladies were so *fearful*.

SP *Yeah.*

PM I thought to myself afterwards, I shouldn't have said he was a judge because you know, they were saying, 'oh Jesus Phil he's a judge,' you know, and they had this vision. I said, 'it's only an office, it's only a room...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you're sitting around a table,' you know, 'it's not...he's up there...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...with his wig on and that. Nothing to...like that, just...we sit around a table and talk'. And again, he was *so sweet*, he was a *little pet*, he really was lovely with the women. You know every woman said, God, you know, they were...you know, he t...straight away he put them at their ease you know and they said, 'oh I don't know what I was worrying about,' you know. And even because some of the women even said to me, 'God I was so scared that he'd have the power to put me back in the...in the Magdalene Laundry'. Really! And they're living in the UK, yeah.

SP *So it really does still stay...*

PM Still stays there...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...that fear and that's why some of them will never go...step back [in Ireland], because they always have that fear...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...that they could be arrested...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...and put...put back in the Magdalene Laundry, but the...as I keep reassuring them there's none left, they're all closed down, you know, it just wouldn't happen.

SP *And what would you like for the women of...of the Magdalene Laundries in terms of redress?*

PM Well I would like to see them get a...an amount of money, I do, I would like to see that because they...they, you know, none of them are wealthy, not one of them and you know, s...so to have that 'cushion' I call it that, if they wanted a little holiday they have the money to have the holiday. You know, if for instance you know, any of them could have a stroke tomorrow and be housebound and they'll all want be able to make sure that they have *every need* to make them stay in their home as long as we can!

SP *Hmm.*

PM And that to help them with...handrail...just simple things like that makes life so much easier for someone to stay in their own home, to be able to manage...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...in their own home. You know, and just...I...that's what I want, a small amount that if they have that little nest egg to do what it is they want to do...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...if they can do it. And just you know, if their television breaks down that they've got the money to pay for it. You know, I...that's what I want, that they don't ever have to worry about the electric bill, any bills coming in and should they need a new suite of furniture the money's there for them.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And just that they're looked after for the rest of their lives...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...which you know I would say...isn't that long...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...because they're...it's like they're worn out.

SP *Hmm. Yeah.*

PM *Yeah.*

SP *And do you think they should get any other supports?*

PM Oh yes, yeah I think there should always be...you know I suppose you know, I...I...you know hopefully I...I will continue working with them...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...you know, and as the needs arise we can help them to achieve whatever is the need is and...and make sure that they get it.

SP *Yeah.*

PM You know, so that...and that...sort of part of the service that Alan Shatter had set aside<sup>1</sup> for that other money that you know, if...it was for the Magdalene women first he said, but it also includes all survivors...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...and you know, that there is going to be a fund there for...if there's a crisis or...you know, like one lady was saying, you know, 'could...would they pay for a hip replacement, I've been waiting for so long,' you know, 'I...I'm in pain and would they pay?' But as I said, 'well let's wait and see what the package is...'

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know.

SP *Yeah. And did they consult with you as well to find...?*

PM Well you know, I...well y...I think you know and John [Mr Justice Quirke] would have heard what I...I'd been saying the few days we did spend together you know. And, you know, that there's some sort of a counselling support for them as well...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...if they want it, you know. And you know, that we can arrange for...for special days that just the Magdalene women turn up if we have this bigger space that you know, today now is a Magdalene women day.

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<sup>1</sup> See: 'Minister Shatter announces payment of €250,000 to the Irish Women Survivors Support Network' <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PR13000393>

SP *Hmm.*

PM Because I can see the way friendships are forming there you know, they're all getting to know each other a bit more...

SP *Yeah, yeah.*

PM ...and lots of trauma...especially a lot of new ladies turning up.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And for them to get to know each other and compare, which...you know...which...because they were all in...some of them were in two and three Magdalene wom...homes.

SP *And what do you think should be the role of the religious orders in this?*

PM Well to make sure the finances *is* there...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...that the..the...you know, for each of these ladies, you know, to make sure the finances is there you know. They're not poor...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...you know, by any stretch of the imagination you know, and perhaps you know, arrange for a good holiday or holidays to go back to Ireland if they wanted to...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...that they could pay...pay for that. You know, they have beautiful homes, you know it's...it's you know, it just falls to mind another thing that I...I sort of was hoping that the religious orders would be quite generous and give it to us – there's a lovely place in Galway in Lenaboy, Taylor's Hill, a lovely...Lenaboy...oh God I can't think of it now, there's a...a convent there...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...as we...we know them and a lot of my clients have a fondness for that place, even though there was some...unkind but they just have something about that place. And you know it's standing empty, it's going to wrack and ruin and why can that not be handed over by...through the Statutory Board for them to do it up and have it as a lovely holiday home?

SP *Hmm.*

PM It's near the beach, it's...you know, it's a nice part of Galway, and that they could go and spend a month there if they wanted, why not?

SP *Yeah.*

PM And that it's all paid for by...by the religious orders or...or...either the Magdalene Fund or the Statutory Board...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...to set up this holiday place there, you know a...and professional people can manage it...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...but that survivors can have it as a health and well-being type place. It would be more...more benefit than the Garden of Remembrance Memorial I think, let's have a *working* memorial, which will benefit all survivors, not a cross in a...in a park or something.

SP *Yeah.*

PM I think it would be much more beneficial to have a *working* memorial. And I would like that...you know, that perhaps...that's one place I would like.

SP *Yeah. And how do you feel about the fact that the religious orders have...I find that they've been...or not find...they have been largely absent in an apology, in issuing an apology.*

PM Yeah and that's...that...that is sad in a way, but yet I g...I...I get what they...they mean because they're...I think what the...they're sort of saying, 'we're not to blame, we weren't the ones that...we weren't in...we weren't in these religious orders then, so why should we be apologising?' And I g...I get what they're saying, you know and maybe it's the State should be apologising, which they have. But, you know, and...and the reli...I...you know...I do understand why they're saying, 'why should we?' Because they don't feel they were the perpetrators, it was the *order* was the perpetrator and how do you get that order, it's got to be whoever is at the top person of each order, maybe to apologise...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...you know.

SP *Yeah, yeah.*

PM Because we've...we've also been engaging with...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...the different orders and we've had great meetings with them, meeting some of the Magdalene ladies and you know they're...they're a little bit...tense when we...when we...we...the meeting starts but you know what, to me and...and a lot of women have said, they got something out of that, just by meeting...okay it's not the nuns that abused them but they...they represent the order...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ....and...you know, and they have come over here and they have met with survivors and you know, it was tough for them I know, you know, but...but, they...they done it and you know and I think they were glad they done it and so were the survivors.

SP *Yeah.*

PM They were glad that they...they did meet and a lot of the women are saying to me, 'when are we...' you know, because some of them still haven't met [with order representatives] and you know, they're saying you know, 'we would like to meet face to face'.

SP *Hmm.*

PM But it's...what I've got to...I...I have to...you *have* to make them aware is that these were not the perpetrators, their *order* was. You know, so it's...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know so yeah I can see why they personally think, 'oh why should I apologise? I wasn't involved!' But maybe, f...from the head of the order...

SP *Yes, yes and my apologies, sorry I meant from the head of the order that we...we haven't really seen like...like they did for the...during the redress...*

PM That's right.

SP *For the convents...*

PM That's right, yeah.

SP *...they...they made a big public apology, say the Christian Brothers...*

PM That's right.

SP *...put it in newspapers etc.*

PM *Hmm.*

SP *...but we haven't seen that...*

PM No.

SP *...for the laundries.*

PM No, no, no.

SP *But yeah, no and actually I'd forgotten to ask this earlier, but I wanted to ask you...we talked about it before but about how you felt about the nuns in your...in your case, in...?*

PM I suppose...I forgive them, you know, sad to say, you know they must have been poorly educated people that they just didn't understand the trauma they were inflicting on children. We were all under the age of ten and you know, when I witnessed myself, personally, different, awful abuses that I often look back and looking at my...my grandchildren, I think...I look at them sometimes and I think, 'jeeppers when I think of what I was going through at that age and to think that any child can go through something like that'. So i...it was ignorance on their part, it really was.

SP *Hmm.*

PM I felt saddened, I used to feel there was sadness from some other nuns when they were aware of certain things that were going on and felt they couldn't do anything about it. So yeah, I suppose I...yeah I...I sort of have forgiveness in my heart, there's no point being bitter about these things, you just have to feel sorry for some of them, that they must have been so poorly educated. And yet funny enough it always seemed to be – and I've heard this from other ladies and men as well – that yet it seemed to be always the...the...the nuns or the Christian Brothers that were in the education classes. So they *were* sort of educated, you know it wouldn't have been the nun who worked in the kitchen or the nun who worked in the nursery...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...it was never them. It was the ones who were dishing out the so-called education to you.

SP *Yeah.*

PM They were they brutal ones...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...and I hear that so many times over the years. So you know, shame on them that's what I say, shame on them. And you know, they were educated...that they could treat children like that.

SP *Hmm, yeah, yeah, and actually just, sorry we...we're nearly finished...*

PM That's alright!

SP *...but to do with...because you did go through all that redress...*

PM Yeah.

SP *...for the first time, I just wanted to know your opinion on how you felt that the Redress Scheme, how...how it...how they handled it?*

PM I don't think it was a very fair scheme, I...I really don't. I think y...you should've got something for every year because you lived in *fear* every year even though you know, I was told, I...well I done alright. Because I haven't, in here I haven't you know. So I...I think it was a very unfair system, people like myself who wanted to achieve, we didn't want to sit down and feel sorry for ourselves for the rest of our lives, we got on with our lives and just tried to move on as best we could. But it's been a struggle for *every single one of us!* We had to battle to get where we are and y...you know, just...by meeting the right person that your luck would change and th...it...it was never about what your background was about if you lived in the UK. But yet you were still penalised at the Board [RIRB] with the pittance you were given you know, and I...I d...I always felt that was a very unfair system. That you should've got something for every year because you've suffered trauma every day of every year you lived in them places. If you weren't being beaten you were observing another friend being beaten and that was as traumatic on you observing that, the brutality being inflicted on somebody else...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...because you know, tomorrow it was going to be your turn.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And I'm sure everyone in that classroom would've felt the same, that you never liked to see one of the other girls or boys being beaten or terrified and weeing on the floor with such fright, they'd be so terrified.

SP *Yeah, yeah and when it comes to this...for the Magdalene Laundries redress do you hope...like...I mean I'm not sure, w...we don't know how it's going to play out, it all depends on what Quirke [Mr Justice Quirke] comes up with..*

PM Now this is for the Magdalene Laundries yeah?

SP *Yeah. But do you...what do you think about solicitors being involved in...?*

PM *No, no, no, no, no* they made enough out of the redress scheme, *too* much money! They...that...that should have been capped. No definitely not, I do not want to see that, I do...you know! And I...I...I keep saying this all the time, I'm sure they're sick and tired I...hearing me say it, I don't want solicitors, but now Judge Quirke *did* say it to me *but* he says, 'I hear...we hear what you're saying, you and Sally, we hear what you're saying but what we don't want is that if we make an offer to a Magdalene lady...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...and she feels she's not happy with what she's been offered, she can get legal advice. But,' he said, 'but, what we are going to do this time, we're going to cap it'. And well I felt better, but I'd still like to know how much they are going to allow because I don't think...you know, it...it should because what will happen is like the Redress Board, they will sit on that case for another three, four or five years like they done with redress cases. People are dying, they don't even get their money because the solicitors are busy doing other work and it's like, 'oh it's a survivor put them on the backburner'.

SP *Hmm.*

PM And I don't like that...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...and I feel well yeah, okay if you want a solicitor to be involved in the case you have to say to them, 'this work has got to be done within six weeks'. You've *got* to give them a time limit!

SP *Yeah.*

PM That's the way I see it, there has to be a time limit now and we're *not* going down that road or I'm constantly ringing the solicitors you know, 'anything happening with this case?' you know...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...it's been two, three years or four years now, it's now five years...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ....do not want that especially with the age group of the Magdalene ladies. This has got to be done by the end of the year, I...I...that's the way I s...I...I can't see why it can't be...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...can't see why it can't be.

SP *And what...what kind of...are they...are they thinking of making a...a redress scheme based on kind of like the points system?*

PM He didn't s...he didn't...he said, 'Phil, I...I can't really s...I can't really say anything, I can't,' he says 'I can't really discuss that with you'. He says, you know, 'I am,' you know, 'I've become very aware of different things,' you know, 'that I feel should be in the package'. And...and...and I trust him and I felt...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...he...he...he was hearing what I was saying and...

SP *Okay.*

PM ...yeah. So hopefully it'll be a good package.

SP *And is there any indication when this is going to be?*

PM Well, you know, he said, you know, 'I have to have it on the desk by the end of May...

SP *Okay oh he has a deadline?*

PM ...and by hook or crook if I can have it there it will be there!

SP *Hmm.*

PM So he was very good about that.

SP *Hmm.*

PM He said, 'because I can see the age of the ladies'.

SP Yes.

PM Yeah, so he said, 'it won't be because I haven't tried,' but he said, 'it would be soon after if it's not there by the end of May'.

SP *Okay.*

PM Yeah.

SP *Okay, well I think...actually yeah...no I think that's all I can think of asking you...*

PM Aren't you great the way you've thought of all of that without referring to paper work?

SP *(Laughs) Yeah, yeah my brain's a bit...*

PM I...I...

SP *...it thinks that way.*

PM ...yeah in tune with it all...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...yeah so you're really good yeah.

SP *But I can't think of anything else but if there is anything else that you'd like to add...*

PM No, I can't...

SP *...that I haven't...?*

PM ...no just that if we can get this stand-alone service, they have so many services in Ireland...

SP Yes.

PM ...they've got the Aislinn place [The Aislinn Centre], they've got a place in Galway, Cork, Waterford and you know, not much over here.

SP *Actually I had meant...that was the question I was going to ask...*

PM Yeah.

SP ...was about survivors...or not even just survivors, but the way that survivor groups etc. are organised. Do you think there's a difference between...

PM Oh yeah.

SP ...Britain survivors, like Irish survivors in Britain and...

PM Oh, so much, yeah...

SP Hmm.

PM (Whispered) ...dreadful, dreadful...

SP And whereabout...

PM ...yeah definitely! Well o...ours are better managed

SP Yeah.

PM ...they...you know, they're properly constituted...

SP Hmm.

PM ...you know, w...we do...I...I think we do it in a more professional way...

SP Yeah.

PM ...and it has to be done like that you know. To...to be able to do certain things you know, you...you have to have control over the meetings and you know, I...I have visited some of these meetings and I thought, 'there's *no...nobody's* in charge...

SP Yeah.

PM ...you know, there's nobody...' You know, and...and it's sad because it upsets too many people, they want that contact with other survivors but it stresses them out you know...

SP Yes.

PM ...that type, those types of meetings, where with ours we have our...our women's meetings, we...we do...get the meeting over with first, so if there's any information, we talk about it and we hear views and let...everybody's allowed to talk. You know, we'll hear everybody's views and we discuss it and hopefully Sally then will go back to whoever and say what...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...the survivors want and what they don't want. And yeah, so we always talk...you know, as a group and then we...we, you know, we finish our meeting and then, you know at the last hour then we sit around and have tea and sandwiches and you know, and everyone congregates together in different groups...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...and it's about them getting together as well to meet up...

SP *Hmm, yes.*

PM ...and spend a couple of hours together as well.

SP *Yeah. And do you think, I...like amongst...and this is in general survivor groups, do you think there's...do you think it's united...in the s...survivor groups to do with institutions, do you think it's a united group as in...*

PM In the...

SP *...all the survivors or do you think there's a lot of...*

PM No, no, it's very broken...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...very broken. It's...it's sad...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...because for God's sake, you know, surely all the...the leaders – so called leaders – of these groups...

SP *Hmm.*

PM ...it's s...it's surely it's about...for *all* survivors, you know, it doesn't matter if...if, 'oh, oh, oh, y...you don't belong to my group, so...' You know, it's about any survivor that comes in for help should be helped...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you know. It doesn't matter if they were in this institution and that...not that institution.

SP *Hmm, yeah.*

PM Yeah, so...th...yeah, you know I...I just find it very odd that we...where to me it's...*any* institution...

SP *Yeah.*

PM ...you are most welcome.

SP *Yeah. I would agree.*

PM *Hmm.*

SP *Well as I said, sorry, I have nothing more to ask but if there's anything else...*

PM I can't think of anything else.

SP *Well I'd like to thank you Phyllis for everything.*

PM Oh it's a *pleasure, a pleasure!*

SP *It was wonderful...*

PM Pleasure!

SP *...thank you.*

PM I hope it's...

[Interview ends]