



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



Reference Code:	MAGOHP/31
Oral History of:	Mary Smith
Pseudonym?	No
Status:	Survivor
Keywords:	Clonakilty Industrial School; <i>St. Joseph's Industrial School</i> for Girls, <i>Mallow</i> , Co. Cork; family separation; rape and sexual abuse; Residential Institutions Redress Board; Sacred Heart Mother and Baby Home, Bessborough, Cork; St. Joseph's Industrial School, Greenmount, St. Patrick's Industrial School, Upton; homelessness; St Stephen's Psychiatric Hospital, Sarsfields Court, Cork; Queen of Angels School, Cork.
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Interviewer:	Dr Katherine O'Donnell
Records/Papers included:	None
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Notes on Redaction and Transcription Process

Interviewee Initials: MS
Interviewer Initials: KOD

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
- Other identifying details have been removed to avoid identifying third parties
- Locations and dates have been accurately transcribed

List of Pseudonyms

Pseudonym	Status/Relationship to Interviewee
Judge Adams	Third Party Other
Gleeson Family	Family who visited industrial school
Sister Rose	Third Party Religious
Sister Bernadette	Third Party Religious
Keane	Person who brought interviewee to laundry
John Edwards	Interviewee's childhood boyfriend
Sister Edna	Third Party Religious
Eithne	Interviewee's house name
Fr Gallagher	Priest who sent interviewee's mother to Magdalene Laundry
Vera	Third party who knew interviewee's mother
Ryan Family	Third Party Other
Susan	Friend of interviewee
Dolores	Susan's neighbour
Gráinne Bennett	Radio Producer
Drennans	Farmers who employed interviewee's brother
Veronica	Mental hospital employee
Terence	Individual who assaulted interviewee's brother
Dr McCarthy	Doctor in Cork University Hospital
Patrick Flannery	Friend of interviewee
Mr Byrne	Former employer/supervisor of interviewee
Yvonne O'Toole	Wife of interviewee's childhood boyfriend
Gerard	Friend of interviewee
Rose Grehan	Friend of interviewee from industrial school
Julia Mahony	Friend/work colleague of interviewee
Anthony Armstrong	Boyfriend of Rose Grehan
Mrs McNulty	Former employer/supervisor of interviewee

Cora	Friend of interviewee
McGovern Family	Family who employed interviewee

Basic Data from Interview

Name/Pseudonym	Mary Smith
When Born	1952
Born outside marriage?	Yes
Raised by	Clonakilty Industrial School, St. Joseph's Industrial School, Mallow
Education	Industrial school
Order	Good Shepherds
Laundry	Sundays Well
From	Circa 1969 (interviewee is uncertain)
To	Interviewee is uncertain
Duration of stay	Doesn't know
Age on entry	Under sixteen/seventeen years, interviewee is uncertain
Entered Via	Priest
House Name/No	Yes
Haircutting/punishment?	Yes
Circumstances of Departure	Sent to work for a family
Emigrated?	No
Physical ailments?	No
Of Note	Mother transferred to mental hospital after giving birth; mother and daughter both in laundries.

[Audio File 1 Begins]

[End of conversation prior to interview]

MSin...what was the name of the place, Peacock...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...Peacock, Peacock Lane, St. Vincent's in Peacock Lane...

[Interview begins]

KOD *Okay, so what we'll do now is, I'll just get you to sign this Mary, because we've gone through the...what the research is about and you understand that the Oral History Project will be recorded, we'll type up your story, it'll be in the UCD Archive and it'll be up on the net as well. And you want to you use your own name rather than a...*

MS I've no reason to hide my name,

KOD *Okay.*

MS I've nothing to hide

KOD *Okay.*

MS I did...it wasn't my choice, it wasn't my mother's choice either.

KOD *So we're going to start right at the beginning then Mary, like you know, where were you born, when were you born?*

MS My name is Mary Smith and I was born 1952 in Fermoy in Co. Cork. As a matter of fact I only found out years later my mother's name was Eileen Smith who came from the Kerry Road, Newmarket, Co. Cork. And years later I only found out that because...because my mother was

an unmarried mother and for two-and-a-half years I believe there's no record of me on this planet. So I don't really know what happened to me.

KOD *For your first two-and-a-half years?*

MS ... two-and-a-half years, there's no record of me whatsoever.

KOD *Okay, but there is a record of your birth cert is there?*

MS I have yeah but...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...on my records it doesn't come on till '54. So there's no record of me

KOD *Okay.*

MS ...where I was for two-and-a-half years.

MS I was put into the courts in Fermoy then when I was two-and-a-half

KOD *Okay...*

MS ...and sentenced to Clonakilty Industrial School.

KOD *At aged two-and-a-half?*

MS At aged...sentenced yeah.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS I was brought into the court by Keane [role of individual removed – hereinafter referred to as 'Keane'] in Cork and he actually brought me from Fermoy down to Clonakilty where to me (*sighs*) actually it was absolutely horrendous...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...because we weren't, we never went to school, *never* went to school whatsoever and there was a boarders [boarding school] there and there was national school and there was an industrial school. And there was a...f...every morning we used to have to get up – and this is what got to me – we used to have to do our exercise every morning before we went to Mass. We had no birthdays, we were...we were called by numbers actually and also there was...we weren't allowed to speak to the outside world. And there was a farm there and there was a big massive laundry, and I remember being so small they had to put me on top of a...what do you call it, a s...chair...a lot of the children were as well. And I remember washing sanitary towels belonging to the nuns and the boarders as I said, when we went to Mass would sit at the other, on one side and we would have to sit on the other side and we weren't allowed to look at them. And as I said, every Saturday I had to go over to the church and you know wax the church – polish the church, sorry. Also, there was also a big long, long corridor over in the nuns' and I used to have to go over there to wax their big long, long floors. And also there was, in the morning the nun would come in and ring the bell in the big cold dormitory, and I used to have to jump out of the bed, join our hands, saying our prayers and if your hands...if you put your hands under the...what do you call...to keep warm...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...the nun would come back along and *box you* across the face, 'keep your hands joined saying your prayers'. And there was this big huge yard and it's where the boarders used to you know, do the recreation or whatever the case may be...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and we used to have to go out there in the mornings with two pieces of cloths before we went to Mass and we used to do our exercises to keep us fit. And a nun would be there leathering you if you didn't keep fit now, [no] matter what age you was, I could have been six, seven, eight, nine, ten. I don't know what age I was because there was no birthdays, there was no nothing in there, but it was just absolutely soul destroying. And also there was a farm as well...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...I used to go up and work in the farm. And also the...when the boarders were in school, and I remember one...I'll never forget this as long as I live and myself and another girl – I won't give her name – we went over to the boarders one day waxing the floor and the nun come around and she says to me, 'what are you doing there? You shouldn't be talking to the outside world, you *know* you shouldn't be talking to the outside world, you're here to work!' And myself and the other girl hid under the bed and she called the nun-in-charge that night and she called me and I was told to put out my two hands and into the dormitory that night, she came in and she...this was one of the...one of the horrific beatings I got just for *talking* to the outside world! I had to put out me two hands and I was put across the bed and I was leathered, me pants down, two girls holding me hands, two girls holding me legs and they leathered me and leathered me (*begins to cry*), and *they leathered me till I fell to the ground!* (*Crying*) That's no word of a lie! And I remember I met one girl from Clonakilty and she [had] an asthma attack cos she got so frightened that I would die that night. Now and this was just for talking to a boarder...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...just for talking to the outside world! And they were always telling us you were a nobody, 'you're nothing and always remember you're a nobody!' Like even if you looked over at the boarders in Clon...no, in the...what you call it...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...at Mass, you got beaten just for looking over at them because you were be...beneath them, you were nothing and the nuns were always telling us that. There was no mirrors there, there was no what you call...for washing your teeth in. I never knew what I was like. There was no birthdays, there was no Christmas...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...no one had...if you had a visitor at all, you know, I oft...often remember I'd stand at the...you know, the gate and st...and wait for someone to come to visit me; and like, it was horrific to

know there was no one coming and of course I didn't know what a mother was. How would I know what a mother was? Because I didn't have one; not through...by choice and of course when the visitors used to come of a Sunday I'd be waiting to see would they come for me. And the sch...every morning when we used to go to Mass, after the Mass as I said we went straight to work, there were never any of us go...some of them did go to school in the national school but I was[n't] one of them because I was, I know I shouldn't say this, at the Redress Board and the judge, Adams [pseudonym] *actually* had me down that I had left school at seven. And I said, 'how could I leave school at seven because I never had a birthday?' And I says to the judge, Adams, I said, 'you must have been at the...at Clonakilty Industrial School with me because I never had a birthday'. This was true. And as I said Christmas meant nothing...and we had the Rosary, three Rosary...three times a day, Benediction, you know the Stations of the Cross were down the corridor...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...*in* the industrial school and we used to have the Stations of the Cross every day and Rosary like that. And there was also this thing called, the fire drill – this sounds crazy now, and they used to have to put all the ropes together and the str...strange thing about it, but I didn't realise until years later, we used to wear skirts and they used to put our knickers over our skirts before we got out the window and this was to make sure that our skirts didn't blow up that the nuns wouldn't look up them. How crazy can you get like...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...you know? And imagine a fire coming and we all have to jump out this window...getting ready for a...the place would be you know...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...absolutely we would be [inaudible] putting to death but this used to happen very often and now the nun would make sure you would come down. And also at Christmas, there was nothing, the only thing the...what you call it, used to come up at Christmas, the Gleasons [pseudonym] I remember and they used to give us an LP and that was all the treat we got. And also it was horrific for us as well; we used to have to walk...*walk* eight miles every Sunday out

[to] Bandon and back to keep us fit, they were always talking about 'keep fit for work, keep you fit for work'. And also there was people in the town, old folk and we used to have to go down and give them their food. And I remember going down there and there was an Alsatian...two Alsatian dogs you know, in a garage and they'd smell the food and you've the basket in your hand. And they used to...the nuns used to send us down, often you know people there used to send us down and while the old folk would be having their dinner, we'd to have to stand in the corner looking at them eating, and I was only I would say about seven or eight, I don't know what age I was. And then when they were finished their dinners, we'd have to wash up after them, then clean their cottage, which meant go down on your knees and wash their floors. And then there was a big huge table, I remember washing their big table and while they sat at the fire – you'd light the fire for them as well. And also in Clonakilty there was three Agas [stove] they were called, Agas, like a range...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and there was nobody over...you know, supervising you...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and it was just horrific because I could be called in the dormitory, anybody would be called in the dormitory and you'd be told to go down to the kitchen with *no* supervision and you'd be actually told to clean out them three Agas. I remember going down to the scullery and getting a co...getting, you know, the coal and like that you get the coal and lift it up on the high chair, you get on the chair and you'd have, you'd have the end of this hot coal...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...hot, you know roasting, and you'd be shak...because there was no one in the kitchen to supervise you. And like anybody could be called and like I'd say I was about eight or nine, I don't know what age I was.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And like it was just nerve-wrecking to be in there...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and it was like, in other words, 'your mother was a sinner'. I don't know why they were doing it to us but to me they were saying that, 'God suffers you suffer'. And I remember they used [to] talk about God so much to me that I thought this man, whoever he, this God was, was something out of...something else. And I remember...this might be immaterial what I'm going to say next...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...but it'll tell you how brainwashed I was as a child. There was a tree under the garden, I used to go around where the Mass was and like that I used to sit under that tree thinking this man was going to come down for me and take me away. That...they said, 'God loved you' and I said, 'if God loves you why is he letting me suffer like this? Why is he make...treating me like this as a child? Why me, what have I done wrong?' And I used to wait for this man...God to come down, under this big tree, as often as I could, go under the tree and see...standing...and look up, up at the sky, to see will he come down and take me away. Because they were all talking about 'God loves you,' and where was this God that's supposed to love you? And yet we were being tortured, you know suffering so much in this place in Clonakilty.

KOD *And you'd no schooling at all there?*

MS None, none, none, none. Some of them did go to school but I genuinely never, never went to school at all at all.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS Because I was always sent up to the farmyard and believe it or not, when you went to the farm they never came down for you, and there was no dinner...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...you stayed in the farm yard all day. And I remember when I used to feed the chickens and there was this yellow stuff and I used to eat it, I used to be so hungry; I used to actually eat that stuff...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...that the chickens were getting and that's all I'd have to eat for the day. And used to have to clean out the...you know, the pig sties...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...you know that...clean them out, the whole lot. Now the nun I must say – up there – she was kind of a kind, kind of a nun.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS You know, sh...I won't give her a name...

KOD *No, you can...you can name her.*

MS ...Sister Rose [pseudonym] was her name, but I think she was a lovely person. I think she knew they were cruel to us...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and like, she...even now...and believe it or not I felt happier with the animals...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...than I did...because I knew there was...there was no one gonna hurt me.

KOD *Yeah.*

MS So I knew that when I was with the animals I wasn't gonna get no beatings...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...because you...you don't know when the next beating was going to come. And we used to have on a Friday after wearing the same knickers for the whole week, you used to have to have to show up your knickers and if your kickers were dirty we were beaten because your knickers were dirty. And I remember once getting very sick and I was genuinely sick, I was after getting sick on the mat and I remember them asking who was it [that] got sick and I wouldn't tell because if you were sick you even got beaten. I remember I was inside in...the infirmary and I think I had the mumps, I don't know what was wrong with me and I remember a thermometer was put into me mouth and I vomited...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...because the taste of it in my mouth and I lashed and I was *lashed, and lashed and lashed* by this nun, 'look what you did to the thermometer; you broke the thermometer!' So I was literally afraid to get sick because I knew there would be lashings in this infirmary [sic] as well. So like the beatings were just horrific, you didn't know when you were going to get the next beating and the work was something else, we were never off our knees. And also my first recollection of life, you won't believe it, it was actually standing at a big hole and the fear...now you know, as a...maybe I don't know but if you have a mother and father or a family you could have a first...first recollection of life, could be a happiness...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...could be a smile from your mother or I don't know. But my first recollection of life was looking into a hole – and the *fear, the fear* jumping – that was my first memory of being on this planet! And all around I seen all these big, big people – what did I found it was later – the nun's funeral. They used to have to make us go to the nun's funeral and we were only children! What would we be doing standing at the nun's funeral for?

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS What was the purpose? I remember then when a nun died we used to have to kiss them goodbye and bowing to them like you know. And then I remember there was a coffin and we'd all have our hands joined behind this coffin – I didn't know it was a coffin...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...I just thought it was a box.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And little did I know it was one of the nuns and we'd have to go to all of their funerals as well...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...you know. But it was just absolutely horrific. And then the food, it was just like dripping we used to get...the food and the gruel and they used to give us Epsom salts with all this [inaudible] and roasting, roasting hot water and you used to have to drink that back and it was like a tin can they used to give us, to make you...you know whatever...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and they used to make us drink that. And when I got my period I was actually scrubbing in where the boarders used to do their study. And I remember I didn't know what was wrong with me and I just couldn't do my work.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And I went up to someone and I says, 'I'm all cut, I'm in bits' and I says...they told me to go up to somebody and to get these...these sanitary towels...as I know now. And I wasn't told what they were *for* nor nothing, all I knew then, these were the things I was washing, not alone was I washing sanitary towels, but washing all the sheets.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And there was...all that was there, there was two swings out where the drying ground was, we used to play...called it the drying ground and like it was just soul destroying being in there. And like, anybody that I have been in contact – suppose there was very little but...from Clonakilty – have never gotten over it...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and it was just horrific – I was there, I would say I'll fast forward to...Mallow. I was actually told that it was closing down and I wasn't crying because it was closing down, I was crying because I was going to miss all these girls...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...you know, all the little girls that I knew, I was going to miss them all because now I got attached to them, grew up with them etc. And we were all just put out in...at the back, vans came to collect us as if they were collecting dogs. No one was allowed to say goodbye to anybody and there was six of us, were put into this car and this is when Keane – the one now I'm going to talk about – came into my life.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS I shouldn't say, 'came into my life,' I'll rephrase that – the first time I met him.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS But I didn't realise this was the same – how do I call him a human being, I don't know what I'm supposed to call him – that also locked up my mother. But the six of us anyway got in from Clonakilty and we were brought to Mallow. Now I didn't know until I went to the Redress [Residential Institutions Redress Board] that I was actually fourteen because I didn't know what age I was, I never, never had a birthday in my life and I didn't have a birthday – I never, never knew what a birthday was. So then I was brought to Mallow – six of us went to Mallow and I remember when we used to go into a bath, and I know when we used to go into a bath in Clonakilty, they used to actually put us...put on this red things over us, and they were iron baths and there was disinfectant put into them and the water was never changed, and when

you started developing, they put a bodice over you, a bodice. And you weren't allowed to look at your body when you started developing. And there was these red like...coats they used to put on you, plastic things, plastic they were and you had to use them going into the bath and you used to have to put up your head, not to look at your body, we were told never to look at your body.

KOD *They were plastic, so you couldn't get washed then Mary could you?*

MS But that's the way it was...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...so we wouldn't look at our bodies developing.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And then when there was, what you call it, put across your back, you know the bodice...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...so as to flatten you down...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...when you started developing so if any men came into the place – we didn't understand sure, I didn't know the difference between a boy and a girl, I think I was about eight or nine at the time.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS I didn't know any different, I thought that girls wore skirts...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and when you're a boy you wore trousers and that was it. I didn't know the difference between a boy and a girl.

KOD *And in the industrial school in Clonakilty what was the congregation there? Who ran it?*

MS The Sisters of Mercy...

KOD *Hmm.*

MS ...if you could call them Mercy, if that's what you call Mercy. So it was just totally horrendous there. So the reason why I'm bringing up about the bodice...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...because when I went to...

KOD *This is Mallow you moved to now...*

MS Yes.

KOD *...was it another Sisters of Mercy?*

MS Sisters of Mercy as well. Now, it was more humane there I must say...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...it was more humane, and the nun there, I'd like to say her name, Sister Bernadette...
[pseudonym]

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...was extremely nice to me when I went there. Now there was only six of us...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and that's where Keane left us, six of us. But the rest of the other girls were all scattered all over the place, you know. And seemingly didn't....that ...our cubicles, cubicles...and the nun came along and she says, 'what are you doing wearing that?' [Unidentified background noise] And she saw me with the bodice – I just happened to be taking off me night dress or whatever I was wearing and she says, 'go down to such-and-such a body and get a bra,' and I didn't know what a bra was, you know. I know you might say this, this doesn't make any difference like you know, to that, but it showed how we were growing up, like we were really nothing.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS In other words we were worse than humans, we weren't, weren't humans at all we were worse than like...an...animals are beautiful, but we weren't...they were always... We used to have to line up in Clonakilty and they used to make us hold our hands and the nuns used to say to us, 'say after me, "I am a nobody. *I am* a nobody"' – they used to keep telling us to say that, '*I am* a nobody'. And they used to brain wash us with this and I was actually talking to a girl and she keeps onto this day saying...she thinks she's a nobody. She keeps on...she has herself brainwashed that she's a nobody. Anyway, when I went there then, didn't...I went to school I must admit for a year-and-a-half I was there and I thought they were much more humane to me...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and I was allowed to wear a uniform for the first time. I had a school bag and I *can* say it was amazing because I came from Newmarket originally – I was born in Fermoy – I know they had no right to take my mother – which I'll tell you what happened there after – but at the same time Fermoy's not far from Mallow.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And why bring me all the way down to Clonakilty...was because for the *work*, but th...w...most of them had all worked in all the Industrial Schools, but Clonakilty was just horrific and you see the *laundry* that was there, talk about the Magdalene *Laundries*, this one and we were only children now...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...compared you know, to what the Magdalene Laundries was. I know at the same time with the Magdalene Laundries...had never been there...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...but it was like a continuation from what happened. So, I was there for a year-and-a-half and I must say, Christmas came and I couldn't believe there was such a thing as Santy! You know I can't remember having...there was no birthdays now, because I don't know, maybe some of them did but I didn't have a birthday...still in Mallow, I still didn't know my birthday. But like, I didn't go to work, there wasn't...I got up in the morning and just went to Mass like we would, and like you know, there was no such thing as Stations of the Cross or scrubbing floors or anything like that, I went to Ma...I went to school. But there was one thing that stands out in my mind most of all and I was telling them the...kind of this...because it...it touched me, like it never left me. And I remember in the school, I was sitting beside this girl one day, you know – she came from the town...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...we used to mix with them – and like it was a different regime completely. And she said, 'your mother must have been lovely looking'. And I says to her, 'what is a mother?' And I says...she looked at me she said, 'do you not know what a mother is?' And this was the first time in my life (*crying*) that I realised I had a mother! And I asked...that...'what was a mother?' because in Clonakilty they used to make us sing that song as well, *A Mother's Love is a Blessing*. And that's when I discovered...where is my mother? And when she tried to describe to me like you know, 'a mother is someone that *has* you, a mother is someone that *loves* you,' but I says...and then I began to wonder, where is my mother? What *happened* to my mother? And it was the way that woman said, 'your mother must have been lovely looking' and I says, 'but I never had her' because she knew I came from the...the orphanage...

KOD *Yeah.*

MS ...you know. But that's why she said that...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and I'll never forget when she said them words to me. But it was then, when I went to Mallow that I started sleep walking. And to this day, to this day, all my dreams, one dream alone, is escaping. I wake up at windows and doors escaping, escaping.

KOD *Hmm.*

MS Psychologically I'm *damaged* in every way, what they've done to me, because I'm trying to escape, get away from this place...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...you know, since childhood.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS So anyway I was in Mallow for about a year-and-a-half, which I found much more humane as I said...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and Santy came up at Christmas and they had, you know, there was a playground there and there was also a band there and I went to school there and I thought I was getting on well in school. Until one day I was told that I was wanted in the office – sorry, the parlour – and there was this woman and she asked for *me*. Now of course I didn't know who she...this woman was, and then she says, 'I want you to come to work for me'. And I says, 'how did you find out who I am?' 'I want you,' she says to me, 'you have a very short skirt on you. You don't come to work to me like that'. I guess like I was about fifteen or sixteen, I don't know what age I was,

and...but I wasn't aware at the time, she was friendly with Keane. And Keane sent her down from Cork to get a hold of me, but I couldn't understand that.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS So when I kept saying, 'I don't want to go, I don't want to go,' then she came down a second time. And I remember Sister Bernadette I'll mention her again, and says to me, 'you don't have to go'. And I felt I was compelled to go because this woman kept coming back for me. So, one day she came and she says, 'you're coming with me'. And I remember Sister Bernadette saying something about, 'if you're ever looking for your family, they're in Newmarket,' which was only 15 miles from Mallow! And like, the chances I would have had if I...*if, if only*...be able to be happy today, if I'd only stayed there. So anyway I went into the car with this woman, I was crying all the way up – oh I'm sorry I should mention, this boy I met. I remember one day I inside in the town and I was at a carnival and they sometimes would give us, you know, tell us to go off down into town. And I remember being up in the chair-plane and this person started kicking me from behind and I got off the chair-plane and it was this boy, and he looked into my eyes and he said, 'would you like to come over on the bumpers?' And of course I was so happy, *delighted* with myself really, you know, I was so happy it was like paradise to me. For the first time in my life I laughed and I was happy! So he bought me an ice-cream and believe it or not, I always say that was me first present I got in me life, that was the first *present*, I call that an ice-cream...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...that that boy gave me, gave me an ice-cream. And with that anyway, we were walking back and he says to me – he didn't ask where I lived or nothing – and as I was walking by the industrial school, I said, 'this is where I live,' says he, 'I know'. And I says, 'how do you know?' He said, 'I looked into your eyes,' he says, and he said, 'you have very sad eyes, but I'm going to make you happy,' he says to me. He says, 'if you can come around to where I live, sneak out of the industrial school,' and he gave me his address and I used to sneak out to see him from time to time. And he sometimes...he had a van, a white van and he'd bring me into town and I'd sneak out to see him and this from time to time was...this...happen. And I'd just stand at the gate and I remember I was afraid to into the house, you understand, and his mother would look out the window and say, 'that girl from the orphanage is at th...at the gate again'. And we used

to...you know, we built up a kind of a happiness together. So when I went then to work out for that woman, all of a sudden these letters started coming for me, but I didn't realise that he had gone up to the industrial school looking for my address, where I went out to work for...you know, that family...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...who were multimillionaires. She had eight bedrooms, she had a parlour, she had the blue room, she had the dining room and a sitting room. And she told me as soon as I entered the house, she put on this white coat on me and she said, 'you're my slave now'. And she says, 'get down on them knees and start washing that floor'. And I remember it was half-seven in the evening and she...st...I started washing the floor and the, the room I had was right beside where the kitchen was and she had a little small, small little room and that was where I have, you know, that was where I had to live, to live. She said, 'you're not to use the bathroom or the toilet, you wash yourself in the yard – you're *nothing*, you're nobody! You're an orphan,' she used to say to me 'and you'll never be anything else'. And I used to have to...the big huge...she had a big huge living room, massive, massive living room and she'd come along and if there was a bit of dirt left over an ornament she'd make me do the whole lot over again. And I didn't know how to use a Hoover and she used to call me stupid because I didn't know how to use a Hoover. And I used to have to go up and have to Hoover *eight* bedrooms, the eight bed...down the stairs and do the ironing. If you look at my hand there, there's a mark there on my hand, ironing at 11 o'clock at night and I was crying because the boy I was after meeting gave me a small little photograph of him and I was missing him so much all in this big, big house on my own. And the next thing Keane arrived and I brought him into the sitting room one day and then he looked at me and he said, 'you're getting more like your mother every day, clean like her'. And I couldn't understand why this man was talking about my mother who I never met. So, he says to me, you know... then because that boy – I won't give his name – was writing letters to me - she was opening the letters and then she told Keane about the boy I was with. So, when I was in that house, I wasn't allowed as I said, to use the bathroom or the toilet upstairs and Keane would come to make sure I was doing the work properly.

KOD *Uh huh.*

[Identifying details removed]

MS It's an understatement...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...absolutely an understatement. How and ever, why I don't know, this...you see, the catch was, this is where this woman came to Mallow for me to go out to work in Rochestown in Cork because Keane was after giving her my name, so that's what the catch was.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS So now, he was after locking up my mother, now it was me next, but I wasn't aware of this. So anyway, they discovered that the boy was writing to me and with that didn't...they said, 'she's going to end up like her mother'. So I remember he came 20 miles to see me and the very words he said to me, he says, 'one day we'll be together forever'. And I said, 'will we sleep...will we live in the van together?' And I was very, very happy with that

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and like he's...vice versa for him as well because as I said I met him 10 years ago and it was genuine, for the first time I was happy...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...with somebody and I felt loved by him and cared, he was a very caring man. Now I know this is immaterial, but 10 years ago I met him, he never drank or smoked either, you know.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS But that's as I said, immaterial because...it *is* to me because they took him away from me as well. So how and ever anyway, she told...when John, [pseudonym] when the man, the boy came up to meet me, and he was after writing to...back to me to say how happy he was to see me. So she went and told Keane that this boy I was seeing...and I'd end up like me mother getting pregnant. So the next thing, the little small room I was in beside the kitchen...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and I remember oh, I just wanted to die at this stage, it was too much in my life, I've been through Clonakilty now, Mallow, now this, now where am I going next? So not knowing where I was going next, but I knew it wasn't going to be good. So, they said, 'she'll end up like her mother getting pregnant outside marriage' – no, 'she'll end up the *same* as her mother,' that's the way he put it – 'so the best thing to do is to lock her away before she does'. And I heard them words as they were packing my bags – and all I had...it wasn't a bag it was like...all I had, ever you seen them things called vanity cases? That's all I had...the possessions in my life, that's all I *owned* in my life because I had nothing. And I remember getting into the black Volkswagen that he had, the same black Volkswagen he had when he was bringing me from Clonakilty to Mallow. And he drove me up to this big, massive, red building and all I could see was the big red building and I was *crying and crying, and crying* and I would not stop crying for him. So with that, he left me there, he said, 'we have another one,' that's what he says to the nun. He said, 'I have another one for you,' they were his very words, 'I have another *one*'. You would think of him talking about a piece of furniture or something! So he left me there anyway, when they brought me in and I remember them taking the briefcase and everything I owned, taking me clothes off me and they came along and they said to me that they were going to change...they brought me into a room and my name was going to be changed, I kept crying and crying and I says, 'no way, I'm not changing my name!' So I wouldn't eat for them, I just would not eat for them and I wanted to die. And I seen all these elderly ladies there and I knew that once the door...what really *traumatised* me more, to hear that door locking behind you and you were *never, never, never* to walk out that door again, *never!*

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And that's what traumatised me so much, that that door was never going to open and that was a fact. I was in Sundays Well in Cork and it was the Magdalene Laundries. So that's how I ended up in the Magdalene Laundries.

KOD *And what age were you then? How long were you working in Rochestown?*

MS Well, you see it was all happening so quick...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...that I really don't know, and I think I was shellshocked that I can't really say how long I was in the Magdalene Laundries for.

KOD *And...but how long were you working in Rochestown? Do you know how long you were there?*

MS That I do not know

KOD *Yeah.*

MS ...everything was so horrific...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...you know, I can't really say.

KOD *So it was a couple of weeks, or a couple of months, you don't know or was it two years or...?*

MS Oh I'd say it would be...oh, this all happened in a year-and-a-half...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...this all happened...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...because I don't know how long...don't ask me how long I was in the Magdalene Laundries for.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS But to me it felt like my lifetime. Anyway the...this nun came down and they said they were having an awful time with me and they chopped up me hair, me hair was just chopped and they were giving me the name of either Benedicta...Anastasia. And I says, 'I'm not changing my name, my name is Mary Smith!' And they said, 'this is the rule that you change your name'. And I says, 'no, no, no, no'. And eventually this nun come along and her name was Edna [pseudonym], 'we have no Edna here, because everybody's called by a different name, there is no-one named the same'.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS So with that I was called Eithne [pseudonym of interviewee's house name, Irish version of nun's name] and I would not even...I just wanted to die, I said there was no point going on living. And they had to force feed me for three weeks, I wouldn't eat for them. And then as I said, there was a big huge laundry there and there was place for, you know where the priest's vestments or whatever they're called?

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS I embroidered in there. So when you got up in the morning, there was a big, huge...we had to go to Mass – *back* to square one again – and...go to Mass every morning. I should say here, and I hope you put this on, I'm an atheist, I don't believe in religion after what I've gone through, I couldn't. I can't kneel down today because I have two big holes in my knees, and I forgot to mention this and this is very vital that I should mention this. I remember – going back to Clonakilty – I was walking up with a bucket of...bucket of water in my hand, ready to go to work and this nun coming towards me and she says to me, 'you have house maid's knees'. And I guess I must have been about seven or eight at the time and I realised after what housemaid's knees is – we're scrubbers.

KOD *Hmm.*

MS Imagine a nun or anybody to say that to a child, they have housemaid's knees! I cannot kneel down today, my knees have two big holes, I...you know it's...it's crazy to think I can't kneel down. Anyway, going back to the Magdalene Laundries, that...the same thing, back to prayers again but, matter of fact I was told when I went in there, you weren't allowed to speak at all

times. If you were, you were threatened with a...a worse place than this, but my opinion was there was no place worse than this! So as I said, you couldn't get outside the door you know, and your name changed and then silence all the time! So when I got up in the morning, like as I said in the refectory, somebody read the Bible to you and the nun would march up and down to make sure that you're...you know, that you don't talk. And then there was a laundry there and then there was a place for doing embroidery and you either went there or the laundry, one or the other. And in the laundry like, it was back to like, Clonakilty again. And they also had the mangles, you know the mangles and there was all these big sheets and stuff like that. And the nun would be there all day wa...watching to make sure you didn't talk. And then you went to...two o'clock you had your dinner and it was always kind of dripping, the food was *horrible*. And the same thing, somebody read the Bible – now *I* could have been called to read the Bible and I wasn't able to read or write because I never went to school. So I always had that fear I'd be called, but at the same time nobody was allowed to talk. And we went back to what you call again, to the rec...to the laundry, the same thing until five o'clock, and then you had your tea at six...sorry you had your tea, then at six o'clock I remember, it was the Angelus, that was the only time that the television went on as far as I can remember. And then there was the Rosary and up to bed. Now up in the bedroom, the dormitory, the beds were back to back and the idea of the beds being back to back...so we wouldn't be able to talk to the next person. So it was a dim laund...a dim light sorry left on all night and the nun would walk around from time to time to make sure there was no one getting out to talk. But the only time I do remember leaving and the door being opened, you know in May when they have this thing...procession or whatever you call that thing...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS and there was a pole in front of you and they – it was May Day...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS and I remember coming out for that. And there was this girl that was in Clonakilty with me and I remember looking up and seeing her because there was two parts to it, there was St Finbarr's and St Mary's in Sundays Well. And there was the industrial school part, we'll say – the orphanage part or whatever – and then there was the Magdalene Laundry part. And I

remember looking up and she waved down to me because she was after being in Clonakilty with me and she asked could I ask...could I come and see her – no, I wasn't allowed to.

KOD *And was she in the industrial school part?*

MS She was in the industrial school part...

KOD *Okay.*

MS ...because she would have left Clonakilty...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...a lot of them did go to...it's called St Finbarr's...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...St Finbarr's up in Sundays Well.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS So that's where she went...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and I remember looking up at the window and seeing her – God!

KOD *Yeah.*

MS You know seeing someone as a child and all of a sudden you're seeing them looking out of the window! And the excitement of looking up at her and seeing her...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...but we weren't allowed to talk. So like, what caught me there was that I...Keane was after saying to me, 'you'll end up where your mother was'. So I had this feeling that my mother could be there even though I didn't know who my mother was, but your name was changed. And I had always this vision that a mother had grey hair, I never had a vision that a mother could be you know, a girl, you know she always had to have grey hair.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And I used to be looking at some of the women, the elderly women in there with grey hair and I said, 'that could be my mother'. And I couldn't, I say, I was going to even ask, like, 'are you a Smith?' but I couldn't talk to them. But it was horrendous to think, I thought my mother was in there...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...you know, because Keane was after telling me I'd end up like me mother and I *knew* the way he spoke about me mother that he knew her. So I guess I must have been in there for...I can't say how long I was in there, I could have been in there for months, y...I don't know because I think my body went into shock and it's like as if I was never going to come out of there. And how long I was in there I don't know, but all I remember that it destroyed my life completely because it was bad enough being in the other industrial schools especially as a child, but now here – what have I done wrong? What crime did I commit? *Nothing!* What crime did my mother commit? She committed no crime. What am I doing in this place? What am I doing wrong in life? If there was a God there, why have I been suffering so much? And I just went completely blank I think, in there.

KOD *So you...you never really worked in the sewing part, the embroidery part?*

MS Yes I did yeah, I did...

KOD *Oh you did, in there too? Okay.*

MS I did yeah, I worked and I remember what the sewing was like, because there were machines and like, I remember underneath there was a handle...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and there was like embroidery for the...you know for the parts of the vestments.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And they had to do the, what do you call what they have for the vestments for the priests and you know the embroidery stuff?

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And they'd have the handle underneath you and there'd be someone walking around to make sure you're doing it okay. And I did that as well yeah, as well as the laundry, there was the two of them.

KOD *And can you remember what kind of clothes or what kind of laundry was done in the laundry? Was there a lot of work in there?*

MS Well it was mostly sheets and there was shirts, there was a place that we...shirts...ironed shirts and stuff like that...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and there was you know, the usual like and the mangle was there, I remember and somebody would be...while you're turning the mangle someone is at the end of it...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...the mangle and you...you know the clothes came in from...I think from the hotels and stuff like that.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And I remember there was two swings out the back and we used to try and get out there. Now, this is no word of a lie, there was myself and another girl and she says, 'I'm going to get out of here'. And you know the drainpipe...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...now there was this big, big grey wall around us and she says, 'come on, let's try and get up the pipe!' We sneaked out the back, out the back of the laundries and she says, 'I'm going to get out of here, there's no way I'm going to stay here, come on let's skip!' And she halfway got up and I was going up behind her...the drainpipe, you know the drainpipe? I said, 'there's no way I'm going to stay here' she says, but she got over it...

KOD *She got over the wall of the...*

MS She did get over...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and when she was halfway up at the top I was going to follow her up, but when I got halfway up I kind of...I fell so I couldn't get back, but she kept going. But anyway she pulled onto the drain pipe and she didn't...and the wall now was as high as any hospital...

KOD *Hmm.*

MS ...but the way she looked at it, she prefers to be dead than to be there.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS But she got over it, and I remember that girl, I can't remember her name but we were, we....out the back and it was no word of a lie.

KOD *And did she get away or was she brought back or?*

MS Sure she...I don't think she ever came back because she was dead, sure the wall was as high as...higher than the...

KOD *Oh you mean she...you think she did a big injury when she came off the wall on the other side or?*

MS She was never found...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...well if she did found...was found there was nothing mentioned...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...when any women died in there, nobody was told.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS You were just brought away and that was it. And I remember there was a woman in there and she was supposed to have went in when she was fifteen or something and she...she was in there I think she was about ninety or something or maybe younger, I don't know – eighty – anyway she was elderly but she died when she was in there and nobody knew and that was it. I was just told there was somebody after being dying up in the dormitory and they weren't coming down. And I always said...was saying, 'I'll end up like that now'.

KOD *And had that woman been working?*

MS No, no she was one of us!

KOD *So she was working in the laundry?*

MS She was working in the laundry as well...

KOD *Right up until when she died?*

MS Yeah, she...no a lot of the women never came out of there.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS As a matter of fact, maybe I shouldn't say this, but I went back there in 1999...1990 sorry, looking for my mother thinking that my mother was...be there. And the women in there still remembered me, this was in Sundays Well...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and they were still there because...on the Gerry Ryan show after being on looking for my brother...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...I went down there thinking that my mother would be up, there would be a chance because Keane had told me, 'your mother died in the early sixties,' but I never believed him. But I have confirmation now that she did; she died in the early sixties when I was twelve.

KOD *But you were in the...the Magdalene Home in Sundays Well, you were looking at these older women and you thought one of them could be your mother?*

MS Correct yeah.

KOD *But you just, you weren't allowed to speak to any of them?*

MS No, I wasn't allowed to speak to anybody because the reason why I thought one of them was my mother...because of...Keane was always talking about my mother...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...so I said she has to be somewhere here.

KOD *And tell us your mother's story, and we'll come back to your...*

MS I tell you how I got out of the Magdalene Laundries...

KOD *Yeah.*

MS Anyway, so I don't know how long I was there for because as I say I went into total shellshock , don't ask me, it was shellshock, I think it was, it was like blocked out of me mind...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...because I just went into shock because I knew I was never, never going to come out of there and I was going to end my days there. And I was looking at all these unfortunate women in there...

KOD *Hmm.*

MS ...who should have never been in there and like, not allowed to talk, no communication, no nothing and silence all day. You know the only time we were allowed to pray – sorry the only time you were allowed to talk – when you prayed, it was the only time you opened your mouth. Apart from that you weren't allowed, and I mean, this is for me totally and utterly ridiculous. Why change your name when you couldn't answer to talk to people?

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS It was ludicrous, absolute...ludicrous! Abs...anyway, one day I was told I was wanted in the office, out of the blue by the head nun. And with that, when I went in who was there, only Keane! And I'll quote his words, you can delete this if you wish but I'll *never, never* forget his words, 'you're getting more like your mother every day,' he says to me, 'big chested like her'. Now I'd never seen a photograph of my mother and that's all he could describe her as, 'you're getting more like her every day'. And I just kept saying, 'why does this man keep talking about my mother for, and I never saw her?' But he said to me, the woman – 'we're going to give you a chance,' he says, 'we're going to take you back to Rochestown and I'm going to give you a chance to get you out of here'. So I went back there, I stayed for...working for four or five months and the man in the house used to always see me crying. And he gave me his sister's

address and he said, 'see the man' – he called him like...Keane, he called him by his name – he says, 'he's taking people out of industrial schools, taking them in here to work for here...in this big house and then he's bringing them up to the Magdalene Laundries,'...didn't call them the Magdalene Laundries, 'bringing them to Sundays Well and then locking them up!' And he says, 'I was telling my...anytime my sister came into this house' – and this was the man of the house – he used to see me crying...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...because I was alone in this big house. And he said, 'there's my sister's address and if you ever get locked up again, contact her'. She lived in Douglas, because he had some sympathy for me and he told me it was through him that I got out of there because he said that I was always crying. But like she was the woman of the house and Keane was getting people to work, and his hands were tied, even though he was the man with the money, she was the boss kind of thing...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...you know. So I was back working there, back in the small room, back to square one again in this big house and I remember once – she used to get all her stuff delivered – you know, like groceries etc., etc. The milkman would come in the morning, the bread man would come in the morning and I remember at this stage, the boy who I had dearly loved...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...you know, I couldn't contact him and like, as a matter of fact, I couldn't remember his address. They had destroyed me so much in there, when that door locked, that I think they just blanked me.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS I couldn't even think of his address, even...and if I did I would be afraid to contact him you know.

KOD *Yeah.*

MS But I realised afterwards that he did go back looking for me and I realised afterwards that he was actually *delivering* to the Magdalene Laundries! He was *actually delivering* to the Magdalene Laundries and I was in there and he didn't know I was there!

KOD *You mean he was taking in laundry from as far away as Mallow?*

MS Because he work...he worked in a laundry in Mallow and he said sometimes the stuff that used to come in the laundry in Mallow, they'd sometimes bring it up to the Sundays Well and he didn't know I was in there.

KOD *Wow.*

MS I couldn't believe when he told me!

KOD *And did you get to know any of the women that you were working alongside?*

MS You couldn't get to know them at all because your name was changed. There was one woman in there that was in Clonakilty with me and she was still in there in 1990 when I went back looking for my mother. Anyway what happened was...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...this is what happened...I went back working there for three months and then I was getting up in the morning to polish his shoes – the usual – clean the house and the bread man came to the door and I was at the door and this was half-eight in the morning, and next thing she says...I could hear her on the phone ringing Keane, 'I don't want that woman' – or she [inaudible] – 'that young girl talking to men, she's chatting up men again!' Just talking to the bread man and she says, 'I don't want to be responsible for her if she does get pregnant'. With that Keane came, Keane came, listen now this is the *second time* I'm going back. At this stage of my life I just couldn't handle any more of it. And I says, 'where did all of this, what am I...what was I born for? Just to suffer, suffer, suffer'. Keane came into the room where I was

and he was packing up and I knew I was going back to the Magdalene Laundry. I never called it the Magdalene Laundry, I used to call it the Good Shepherds...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...it was always known to me as the Good Shepherds. And I knew I was going back to the Good Shepherds and with that Keane, when he came he said, 'well I tell you, she's not going to end up like her mother!' He was always talking about my mother. So anyway...didn't...I got into the black Volkswagen again, at this stage I must have been crying and crying, at this stage now it was the [River] Lee in Cork, I said the Lee, I would have filled the Lee with tears at this stage since I'd been a child. I think I would have been seventeen at this stage, seventeen-and-a-half at this stage, I don't know. But looking back in hindsight I think I was seventeen-and-a-half, but I was going through so much trauma, it was something else! And nowhere to go, no one to turn to, nowhere to live, nothing! So anyway I get into the black Volkswagen and all the way up thinking that the car was going to stop outside this big red building, I'd me hands on me face bawling me eyes crying and all, I kept me hands on me face. And he stopped the car and I looked and then he had something sticking up out of his trousers, because I didn't know the facts of life.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS But I didn't...wasn't thinking about that, I says...he stopped in the middle of nowhere and I started to run and I jumped out of the car and I said, 'this is my chance to get away from him!' But it wasn't up in Sundays Well he was stopped, it was in...I don't know where it was, but all I see was fields. And next thing I never forget what I was wearing, I was wearing a navy skirt and I had blue tights on me and next thing he tore the tights off me and raped me. And I was screaming me head off and he blocked me face and he's...you know, screaming and with that he got me and pushed me back into the car and the tears were just pouring down me face and I says, 'why do this to me, why?' (*Crying*) And he started talking about me mother...and he says to me, this words I'll never forget as long as I live, he says, 'your mother never got a chance, I'll give you a chance...but only if there's room in a hostel'. And I kept saying, 'but I'm not doing nothing wrong!' And he says, I says, 'where is my mother? Where is she?' He says, 'she's dead,' I says, 'how do *you* know?' He says, 'she died in the early sixties, she's gone' and he said, 'I was with her the day she was dead'. He used to go up and abuse her, I heard after. (*Still*

crying) And he says, 'there's this hostel called the Santa Maria' and he said, 'if there's no room in that hostel' he said, 'I'll have to put you in a mental hospital or back up to Sundays Well'. And I said, 'what am I doing wrong?' He said, 'there's nowhere to put you'. And you'd think you were talking about an animal, 'there's nowhere to put you' he says. And I remember a hostel...it was around September because the person said that to me that they were only closing down that week but they had two weeks left and only for that hostel I'd be still up...probably in the Magdalene Laundry or some mental hospital, just because this priest took my mother away from me. The church, the State destroyed me. I didn't choose this life, but when I went into the hostel that was the last I saw of Keane and I was in there for two weeks. And I remember I was sitting in front of a fire, the old lady brought me in and there was two women working there and she brought me in front of the fire and she says to me, first thing she said is, [glasses rattling in background] 'have you got a family?' I said, 'no I have no family'. And then she says, 'have you got a boyfriend?' and I says, 'I have'. She says, she says, 'what's his name?' and I give her his name. And she said, 'do you love him?' And I says, 'I do'. She says, 'where is he?' I says, 'I can't find him'. [Glasses rattling in background] And I remember her giving me dinner and I couldn't even pick up the cup I was shaking, shaking, shaking. And she says to me, you know the place was closing down in two weeks...

[Phone ringing]

KOD *Yeah.*

MS She said to me, the place was closing down for two weeks and I'd have to find somewhere after that. But I didn't care because I was away now from that man, Keane, and I knew that I had freedom and even though I slept rough in Cork after that with nowhere to live and nowhere to go, I didn't care once I was away from this, but then I found out years later that me mother, her name was Eileen Smith from the Kerry Road, New Market Co. Cork. And I believe when she was pregnant on me, a priest, I'll gi...I'll give you his name, I even know his name, he was named Gallagher [pseudonym] and I believe he gave orders to lock up me mother in the Magdalene Laundries. Now, there was Sundays Well, and then there was Peacock Lane. Peacock Lane was St. Vincent's, St. Vincent's Road and St. Mary's in Cork, obviously we know this in Cork and she was four months pregnant on me and the priest gave orders to lock my mother up. And she was then put into the Magdalene Laundries. And from hearing back, people that knew my mother went up to visit her and when...after being looking for Christy my

brother, who was unfortunately found years later and I was after being on the radio looking for Christy and people came forward who knew my family in Cork. And this one person says she remembers the last time she saw my mother (*voice cracking*). She said the nuns had a sack over her in...in the Magdalene Laundries in Peacock Lane and they were trying to kick me out of her! And the person, I won't give the person's name, she's dead anyway, but I have a witness to this if you wanted a witness...the person is still alive who witnessed the same thing I'm going to say to you now, and because the person also heard the person saying it, and she said, when she went up to sa...see me the nuns were trying to kick me out of her and she says, I'll give her, her name because she's dead, Vera [pseudonym] who lived beside the Ryans [pseudonym] and she says, 'don't you dare come up here again to see that woman, she's a sinner and she'll pay for her sins'. And she's bawling her eyes crying and she kept saying you know like, 'they're taking my baby, they took my baby Christy [glasses rattling in background noise] and now they're going to take my...'. She didn't know I was – she said, 'they're going to take the baby inside me'. So, she was th...she was there until...she was due to give birth to me and she was brought out to Fermoy and that's when...

[Unidentified person enters the room]

UP Oh excuse me.

MS ...the day Keane went for her and brought her up to the mental hospital in the Lee Road in Cork. The day she gave birth to me, he took her and brought her up to the Lee Road and that's where she died 10 years later. And I only found my mother's grave 10 years ago and the man that buried her – in Macroom – said, 'I remember your mother she was only a very, very young girl' and that's how I remember her, she had no...she had no headstone or nothing, she was buried in an unmarked grave 10 years after she was put in there, she was dead. But Keane I believe used to go up because the man...when I went down looking for my brother in 1990, the man at the door remembers my mother coming in and Keane with her and he said there was a room left there for him to go up and do what he wanted to her. And I said some very nasty things to him, I said, 'that was my mother you're talking about'. And he said, 'I always remember,' he still remembered in 1990. But when Keane told me that my mother had died in the early sixties, now I've clarification that she did because I found her death cert and she was...I was twelve when she died, and Christy was what...five-and-a-half, or four-and-a-half

I'm not sure. But she was taken off me when he was sentenced and...that's all I know about my mother and that. You know, Christy then, if you want me to talk about Christy I will...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...but I don't know she...

KOD *And so your mother wasn't married, she had Christy and then she had you?*

MS Yeah, but she had Christy, she had Christy in a place called Bessborough [Mother and Baby Home] in Cork...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...which was run by nuns again. Very, very, very cruel and she went out to have Christy there. And people, I believe the nuns gave them an *awful*...when they were, you know when they were giving birth, slash them into the face. There's a book called, *Candle in the Window* [*A Light in the Window* by June Goulding] or something, I went to read it, I had to put it down because I knew Christy was born there and she had him for...there four years because he wasn't adopted, she brought him back to home. But everybody I believe in Newmarket thought that Christy was adopted by the Ryans because they were so well-to-do...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and they all thought like you know even though me mother was away, they thought she was gone away working.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And they all thought that, you know, the Ryans were after adopting a little boy, which is my brother. And the strange thing about it is he was very foreign looking, he was very dark skinned as well.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS So that made him realise that maybe he was adopted...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and then they realised that when me mother got pregnant on me, Christy then was put into the Courts, that's what I found out after. Christy was put into to the Courts in K...in Kanturk and he was sentenced to Greenmount and he was then put into Upton. When I found him he was actually...he remembered being raped by the Brothers, you wouldn't call them what they should be called...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...they're supposed to be called and he said, 'I remember going into the office,' he says, 'as the other Brothers used to look on and I used to come out' – excuse my expression – 'with a sore hole'.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And I said, 'Christy how often would that happen?' He said, 'all the time and the other Brothers would look on while this was happening,' and he said, 'they treated me terrible'. But how I found Christy, it's a bit too much of a long story. I was working in Smith's Crisps and this girl came to work in Smith's Crisps who keeps in touch from time to time [sound of door opening] and when she asked – she was from Cork – and I was working in Quality Control there and I was going around collecting and check...working. And when she said, 'what part of Cork are you from?' I couldn't say...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...because I was worse than an animal thrown from pillar to post. And I says to her, 'where are you from?' And she says, 'Fermoy'. And I said, 'that's where I'm from' – no I didn't say that's where I'm from – I says, 'to be quite honest with you I come from Newmarket, Co. Cork'. And it turned out her friend next door, her mother came from Newmarket in Cork, who lived beside my mother. So her daughter was living beside that girl and what are the chances of that happening

and she coming to the factory where I was working in Dublin? And the reason why she came to work in the factory because she had...she didn't have to get married, she got married because you know, she was pregnant...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and because the husb...the fella was much older than her and he wouldn't give her a penny. So she had three kids and she used to come up, she'd stay in Dublin and go home at the weekends, so that's why she ended up there. So then she, when she came back she says to me, 'you've got a brother!' No, first of all she says, 'Vera' she called her, 'knows your mother'. And I says, 'I don't believe you Susan!' [Pseudonym] And she says, 'yeah'. And she says, 'Dolores [pseudonym] that lived beside me, her mother lived beside your mother'. And that's how she remembered, going up to see the sack over me mother in the Magdalene Laundries and how they were kicking me out of her. And she says, 'I remember her very well'. So, then she says, 'she has a brother and the brother is very, very good looking, he's very dark and I don't know what happened to him'. So I wrote to the priest in Newmarket, unfortunately when I got my birth cert and he says, 'your mother is dead and don't write back here,' instead of writing to Kerry Road, Newmarket. My grandmother I believe, in my twenties, left two houses and six thousand pound to an uncle of mine. (*Sighs*) There's...there was...there's still, there's still land down there but it wasn't that the Smiths were poor...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...like, six thousand pounds was a lot of money then. I know somebody who...who was an executive in Cork whose house cost that much!

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And I could have just handed, got that handed to me with two houses on top. What good was that to me with...you know...Christy? And Christy locked up because he was homeless. But anyway what happened was, this was how I found Christy. So then I wrote to the priest in Newmarket and he says, 'don't write back here again, your mother is dead,' and that was it. So then when I found out I had a brother I...actually, he said, 'your *younger* brother is dead, *again* don't write back here'. So my grandmother would have been, still been alive you know, when I

wrote first, how and ever he said, 'she's dead'. So anyway I was writing to the Salvation Army looking for family belonging to me, aunts and uncles if I had any, which I had, which I want nothing to do with them, because they could have stopped all of this happening, you know, religion again...

KOD *Hmm.*

MS ...bowing to the things in the collars and the habits. So anyway, I wrote...one morning I woke up out of the blue and I just headed for Joyce House [former location of General Registrar's Office Research Room], I don't know what possessed me, and I looked...went into Joyce House and I asked - this was in 1989 - and at this stage Christy is dead, you know, as far as I'm concerned...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...I didn't know his date of birth, I didn't know anything about him, all I knew is his name was Christy Smith. So how and ever, I went into Joyce House and the woman said to me, 'this is how you look for the Smiths' and she opened up a red book [Register of Births] and Christy Smith from Cork came up the minute she opened that book, in five seconds I had the birth cert in my hand, not knowing his date of birth...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...not knowing what year he was born. She said, 'give a guess, the year' and I guessed the year, I hadn't a clue what year he was born because how could I...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...because all I knew is he was you know Christy Smith and he was...I knew nothing about him. At this stage I didn't know he was in the...he was in the industrial schools, I knew nothing about him. All I knew, he was my brother and he was dead, that's all I knew about him and he was supposed to have been younger than me, which I found out when I got his death cert, sorry his birth cert that, that he was older than me. So anyway, after I found this...what you call it, a birth cert, I'm going to the Salvation Army and I'm walking down the road with the birth cert in my

hands and I met Gerry Ryan [radio presenter, now deceased] and I says, 'Gerry can I talk to you please?' And I says to him, and I looked at the birth cert and I says, 'I only found it today'.

KOD *Wow.*

MS Now, *I'm* going to the Salvation Army with this birth cert only to discover, I meet Gerry Ryan on the street and he was very reluctant you know, because...being on the radio, I just came up to him. So I had no phone or nothing to ring him because the phones weren't...I had no phone at the time. So the...then I was told one day I was supposed to be on the radio and Gerry said to me – I still have it on tape – 'I remember your story and I haven't forgotten it'. And he asked me about myself and I gave Christy's date of birth, if anybody knew. And he said, 'Mary, what was it back like [sic] in the fifties?' – this was '89 now – and I says, 'Gerry it was horrific!' I says, 'I never went to school, I was scrubbing the floors and then I was in another place and then I was in another institution'. And he said, 'what was the institution?' – meaning the Magdalene Laundries – and I says to Gerry, I says, 'in case I got pregnant they put me into this place'. And he was stunned and he didn't know what to say and I could feel it in his voice that he was actually stunned, locking me up in case I got pregnant...

KOD *Hmm.*

MS ...by the boy who...who I was in love with at the time. And I told him that as well. I says, 'I was very much in love with a boy and they locked me up in case I got pregnant'. So how and ever, he says, 'wouldn't it be nice if you found your brother?' And I said, 'if it's to be, it'll be'. So then this girl came up and she was doing her research for something – she was into dogs at the time, like animals...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and she decided to go down and look for my brother Christy. And I said, 'come on what are the chances in Cork, looking for my brother?' And I said, 'I mean Cork is a big county'...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and I said, 'not that alone that,' I says 'Christy could be dead, you know, I don't know where he is'. So to make a long story short, I went down and we met somebody that was...lived in

Newmarket who knew Christy as a small boy and then he said to me, '[what] about your mother?' He says, 'I think they put your...locked your mother away'. And I had a feeling at that stage that my mother had been put away by Keane, bec...you know, this...after you know I found him, remember the time I was saying what he...the man said at the door? So I actually...anyway, to make a long story short, went up to the Magdalene Laundries, which is a big, red, red building and then this one come along and this was one or half-one and I says, 'I just want to know is there an Eileen Smith here?' And she says, 'oh I'm going for my tea,' or 'for my dinner' or whatever. And I says, 'please,' I says, 'I'm after coming down from Dublin and I want to know is my mother here'. 'Oh you should come back at half-two'. So I went, went back at half-two and I seen them all outside and the women said to me, 'your name was Eithne, I remember you here'. Some of the women still remembered me and I couldn't believe it, they were *still there!* Now that was in '69 I was there and this is '99 and they're *still there!*

KOD *So 30 years later they were still there?*

MS They're still there, the same...and this woman says, 'I remember you, you were called Eithne!' I was absol...they could talk now...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...because the laundries was gone, the whole lot was gone, like it was just like they were still there.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And I couldn't believe when the women actually remembered me! But you know the woman that was with me the...from RTÉ was completely traumatised. But seemingly that same nun was waving a piece of paper in her hand as we were coming up the alleyway you know, back to see was me mother there. And she says, 'your mother is a patient in Our Lady's Mental Hospital'. She said, 'you were the only one that was brought in here,' Keane, we'll call him Keane, that had a mother [as a] patient in Our Lady's Mental Hospital. He put 'em in there, 'he put your mother in there and you were the only one of all the people that passed through here, there was no way, your mother was gone'. And she says...I was only 10 minutes from the Magdalene Laundry to the mental hospital, so when I was in the Magdalene Laundries my

brother was in the mental hospital, my mother was only after dying there. Christy then goes in, because what happened then was I went up there and I asked – she was doing a survey, okay and whoever, because she wanted to be a producer – and whoever came up with the best story or whatever...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...they had to do a story in 40 minutes – would become a producer. But as I said she was going to be...to do with animals or whatever and now, the chances of finding Christy were very, very poor, a million to nothing...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...you know. So anyway when I went up there, Gráinne Bennett [pseudonym] told us – sorry the girl, the person that was with me, had got a phone call from the person in Newmarket that said to me there was somebody working on the Lee Road in the mental hospital because we were staying in the Imperial Hotel and...rang up the Imperial and says, 'the person is very dark and his name is Christy Smith and I have a feeling that's Mary's brother, but don't tell Mary'. And Gráinne the girl that was with me was going to come back to Dublin and not tell me that Christy was there. But I was taken from the Magdalene Laundries up to the Lee Road which is only...and as a matter of fact there was...there was about 10,000 people in that mental hospital and it's the largest building in Ireland, you should see it...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...there was bars, bars on the window and everything, horrific! And it was worse than anything you could ever see, like I always maintain and I even said it to Enda Kenny, Hitler was better, I know what Hitler done was...was wrong, was very wrong, he should never have done it. But what the Catholic Church did to us was horrific, was 10 times worse! Because as I said, Hitler had no right to do it, what he did was wrong, but we're left with the suffering whereas if they, if they felt that bad about us, about meself and me mother, they should have just, just killed the whole lot of us together; they'd be better off than be left with the *suffering*. And Christy then to come on top of it was even worse. So when I went in anyway, I asked could I see somebody. This man came down the stairs and at the same time she was taping everything, recording

everything and down...to...came down the stairs this man and he says, 'I want to see you but not her,' meaning the woman that was with me. So I went up the stairs and I says, 'was there an Eileen Smith here? And he rang up and he said 'yeah,' and he says, 'she's dead'. And he then emphasised she died in the sixties, that confirmed what Keane said, what Keane had said. And 'she was a very young girl,' he says, 'when she died,' but it makes no difference because she should never have been there in the first place, I mean what crime did she commit? I haven't a clue. Then I says, 'is there a Christy Smith here?' And he rang up again and he says, 'no'. But I says – I knew he was there you see – and he says 'yes,' he rang again and he says 'yeah'. He said, 'you're really doing your research,' he says, 'but, eight or nine years ago, he said, 'I saw it in the paper – you had it on the Echo – that you were looking for a Christy Smith and we saw it'. And I said, 'why didn't you answer it?' I said, 'he's my brother!' Now, he says 'Christy is completely different to you, he's very dark, very dark skin...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and dark hair' and he said, 'he went into himself, into the last 10 years ago [sic]' and he said, 'he was brought in by a farmer'. And I said, 'why should a *farmer* bring him in here, he had no authority to bring him in?' He said, 'that's wh...all I know, he was brought in by a farmer'. So, I was after finding out about my mother there and Christy there on the same day. Could you imagine?

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And all he said to me, 'you must have a very, very strong brain,' he said that to me. And I said, 'I know one thing for sure, what keeps me going is that I know what day it has to end, I'm not here for eternity,' and I says, 'suffering,' 'I have suffered' and all that'. So anyway, Gráinne Bennett was in bits, she was you know...oh no, what happened was he went down then for the girl that was with me and he brought her up and we were coming back to Dublin at half-twelve...half-five train, it was the last train, not like now. And he says, 'well, you have to find your...you'll have to meet your brother'. He had *more keys* than there would be if you were in a...you know, a murderer place. I don't know how he knew which key [sound of car horn beeping] was which and he brought me down a long, long corridor into a basement; it was just *horrific!* And he opened the door and Christy walked out! And, I remember Christy, he sat down and kept looking at me. And I says, 'what's your name?' He says, 'Christy Smith'. And I put me

hand on his head and – like that – and for the first time I actually felt a bond, like a bond. (*Crying*) I says, 'I'm Mary Smith, your sister'. And prior to that, the man had said, 'Christy have you any brothers and sisters?' He said, 'I don't know what a brother and sister is!' And I says, 'Christy are you happy here?' He says, 'I don't know'. And Gráinne Bennett the woman that was with me was taken away, she was hysterical crying. So I left and I says, 'Christy I'll be back to see you I promise you'. And the next thing the keys were opening up and he was just locked up again, just left there. So we came back on the train and I was writing a letter to Christy and Gráinne – the woman – came up to my place and she put it on that I had no phone because she was told to...not to tape...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...but she got the producer's job after but that's neither here nor there. So anyway I was going down to visit Christy when I met up, I met, I asked to see the shrink. And I asked, 'why are you holding my brother here?' I says, 'who are *you* to hold my brother?' And he said, '*you* could be anybody!' I had my mother's death cert, I had my brother's death cert and my birth cert and I handed them to him. And I said, 'who are *you*?' And I said, 'I want to know your name'. He said, 'why should I?' I said, 'you made the arrangements to see me now, I want to find out why are you holding my brother here'. And he said, 'get out of this hospital! Your brother was alright until you came along!' I said, 'no you're holding my brother against his wishes!' And this person wanted to go for Christy 10 years prior to that and *that's* where the snag came in, that this man was abusive towards Christy etc. So I kept going up and down, up and down and then I asked for Christy to be taken out, and I went to a social worker in Dublin and she says, 'no problem, we'll get Christy out of there'. Contacted the social worker, the person came up and she said – she was an American – and this was, this was what they were trying to say that Christy was being kept in there because he was sexually active, that anybody he passed, he was taking out his private parts.

KOD *Hmm.*

MS Yet, he was in a mixed ward, now, he was *drugged* to the eye balls, yet he was in a mixed ward, so this was this idea of keeping him there. So I said, 'you're holding him against his wishes'. So I went to – I'll fast forward - I went up and down, up and down to see Christy, now Christy, the person could not believe this was the same man I spoke, because he had a

powerful, powerful, powerful memory. He kept saying to me about the Drennans [pseudonym] he went to work for. And I says, 'Christy a farmer brought you in'. 'No' he says, 'the Guards, the Guards did, the Guards brought me in, the Guards brought...' And I said, 'no Christy' I said, 'a farmer' and I said, 'is there something wrong with you Christy that you think the, the farmer brought you'. 'It wasn't it was the Guards!' He had a *powerful* brain, it was unbelievable, he could remember everything about Upton, and what I'm, why I'm saying this, like the Magdalene Laundries, there was no communication there, there was nothing and they just drugged, drugged, drugged to the eyeballs. How and ever, I went to the Medical Council to remove the shrink for malpractice (*voice breaks*) and of course he started getting frightened of me. And because Christy was going to the toilet an awful lot. Oh sorry, one day I went down and I asked Christy to look at the clock and, 'what time is it?' And he says, 'I can't see the clock'. And I thought 'no, no'. So, the following month I went down and I says, 'Christy what time is it?' – *again*. And I said, 'excuse me' I said – I call them criminals that worked there – and I says to one of the criminals that worked in there, I said 'excuse me' says I, Ver...Veronica was her name, I said, 'you see my brother, his eyesight's nearly gone'. I said, 'would you mind getting it checked?' So they went and sent in an optician. You might say this is immaterial but it is, it's very, very much so for the simple reason, when he went to the optician he had cataracts in both eyes, very advanced. So of course I said, 'no way is my brother going to go blind'. Now there was a woman lying on the ground feeding a blind man and I says, 'how come this man is blind?' 'Oh, like your brother, he just went blind'. I said, 'this is *neglect*, people neglected here and nobody knows about this and I'm trying now to do something about it...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...in this hospital!' So I went anyway and I contacted – if you don't mind me saying – Micheál Martin, who was then the Minister for Health, being in Cork and my TD I'd like to give his name, Eoin Ryan and I told them about Christy. Fair dues to them, they contacted the hospital and Christy got the two operations done within two months. And he says, 'Mary Smith,' he says 'am I glad I found you! I'd be blind now'. Now he was able to go out to that hospital and no-one...attack nobody and stay in that hospital but through that they found out he was a diabetic. So one day I went down and Christy was going to the toilet a lot, and he'd be only up the stairs, down, going again. What happened was these narcotic drugs he was on were counteracting the diabetes, because I discovered he was diabetic.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS So this is why I get...went to the Medical Council because I kept asking for Christy to go to the hospital and they wouldn't let him go. So Christy then collapsed, but at that stage I got the Medical Council for the shrink.

KOD *Uh huh. (Coughs)*

MS So, anyway Christy then was sent out to UCH [Cork University Hospital (CUH)] when he collapsed, where he was taken off *all* drugs. It was unbelievable he could speak as clearly as me or you, he wasn't drugged up or doped up or...you know, I call them people legalised pushers. They are *legalised* pushers because they're pushing drugs into people for the sake of money and they don't give a damn who they give it to. It could be anybody as once they have you – 'no one was going to tell but, I'll make money out of you' – type of thing. So this is what they were giving to Christy but Christy was taken off *all* drugs because the shrink was afraid now I was at the Medical Council. So I went down one day and Christy was now back in the lock-up after collapsing and he was in CUH, they had no choice but to put him in then. Christy couldn't talk, so drugged *now* this time, Christy's now on death row and I mean death row. So the following couple of weeks I went down, I was told I was wanted in the office. I was told my – what you call it – were going to be supervised – my visits – I was to bring down no food and Christy was not to give any food and he was not allowed to have any food whatsoever. So when I used to see him, he used to be tearing himself to bits. The drugs were more, and more and more and the next thing he said, 'I've a pain in me stomach,' and all this and then I tried to get an ambulances, ambulance was being refused. What I'm trying to clarify here, the shrink took it out on my brother...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...for me getting the Medical Council. So this is when I started writing to a load of TDs. I went to the paper, I went to 106 [radio station] and now, and it's very strange but even Enda Kenny, it was only when this...what you call...when Christy had died that Enda Kenny at the back of you know, the Med...the HSE were saying, 'well Christy was well cared for, well looked after' and all the time he was getting thinner and thinner and he was 15 stone and he was getting thinner, every time. If I show...if I showed you the photographs, you would not believe the photographs

I showed you, you would say he had *terminal* illness, you would say he had cancer that ate him away. Now I rang up the hospital and I made an appointment in UC-CD [CUH] behind the shrink's back. I'm not giving you his name but I'll call him the shrink...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and he brought *me* down to Cork to intimidate *me* - how often was I supposed to visit Christy, not to bring food – I got a list as long as me arm. Now *I'm* in the frame because of trying to help my brother, get out of there. He's now worried because all these letters are coming in the door for him because when he met me he knew that this woman is not a fool. He knew, 'get out of here,' he could see this woman was not a f...you know...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...wasn't a no-brainer in other words. So anyway, Christy was getting more drugged and more drugged up, so I went to 106FM and when I went up to the Dáil to see John Gormley [former Green Party leader] that's when I met Enda Kenny. And it was a pity I didn't say it to Enda Kenny that day, '*I'm* the woman that's trying to help my brother' because it was only when Christy died that I saw the back of *his* letter, 'I'm dubious,' he said in his own kind of way...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...'what they're doing to Christy your brother is wrong'. He even had to call your man Ruairí Quinn [Labour Party TD] when I asked, 'is this...is that case still going on?' Like I done *everything* in my power to get Christy out of there and I was...I was actually threatened that if I called anymore ambulances, they'd put, they'd put my brother where I would *never, never* see him! This was when I called and I went down one day and his head was *split* right opened and you know, he had things...you know, there was things across his head like imitation stitches and I said, 'why's...who done that to you Christy?' He said, 'Terence belted me across the head!' And...and I said, 'why did you not get my brother into a hospital?' And they told me to mind my own business and I still have photographs of his head split opened. Also when I did eventually go into the ho...CUH to get Christy in, two doctors that fell in love with Christy...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and they could see what Christy was going through. They said, 'it's no...the only thing we can con...conclude you with is malnutrition, we can't find anything wrong with your brother'. Why is he losing that weight? It's malnutrition. And I says, 'Doctor' – I'll give you...Dr McCarthy, Dr McCarthy could be anybody, cos that was her name – and I said, 'that's exactly what's happening to Christy,' and I remember they were giving him, you know, Gaviscon? Dosing him with – what you call it – Christy would tear himself...drink water, water, water, water, tearing himself and scratching himself. And I said, 'would you mind getting that analysed Doctor McCarthy, in CUH?' She did...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...she said, 'that has to be stopped, straight away!' She didn't tell me what was in it but she said, '*stop it!*' So they put it into his food, even in CUH, this was still...then – the shrink told me that he had left his post – but he hadn't – and somebody else had taken over, then he got Christy out to the Mercy. Now in the Mercy, there's – adjacent to – there's a psychiatric hospital where you can just go through there and he had CCTs or whatever you call it?

KOD *ECT.*

MS And I'd say he was giving Christy loads of them. Now Christy actually knew, they weren't even allowed to have water in the hospital and they had someone 24/7 watching over him in the Mercy now, this was.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS So they were building him up for his death in other words. So anyway, when he went back to the lock-up, Sarsfields Court [St. Stephen's Psychiatric Hospital], I'm still going to the papers, still going everywhere to get Christy out of there. And to go through all of that seeing my brother getting thinner and thinner and thinner. And he kept saying, 'I'm dying, I'm dying, I'm doing my penance, help me I'm dying, I'm dying, I'm doing my penance'. See he thought he done something wrong and he was doing his penance. I said, 'Christy I'm not...prayers or nothing for you, there's no such thing as penance, they're just torturing you!' And he couldn't understand what was wrong with him but he had that *brain!* He actually...when he was put into this lock-up,

oh you should see it oh Katherine, it was horrific! They put him in what's called Unit Five and all the windows and doors were locked, there was one corridor with a dim light and I had to ring the bell to get in. Now the heat was tremendous, Christy was bringing up blood, vomiting up blood you know...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...from his chest and every time I went down they would give him a needle to drug him up so he wouldn't communicate with me and somebody would stand there watching me, this was in the lock-up. And then this so-called shrink was supposed to be taking over and I had her recorded, I was recording her and she says, sh...when she asked to see me I says, 'excuse me' I says, 'who do you say you are?' And she wouldn't give her name. And I said, 'I don't acq...associate with people who don't introduce themselves'. I said, 'what's your name?' And I was calling her criminal...

KOD *Hmm.*

MS ...because she never said what her name was. I said, 'excuse me, she has a mouth on her head, I'm after coming all the way down from Dublin to meet her. What is your name and what am I down here for?' And I knew she was recording me because she had a shawl over her and I was recording her, which was good, was great evidence, but anyway how and ever. I says to her – she said she had files – I said, 'what are they?' She comes along with a load of stuff, all of those drugs, narcotic drugs and she says, 'bi-polar'. I said, 'you mean to tell me Christy is bi-polar? He comes in here all windows and doors locked,' and I says, 'no sun coming in, one corridor, slippers on you and no air, and you said he suffering bi-polar?' I said, 'that happens to be a joke because I'd say if you were in here,' I said, 'you're the one that's cuckoo to put somebody in here in a lock-up, I have to ring the bell to get in, not even a...fresh air. And by the way,' I said, 'you said he's voluntary? How come you're saying he's voluntary, Christy doesn't want to be here!' So I brought her down to see Christy you see this is all on tape.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS I brought her down to see Christy, now I said, if you say Christy is voluntary – he couldn't even say his name – I says, 'what's her name Christy?' [Imitation of someone not making any sense]

– he couldn't even talk – I says, 'my brother is so drugged to the eye balls he can't even say his name!' And I says, 'Christy, this woman here is saying you're voluntary. Do you know what voluntary means, you want to be in here yourself'. 'I don't!' he says, on the top of his voice! It's all on tape. I says, 'now ask Christy does he want to be here? – Christy do you want to be here?' [imitation of someone not making any sense] He couldn't even say yes or no he was so drugged. I said, 'Christy I want an answer, yes or no. This woman here is saying you're voluntary. Now, it means you want to be here yourself'. I said, 'do you want to be here?' 'No, I want out!' 'Now,' I said, 'you're getting it from the horse's mouth! Get him out,' says I, 'before he's *dead*, he's illegally here, you're saying he's voluntary!' 'Oh I'll see what I can do!' 'No, it's not what you see you can do, do it now!' I said, I said, 'the man is dying away and you're killing him off! Get him out of here *now*!' Then, and I kept writing to TDs, kept writing to everybody and a very strange thing happened, I met Ryan Tubridy [radio presenter] on the 3rd of February, 3rd of February '07 that's when – '06 sorry '06, not '07. What were the chances of meeting Ryan Tubridy at Heuston station at 10 o'clock at the same time I was going down to see Christy And I says to Ryan Tubridy, 'you're the very man I want to see!' – And he says...I said, 'about my brother'. Who was actually with him only the producer – I won't give his name – that was the producer for Gerry Ryan who is now to this day the producer for Ryan Tubridy. He says, 'I know who you are Christy Smith's sister! And I know [inaudible] where Christy is. He says to me, 'if you want Christy out of there,' and your man says, 'we'll get him out of there!' I says, 'he's...he's nearly dead, he's skin and bone!' And what were the chances, 10 o'clock that morning and meeting Ryan Tubridy. I was meant to get him out of there. But there was this person who I *thought* was a p...a friend of mine, I actually saved his life Patrick Flannery was with me and he says, 'oh if you're going to contact the radio that'll mean you let the other person down. Who's going to help you?' And I said, 'come on,' says I, 'you'll never get a chance like this'. And he says...but I said, 'Christy is *dying*, he's almost dead, they won't even let him into a hospital and this is me chance'. But, says he, 'you're going to let the other person down'. And now all the way down on the train, I was going to get up and walk down and see Ryan Tubridy, and say 'there is my phone number' in case. And the person says, 'forget it, sit down!' I went down to see Christy and it was the last time I saw him and there was a song he sang to me and that will tell you the brain he had. 'Around the World I Searched for You' – I don't know, did you ever hear it? And it goes something like, 'I searched for you in gay Paris,' and I...I thought he was making it up! And it's supposed to be about a film, *Around the World in Eighty Days* and that song was played, and he sang it from the beginning to the end, looking at me (*begins to cry*) – [inaudible] search for Christy and he grabbed me and grabbed me and

says, 'Mary Smith I love you, I love you'. And I remember walking out that day and I says, 'Christy, it's going to be the last time I see you'. I came back...the person I was with locked their door and on the 15th of February – I w...I was ringing every day – and Christy's breathing was getting worse and worse and worse and on the 15th of February I rang up and Christy could hardly breathe and I have two witnesses, *two* witnesses to this call, *two*! And I said, 'get an ambulance for my brother, please, he cannot breathe, he's nearly dead!' And the person at the end of the phone says, 'we can't wave a magic wand' and I also want to say, a certain person came along and says, 'because you got the Medical Council for the shrink, that's why they're killing off your brother'. They were the words, 'that's why they're killing off your brother'. But I says, 'Christy didn't get the Medical Council, it was me! Why should he have to suffer?' So, anyway, on the 15th of February I called for an ambulance and the person says, 'you can't get a...can't...we can't wave a magic wand'. I says, 'call an ambulance 999!' And another person on the phone says, '*get that ambulance!* Her brother can't breathe! He's practically dead!' And they says, 'it's none of your business, you're not related!' So the next morning I got a call – I laughed, and laughed and laughed down the phone – 'your brother died last night,' and that was the 16th of February. That was the end of Christy'. Oh by the way when I was talking to Christy he said, 'there's no God, there's no God'. That's all he kept saying there was no God, that's all he kept saying, he could hardly say it but he kept saying, 'there's no God, there's no God'. And I said, 'Christy I'm trying to tell you that since I found you, because if there was a God how is he so cruel?' And that was his last words to me and he was gone the next day. And like that, when I went down and the person says to me that...got the phone, rang me and said to me, 'do you want bereavement counselling?' I laughed and laughed down the phone and to this day I can't talk to anybody how I feel, not alone my own hurt, my mother and myself and no one to help me, so that's it.

KOD *And for the time that you were in the...the [coughing in background] Magdalenes, you said you met...you saw one girl try and escape...*

MS That's correct...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...she did go over the wall yeah.

KOD *And you, you tried that time, then couldn't though?*

MS I couldn't....I...halfway up and I couldn't get down it was, it was like the drain pipe.

KOD *And...*

MS Because there was no way out.

KOD *And how...how long did you work there...in...like you'd get up...what time would you get up in the morning?*

MS There was no time, there was no clocks, [inaudible] as I said earlier...

KOD *Hmm.*

MS ...the only time I knew the time in the Magdalene Laundry was when the bell rang for the Angelus...

KOD *And cos you...*

MS ...because there was no such thing, ah don't ask me what time we got up at!

KOD *So they got you up early in the morning?*

MS Well obviously early in the morning because there was no such thing as time, you never saw the time.

KOD *And they gave you some kind of a breakfast?*

MS Yeah...

KOD *...what kind of...*

MS Well the breakfast was just porridge, maybe a cup of tea, whatever and that was it.

KOD *And then they put you to work?*

MS Yeah in the laundry yeah or the sewing room.

KOD *Or the sewing room.*

MS Or the sewing room.

KOD *Did you get a dinner in the middle of the day?*

MS Around...whatever...I guess it was around two o'clock because just...you know and there was no time...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...I'm only just guessing because you got a break for your dinner...back to the laundry but there was never, there was no like...

KOD *And what was the food like then?*

MS Oh, the food was horrific! There was like...it was the same kind of like gruel every day and what you call that – stew – mostly stews every day, you got stew, it was mostly stew every day you got and like dripping and stuff like that.

KOD *And...and for your tea?*

MS We might get toast or something or scrambled egg or whatever but that's about it.

KOD *And...*

MS ...but you never got a cup of tea after that...

KOD *...was it...*

MS ...at night time.

KOD *Did you work, how many days a week did you work?*

MS Well it was usually five days a week, six days a week. Sundays like you just sat around, you know. And another thing, Jack Lynch [former Taoiseach] came up when I was there, yes he did! Jack Lynch came up because I remember the younger girls, they used to make us sing a song all the time – a particular song – and they picked me out, one of the young girls. And all I had, the name was Jack Lynch, don't ask me who Jack Lynch was because I didn't know anything about politics. And I remember this man coming up, and he went...the laundry was closed down that day, everything was closed, table cloths were put out and everything. And I couldn't understand what was going on here and we had to sing one song to him, but it was as I said it was the younger girls and the older girls like you know, they were pushed away somewhere. And I just couldn't understand it. But all I remembered...his name was Jack Lynch. And I know someone else who was there three years prior to when I was there and Jack Lynch came up as well.

KOD *And do you remember what song you sang?*

MS No, but it was just the one song...

KOD *Hmm.*

MS ...and they'd get us to sing it when we were finished in the laundry. So after six o'clock in the evening they'd get us to sing this song because this person was coming up.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And I'd say it was about 15 to 20 of us maybe, I don't know I can't remember now. But I was up in the front row I remember.

KOD *And how many were working in the laundry when you were there? How many women were there?*

MS Oh they varied...different...there could be...20 or 40, could be different because it was such a big laundry...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...you know, they were different like.

KOD *And how many were up in the dormitories?*

MS The dormitories – they were cubicles actually – they were more like cubicles...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...like say there was four and the bed that way, as I say they were going back to back.

KOD *Back, yeah.*

MS And they'd be all the way down, cubicles, cubicles.

KOD *And how many would be up there?*

MS Ah sure all the women were there – they were all different dormitories like.

KOD *Uh huh, different floors, or different...*

MS Different floors, different floors...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...different floors. But like as I said you weren't allowed, with the light...dim light that always...remember that with the dim light that was on all night.

KOD *And did they ever beat you?*

MS Oh yeah I often got some...say, in the laundry like, if you were slow at your work, the nun would come along with a stick and *whack* you with the stick, 'get on with your work!' Or if you spoke, if you tried to talk...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...if you did try to talk she had the stick, she always had that stick in her hand and *whack*, say like something that that with a table...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and she'd whack you with the stick. If you tried to talk or didn't want to be doing your work.

KOD *And did they work alongside you?*

MS Just walked around, just like...you know, but they...you wouldn't know when they were going to...you see they, they might leave the laundry, they might come back again or, you know, they c...coul....they weren't constantly there.

KOD *And you mentioned that there was at least two good nuns, there was a nun in Mallow and then there was the nun on the farm in Clonakilty.*

MS Yeah.

KOD *Like, what made them good?*

MS Well, I think the reason why the nun in the farm was good was because she was with animals...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and I think she realised – the nun in Clonakilty – that animals wouldn't harm you.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And I got...everybody in Clonakilty strangely enough loved her because she was lovely...up at the farm, she'd be with the animals, I felt more safe with the animals. And as regards the nun in Mallow that took a liking to me – because I couldn't read or write – and I remember she used to keep me after the class and she'd let me on I was watering plants, but I wasn't, she was teaching me to read and write because I didn't know how to read and write. And I remember I didn't know what classes – this class, or third class, fourth – I remember I was much older than the other girls because they were all saying they were such an age, but I didn't know what birthdays were. But I remember I was always small for my age so I kind of fitted in the class I was in and she used to keep me back.

KOD *So she was nice because she taught you kind of quietly...*

MS ...yeah, yeah...

KOD *...without anybody seeing...*

MS Yeah...

KOD *...how to...*

MS ...because she knew I couldn't read or write and she knew that...where I came from and as a matter of fact I kept...she kept in touch with me for years!

KOD *Hmm.*

MS She was a very nice nun, you know, in Mallow. So like she was...she was a teacher and she knew I was after coming from the industrial school, but there was no education or nothing in the Magdalene Laundries, nothing whatsoever.

KOD *Because I've seen you with your t...you can text message me, so you can write now, did she teach you how to write in that year-and-a-half?*

MS Well to be quite honest with you, the year, the year-and-a-half...[inaudible] wasn't I writing to politicians as well about Christy...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...when he was being tortured to death and I had no choice. And I was in quality control, I worked in quality control, I had to write names and I was working in a laboratory. I remember, what you call it said that to me...Mr Byrne [pseudonym] saying, 'did anybody ever tell you, you were a genius?' I was only twenty-three and I said...he said, 'you must have went to college,' because he was showing me how to do things down in the laboratory and in a few minutes I was able to do them all by heart or...whatever anyway. And I was also a cook for 150 people in the Bon Secours [hospital] in Cork because I was sleeping rough and I always wanted to, psychologically I always wanted to be a nurse...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...because I was a caring person and when I was sleeping rough in Cork, I says, you know, I could try and go up there and see could I be a nurse, and they were looking for a cook. Unfortunately I left the place, and I left it because somebody else was being sacked and she was like myself, she had no one belonging to her and she was in the Queen of Angels [special education residential school] in Cork up at Montenotte and I walked out with her feeling sorry for her because she was on her own. And I'm walking the streets with her after leaving the job and I loved it there! I was a cook for 150 people who were *also* nuns by the way...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and they were nice, but they were nuns, actually there was only one nun there. And I know this is immaterial but I remember the nun saying to me she had a mother and father. And I said, 'how could you have a mother and father?' And she said, 'I'm the same as everybody else'. As a matter of fact she left the order after I left. And, I also...this might sound crazy, I always thought that nuns came out of the sky because I never saw them out of the habits and I...I didn't know where they came from and I was still in my twenties when I thought they actually flew down from the sky and were dressed like that. You know, because I never saw a baby...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...I didn't know what a baby was because being in these places you never saw a pram. We used to all go out for walks of a Sunday and if we saw a baby we all thought it was a dog, was trying to take...grab the dog out of the...little did we know it was a baby because none of us knew what babies were, there was no babies in Clonakilty!

KOD *And in the Magdalenes were there any nuns that were good, like the nun...*

MS No way! No way, no, no way! They were vicious, every one of them were vicious. Like, they were totally, utterly vicious in my opinion. None of them in the Magdalene Laundries, none of the nuns would actually show....show sympathy. As a matter of fact I'm gonna...I forgot to tell you this, the day I was leaving the Magdalene Laundries, the nun-in-charge said to me, 'you have your life in front of you'. And I remember distinctly looking back at her and I says, 'my life is over,' because the Magdalene Laundries destroyed me so much, that I knew...and then they're after taking the man, the...or the boy – at the time – that I loved away from me and then being in this place and then I had a feeling something was after...after happening to my mother. But I says, 'my life is over'. And if I have a life...I never had, any dreams I had, any hopes I had dashed...were dashed after I came out of there. You know, it destroyed me so much being in there. I can't describe it but like when I remember seeing that to that woman I'll call her, I'd like to call her, 'the woman' that was sitting at the desk and she says to me, she says, 'your life,' she said, 'you have your life in front of you now,' I said, 'it's over' because I mean, that woman that came down with me to look for my brother after being in the Magdalene Laundries and going up to what you call...Our Lady's Mental Hospital, she, seriously had to get counselling...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...after just seeing the place. And she says, 'Mary,' she says, 'I don't know how the hell that you were able to keep going'. Now that was after only *one day*, she had to get *counselling*, she couldn't go to work for a week after. She...she...she couldn't handle work and they knew in RTÉ, after hearing the...you know...the story, that she'd understand you know, from *one*...I mean you, you could actually tell somebody something but seeing it is a different story. And I could be telling you now, but if you saw this...the place...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...it was just horrific, and seeing all these women going around and no one allowed to talk, and just being in there and never to come out of there, what would that do to your brain like, you know? And little did I know, as I say, I had Christy now in front of me, I had to try and save my brother's life then after that, and then the mental hospital again.

KOD *And you...you mentioned that, that you know, there was an older woman there who was working and then went to the infirmary and within a week she was dead. Did you see any others die or did you go to any funerals?*

MS No, no, no when the women died there nobody knew what happened, they were just taken away. But I was always thinking, 'that's going to be me,' obviously I was never going to get out of there!

KOD *So there was no funeral that you went...?*

MS There was no funeral no. There was...when I went back...when I did go back there, I saw there was funer...a graveyard for the nuns...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...but not that I know about them, but at the same time there was no funerals.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS Like I remember that day when I came down after being...you know, and somebody said, 'there's such-and-such a woman,' they gave her name, I can't remember her name now, but she was an elderly lady, and she says, 'she's dead'. And nobody knew where she went...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...as according as people died nobody knew where they went to.

KOD *Did you see anybody getting beaten when you were there?*

MS As I said, the nun would come with the stick and she'd just crack, crack the legs or if you started talking she'd *bang* the table! There was really no kind of physical abuse but psychological abuse...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...which is, you know, just as worse, emotional and psychological abuse because being in there, and not being able to talk and incarcerated in a place where you didn't belong.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS What...you...what crime did I commit? What crime did *any* of us commit to be in there? And to be honest, as I said it was worse than *any, any* prison, you had no visitors, no one came to visit you, the doors never opened and like that when you were in there, you nev...you never knew you were going to come out of there.

KOD *So the other women didn't have any visitors either?*

MS No one had visitors, not that I'm aware of, not that I'm...but if they had visitors I wasn't aware of them.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And like that as I maintain, it was worse than a prison. I mean, you went to prison and you did time, your sentence is up and you do something, you get your time, you're a criminal. But we weren't criminal...criminals and yet we were in there, against our wishes, incarcerated, it was worse than *any, any* prison.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS I mean, to think that this went on in Ireland, it's hard to believe, behind closed doors and nobody knew they existed. And strangely enough, where Sundays Well was, that red building, it was every...all these buildings were always hid behind trees because nobody would ever see Sundays Well, it went up a hill and around a corner and you wouldn't even know it was there. So nobody knew we were behind them walls, we existed. And I can't understand why Jack Lynch didn't do something. I said it to Micheál Martin [current leader of same political party] and to clarify, as a matter of fact, one...somebody of your group [Justice for Magdalenes] that was there before me...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...was there about three years before I was in there, it was '69 I was there and she was there in '63 and she said Jack Lynch always came up when she was there. And I don't know what he was doing up there. *(Coughs)*

KOD *And how do you feel...I know it's very clear how you feel about the church and that you know, you've no time for it, 'there is no God'...*

MS I *can't*, I can't believe there could be a God that would let somebody suffer so much.

KOD *How do you feel about being Irish?*

MS Ashamed, ashamed of being Irish. And like it just didn't happen to just me, but it happened to my mother, she was in a Magdalene Laundry as well and to think the priest locked her up – that was abusing people! *I mean who gave them the authority, who gave...put in the law, who gave them the right to take people's mothers, lock them up, take away their children? Did they have any, any indication that we were human beings with minds and hearts and we had to live only in this world once and they took that away from us! They took everything away from me, literally everything! Jesus you'd be better off, as I said to Enda Kenny, 'got a gun and shot me!'*

KOD *Hmm.*

MS I mean they had no *right* to!

KOD *And how did you feel about Enda Kenny's apology there recently? What did you think of that?*

MS *(Sighs)* Well I admire him because I know Mr Kenny, Enda Kenny from Christy...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and I found him...and I was with him in what you call the place – the Mansion House – there in 209 [2009] and we were talking all about Christy, it was nothing to do with the Magdalene Laundries and I found him a very emotional man and he even said to me, 'Mary, how did you go through life without your mother?' I could see the tears coming down his face so I'd expect a man, that's a very, very caring man, a very sympathetic man but there was nothing he could do about what...what was done in the past. But from what he heard and saw I don't think that he could even take it. And I think when he got emotional that time it was very, very genuine and it made me feel that at least he acknowledged the suffering that we had, not as I said it can't be undone...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...but to let the people know and the world that we were human beings who were incarcerated into these places against our wishes...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...we committed no crime, none of us committed a crime! I mean my mother, what crime did she commit having me? She was being locked up for having a child!

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS Like she was pregnant on me, what crime did I commit - in case I got pregnant? What crime did any of us commit? And some women are still there to this day...

KOD *Yeah.*

MS ...institutionalised, they're institutionalised – for what crime? I mean that's why I cannot believe there's a God there, because if there was a God there – they might say 'man-made, man-made'...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...but who gave them the right to do it?

KOD *Hmm.*

MS Who gave them the right to take me from my mother, to lock me up, to lock my mother up, to lock me into these Magdalene Laundries and let me suffer, suffer so much? That pain will never go away, that suffering will never go away.

KOD *And did you go through the Redress Board in terms of trying to talk about your time in Clonakilty and Mallow? Did you go...*

MS Yeah I did, I was in, I was in front of the judge, Judge Adams for six hours!

KOD *Hmm.*

MS And like, I was like somebody being intimidated, interrogated, sorry. I was like someone interrogated – I was a criminal - but I was well able to talk to Judge Adams and strangely enough he was from Cork and he knew Keane and I actually think that he was in Clonakilty – he knew the dormitories – and when I said to him, 'we used to get up every morning to do our exercise with two pieces of wood,' 'no,' he said, 'they were called clubs'. He even knew! Imagine getting children up in the morning to get them to do their exercise out in the yard? He knew about that, he said, 'they were actually called clubs'. We used to get two big pieces of wood every morning...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...out in the cold, freezing cold to do our exercise, get us fit for work. But the Magdalene Laundries, as I said, like to me as a child, you know when you're a child like you...you don't really know any better...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...but you know what they're doing is wrong to you. But when I was in the Magdalene Laundries it was worse because now you're an adult and you know you're not going to get out of this place. You see all these women there and you know you're going to end up like them and psychologically p...damaged you for the rest of your life. And literally say that I think I went...my body went into shellshock when I went in there...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...when that, that door closed, that was...I think my life was over then because...

KOD *And how do you think it affected you for the rest of your life?*

MS That's what I said...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...I never ever...as I said being in the industrial school was bad enough as I said, you were only a child. But when you went into the Magdalene Laundries, when I was in Sundays Well, when that door closed, psychologically it affected me for the rest of my life. First of all I didn't think I was ever going to ever get out of there and yet I committed no crime. When I did get out of there, it just never went away and eventually...another thing as well, I never had any children for the simple reason I was afraid to have kids in case the children would be taken off me. And I was over-fertile. And after being raped I was attending the Coombe [women's hospital] 24, 25 years, 26 years because I was over-fertile. I was...what was wrong with me, I was passing blood in the middle of the month. And they knew straight away I was after being raped, there was a tear the top of the womb, I don't know how it happened that...that, lucky for me that...that I was passing blood in the middle of the month but I didn't know why, but lucky for me, because I had a tear at the top of the womb after being raped by Keane, which I was

attending the Coombe for years and they kept treating and treating and treating otherwise it would have turned to cancer.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS For years I was attending the Coombe and like that I was afraid to have kids because in case. I remember a fella asked me to marry him - I ran, and ran and ran and he couldn't understand it! I said, 'if I get married to him I'll have kids, me kids will be taken off me'. So psychologically it affected me in every way after being in the Magdalene Laundries and of course me mother as well.

KOD *And when did you hear the phrase Magdalene Laundries? Was it after you were in the Good She...*

MS Sorry?

KOD *You know the...the phrase 'Magdalene Laundries,' did you...when did you first hear that?*

MS I used to always call it the Good Shepherds. I never heard it called the Magdalene Laundries even though they were just laundries but I never heard of the Magdalene Laundries. I don't know what, can't...I think it was when this all started up.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS I always thought they were just the Good Shepherds that was it. But psychologically it did aff...affect my whole life and I can't say it didn't...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and to date I didn't...I never wanted to live after that because of the Magdalene Laundries. It was just...don't ask me as I said, how long I was in there because I think I got shell-shocked – you may not understand it but I think I got shell-shocked because like...just...you know. And then to meet up with that boy 10 years ago, made matters worse...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...that he never forgot me, he'd even still got my letters. And I wrote to him and...because he was working in this one laundry down in Mallow. And so I was always talking about him to somebody and they says, 'why don't you write to him?' And he was the taxi driver and he said, 'before I opened that letter I knew your writing, I knew it was you'. And I said to somebody, 'that's the one I used to court in the sixties'. 'Before I opened your letter I knew you'. And he told me when he saw me, he was at the station and he said to me, 'I'll go to my grave loving you'. And he said to somebody down in Mallow, 'When I looked into Mary's eyes, the first time I met Mary, she had sad eyes – because I knew when I met her – and I looked at her again and I could see them sad eyes'. And I says to him, 'is your wife's name called Yvonne O'Toole?' [Pseudonym] He says, 'yeah,' he says, 'how did you know?' She was after him when I was with him!

KOD *So he married the next girlfriend?*

MS No, she was after him when I was with him.

KOD *Oh, she was after him (laughs) okay at the same time, right!*

MS Because I knew it and I says, 'is your wife by any chance Yvonne O'Toole?' He says, 'yeah,' and he says, you know, and I sa...he said, 'how did you know?' I said, 'I know she was always...fancied you when I was with you,' because when I used to go down the town she used to be watching him. And he said, 'that's Yvonne O'Toole, she has her eye on me'. That's how I knew and I knew that was his wife...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...I just guessed and he said it was.

KOD *And what would be the thing that you're most proud of in your life? What do you think you've accomplished, what do you think you've succeeded at?*

MS I can't say, I don't know. Let's put it this way if I was to tell you something you wouldn't believe it – I've never been happy in my life. I don't know the meaning of happiness. I don't know, and unfortunately – I won't go down that road – but I've been helping people all my life, like you know to keep people off the streets and then I was thrown out of bed sitters [bedsits] you know, for helping people...taking people...you know. This man, I won't go into detail about it but he was...his mother, sorry his family were putting him into an old folks home, I stopped it and I was called a 'B,' off any...the whole lot, for doing something to him. I should have told them to...mind me own business. I've helped people, another ma...woman when I was up in James's [hospital], says...I says to her, 'you came to me, 3 o'clock in the morning,' she says, 'Gerard [pseudonym] is such an angel'. And I says, 'only for me you wouldn't have the child,' because I was...3 o'clock in the morning she came to me, little box-room flat I was living in and, and she says, 'I wasn't the only one that's used you, everybody used you'. And how I came to Dublin, I was working – Rose Grehan [pseudonym] was in Clonakilty and other than that I never heard of Dublin – I was working in the Bons [Bons Secours Hospital] in Cork and next thing I heard, I got a call...rings...you know, the old-fashioned phones. I says, 'Rose Grehan,' I said, 'how did you find my number?' And she says, 'I'm in Dublin'. I says, 'what's that?' I didn't know what Dublin was! And she came down to Cork and brought me up here for a holiday, two weeks holiday and I couldn't stick it – I had to get out qu...fast. I said, 'I'm not staying there, get me out of here!' For the two weeks I couldn't last, I was still working in the Bons. Of course when Julia Mahony came I left with her because she was out of the Queen of Angels, 10 o'clock that morning I was supposed to go back to work, walked out with her and I was out sleeping in the streets again. Then I was working...she was in another job and she couldn't leave there, sacked again and I walked the streets with her again. Then I was always in contact with Rose Grehan and she was with this partner and I was working then in the Country Club up in Montenotte and the next thing I was told one day I was wanted up in the office upstairs. And Anthony Armstrong [pseudonym] that she was with, had a uniform because he was working security and there I thought it was the priest. And I says, 'what are you doing down here at 10 o'clock in the morning?' 'I'm bringing you to Dublin'. I says, 'no way am I going up there!' I says, 'I'm not going up to Dublin, I don't like Dublin and I'm not going up'. 'Oh what happens if you get pregnant you'll be down here on your own'. I says, 'hold on a minute now, I'm not going up there'. She would not leave, herself and Anthony Armstrong – she had one child, expecting another – until I came to Dublin. And she said, 'we're not leaving Cork until you come!' Because she came down at five o'clock in the morning and she was...they were landing in Cork at f...at...at 10 o'clock that morning. And I says, 'Rose I'm not going up'. Eventually she says, I

says, 'what would you want me going up there for?' So with that, she brought me up. When I came up here, I was out, she was out in Sandymount in a flat, for two weeks I was out there crying me eyes out knowing I would never go back to Cork. Next thing, she left me here in Dublin and I never saw her again and I started working in the Bons...the Eye and Ear Hospital, all my jobs were kind of living in...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...because I had nowhere to go. And then I was sacked on my day off (*coughs*) in the Eye and Ear, living in, because someone never went up to...what was that the female landing someone never went up to what do you call that place...oh yeah and I told Mrs McNulty [pseudonym] that I had a family down in Cork – she was over the domestics – and this girl I know and I shouldn't be telling you this – Cora [pseudonym] – but this girl I know was working in there and she came from Kerry and because she was on her own, I brought her out to see Rose and Anthony Armstrong and with that, I'm standing outside the gate one day and is she...and me...that same woman, that girl kissing the face off Anthony Armstrong and I went out and told Rose. And Rose says, 'no way, you're trying to break up...' – she was n...she was never married sorry – 'you're trying to break up my marriage'. So what did Anthony Armstrong do? Come up and told Mrs McNulty that I was trying to break up a marriage, but he was never married! And he says that I was an orphan and then she had it in for me! She says, 'why did you tell me lies?' Mrs McNulty says. And I says, 'it doesn't make any difference, it's only a job'. And that was the last I saw of Anthony Armstrong. And Rose Grehan then, she rang me one day about four years ago looking for someone that had died, and I says to her, 'Rose,' I says, 'you should have never, never brought me up here'. She says, 'I know, I'm regretting I did now'. But she contacted me a few times looking for money, 'Anthony spends,' this carry on. That was the only time she contacted me, she'd go looking for jobs, that was it. So that's how I ended up coming to Dublin, I never wanted to be...

KOD *Hmm.*

MS ...and unfortunately I could've went into Newmarket, met me grandmother, found Christy, life could have been completely, completely different. [Glasses rattling in background] At least...it could have been the happiest but I genuinely, genuinely I loved, loved Christy (*voice breaks*). He's still, you know, don't get me wrong but, there's three people...you're going to go, 'go away'

when I say this...the third person, that showed me affection in me life. One was John Edwards, the other was my brother and believe it or not, the third person that showed me affection was Enda Kenny. He grabbed me when I went up there the other day and he says, 'Mary!' and it was *affection* that he gave me, that Enda Kenny showed me...

KOD *Hmm.*

MS ...that he cared, because Enda Kenny knows me from Christy and like I used to be writing to him so much and he was the opposition then, and he *believed* it, I wasn't telling lies about Christy and then when I met him in the - what you call that place - the Mansion House...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and I kept meeting him a few times again. And the last time I was up there two weeks ago he just gave me this...hug and he says, 'Mary I'm delighted to see you!' And it was just the affection that he gave me! [Inaudible]

KOD *No.*

MS But like my brother used to do the same, 'Mary I love you!' Every time I seen him and the only time I felt really loved was from John Edwards, *real* love...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and what you call, my brother. And he used to always say, 'Mary Smith, I love you Mary Smith!' And like, it was so heartbreaking. I mean when I used to go down all the way...I used to go down to Cork of a Sunday at nine o'clock on the train and I'd get out to Sarsfields Court and I'd get out there and I play a lot of instruments and I used to play the tin-whistle, the harmonica for him and Christy used to sing and it used to really give him a lift like, you know. And then I'd get back at...half-past-five train and get back to Dublin at half-five...half-nine, ten, sorry, half-eight or nine and that was nearly every week I used to do that...

KOD *Hmm.*

MS ...and like, to see him die like that. And I used to say to myself sometimes, 'what was I really born for?'

KOD *And is there anything else you'd like to add, just as we're wrapping up now? Anything else you want to...*

[Unidentified individuals talking in background]

MS Well as I said as regards the Magdalene Laundries, getting back to that, I reckon if I had not been in a Magdalene Laundries my life would have been completely different, it wouldn't have been as horrendous because the Magdalene Laundries – and I can['t] *emphasise* this [enough] – put the nail for me in my coffin. And I mean that from my heart because it took so much out of me after being in there and to think that you loved someone, imagine you're in love with somebody and you love somebody and they're taken away from you like or th...or they're...whatever, they're not with you or even finished with the relationship or whatever. But you felt love for the first time, felt somebody *cared* for you and shown you a bit of kindness and care but that person is taken away from you and you're put in there, never to come out of there. And I mean you broke up with somebody it's a break heart, it's heart broke, even when your mother dies or someone is gone belonging to you it's break heart, but to go in there and *never, never* to come outside that door again! You know, to me I'll *emphasise* that but life would have been much, much easier for me if I'd never, never been in the Magdalene Laundries.

KOD *And how come you...you didn't want to look up John Edwards when you did get out? You said...*

MS I forgot his address because I was after being traumatised after being raped and everything and all because when that lady said that to me...

KOD *And you also said something like, even if you'd remembered his address...*

MS I was afraid in case I'd be locked up again if I went to find him. If I...if I found him they might lock me up again.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS And then to think that he was delivering to the Magdalene Laundries and there I was inside there! Because he went up to the Mc...the McGovern, [pseudonym] well that family – I won't give their names – looking for me and they just said, 'she's not here' and they closed the door in his face because he went back looking for me. I didn't know that and then he didn't know where to find me.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS But he was actually delivering to the Magdalene Laundries because as I said, in Mallow there was a laundry that he worked in and some of the stuff used to go up to the Magdalene Laundries in Sundays Well, not *Peacock Lane* now.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS But when I was there because I used to think...there was two of them – I told him about my mother – he said, 'no it was Sundays Well I used to be in'.

KOD *Hmm. Mary, thanks very much. Thanks for being so generous and sharing it.*

MS So, what's the situation, you're not going to put down me whole life story there now? (*Laughs*)

KOD *Yep...*

MS You're not getting the whole...

KOD *...type it all out!*

MS What?

[Audio File 1 Ends]

[Begin Audio File 2 at 01:13:15]

KOD *We're going to type it all out.*

MS About Christy and all?

KOD *Yeah.*

MS Oh by the way there was, I should have said this, if you wanted to hear about this...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...but there was a, I went to the police after when Christy died.

KOD *Yeah.*

MS Do you want to hear about that?

KOD *Yeah. Let's see, I'll just do this again. [Adjusting audio equipment] Yeah.*

MS Well Christy died and I went to the police because I knew it wasn't natural, how he died, and I wanted somebody to be brought to justice. And I got all the evidence together, gave it to the police and of course the police, one guard, [policeman] fantastic guard he was, young guard, he believed in me. And even in the tape that Christy was saying, 'get me out of here,' all of that, which I still have, all the material that...trying to get my brother out of there. And s...he had no terminal illness, to go from – if you saw the photographs they were horrendous – go from 15 stone to 4 stone. But anyway to make a long story short, the guard only looked at the photographs and that was enough of evidence for them. This was in Cork, so they came up and they started an investigation. There was people that went for witnesses and then of course the DPP [Director of Public Prosecutions]. Now there was one particular detective in Cork and I'd like to say his name, but literally told me...

[Unidentified person enters the room]

UP Sorry, my apologies.

MS ...that literally told me, 'I've been on these cases before, I know there will be no one prosecuted and out will come with the inquest, the verdict will be "natural causes"'. He said, ' Mary, you're going down the wrong road,' but he wanted to do it because, 'I'd been on them cases before, they're all hush hush behind the walls'. And how and ever, went to the police, got all the material together, then went around to people who met...saw Christy, how he...how he reacted, how thin he was getting, how he was tearing himself...how...you know – what they saw they had enough of evidence. People you know – as a matter of fact – no offence there was actually a blind man...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...who I know, a lovely man and he used to sing down the phone to Christy and vice versa. And he actually behind my back, around Christmas before Christy died, Christy wasn't able to breathe and I had him as a witness even, that he c...he could see the difference in Christy. So I had all this witnesses going on. Anyway went to the DPP's office and in the space of 26 days, 26 days no one prosecuted! I had enough of files, myself that put together and no one prosecuted. So what happened was then I went to what do you call it, the Courts of Human Right myself, got the stuff together and it was accepted.

KOD *The Irish Human Rights Commission?*

MS The Court of Human Rights...

KOD *Uh huh, okay.*

MS ...the courts in Strasbourg.

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS So I said, 'I want to get justice for my brother,' and I went to the Court of Human Rights, and I...I put all the stuff together myself and – no legal representation or nothing – went over and after about four weeks it was accepted. Within six months you have...

KOD *So y...you went to Strasbourg yourself?*

Ms: Yes, yes...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...and I went to Strasbourg, put the mat...all the material together myself as I did for the police and I went to them and I couldn't believe it was accepted within a couple of weeks! So anyway, I was telling people and I think the Guards [Gardaí] knew as well, that I was going to the Court of Human Rights. Now you know with the Court of Human Rights, it's 27 countries, 28 now there is and to get a slot in there you could be waiting years. Within the space of six weeks, I met Enda Kenny, I'm not saying Enda Kenny did...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...but I did ask him, and I asked Enda Kenny I says...because I met him in the Mansion House, he says, 'I'll go to the Courts of Human Right and they'll give it top priority'. And I said, 'it's not in your remit Mr Kenny to go to the Courts'. Within s...I'm not saying he did...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...because he...like because the Guards knew as well because the pers...my partner was telling everything to the Guards. Now I don't know but I got the feeling somebody went onto the Courts of Human Rights because as I said you could be waiting a long, long time. How and ever, there was one person sitting in the Court of Human Rights – there was three judges – one was a state solicitor here in Dublin, that was sitting there on the Courts of Human Rights, what chance had I got? I was told to go to nowhere else with this case by the Courts of Human Rights! So it wasn't for the...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...you know...and up comes new evidence that Christy had a severe fractured skull, which when I got his records...

[Section of interview removed for confidentiality reasons]

MS But I did try to get justice for him after his death, I tried and tried and no...to no avail.

KOD *Well you put up a very good fight though Mary, you know.*

MS I sure did and it breaks my heart all the time...

KOD *Uh huh.*

MS ...the death he had was something else. You know, so I have to live with me own hurt, my mother's hurt and my brother's hurt... You know and yet you heard that before, voicemail...just what I'm putting up with...and all I do is try to help people, be nice to people and hurt all the time.

KOD *Uh huh. Listen thanks very much for giving us all of this.*

MS So, how long did that take? – Wow, it's quarter-to-five.

[Audio File 2 ends]

[Interview ends]