

This is Exhibit "H" to the Statement of
JOAN KATHERINE ISAACS

Dated: 23 OCTOBER 2013

JK Isaacs

22- 4 -99

Today, for me was the final chapter in a long battle that has lasted 31 years. I had long ago decided that when the trial was over that there was still one job left that I had to do before I would be at peace with myself. Being a practising Catholic it has been very difficult for me to not feel a great deal of anger at the way I was treated by the Church. Not only did they fail to protect me from someone they knew was a sexual deviant, but they abandoned me when I went to them for help. In spite of retaining my faith over the ensuing years, I have felt abandoned by a Church that espoused love and social justice for all.

In February I approached the Towards Healing Convenor and asked to enter the process. Today, April 22 was the culmination of this process for me. At 11:00 I met with Dr. Adrian Farrelly at Centacare in Fortitude Valley to tell my story and for the first time in 31 years to be heard by the Church. I had requested that my support person in this was to be my lawyer, Peter Deed. The meeting was facilitated and mediated by a female lawyer from the Law Society.

I walked in to the building to be greeted by Peter. He was the first to arrive. Soon after, Adrian Farrelly arrived, followed by Bernadette Rogers. Greetings and introductions were made but there was a noticeable tension in the air. We had been allocated a family therapy room upstairs to use so we made our way up there.

The room was relatively large so we moved four of the many chairs into a circle and sat down. Bernadette placed us in particular positions and I could then see why. I was sitting directly opposite Adrian while I had Peter on my right. I was immediately aware of being in a closed room. The door was closed and there were no windows open. I suggested that we might open the windows so that I would feel more comfortable. I explained that I had a problem being shut in - a legacy of my abuse. I then asked Dr. Farrelly what he wished to be called. He said that I could call him Father Farrelly, Dr. Farrelly or simply Adrian. I replied that I preferred not to call him Father but if he was happy with Adrian that would suit me.

I had thought that I would prefer not to go through the details of the two years I had experienced with Frank Derriman again. Adrian had the information from the trial and was familiar with the details. However, at the last minute, I decided to retell the story despite the pain. I am so pleased I did. The impact of the story being delivered by me personally had a strong emotional effect on the three others in the room.

When the story was complete, the facilitator wanted to move on to the issue of counselling and compensation. However, I was not ready to do this. I had waited a long time for this moment I wanted to hear from Adrian how he had felt while he had listened. He looked at me directly and said, "It churns my guts!" After a pause he continued "I cannot even imagine what it must have been like to live through those experiences!"

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I talked on, elaborating on how some of these experiences had affected my life. The rippling effect it had had on the lives of my parents..... my children my husband. I talked of how the path of my life had been irrevocably changed as a result of this association... of my struggle to live with the effects of the abuse and finally my struggle to face the reality of what had happened and to fully confront it for the first time. The last year in particular had been a severe test. ~~I had faced two Committal Hearings and a trial and had watched my dear~~ mother die of cancer. I impressed upon the three in the room how important it was for me to be a survivor but that it was something that did not come easy. It was something that had to be worked at every day and it would be like that for the rest of my life.

When we finished the meeting we left the building quite different people than when we had arrived. I felt a sense of relief and achievement that I had at last dealt with something so important in my life. The facilitator was clearly moved. Her hands were still shaking as we said our "goodbyes". She said that although she had done a number of these interviews this one had left her visibly shaken. Adrian said he would never be able to talk or read about the subject of abuse without seeing my face before him. I thought that was a good outcome. Abuse now has a face, a name, and conjures up specific emotions for him. It is not just a news report and I am not just another number on the list. Hopefully he will go away and use this newfound information for the good of many other sexual abuse victims. Finally, Peter's reaction quite unnerved me. When we were alone he said, "I have just finished a case like this. The settlement was considerable.. but after hearing you speak I know that you are far more damaged than the person in this case and far more damaged than you appear." This gave me quite a shock as none of the information was new to him. He was reacting to the emotion of the meeting and was clearly quite affected.

For me, I have now done what I set out to do. There are formalities to be seen to, but that is not my personal concern. It is now a job for the lawyers and they are welcome to that job. Whatever the outcome I will be content that I have challenged the system - both the legal system and the Church and that I have finally been heard. My life will still be difficult at times. The pain will go on. But I have done what I had to do. It has just taken 31 years to get there.