CLANN: IRELAND'S UNMARRIED MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN: GATHERING THE DATA

Statement of Witness 22

Reference Code:	CLANN/WIT22
Status:	Mother
Institution(s)/Agencies:	St Patrick's Mother and Baby Home, Navan Road, Dublin; St Michael's Private Nursing Home, Dún Laoghaire, Dublin; Catholic Protection and Rescue Society of Ireland; Adoption Authority
Date:	12th January 2017
Transcript:	7 pages
Records/Papers included:	Yes
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To cite this statement:

O'Rourke, M., McGettrick, C., Baker, R. and Hill, R. (2018) "Statement of Witness 22." *Clann: Ireland's Unmarried Mothers and their Children: Gathering the Data.* Dublin: Justice for Magdalenes Research, Adoption Rights Alliance, Hogan Lovells.



WITNESS STATEMENT OF [redacted]

I, [redacted] of [redacted]

[redacted] WILL SAY:

1. I make this statement for the purpose of providing evidence to the Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation established by the Irish Government pursuant to Section 3 of the Commissions of Investigations Act 2004.

2. Attached to this statement is a bundle of papers marked [redacted] References to page numbers in this statement are to page numbers in this bundle of papers.

3. I make this statement as a natural mother who gave birth to a child that was subsequently homed in St Patrick's Home, Navan Road, Dublin 7 ("St Patrick's") prior to adoption.

Family background

4. I was born on [redacted] in [redacted] I had a comfortable background. I have [redacted] My mother was a [redacted] and I had a close relationship with her. My father was a [redacted]

Treatment before, during and immediately after childbirth

5. I fell pregnant in May 1972, when I was [redacted] I had been dating the father by that point for approximately twelve months.

6. My parents learned of my pregnancy in October 1972, because I fell ill and they took me to the doctor. I was immediately withdrawn from the convent school I was attending on the pretence that I was going to study at a private college instead. However, I stayed at home until I reached full term. From the point of telling my parents until after my daughter was born, I was allowed no contact with my friends or family outside of my parents and brothers. If family came to visit, for example, I would remain upstairs. I was only permitted to take walks at night, so as to avoid running into anyone.

7. For the last two months of the pregnancy, I was confined to bed with high blood pressure. I was therefore at home when I went into labour. My mother recognised the signs and called a doctor, who drove me to what was then St Michael's Private Nursing Home, on the Crofton Road ("St Michael's"). I believe we arrived there at around midday.

8. The nuns in St Michael's suggested that they did not like taking girls such as me, an unmarried mother, but in this case they agreed to take me under their care as my parents had no problem taking care of the hospital fees.

9. I gave birth there to a baby girl on [redacted] whom I named [redacted] I see from her birth certificate that the birth was registered two weeks later with a nurse from St Michael's acting as informant, but I was not told about this at the time (page 1).

10. I do not recall very much at all about the birth, since I was not conscious. I do not know whether I passed out or was given any anaesthetic.

11. I was not consulted about the administration of any anaesthetic, or about any decisions taken during delivery. I do not recall ever having seen the doctor who delivered [redacted] However, I understand from subsequent conversations with my mother that [redacted] was delivered using forceps, and that I had an episiotomy (though I have not had any medical issues as a result of this procedure and have gone on to have [redacted] further children, all delivered naturally).

12. I understood that [redacted] suffered some damage to her head in the course of being delivered. Originally, it was suspected that she might have water on the brain, and she was placed under the care of a neurologist. However, it was subsequently established that the damage was external.

13. I suspect that this may have been the result of the use of forceps but, to date, I have been unable to obtain any medical records related to the birth. I did attend the medical records office at the hospital to request them, but was told the medical records officer had been advised by the nun in charge that these records are not available.

14. I felt that I was reasonably well-treated at St Michael's following the birth of my daughter and stayed there for only seven days, until I was well enough to go home to my family. During that time, I was looked after by a young nurse, named [redacted] I was given sufficient to eat, wore my own clothes and was generally comfortable.

15. However, I did not see [redacted] at any stage while at St Michael's. She was taken away immediately after she was born and was kept in a downstairs nursery in a separate wing. When there was nobody around, I walked the corridors of St Michael's looking for a way downstairs to see her, but was unable to find one.

16. I therefore never fed [redacted] I was given tablets to dry up my milk supply, which I took in order to avoid becoming engorged, because it was painful.

17. Three weeks after the birth, I was allowed to return to school, at 5th year level. None of my classmates appeared to have found out what had happened to me (though I subsequently confided in my closest female friend). It was as if nothing had happened.

Care of my child after birth

18. My father took responsibility for making arrangements after [redacted] birth. He made it clear that she should be adopted. This was organised by the Catholic Protection and Rescue Society of Ireland (CPRSI), to whom my mother had initially taken me in December 1972, following a referral by my doctor, [redacted]

19. I therefore do not know very much about [redacted] care from birth until her adoption.

20. It was made very clear to me at the time that neither my mother, nor [redacted] natural father (whom I subsequently married, [redacted] years later), nor I would be allowed to visit [redacted] at any stage.

21. From conversations with my father, letters I received from the social worker assigned to me by CPRSI (a lady named [redacted], and a transcript of my records she held that I received many years later, I learned the following.

21.1 Although I had always assumed that [redacted] was at St Michael's at least for as long as I stayed there, because I recall my father mentioning during this time that he had been to see her, the transcript records that [redacted] was placed into foster care with a family in [redacted] less than a week after she was born (page 15).

21.2 During this time, she was under the care of a doctor at the Richmond hospital. Seemingly at his recommendation, my social worker arranged for [redacted] be admitted to a special unit at St Patrick's in early April 1973, so as to ensure she had "*constant medical supervision*" (page 6).

21.3 The transcript also appears to record that [redacted] foster mother had not wanted her to be transferred to St Patrick's, since she thought that she could care for her adequately, and that my father visited my social worker at this point to express concern for [redacted] future (page 16).

21.4 [redacted] was baptised on [redacted] while at St Patricks (page 15).

22. I understood that the damage to [redacted] head meant that there was some uncertainty about whether she would be suitable for adoption. My mother and I secretly hoped that she would not be passed for adoption as a result of this, and that we might be able to regain custody of her. However, she was ultimately discharged by the neurologist and was sent to live with her adoptive parents in May 1973 (pages 7, 8 and 17). She was therefore only resident at St Patrick's for a very short time.

23. I asked my sister-in-law, [redacted] if she could help me to see [redacted] before she was adopted, which she did. She and my brother, [redacted] took me to meet [redacted] in [redacted] or [redacted] shortly before she was adopted. [redacted] told me that the nun with whom she had made the arrangements had been obliging and kind.

24. I don't know whether anybody else knew of our visit or whether anyone at St Patrick's knew that I was [redacted] mother.

25. I cannot recall much about that visit, except for [redacted] face. She was a thriving and bonny baby, and seemed healthy. The room in which we met was large and empty. We were not brought to that room through the building itself, so did not see anything of the conditions there, or any other children.

26. I have never known anything about the living conditions there. My brother told me that the nun had asked him if there was any way that he and [redacted] could adopt [redacted] but I don't know if this was ever something that was considered as part of the official adoption process. They did not ultimately adopt her.

Circumstances of my child's adoption

27. I recall that I used to receive letters from my social worker, [redacted] in which she gave me instructions about the adoption process (see, for example, page 9).

28. As part of the process, I was also required to speak with a priest, who was not pleasant to deal with. His role appeared to be to "investigate" my private life through intrusive and personal questioning, for which purpose [redacted] seemed to act as "witness". This questioning made me feel like a third-class citizen. I recall my mother disapproved of his style of questioning and would argue with the priest regularly. She had wanted us to care for [redacted] ourselves.

29. I found the whole matter so stressful that I later burned many of the letters I received regarding the process (though I subsequently reacquired some of them from the adoption authority). My mother's health was also affected.

30. In March 1973, I received the initial adoption papers signed by [redacted] and was instructed to sign and return them. Initially, I did not agree to [redacted] being put up for adoption (page 3). However, following some pressure, I ultimately signed the papers on 20 March 1973 (page 4).

31. The papers record that I "*willingly and freely*" gave [redacted] to the society and agreed "*never to claim her back*" (page 4). They also record that I received a statement

explaining the effects of the adoption order and I was required to sign to confirm that I had understood it (page 5). However, neither the form nor the process was ever really adequately explained to me, and I was not given any other options.

32. In August of that year, I was required to sign a further form once [redacted] had been cleared by the consultant. That form was more official and had to be sworn in front of a solicitor. It recorded that I understood the effect of the adoption order, that I would be deprived of all rights in respect of [redacted] upbringing, and that the form could be used as evidence of my consent to adoption (pages 10-11). However, again, that form was never explained to me and I felt that I had no option but to sign. No one accompanied me when I went to sign it before the solicitor.

33. Nor was I told much about what would then happen to [redacted] save that any adoptive parents would not live in Dublin and would be from a family similar to mine. I always assumed that family would be somewhere in Ireland, but this was not discussed at all.

34. I understand from the transcript that adoption order for [redacted] was finalised on 29 November 1973 (page 17).

Tracing and reunion experience

35. On 31 December 2008, I telephoned the CPRSI (which by that time had changed its name to Cúnamh) to start a search for [redacted] Then, in January 2009, I signed the National Adoption Contact Preference Register.

36. I was told by Cúnamh that it could take up to approximately two years for a social worker to be assigned to me. While waiting for this, I was told to go to Barnardos who offered counselling for young mothers who had been in my situation, which I did.

37. In the event, I was assigned a social worker, called [redacted] in October 2009, approximately nine months after signing the register (page 12).

38. During the tracing process, [redacted] told me that [redacted] adoptive parents had come to Cúnamh at [redacted] request, when she would have been 21 (i.e. in [redacted] I never knew of that approach, though I had not requested anonymity at any stage in the adoption process.

39. In July 2010, [redacted] informed me that she would be leaving Cúnamh (page 13). Before she left, I had a telephone conversation with [redacted] at which she told me that she had found [redacted] adoptive parents and had drafted a follow up letter to be sent by her replacement. She also told me that she had made progress in finding [redacted] herself, including evidence that she had left Ireland (she did not say when) and that, there being no evidence that she had returned to Ireland, she was "*99% sure*" that [redacted] was in [redacted]

40. I waited several months to hear further from Cúnamh. I understood that this delay was due to legislation regarding adoption that was then going through the Dail, meaning Cúnamh could not work on their cases for about six months.

41. When a new social worker [redacted] was eventually assigned to my case, she arranged an appointment for me to come in to meet her.

42. In the interim, I learned at my Barnardos support group that I could apply for my records from Cúnamh, and did so.

43. However, instead of my full records (which I had understood I should get), I received a transcript of what [redacted] had read on my file (pages 14 – 17). The transcript does not provide very many details, and does not contain any details of her stay at St Patrick's, though I note it records (without going into details) that my father "*expressed concerns about* [redacted] when she was sent there (page 16).

44. I would very much like to see my actual records, since some of the matters recorded in the transcript are not accurate (page 18). I don't know if this reflects inaccuracies in the records or whether the transcript is inadequate.

45. At a meeting in May 2011, [redacted] told me that the letter of contact drafted by [redacted] back in July 2010 had in fact been sent to [redacted] adoptive parents, who in turn got in touch with their daughter (though I don't know exactly when this happened). [redacted] said that they had told her that they had to phone [redacted] and read the letter to her over the phone. [redacted] said that she supported and encouraged [redacted] to respond to my request through the agency to contact her. [redacted] then phoned Cúnamh and spoke to [redacted] At that time she said she was not ready for contact with me but, [redacted] told me, they continued to correspond by email.

46. In June 2011, I asked [redacted] if [redacted] had changed her mind about contacting me and requested that they contact her again to tell her that I had in fact subsequently married her father and that she has [redacted] full siblings. I also wanted to pass on to [redacted] some information regarding my medical history, since I found out in 2008 that I have an [redacted] that can cause instant death.

47. [redacted] told me that she had to get the permission of her supervising social worker to make contact with [redacted] again to pass on these details. Eventually the supervisor agreed to her passing on this information. I understand that my social worker exchanged emails with [redacted] directly on these matters on 22 June 2011 (page 20).

48. Since I did not hear any further news regarding [redacted] I contacted [redacted] in October 2011 to see if [redacted] had had any further contact with her, but she had not. At that point, [redacted] told that Cúnamh had fulfilled its contract with me, which required them to try twice to make contact with [redacted] I therefore had no choice but to close the file and leave it up to [redacted] to contact the agency if and when she wishes (page 21). It was a particularly distressing time for me since my mother had suddenly taken ill at around the same time this was happening. I was desperate to be able to share some good news with her.

49. A short while after that, [redacted] wrote to me to invite me to write a short story about my experiences for a book project intended to raise funds for Cúnamh. Eventually, I agreed and my story (pages 22 – 25) was ultimately published in the book, *All Born Under One Blue Sky*. I even attended the book launch. However, I made no further progress towards establishing contact with Ashling.

50. I therefore tried to reignite the process through other means in October 2015.

51. I tried searching through the Adopted Peoples Register at the General Register Office. The process is a little convoluted because the records are in the adopted name of the individual. As a birth mother with little information to go on, I had first to search the register by date of birth, and found three female adoptees who share [redacted] birthday. I wrote down their details as they appeared on the register. I then had to apply to the Adoption Authority for the date of [redacted] adoption order (pages 26-27) and then, through a government website, for information on individuals whose adoption orders were

[redacted]

made on the date of [redacted] adoption order and compare the results (a match would indicate that I had found [redacted] However, the details did not match in my case. I was told by the librarian at the Register Office that it is possible that the adoption was not registered (which could be the case, for example, where a child was sent to a family outside of Ireland or where money had been exchanged, both of which I understand would have been illegal). However, without the relevant records it is impossible to know what has happened or why.

52. I then discussed my case again with the Adoption Authority. However, after an hour-long conversation with the Adoption Authority social worker, she told me that the best way to take matters forwards in the circumstances was to get back in touch with Cúnamh.

53. I did that earlier this year (page 29), but found that [redacted] had left on maternity leave (page 30), so – I was told – I would have to re-apply for a new social worker to be assigned to my case, which would again apparently take approximately two years.

54. I have found the length of time it takes to get any assistance with tracing adopted children very frustrating. It is upsetting that, even when that process finally begins, there seems to be so much resistance to providing access to any (or any complete) records. In particular, I do not understand why it should only be possible to obtain from Cúnamh a short transcript summarising my own file, rather than access to the actual documents on that file. I am sure that those documents will contain much more information than I have been given. Nor do I understand why I should not be entitled to see the medical records relating to [redacted] birth.

I believe that the contents of this statement are true.

Signed ... [redacted]

[redacted]

Date ..... 12 - 1 - 2017 .....

All redactions have been carried out by the Clann Project



EXHIBIT [redacted]

Deimhniú Breithe — Birth Certificate

Arna h-eisiúint de bhun na hAchta um Chlárú Sibhialta 2004 — Issued in pursuance of the Civil Registration Act 2004

Éire — **Ireland**

Clár Uimhir / Registration Number: **3117964**

Breith a Chláraíodh i gCeantar / Birth Registered in the district of: [redacted]

i gCeantar an Chláraitheóra Maoirseachta / in the Superintendent Registrar's District of: [redacted]

i gContae / in the County of: **Co. Dublin**

Uimh. / No.	Dáta Breithe / Date of Birth	Ainm / Name	Gnéas / Sex	Ainm, Sloinne agus Ionad Chónaithe an Athar / Name and Surname and Dwelling-Place of Father	Ainm agus Sloinne na Máthar agus a sloinne roimh phósadh di / Name and Surname and Maiden name of Mother	Céim nó Gairm Bheatha an Athar / Rank or Profession of Father	Sinú, Cáilíocht agus Ionad Chónaithe an Fhaisnéiseora / Signature, Qualification and Residence of Informant	An Dáta a Chláraíodh / When Registered	Siniú an Chláraitheora / Signature of Registrar	Ainm Baiste má tugadh é tar-éis chlárú na Breithe agus an Dáta / Baptismal Name if added after Registration of Birth and Date
	[redacted] St Michaels Nursing Home	[redacted]	Female.	✓	[redacted]	✓	[redacted]	Twenty Eight February 19 73.	[redacted] Clárathóir / Registrar	

Deimhnítear gur thiomsíodh na sonraí seo ó clárleabhar coinnithe faoi alt 13 den Acht um Chlárú Sibhialta 2004/Certified to be compiled from a register maintained under section 13 of the Civil Registration Act 2004

Eisithe ag / Issued by **Noreen Ryan, Authorised Officer** Dáta / Date Of Issue **9 April 2010**

Is cion trom é an deimhniú seo a athrú nó é a úsáid tar éis a athraithe / To alter this certificate or to use it as altered is a serious offence

INVALID

HC/EO'F

February 22nd 1973

[redacted]

Dear [redacted]

I hope you are feeling good since you went home and all is going well for you.

You will probably be going back to the doctor for a check up and if so I will be grateful if you would give him the enclosed letter. It is necessary for us to have the result of the blood test mentioned in the letter before we will be able to make any permanent arrangements and it is well for us to have these straight away so there will be no delay afterwards.

Will you give me a ring some day next week and I can arrange to see you to have a further chat with you. Meanwhile, everything is going very well.

With kind wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Secretary

tholic Protection and Rescue Society of Ireland

Registered Adoption Society

30, South Anne Street,
Dublin, 2.

I [redacted] desire that my child

..... born at .....

on ..... and baptised at .....

on ..... should be taken care of and brought up a Catholic.

I willingly and freely give my child to the care of the Catholic Protection and Rescue Society of Ireland for this purpose, ~~and I agree never to claim ..... back from the Society.~~

~~I further authorise the Society to place my child for adoption.~~

Signed [redacted] .....

Address [redacted]

Date 1.3.23.

Witness' Signature [redacted] .....

Catholic Protection and Rescue Society of Ireland

Registered Adoption Society

30, South Anne Street,
Dublin, 2.

I, [redacted] desire that my child

[redacted] born at .....

on ..... and baptised at .....

on ..... should be taken care of and brought up a Catholic.

I willingly and freely give my child to the care of the Catholic Protection and Rescue Society of Ireland for this purpose, and I agree never to claim her back from the Society.

I further authorise the Society to place my child for adoption.

Signed [redacted]

Address [redacted]

Date 22nd March 1973

Witness' Signature [redacted]

(Detach here)

To THE REGISTERED ADOPTION SOCIETY CALLED C.P.R.S.I

30 St Anne's Dublin 2

I have received from you a statement explaining the effects of an adoption order. That statement w attached to this receipt and I have myself torn it off. I understand that statement.

Name (in block letters) [redacted]

Signature [redacted]

Address [redacted]

Signature of Witness [redacted]

Address [redacted]

Occupation or Description Social Worker

DATE: 20.3.23

(307)N49855D. 10,000. 8-69. F.P.—G20.

HC/SO'F

3rd April 1973

[redacted]

Dear [redacted]

I am sorry to have to tell you that we have to postpone adoption plans for little [redacted] for another while. There still seems to be some suspicion by the doctor in the Richmond who examined [redacted] that there may be some brain damage, and further investigations have to be carried out.

When I saw you last I had just obtained a verbal report from the Richmond Hospital, but apparently the written report to the doctor who had sent the baby in for examination mentioned this suspicion. The baby was seen again at the Richmond Hospital yesterday and there is an appointment for her to be seen by another specialist on Thursday.

In order to have [redacted] under constant medical supervision we have arrange her admission to the special unit at St. Patrick's Home, Navan Road, and we will get reports from there as to her progress. I am extremely sorry to have to give you this news. When we have final definite diagnosis I will get in touch with you again.

With kind wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Secretary

HC/EO'F 27th April 1972

[redacted]

Dear [redacted]

I am very glad to be able to tell you that I have now been assured by the doctor that [redacted] is perfectly well and that we can go ahead and make arrangements for her adoption. I had spoken to the doctor last week but as she promised to send me a written certificate I decided I had better wait until I got this and I am glad to say that I now have it.

We will go ahead and make arrangements very shortly for [redacted] to be placed with adoptive parents and as soon as arrangements have been made and she has settled in her new home I will tell you. I know you will be relieved now that all is well and there is no further need for you to worry.

With kind wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Secretary

HG/EO'F May 8th 1973

[redacted]

Dear [redacted]

I am very glad to be able to tell you that we have placed little [redacted] in her new house yesterday. She looked really beautiful and her new parents were simply thrilled with her. I know you will be glad to hear that at last she is in her permanent home and you need have no further worries about her welfare.

You know that there will be a further form for you to sign, in August, so perhaps you would contact me at that time, otherwise I will drop you a line.

I hope you are keeping well and in good form.

With kind wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Secretary

HC/EO'F

17th August 1973

[redacted]

Dear [redacted]

I would be glad if you would phone me as soon as you get this letter as I want to arrange for you to come into see me to complete the form about which I told you.

You will be glad to hear that everything is going extremely well. I hope you are keeping in good form yourself.

With kind wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Secretary

Form 4A

CONSENT TO ADOPTION

(For use by mother where the identity of the applicant is not known to her)

In the matter of an application for the adoption of [redacted]

I, [redacted] (Single)

of [redacted]

aged twenty-one years and upwards (*or, if under age,* aged [redacted] years), make oath and say as follows :—

1. I am informed and believe that an application has been made under serial number A.962/73

(a) for an adoption order in respect of the child [redacted]

2. I am the mother of the child.

3. The child is not less than six months old, having been born on the [redacted] day of [redacted].

4. I am of the Roman Catholic religion, and this has been my religion since baptism in infancy.

5. I understand that the effect of an adoption order is to deprive me of all rights which I have in respect of the upbringing of the child, and to give these rights and all parental rights and duties to the adopter.

6. I hereby give my consent to the making of an adoption order in pursuance of the application referred to above.

7. I understand that this affidavit may be used as evidence that I consent to the adoption order being made.

Signature [redacted]

Sworn at [redacted] in the county of [redacted] on this 21st day of August 1973 before me [redacted] (name) and ~~I know the deponent (or~~ and I know [redacted] who certifies to me that he knows the deponent) [redacted]

Signature [redacted]

Description (b) Commissioner for Oaths.

(a) Where the identity of the applicant is not known to the consenting party the applicant should request the Board to assign a serial number to the application and this number should be inserted here.

(b) If the affidavit is being sworn in the State, it should be sworn before a Commissioner for Oaths; if it is being sworn elsewhere, it should be sworn before a Notary Public or other person duly authorised to administer oaths.

(9742). K23850.10000.6/67. W.P.W.Ltd.20.

[redacted]

[redacted]

(Detach here)

To THE REGISTERED ADOPTION SOCIETY CALLED C.P.R.S.I.

30 Sth Anne St. Dublin 2

I have received from you a statement explaining the effects of an adoption order. That statement w[redacted] attached to this receipt and I have myself torn it off. I understand that statement.

Name (in block letters) [redacted]

Signature [redacted]

Address [redacted]

Signature of Witness [redacted]

Address [redacted]

Occupation or Description Social worker

DATE : 20.3.73

(307)N49855D. 10,000. 8-69. F.P.—G20.

Cúnamh
Child Care Agency
CPRSI House
30 South Anne Street
Dublin 2
Phone: [redacted]
Fax: [redacted]
Email: info@cunamh.com
www.cunamh.com

Our Ref [redacted]

[redacted]

1st October 2009

Dear [redacted]

I hope this letter finds you well.

As a follow up to the receipt of your completed enquiry form, I am now in a position to offer you an appointment on **Tuesday ~~13th~~ 12th October at 2:30pm**. Please accept my apologies for the long delay in offering you this appointment. If this date or time does not suit feel free to contact me so that we can arrange an alternative appointment. Please be assured that I will now do my best to assist you in whatever way possible.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Social Worker

[redacted]

Chairman: John O'Connor. Chaplain: Reverend John Gilligan. Secretary: Elizabeth O'Flinn. Senior Social Worker: Julie Kerins B.Soc.Sc., C.Q.S.W., M.Soc.Sc.
CÚNAMH is the new name for C.P.R.S.I. - effective 1992. Registered Charity No. 3074

Cúnamh
Child Care Agency
CPRSI House
30 South Anne Street
Dublin 2
Phone: [redacted]
Fax: [redacted]
Email: info@cunamh.com
www.cunamh.com

Ref: [redacted]

[redacted]

7th July 2010

Dear [redacted]

I hope this letter finds you well.

As I mentioned during our recent telephone conversation, I will be leaving the agency on the [redacted] A new social worker will be coming to work in Cúnamh in the next number of weeks and he/she will be in touch with you in relation to your search for [redacted]

I will take this opportunity to extend my best wishes to you in your continued contact with the agency and I hope that the outcome of your enquiries will be successful.

If you wish to speak with me, I will be available up until Friday 16th July.

Kind regards,

[redacted]
Social Worker

Chairman: William Hennigan. Chaplain: Reverend David Tyndall. Secretary/Senior Social Worker: Julie Kerins B.Soc.Sc., C.Q.S.W., M.Soc.Sc.
Administrative Secretary: Jim Dwan.
Cúnamh was formerly known as C.P.R.S.I. Registered Charity No. 3074

Cúnamh
Child Care Agency
CPRSI House
30 South Anne Street
Dublin 2
Phone: [redacted]
Fax: [redacted]
Email: info@cunamh.com
www.cunamh.com

[redacted]

[redacted] you first called to Cúnamh (known then as the Catholic Protection and Rescue Society) on the 12th of December 1972 with your mum, you both met with Social Worker [redacted] It was noted that you were referred by [redacted] in Dun Laoghaire. It was noted that you were a *"pretty girl with long fair, quite composed and self assured"*. It was recorded that your father was aware of the pregnancy and that there was no question at all of keeping the baby. It was noted that you were quite prepared to keep the baby and that your mother would have supported you in doing so. At that time you were attending school and it was noted that you were going to continue going to school until you had your baby.

Arrangements were made for you to go to St. Michaels Hospital in Dun Laoghaire to have your baby, by [redacted] stated that, *"If they decide on adoption I will take the baby from there, I also offered temporary care for the baby incase they could take the baby home eventually"*.

You told [redacted] that the birth father is [redacted] he was 18 and a half at that time. It was also noted that you were together for over a year.

You called to the agency on the 19th of December, you spoke about how things were at home, it was noted that *"matters are going pretty well for her there. They*

Chairman: John O'Connor. Chaplain; Reverend David Tyndall. Secretary/Senior Social Worker: Julie Kerins B.Soc.Sc., C.Q.S.W., M.Soc.Sc.
Administrative Secretary: Jim Dwan.
Cúnamh was formerly known as C.P.R.S.I. Registered Charity No. 3074

are all making it as easy as possible for her although her father's reaction is one of disinterest according to [redacted] You continued to feel that your father would not change his mind about bringing your baby home.

On the [redacted] your mum phoned the agency to say you had given birth to a baby girl the previous day. [redacted] was born on the [redacted] she weighed 6lbs 12ozs at birth following a *"spontaneous vertex delivery"*. [redacted] was described as having auburn hair, blue eyes and fair skin. [redacted] had her B.C.G vaccination on the [redacted] It was noted that she had a slight lump on the left side of her head. [redacted] was later baptised on the 7th of April in St. Patrick's Mother and Baby Home on the Navan Road.

[redacted] went to foster care on the 20th of February with a family living in [redacted]

On the [redacted] foster mother phoned to say that the doctor had examined the lump on [redacted] head.

You signed the initial adoption forms on the 1st of March and the 20th of March.

You called to the agency on the 1st of March, it was noted that, "*she looked very well and seems to have quite recovered. She is still convinced that adoption is the best solution. Even if she could take the baby home straight away she does not feel she would do so because again she said the atmosphere at home was very tense and she would not like her child to be brought up the way she was*".

On the same date, [redacted] foster mother phoned to say that [redacted] had an x ray on the lump on her head, the doctor drained the fluid. [redacted] attended the Richmond Hospital for tests on a lump on her head. It was noted that this lump was to be kept under observation.

Your parents called to the agency on the 5th of March, it was noted that there was a mix up in times and both arrived at different times. They were both concerned about [redacted] when they were informed about the lump on her head. Your father also agreed to pay maintenance for [redacted] while she was in foster care.

[redacted] you called to the agency on the 20th of March, it was noted that you were *"back in school and happy"*. It was also noted that you were clear about your decision in terms of the adoption.

Your father phoned the agency on the 2nd of April and received an update on [redacted]

A letter was sent to you from the agency on the 3rd of April to say that the adoption plans would have to be postponed as doctors in the Richmond wanted to run more tests on the lump on [redacted] head. Arrangements were made for [redacted] to be admitted to the special unit in St. Patrick's Mother and Baby home on the Navan Road.

On the same date [redacted] foster mother wrote to the agency to say that she was heart broken that [redacted] was sent to St. Patrick's, she stated that she was a cross baby but not so much that she could not manage her.

A letter was sent to your father on the 3rd of April, as he had requested a bill for [redacted] maintenance. Your father was told that there was no payment required while [redacted] was in St. Patrick's. You also called to the agency on this date and were given an update.

Your father called to the agency on the 5th of April to pay the maintenance for [redacted] he expressed concerns about [redacted] future.

There were numerous telephone calls with the doctor where [redacted] suitability for adoption was discussed. On the 25th of April, [redacted] from St. Patrick's phoned to say that [redacted] was medically fit for adoption.

A letter was sent to you on the 27th of April, to let you know that [redacted] was *"perfectly well and that we can go ahead and make arrangements for her adoption"*.

[redacted] went to live with her adoptive family on the [redacted] at that time she weighed 11lbs 9ozs. A letter was sent to you on the 8th of May to let you know [redacted] was placed with her adoptive parents.

On the 28th of May, [redacted] visited [redacted] it was noted that *"Everything is going extremely well. The baby has come on tremendously and is a really beautiful child. She is now on 3 meals a day and sleeps all night long"*.

On the 17th of August the agency wrote to you to arrange for you to sign the final consent form. You called to the agency on the 21st of August, it was noted that you seemed happy and felt you were making the right decision for [redacted] You informed [redacted] that you were still in contact with [redacted]

The order for [redacted] adoption was granted on the 29th of November 1973

According to our records you had no further contact with the agency until the 31st of December 2008.

[redacted]

Social Worker

13.5.11

Date Recorded

Gmail [redacted]

transcript

3 messages

[redacted] Mon, Jun 13, 2011 at 1:08 AM

To: [redacted]

Hello [redacted]

How are you, it's a month since I saw you now. I suppose you did not get a message from [redacted]

I read through the transcript and letters you gave me afterwards. It was quite strange. Such a long time ago, I had forgotton some of the things that happened around that time. In the file it remarked that I was living at home and was attending school. In fact I had been taken out of school and did not return until March. I lived at home and was confined to the house totally, I never saw my friends and no one outside of my parents and brothers knew of my pregnancy.

I returned to school about 3 weeks after the birth. I had to approach the school by myself and ask to be admitted (in the final term of 5th year) and catch up on all the work, which I did, I was a model student. It is mentioned in the documents that my father inquired after [redacted] well being and offered to pay for her care. In fact, my father had threatened [redacted] mum with having him charged with rape and insisted that she pay half of all the costs, hostpital and doctors etc. She was a widow with no husband to support her, and at the time my father was very harsh and demanding. [redacted] had to pay it all back to his mother when he started working. Although it all sounds very endearing in the text, what was actually going on in the background was not a nice story.

It did upset me reliving it all, but well that's what happens when you go back. I am feeling better now. Was legal for a 16 year old to sign adoption papers back then? It seems like an awful big decision to make and there wasn't much on the form.

I decided to write a letter to the doctor who looked after me at the time. I just wanted him to know what happened to me and that after all this time I had searched and found [redacted] He was a very young man at the time and he was very kind and gentle with me. I know if often asked my mum about me over the years, and she and my father still go to that surgery and he is my father's doctor still. I felt really good after writing it. Like a load was lifted sharing the story.

I am knitting at the moment. My latest therapy!!

I am going to the country for 2 weeks on the 18th June and I am so looking forward to the break. I know you told [redacted] you would contact her again around the 6 week mark. I dont know what the outcome of our request for contact will be. I will check my emails and I have my mobile phone with me so you can call me if you hear anything. If it's not good news please dont contact me til the middle of first week in July, I dont want to deal with that whilst I am on holiday and I will be back at work on july 2nd.

Thank you for all the trouble you have taken to make time for me and give me all the information. I hope to come in again near the end of the summer. You are such a kind young lady. Take care [redacted]

Very sincerely

[redacted]

[redacted] Mon, Jun 13, 2011 at 9:42 AM

To: [redacted]

Morning [redacted]

Many thanks for you email. It must have been very difficult for you to read that information especially given the huge discrepancies that you have shared with me. I cannot even begin to imagine what it must have been like for you.

I will contact [redacted] again in about 2 weeks, at that point I will talk to her about what she would like to happen next, I feel it is important for you both to know where each other stands?

Enjoy your holiday [redacted] if I don't talk to you before hand I will talk to you on your return.

Take Care

[redacted]

[redacted]

Cunamh

30 South Anne Street

Dublin 2

[redacted]

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From: [redacted]
Sent: 13 June 2011 01:16
To: [redacted]
Subject: transcript

[Quoted text hidden]

Gmail [redacted]

Update

3 messages

[redacted] Tue, Jul 5, 2011 at 2:35 PM

To: [redacted]

Hi [redacted]

I hope you are well, and had a lovely holiday. I thought it best to email you, as I am aware you work during the day.

Following on from our last conversation I emailed [redacted] on the 22nd of June, she responded the same day. She stated that hearing that you married her birth father was really big news and something that she hadn't expected at all. She commented that it is strange that there is a "whole other family out there". She also said that she was relieved to hear that you were not sick. [redacted] has spoken to her parents, and she described them as being very supportive and want her to do whatever makes her happy.

[redacted] said that she is not ruling out contact but feels she needs more time. She asked why you decided to make contact when you did, I told her that you felt it important that she know about the medical information.

I assured [redacted] that there was no pressure and to take her time. I will touch base with her in a few weeks.

Please do feel free to give me a call at any time, I am here until Thursday afternoon, and I will be in leave until Monday the 25th of July.

Talk soon

Regards

[redacted]

[redacted]

Social Worker

Cunamh

30 South Anne Street

Dublin 2



Cúnamh

Child Care Agency
CPRSI House
30 South Anne Street
Dublin 2
Phone: [redacted]
Fax: [redacted]
Email: info@cunamh.com
www.cunamh.com

24th of October 2011

Dear [redacted]

As discussed during our recent conversation I am now writing to let you know that I am closing your case.

Please be assured that if [redacted] decides to come back to the agency in the future with a view to having contact with you, your case will be considered a match and will be activated as soon as possible.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Kind regards,

[redacted]

Social Worker

Chairman: William Hennigan. Chaplain; Reverend David Tyndall. Secretary/Senior Social Worker: Julie Kerins B.Soc.Sc., C.Q.S.W., M.Soc.Sc.
Administrative Secretary: Jim Dwan.
Cúnamh was formerly known as C.P.R.S.I. Registered Charity No. 3074

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From: [redacted]
Sent: 08 February 2012 13:01
To: [redacted]
Subject: sent as an email, i haven't got word on my computer

My story begins in 1971. I was a [redacted] year old teenager full of fun, giggly and silly: Jackie Magazine provided me and my friends with fashion and make up advice, topics of conversation, personal advice and pin-up posters of our favourite pop stars. I had girl friends and I went out with boys. Having a boyfriend is the culmination of joy for every teenage girl although,in my mind, I knew I was going to marry David Cassidy the pop singer. Then,that summer I met a special boy. I was madly in love with him. My new boyfriend was [redacted] years older than me: a tall, elegant, pretty boy, he became my friend, my passion, my world. I transferred all my emotional fervour to him. We walked, talked, danced and played the days away. I thought this wonderful existance would last forever.

We were together a year. I was growing up fast but at [redacted] years is a lot of catching up to do. Soon,without knowing it I was in over my head and I was pregnant. It was [redacted] By October I was not well and my parents took me to a doctor and the news was out. My [redacted] birthday was in [redacted] It was a lonely, empty one. It should have been a sweet time.

I left school (a Convent), in October, under the pretense that I was going to study in a private college. That sorted that out. My father was furious. My boyfriend's mum was a widow. There were family meetings. There were ugly scenes. I was the apple of my parents eye. An only daughter among sons. One was outraged. - he was the wild one! The eldest, who was married, was sympathetic and tried to calm the situation. Only one was younger than I. We were very close. I thank God for that. It was hard to tell him and explain what had happened. It meant he had to grow up too but he was to keep me sane the next few months. He was [redacted] with my boyfriend, who by now was doing his [redacted] My brother kept a line of information open between us, delivering letters and notes.

My parents did not know this. They confined me to the house. No one was to know. If family came to visit I was banished upstairs. I could only go out for a walk at night time so no one would meet me. My mum didn't know what to think. My father blamed her. She let me go out with boys. He was scathing about her part in the whole afair. Bad feeling grew like a dark cloud over our home. I know mum had plans to keep her first grandchild, (I noticed that she was putting away baby clothes), but she was afraid of my dad. He was very upset. I was clever and he had high hopes for me. It was to be a miserable Christmas, the sadest I can remember. I felt so alone, sitting with the Christmas tree whilst everyone went

to parties and I left me on my own. Then I would catch a few moments and I talked to my boyfriend on the phone. I tried not to give in to tears, I did not want my baby to experience unhappiness before she was born. There would be time for tears later.

Some nights I met HIM quitely on my walk. I was afraid to use his name now. It was cold. We just stared at the stars and just held each other not really knowing what to do or what would happen to us. I remember those nights so well. I did'nt want to go home. I even contemplated killing myself. My father had threatened to accuse him of rape, as I was under the age of consent when I fell pregnant. It was too horrible to think about. His future would be ruined. He was a good guy. We were only guilty of loving each other.

I was a small girl, there wasn't much of a "bump". My romatic nature keep me going. In my isolation I played my music, painted, wrote poetry and dreamed of being a mum. And I kept my studies going too. Oh, I had no doubt that my mum would keep my child and we would all live happily ever after. I thought we were part of the new age. Wrong again.

The visits to the social worker at The Irish Catholic Rescue & Protection Society started.

An old,forboding building with endless climbing stairs and dark rooms. My mum came with me for all the visits but I only remember one, the interview with the priest. I didn't like the questions about my personal life. I don't remember my mum being there, but she was, always. I don't even remember the social worker at all. I knew they were going to take my baby. I didn't want to be there: I did not want to be a part of this. I was not married and my parents were becoming ashamed of me I thought. Looking back now [redacted] years, they were protecting me from a backward Nation, stigma and conventionality. They did not want me exposed or hurt. Wrong again. This hurt never goes away.

My daughter was born on [redacted] I told you I was a romantic. My doctor had to bring me to the hospital as my father was away on business. I remember little of the birth. I never saw my child. She was taken away. The next morning I looked out the window, snow had fallen, it was a winter wonderland. My father came in smiling and told me I hada little girl. I felt sad for us. He loved little girls. His attitude had changed but his mind was made up. My mum never saw her grand daughter. I don't know if that was my father's doing. But my mum was never the same again. She got depressed and ill. It took years for her to get through it. I carried a lot of guilt after that. The "secret" had become too much for mum and me.

I gave my baby a [redacted] name. A name that would have a meaning, a name we would never forget. We never have.

I went back to school 3 weeks after the birth. It was like it had never happened. No one noticed. No one knew. One of my friends little sister was pregnant. The nuns were doing

everything they could to help her through school as she was keeping her baby! I was happy for her. In [redacted] I graduated from secondary education with honours.

The doctors thought there might be a problem with my daughter's health. She went into foster care until given a clean bill of health. I prayed she would not pass so we could take her home. She did pass and she was taken into the adoption system at 3 months old and given to her new parents.

My brother arranged for me to meet her in St. Patrick's for a few minutes or an hour. I don't remember. But I am grateful that he did. I have at least the memory and pleasure of holding my lovely little girl for that one time. She was beautifull. I felt blessed.

I signed the final adoption papers in [redacted] I made the journey alone to the solicitors. No one knew I was going. And no one asked. I was [redacted] A big decision for one so young. So final. I did not want my child's new parents to be worried that I would come looking for her in a few years. I wanted her to have the best start in life. The best family. Security. Happiness.

[redacted] Wed, Feb 8, 2012 at 2:27 PM

To: [redacted]

Hi [redacted]

Thanks for that. What a powerful piece thank you so much for sharing your story.

I hope you are keeping well?

Take Care

[redacted]

[redacted]

Cunamh

30 South Anne Street

Dublin 2

00353(0)16779664

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From: [redacted]
Sent: 08 February 2012 13:01
To: [redacted]
Subject: sent as an email, i haven't got word on my computer

[Quoted text hidden]

Údarás Uchtála na hÉireann
Teach Shíol Bhroin,
Bóthar Shíol Bhroin,
Droichead na Dothra,
Baile Átha Cliath 4.

Fón: [redacted]
Faics: [redacted]
www.aai.gov.ie

Adoption Authority of Ireland
Shelbourne House,
Shelbourne Road,
Ballsbridge,
Dublin 4.

Tel: [redacted]
Fax: [redacted]
www.aai.gov.ie

Private and Confidential

[redacted]

7 October 2015

Dear [redacted]

I refer to your letter dated 4 October 2015, requesting the agency and date of the adoption order in respect of your daughter. Before we can process your request, we will require some form of identification such as a photocopy of your passport, driver licence or public services card for example. You can send it to

Adoption Authority of Ireland
Information and Tracing Unit
Shelbourne House
Sheibourne Road
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4.

Alternatively, you can email a scanned copy of your identification to me at [redacted]

If you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact me at the number below.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]
Information and Tracing Unit
Tel: 01-2309 327

Údarás Uchtála na hÉireann
Teach Shíol Bhroin,
Bóthar Shíol Bhroin,
Droichead na Dothra,
Baile Átha Cliath 4.

Fón: [redacted]
Faics: [redacted]
www.aai.gov.ie

Adoption Authority of Ireland
Shelbourne House,
Shelbourne Road,
Ballsbridge,
Dublin 4.

Tel: [redacted]
Fax: [redacted]
www.aai.gov.ie

Private and Confidential

[redacted]

13 October 2015

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for the photocopy of your identification.

I can confirm that the date of the adoption order was made on [redacted]
According to our records, the agency that dealt with your daughter's adoption was the Catholic Protection and Rescue Society of Ireland, now Cúnamh. Their contact details are below

Cúnamh
Child Care Agency
CPRSI House
30 South Anne Street
Dublin 2.

Tel: [redacted]
Email: info@cunamh.com
Website: www.cunamh.com

I hope this is of some assistance to you. If you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact me at the number below.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]
Information and Tracing Unit
Tel: 01-2309 327

Údarás Uchtála na hÉireann
Teach Shíol Bhroin,
Bóthar Shíol Bhroin,
Droichead na Dothra,
Baile Átha Cliath 4.

Fón: [redacted]
Faics:
www.aai.gov.ie

Adoption Authority of Ireland
Shelbourne House,
Shelbourne Road,
Ballsbridge,
Dublin 4.

Tel: [redacted]
Fax:
www.aai.gov.ie

Private and Confidential

[redacted]

20 October 2015

Dear [redacted]

Please find enclosed a copy of the consent to adoption (Form 4A) and the form you signed for the CPRSI (now Cúnamh).

If you have any other questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact me at the number below.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Information and Tracing Unit
Tel: 01-2309 327

Gmail [redacted]

Long time

1 message

[redacted] Thu, Feb 4, 2016 at 1:36 AM

To: [redacted]

Hello [redacted]

I don't know for sure if you are still in Cunamh but I have a feeling you are?

If so, please email me, I have one or two questions, it's been a long time but I hope you are well, last time I saw you was at the book launch which was quite an evening,

Kind regards

[redacted]

On 8 Feb 2012, at 14:27, [redacted] wrote:

Hi [redacted]

Thanks for that. What a powerful piece thank you so much for sharing your story.

I hope you are keeping well?

Take Care

[redacted]

[redacted]

Social Worker

Cunamh

30 South Anne Street

Dublin 2

00353(0)16779664

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Gmail [redacted]

Re: [redacted]

3 messages

[redacted] Fri, Feb 19, 2016 at 2:32 PM

To: "info@cunamh.com" <info@cunamh.com>

Hi
I tried to get in touch with my social worker [redacted] but I received a return email saying she is on maternity leave at the moment

The phone line was busy today

Could someone contact me regarding an appointment to discuss my case ?

Many thanks

[redacted]

Info <Info@cunamh.com> Mon, Feb 22, 2016 at 9:43 AM

To: [redacted]

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your email. I will pass your request on to the relevant social worker.

I am sorry you could not get through by phone, our phone lines go to answer service in the afternoon this is due to staff shortage. Our offices our only open now in the morning also, all appointments in the afternoon are by appointment only.

A social worker will get back to you as soon as possible.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]
Secretary

'All Born Under The One Blue Sky Irish people share their adoption stories' was launched in 2013 to mark Cúnamh's centenary. Cúnamh was established in 1913. Our book is a compilation of stories, poems and illustrations by adopted persons, birth parents, adoptive parents and others, all of whom have a connection to Cúnamh. The book is available directly from Cúnamh (€12 excluding postage) or can be ordered through our website www.cunamh.com

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[Quoted text hidden]

[redacted] Mon, Feb 22, 2016 at 1:05 PM

To: Info <Info@cunamh.com>

Thank you [redacted]

Much appreciated

[redacted]

Sent from my iPhone

[Quoted text hidden]