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

Statement of Witness 31

Reference Code:	CLANN/WIT31
Status:	Adopted Person
Institution(s)/Agencies:	St. Rita's Nursing Home, Dublin
Date:	19th February 2017
Transcript:	3 pages
Records/Papers included:	No
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WITNESS STATEMENT OF [redacted]

I, [redacted] of [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 documents marked [redacted] References to page numbers in square brackets in this statement are to pages in [redacted]

3. I make this statement as an adopted person.

Circumstances of my Birth and Early Life

4. My parents were [redacted] but in the late 1950s my father worked for [redacted] as a [redacted] manager and was based in [redacted] some [redacted] of Dublin. My mother was unable to have children following an earlier illness and I was raised as an only child.

5. According to my birth certificate [page 1] and my baptismal certificate [page 2], I was born at St Rita's Nursing Home, 68 Sandford Road, Ranelagh on [redacted] 1962 and was baptised at the Church of Sacred Heart, Donnybrook on 8 March 1962.

6. I was told that my parents and I moved back to [redacted] in 1965 because my parents were concerned about the Irish Troubles. However, given the timing of that move, it is possible that it was because of the high profile court case of [redacted] in 1965 (see paragraph 8 below). I had a fortunate childhood and both of my parents were very loving.

7. My parents died when I was [redacted] without telling me that I was adopted. I learned about my adoption when I was [redacted] from a member of my extended family who assumed that I knew. I have been unable to ascertain many facts about the circumstances of my adoption because my parents did not keep any records with their personal effects and my relations knew little about the process.

Circumstances of adoption

8. I know very little about the circumstances of my adoption, however my parents are listed on my birth certificate as my birth parents. [redacted] is named on my birth certificate as the informant and is also named on my baptismal certificate as the sponsor. I now know that registering adoptive parents as birth parents on birth certificates in Ireland is illegal and I have learned that [redacted] was prosecuted for falsifying birth certificates in 1965.

9. I think the fact that my adoption was illegal may explain why my parents travelled from [redacted] to Dublin to adopt me. I think that my father would not have wanted me to have had the stigma of being adopted, which is why he didn't tell me and why he thought that an illegal adoption would have been for the best. I suspect that my parents did their homework and I feel sure that my father paid money to [redacted] for my adoption.

Information and tracing

10. After I was told that I was adopted, it took a few years for me to come to terms with it. My former husband's job was based in Ireland and I took the opportunity to visit St Rita's Nursing Home in the mid-1990s. By chance, I was able to gain access to the house, although by that time it was in a state of disrepair and vacant. There was some evidence of its previous life as a nursing home, which I found unsettling.

11. I tried during my visit to contact anybody who might know anything reliable about the circumstances of my birth or my adoption. I found a telephone number for [redacted] son, but he hung up when I tried to talk to him. I also tried to talk to the monsignor of Sacred Heart, Donnybrook. I spoke to his housekeeper, but she didn't want me to talk to the monsignor and couldn't tell me much at all. I did, however, speak to a priest at the Sacred Heart who showed me the records of my baptism. I couldn't help but notice that [redacted] name was mentioned alongside numerous pages of baptism entries. Interestingly, my first communion which I undertook in [redacted] was also recorded in this book.

12. As I didn't have a single piece of reliable information about my birth or adoption and no leads to follow, I gave up on my search.

13. I made an application for entry on the National Adoption Contact Preference Register, but nobody has ever contacted me through the Register. As all I have is my date and place of birth, there is not much information to go on. I am not even sure whether my date of birth is correct as I understand that [redacted] would often delay registering births by a day or so.

14. I have come to the conclusion that my real mother is probably deceased by now. I would like to think that if she were living she would want to make contact with me.

Access to Information

15. I understand that it is very difficult for people who are adopted through legitimate means to get hold of accurate and detailed information about their birth parents. However, for illegal adoptions, it is almost impossible.

16. My doctor recently asked me for my family medical history, which I obviously don't know. I was struck by the fact that I have no idea what could be lurking around the corner for me from a medical point of view and this is causing me anxiety, not only for me but for my own daughter.

17. I feel that the authorities are biding their time and playing a long game. Sooner or later everybody concerned with these adoptions will be deceased and that will be the end of it.

18. Although I have no hope that my birth mother can be located, I do want my voice to be heard and my story to be told. Since I found out I was adopted I feel like I have been living in limbo and I have become distant from my parents' family. I would hate to think that none of this matters and I hope that my experiences can be put to good use for the future.

I believe that the contents of this statement are true.

Signed [redacted]

Date 19/2/2017

[redacted]