

56. In November of 1988 I learned that I was being investigated by a Keene Police officer, Detective James McLaughlin, who specializes in sexual abuse investigations. I learned this when I received a telephone call from a young man who was a patient at the drug abuse agency where I worked. He told me that McLaughlin approached him with questions about whether I had ever attempted to engage him in sexual behaviors. I then contacted Detective McLaughlin to ascertain what this was about. He invited me to the Keene Police station for an interview on November 14, 1988. Keene has a population of about 22,000 with a police force of approximately 25 so McLaughlin is its only sex crimes investigator. I met with McLaughlin for two hours in an interview which he tape recorded. During this time McLaughlin informed me that he had a complaint about me from a teenage male in the Keene area whom he would not name. He said that I had offered this boy money in exchange for sex. McLaughlin also made several references to Father Scruton's lengthy history and said that he had information which led him to believe that Scruton and I were accomplices in the sexual abuse of several Keene area youths. McLaughlin would not name any of these youths, nor would he divulge his source for this information.

57. After an hour of denying the allegations, McLaughlin then named the complainant as being [REDACTED], a fourteen year old Keene youth. I knew [REDACTED] in that a year earlier he came to the alcohol and drug facility in which I worked and claimed that he had been sexually molested by his employer in a Keene Summer job corp's program. At that time I referred his complaint to police who investigated it. [REDACTED] periodically visited me at the agency. On one occasion, weeks before my November interview with Detective McLaughlin, [REDACTED] showed up at my Keene apartment asking to speak with me. It was an odd conversation in that [REDACTED] was very anxious and asked me for a loan of \$75 claiming that he had to raise it immediately and could not tell me why. I told [REDACTED] that I would not give him money without knowing why he needed it. He then made the comment, "I will do anything for it...I mean ANYTHING!" I then asked him what he meant by "anything". He replied something to the effect of "Anything means anything...well, anything but sex . . well maybe even that but I would only do it with someone I knew." He then spoke of having a friend "who goes both ways", and said he was curious about what this was like. I ended the conversation by telling [REDACTED] that I would not give him the money, and he left. Days later he showed up again asking me if I had thought about our previous

conversation. I told [REDACTED] to stop asking the question because I was not sure what my answer would be. At this point I asked him to leave.

58. At my November 14, 1988 interview, Detective McLaughlin said that [REDACTED] had come forward with an allegation that I attempted to solicit him with an offer of money in exchange for sex. I continued to deny this, and told McLaughlin the truth, as I have described it above, over the course of the two hour interview which was tape recorded. At one point during this interview McLaughlin turned off his tape recorder. He then informed me that he intended to bring felony charges against me in Superior Court for attempted aggravated felonious sexual assault. He said that no matter what my defense was no one would believe me because of my prior "association" with Father Scruton who he referred to as a "known sex offender", and because of the fact that I had previously been accused by [REDACTED] even though that case did not go anywhere. McLaughlin then offered me a deal: If I plead guilty to a single misdemeanor count of endangering a minor he will guarantee me a year probation and will keep the case out of the media. I then told him that I wanted to talk with an attorney. McLaughlin responded that if I did there would be no deal. He said that even if I was not convicted of the charges I would be destroyed in the press. He also brought up the fact that he was investigating the son of a family I was very close to for a three year old burglary charge. The son was sixteen years of age and I had helped him through a long recovery process. McLaughlin insinuated that this would destroy this young man, "but I have a feeling this can just go away if you cooperate here". I then agreed to the guilty plea to the misdemeanor with McLaughlin's conditions that I not consult with legal counsel, and that the case will be kept out of the media. Needless to say, McLaughlin personally invited the local newspaper to be present at the plea hearing and sentencing. I entered the plea on November 17, 1988 and resigned my position as director of the alcohol and drug facility.

59. Prior to the misdemeanor charge and hearing I contacted Msgr. Christian at the Diocese of Manchester and explained what was happening. I told Msgr. Christian that Detective McLaughlin was the same police detective who had been investigating Father Scruton in 1987, and that I felt that this charge was somehow related to that. I explained to Msgr. Christian what I was actually accused of, and what had actually taken place. Msgr. Christian then informed me that it was the policy of the Diocese that I be suspended, and that I am entirely on my own from this point forward. He said that

the diocese could not assist me with obtaining legal counsel. He also said that, mysteriously, he had received a telephone call from the mother of [REDACTED] even before I was aware that I was being investigated. [REDACTED] had alluded to Msgr. Christian that Detective McLaughlin was going to charge me with attempting to solicit her son, and that a lawsuit could be avoided with a settlement. [REDACTED] was, at the time, an employee of the Keene Police Department. I asked Msgr. Christian if the attorney for the Diocese could at least recommend a local attorney with whom I could consult, but Msgr. Christian merely responded that it is not the policy to help any accused priest who is dealing with a legal situation.

60. Since the initiation of my leave of absence from ministry, however, I had periodically seen a therapist, Dr. Henry Guertin-Ouellette, Ph.D. (now retired) who was then employed by the Diocese as the director of Consultation Services for Clergy and Religious. I was clear with Dr. Guertin-Ouellette about everything that had transpired during and after my assignment with Father Scruton. Dr. Guertin-Ouellette was also the therapist that Father Scruton had seen during and following several incidents in the Keene rectory, however it became clear that Father Scruton had not told him everything.

61. Dr. Guertin-Ouellette had asked for my permission to use my name and the account I gave him to confront Father Scruton, and I gave that permission. Following the misdemeanor charge against me, and my telephone discussion with Msgr. Christian, I met with Dr. Guertin-Ouellette. He was quite concerned about the stance of the diocese, and about the fact that I would agree to enter into a guilty plea without ever consulting with legal counsel - especially so when the circumstances surrounding whether or not I was actually guilty of what I was accused were sketchy at best. I tried to explain that I just did not have the emotional resources at the time to fight the case. Dr. Guertin-Ouellette recommended to me that I undergo a residential evaluation. When I explained that I was on probation and a condition of the probation was that I not leave the State, Dr. Guertin-Ouellette said that he would talk with the Keene probation Department and make the recommendation. I had still been living in my apartment in Keene, but was no longer employed and was not receiving any salary from the Diocese. Dr. Guertin-Ouellette assured me that, on his recommendation, the Diocese would pay for any evaluation or treatment I received. I again requested to be

placed on sick leave with the Diocese instead of a leave of absence so that I could receive a sick-leave salary, but this was again refused.

62. Dr. Guertin-Ouellette arranged for me to be evaluated by the House of Affirmation, a residential facility for priests and religious in Whitinsville, MA. At the end of November, 1988, I went to the House of Affirmation and commenced a four-day psychological evaluation. It became clear shortly after my arrival that Detective McLaughlin in Keene had already talked with the evaluators. They were harsh, and repeatedly accused me of a number of vague and ill defined accusations involving unnamed accusers. Oddly, they did not at all seem interested in talking about the accusation for which I had just plead guilty. One of the assessors, Father George Brennan, D.Min., expressed his bias to me that he had never met an accused priest who was not also guilty of the accusations. He also added that in every case he has encountered the accused priest is guilty of much more than what the authorities already know. For the next four days Father Brennan tried to get me to admit to being "Father Scruton's co-defendant", and accused me of receiving child pornography from Father Scruton and hiding it for him. I thought that, perhaps, he was referring to the night that Father Scruton had asked me to dispose of his pornography, and so I related this account. Father Brennan was not interested, and seemed to have prior information from someone that I was somehow involved with Father Scruton's sexual exploits. He also accused me of "sharing victims" with Father Scruton. (And, in fact, Detective McLaughlin later made this identical accusation). Finally, and mysteriously to me at the time, Father Brennan repeatedly interrogated me about having been a priest in Florida before coming to New Hampshire, and about a claim that I was involved in a heinous crime there. (This latter accusation was a complete bewilderment to me at the time, but as described further on I eventually became aware of its source).

63. I completed the evaluation at the House of Affirmation in four days, and then returned to my apartment in Keene. I was very concerned that I had no income, and no way to continue to pay my rent. My utilities and phone service were discontinued after a week, so I remained in the apartment with no contact outside of there.

64. The week I remained at the apartment in Keene following the evaluation at the House of Affirmation was a very confusing week. When I returned from the House of Affirmation I had to meet with Keene Probation Department officials, specifically a Mr..

Sherwood Vacchs who was in charge of the Keene probation office. (I later learned that Mr. Vacchs is the brother of Andrew Vacchs, a notorious New York attorney who has written several books advocating the death penalty for convicted child abusers). Mr. Vacchs seemed to bear a very personal hostility toward me. On the day that I returned from the House of Affirmation Mr. Vacchs confronted me with his impression that I was in deep denial, and had denied everything to the evaluation interviewer at the House of Affirmation. He told me that he was placing me on the highest level of supervision and that I was an extremely dangerous man. When I asked what, specifically, he meant by this he became incensed and said "Florida, among other things." Some allegation that I had been a priest in Florida repeatedly surfaced in both my interviews at the House of Affirmation, and my interaction with Mr. Vacchs, the probation officer, but this was a total mystery to me. Mr. Vacchs also came to my apartment the same night I returned there and spent hours searching it. Finally, he, too, accused me of "trafficking in child pornography with Father Scruton" and of being a co-defendant in his crimes. Mr. Vacchs seemed very disturbed that he found nothing after spending hours searching my apartment and car.

65. The day after the search of my apartment, Mr. Vacchs did something which I found to be very strange. He seemed to be largely operating for the sole purpose of getting my case into the newspaper. I am not certain of whether he expected that this would generate other accusations, or whether it was for the sole purpose of embarrassing the Church and Diocese, but both Mr. Vacchs and Detective McLaughlin seemed to manipulate the media substantially. Whenever, for example, I was scheduled to visit the Keene probation office the local reporters seemed to always be aware of it ahead of time, and would be there to question me on my way out. One of the reporters also asked me about being a priest in Florida, but no one would tell me what this was all about.

66. On the day after my apartment was searched, Mr. Vacchs ordered me to report to the local hospital emergency room, state that I am going to commit suicide, and ask to be admitted to the psychiatric ward. I was aware, having been director of a chemical dependency program, that state law would then require the hospital to admit me for observation. "Suicidal Priest Hospitalized" would have made a great local newspaper headline. Mr. Vacchs was not aware that the Chief of Psychiatry at the hospital, Dr. Joel Garner, was also an acquaintance whom I had met on several occasions. When I

arrived at the hospital I went to the lobby instead of to the emergency room, and from a pay phone there I called Dr. Garner and told him what I had just been instructed to do. He was quite angry, and said that he had just received a call from a reporter asking whether I had been admitted. Dr. Garner angrily said that he was well aware of what Mr. Vacchs was attempting to do, and that he "refuses to play this ridiculous game". He said that he was going to file a complaint against Mr. Vacchs and asked me to return to the probation office. I asked Dr. Garner what I should tell them, and he only said that he would take care of it.

67. When I returned to the probation office I was surprised to learn that Mr. Vacchs was no longer my probation officer, and I was told to report the next day to Ms. Karen Grovier, another probation officer. Ms. Grovier was equally hostile, but not for the same reasons. She accused me of "using my contacts to circumvent and manipulate the system." I asked her what she meant by this, and she referred to the incident the previous day at the hospital. Ms. Grovier also told me that she had prior dealing with a priest, and that Diocesan officials pulled strings and sheltered him from the system. I asked her if she was referring to Father Scruton, but she refused to acknowledge this.

68. At my next appointment with Dr. Guertin-Ouellette, he expressed that he was unhappy with the House of Affirmation evaluation, and he asked me to repeat it at another facility, the St. Luke Institute in Suitland, Maryland. I requested that I also be able to plan to remain there for a program. (A few months later the House of Affirmation was closed, and its records have since been destroyed).

69. The next evening I received a surprise visit at my apartment from Father Maurice Rochefort, a friend who was pastor of a parish in Exeter about 100 miles away from Keene. He could not have called first since I did not have a telephone. Father Rochefort said that he would like for me to come with him to his rectory in Exeter and remain there until my situation was straightened out. I told Father Rochefort that I very much appreciated this since I had no income and no place to go, but that I felt that the Keene probation officials were playing some sort of game and would not permit this move. Oddly, Mr. Vacchs, Ms. Grovier, and another unidentified man showed up at my apartment that same evening. Vacchs was the only one who spoke, but his demeanor and tone were entirely different from any past contact I had with him. I told him about Father Rochefort's offer, and Vacchs then told me, rather politely, that I was free to go