

INTERVIEW OF FR GORDON MACRAE – August 2011

Interviewer: Fr Kenneth Gumbert OP



PART 1

Fr Gordon: I am a little shocked that you were permitted to ...

Interviewer: But Jeff just told me “oh, we let people in all the time and this is standard.”

Fr Gordon: I think that they changed their policy over the years. In '98 Fox News was trying to come in and interview me. They had heard that I had taken pre-trial polygraphs and passed them but then the accusers refused polygraphs of course on the advice of their lawyers, and so Fox had this scheme – they wanted me to take a live polygraph with their FBI expert and I agreed to it, but the prison wouldn't permit it – but that was '98 and I think since then there's been a little pressure to change some of those policies

Interviewer: Yeah, because I visit Shanley in prison and they will not – and I've written to them twice and they will not let me in with a camera - there's no way...

Fr Gordon: It's interesting because down there in Mass (*Massachusetts*) – in Mass all their other visiting rules are far relaxed next to here.

Interviewer: Well he told me that other people have been on camera for stories but they won't let him because he's too infamous – his case is too shaky and weird. I've spoken to everybody, I've read everything – he didn't do what he's accused of.

Fr Gordon: I agree with that.

Interviewer: He told me that.

Fr Gordon: Yeah, I agree with that.

Interviewer: And I believe him and I believe other people that he didn't do that.

Fr Gordon: The repressed memory theory behind his case is simply not

Interviewer: Last week I was in at Harvard with Richard McNally, one of the leading experts and he said he'll give me an on camera interview so what I'm doing is I'm lining up legal experts, psychology experts along with priests who have been accused and so far I have one priest whose name is Roger Jacques from the

Archdiocese of Boston who was accused, cleared but it took him fourteen years but his life was ruined and so what I want to do with this film at present is to weave in all your stories here and to come to a conclusion that there's a great injustice here and something needs to be done and so I really want to appeal to a public audience. I hope to get this on television. So could you say that you give me 'cos I really don't have any real permission.

Fr Gordon: Oh yes, I do give you permission to use whatever I say in a public forum and edit it as you wish.

Interviewer: OK. Great, thanks, and I will be very sensitive and I mentioned to Charline, I know that you have a case coming up and ... what I do with Rog is that he and I, we edited – we rough edited what he said and then I mailed him the DVD, he had a chance to see it and he loved it so I'll do the same thing with you. We'll rough edit it, you know what I mean?

Fr Gordon: I will not be able to see it. You don't have to worry about that – I've talked with attorneys involved and we have the parameters down. There's so much that's already public. I mean the legal case only came about as a result of Dorothy Rabinowitz's articles so all of that was already public, and that kind of opened a door to looking at another side of this whole...

Interviewer: I've read her articles and she's right spot on.

Fr Gordon: Yes, she's very good.

Interviewer: And I hope to contact her. I've heard that she's a very difficult personality but I am going to try and contact her to see if she'll speak to me given that we've have this interview.

Fr Gordon: I haven't heard from her in a long time. Occasionally if I come across something interesting I send it to her, but I see her periodically on the Journal Editorial Report and she's a really feisty

Interviewer: A New Yorker.

Fr Gordon: Yeah, very much a New Yorker, yes, she is. So where would you like me to begin?

Interviewer: OK, so let's start with what I want do to with the film, for you and the film is for the arc of your story to unfold – what happened and then how you felt. I want to appeal to your feelings and your family and how it affected. Let's start with what happened to you and we have as much tape and as much time as you want but what we'll do is I'm going to edit it down

Fr Gordon: Of course

Interviewer: So that you will only in the course of this film probably only get 12 minutes max to this film – there's a possibility where I could do another follow up film regarding your specific case so there's different purposes but for now I'd like to get the arc of your real salient points of your story.

Fr Gordon: OK, certainly. Its bizarre of course, but at the time I was accused I was admissions director for the Servants of the Paraclete Center in Jemez Springs, New Mexico and we were neck deep in a controversy. About 25 years earlier in the late 60's the Center had treated Fr James Porter and at the time Fr Porter was there, there was actually no treatment – it was simply a place he was sent more or less as a punishment by the Fall River Diocese and as the Porter case unfolded – I am sure that you remember it.

Interviewer: I live in Fall River Diocese. I live in Fall River. I live in the Rectory.

Fr Gordon: It was 92, 93, that it really became nightmarish for the Servants of the Paraclete because they had a completely revamped and very successful treatment program for priests, some accused and some not; some treated for depression and other issues; alcoholism. They had a very supportive and successful program but they were being held civilly liable for not acting in 1968 as they would in 1992 so there's this retroactive sense

to this whole picture that has really been disturbing because they didn't have the level of treatment in '68 that they had in '92 they were declared negligent and Porter was sent there really for a kind of spiritual renewal in the sixties. At least from my reading of this, the issues for which he was accused were seen primarily as a spiritual problem, as sort of an addiction problem and so he was sent there and he spent about 60 or 90 days in New Mexico with the Servants and they released him. His Diocese reassigned him and then in the 90's the Paraclete order was sued. I think 80 individual law suits over the course of 1992 by Fr Porter's accusers and victims. I can't imagine that they were all victims but I have no doubt that many were and it was at the height of that whole story that I was accused and I remember, I will never forget the day – it was May 3, 1993 and I had been at a meeting with some of our staff and we got into a big argument because we had an increasing number of priests coming to the Paraclete Center accused of sexual misconduct. More often than not the accusations were 20 or 30 years old at the time they were brought, but some were current and as the admissions director, I took a position that we must not simply preclude the guilt of each one of these men simply because they were accused.

And what brought it to a point of contention I think with that staff, was that one particular bishop had a man who was accused of what would generally be called boundary violations and the bishop wanted a diagnosis of pedophilia so he could dismiss the man from the priesthood. The diagnosis simply wasn't realistic, it wasn't accurate and so to its credit the Center refused to let the Bishop dictate the diagnosis and he was furious with them so we got into this discussion about whether or not we should be precluding the guilt of these men and on that same day that I left that meeting I drove home.

I shared an apartment with another priest who was on our faculty, on our staff as the aftercare director and there was a knock on the door about 6 that evening. It was two police officers from Rio Rancho New Mexico and about a week earlier I heard there was a skirmish of some sort – a man was arrested for DUI right outside the apartment so I presumed that this was in reference to that. I opened the door and they asked if my name was Gordon MacRae and I said "yes". They asked if I had a drivers licence so I gave it to them and they said "You're under arrest for – charged with two indictments from the state of New Hampshire alleged to have occurred – this was 1993 – alleged to have occurred between 1979 and 1983, and the two indictments which they showed me contained only initials so I had no idea who was accusing me. There were no details, the indictments simply listed felonious sexual assault and the initials on the indictments were JG and TG. I had no clue who this was.

I was taken immediately to a county jail and I had no this was my first experience with the criminal justice system and the sense that I was really naïve in terms of how this worked. At the county jail I was immediately presented by a local detective with papers to sign waiving extradition to New Hampshire and something told me not to sign them without consulting counsel. The pressure to sign them was enormous but I found out later that if I had signed that paper I would have sat in a county jail in New Mexico for up to a year waiting for New Hampshire to come and get me, whereas if I refused to sign, then I was entitled to a bond hearing within 24 hours and so by refusing to sign I was released on personal recognizance bail the next day in New Mexico.

New Hampshire officials, I understood were furious because they were told that "We'll get him to sign these papers" and so there's a game here played that's very manipulative from day one to pressure defendants into signing papers, into admissions of guilt that makes the whole system easier but not for the defendant.

So once I was released there was really no notice at all in New Mexico, the local papers that had daily headlines about the Porter case and the lawsuits against the Servants of the Paraclete, took no notice of the fact that I had been arrested and released and then I learned that the detective in New Hampshire who choreographed this case as opposed to investigating it personally faxed forty pages of his police reports to a New Mexico newspaper and the headline that night around May 17 or so was "Paraclete official indicted for rape" and that was the end of my employment, it was the end of my ministry, the end of my career with them.

The Order, the Servants of the Paraclete was very supportive of me and they believed in my innocence and I believe they still do and they permitted me to remain there with them but I had to take a leave from my job, from my ministry, which I did so from my office there which I was able to retain, I started to fight the case. It was months before I even knew who was accusing me and that's the most Kafkaesque part of this tale. I since read Franz Kafka's "The Trial" - that was the story of my life because every step of the way his protagonist is trying to determine "what exactly am I on trial for?" and at every corner he could not find out anything, and it was a nightmare to read, but I became really engrossed in the trial.

I had a New Mexico attorney who came out of the blue, actually and offered to take the case after reading the newspaper and worked with me on it and we started to obtain discovery and then learned who the accusers were. There's something from day one that was very disturbing about the discovery. All defendants and their counsel are entitled to see everything that the State uses against them, but the discovery in this case consisted of no investigation whatsoever, simply the police reports of this one detective's interviews with each of these brothers. They turned out to be three adult brothers. In the end there were four from the same family who accused me.

In other cases that I have become aware of only later, only through other discovery, this detective, James McLaughlin was his name – in fact he's from your home town, Fitchburg, Massachusetts. He is the sole sex crimes detective on the Keene Police Department.... at that time.... Keene, New Hampshire, Police Department. At that time Keene was a town of about twenty eight or twenty nine thousand people with a police force of thirty and a full time sex crimes detective who did nothing but investigate sex crimes.

It's bewildering – it always has been bewildering but he choreographed this case and in all other cases up to that point, he meticulously audio and video recorded every interview with complainants. We were able to obtain his reports in another case involving another priest that preceded the claims against me by about a year. This case came up in 1990 and '91 and the accuser in that case has even come forward and has given us evidence that he said that he was not only audio and video recorded, but he was given a polygraph by the detective and he was told that these recordings are absolutely necessary, that he can't proceed in the case without recording every interview and preserving the recordings for evidence.

A year later he interviewed these three brothers – two, three, four interviews each. These were not children – these were men in their late twenties and he recorded absolutely none of his interviews with them so we had nothing to go on but these police reports and they came forward separately over the course of several weeks. The first one had a We never knew even how they came to be in detective McLaughlin's office. It was never clear to us whether they had gone to him with a complaint, whether he had gone to them; there was some evidence from others that that was the case. We knew that they went to personal injury lawyers but there was a conflict throughout all of the investigation and even the trial, we never got an answer on who they went to first. At trial, the accuser said that he went to detective McLaughlin who referred him to a contingency lawyer. Detective McLaughlin testified that the accuser went to a contingency lawyer who referred him to McLaughlin. We never got to the bottom of this.

In the reports however, the first of the three brothers to come forward, Jonathan Grover, accused me and another priest of both simultaneous and separate abuses of him. He claimed that these abuses occurred when he was 10 years old. I wasn't ordained a priest until he was 14, and the other priest he was accusing of acting simultaneously with me was not present in that community until he was 16.

As time went on we were able to determine that but throughout this investigation no one had obtained my personnel file, no one had sought to corroborate these dates – no one had done anything simply we have an interview, now we have an indictment and so my attorney from 2,000 miles away was saddled with having to investigate and ran up against road blocks every step of the way. My diocese would not cooperate with the

investigation. Priests of the diocese who were with me in those places at those times would not answer requests for information – even the most simple things. One priest we wrote to replaced me in a parish and our only question of him was “Can you corroborate that these three offices in this rectory are where this diagram says they are?” and he wrote back and said “I will not help you win. I do not see the need for any communication with you.”

It was mind boggling. So we were on our own and that was made very clear, but investigate we did and we were able to show that the other accused was not present in this community until Jonathan Grover was 16 and here he is accusing us of raping him at the age of 10 and that I was not there until 14. At about the same time we were able to demonstrate that, Jonathan Grover disappears into the background and another brother comes forward with a whole new set of claims and a whole new set of dates and times and places. The other priest, Fr Stephen Scruton who had been accused over and over and over again by others was just omitted from the picture as if his name never came up.

The second brother, David Grover was then about 28 – he said that he was driving his car and again he appears in detective McLaughlin’s office, no idea how, no knowledge of how he got there or why. He claimed that he was driving his car and heard a radio announcement about the Diocese of Fall River agreeing to a mediated settlement of 80 law suits against Father Porter and the Diocese and he said that he pulled over and began to weep because these flood of memories of his own abuse came into play. He claimed that at the age of 12, I raped him in St Bernard’s rectory in Keene, New Hampshire and again, this was thrown out there in a police report with no attempt to corroborate anything. I arrived at St Bernard’s rectory in Keene, New Hampshire – it was demonstrable on June 15, 1983 – two weeks before David Grover’s 18th birthday so I could not have been there when he was 12 years old. He told this whole story of being repeatedly raped between the ages of 12 and 14 in the St Bernard rectory while visiting me – overnight stays, all of this, and then two months went by and he appeared in the detective’s office again, this time with a whole different story.

His new story was that in 1982 I had brought him to another parish where he was raped by two other priests who he could not identify. He could not name them. One of the two priests there at the time was the same priest that the other brother had been accusing however, this gets really convoluted. David Grover claimed in this police report that he went there to this rectory with me because we had a positive relationship and he had no reason to suspect that anything had been wrong... could be wrong. Two months earlier he told the same detective that over the previous four years I had raped him repeatedly in the other rectory. This was making no sense, and there was no just questioning at all. There was simply a narrative repeated by the detective with no sense of any prompting, of any questioning – nothing whatsoever. And then at some point, this detective or the accusers or their contingency lawyers became aware of these time parameter conflicts and so there’s a new police report with all of them and the detective gave them a copy of my resume so they could get there so they could actually accuse me of a time that I was there. And then there was a whole new set of interviews and a whole new set of accusations and dates as if none of the other interviews had ever taken place.

Interviewer: Do you have copies of those previous interviews?

Fr Gordon: We do, yeah, and they were all presented in discovery and I think in hindsight, looking back on this there is a sense that once the State becomes aware of these sorts of problems with accusers in a trial, the plea deal offers start surfacing. But we weren’t even through yet with the accusations that a third brother came forward completing excluding all the other information of the other two. He claimed that when he was 15 years old which would have been the summer of 1983, in the weeks just after I arrived at this parish, he claimed that he came to see me for counselling for his drug dependency. He claimed that he was forcibly raped at each counselling session in my rectory office and that each week he returned for counselling unable to remember that he was raped the week before. There was no consultation with an expert to see if this was

even possible, this again this was just thrown out there – we have this claim, now we have an indictment and then that was the case that went to trial. From day one I maintain and I still do that neither the counselling sessions nor the sexual assaults ever took place. This was a young man who at 15, 16 was 5’11” and 180 – 190 pounds and the claim was that I had shut the door, tackled him, raped him, let him go and then he came back for his next appointment a week later. This made no sense whatsoever.

Then the plea deal offers began. I was offered originally a sentence of 7 ½ to 15 years if I would plead guilty to one of these claims and dismiss the rest. I refused it. A few months went by and then the offer changed to 3 ½ to 7 years and I refused that and then a few months after that there was another offer and it was the State’s last best effort. The prosecutor’s last best effort he put in writing to my attorney that I could serve a sentence of 1 to 3 years if I could plead guilty to one charge. And this really created a dilemma for those who were defending me because the lawyers at least knew the risk that we were taking by not taking a plea deal and so my attorney sat me down and told me that innocent defendants plead guilty all the time to control the sentence, but I just couldn’t do it .

In fact, during the trial, during testimony at the trial, as Thomas Grover was describing out of body experiences and these counselling sessions which never took place, we had a break in the trial and at the end of his testimony the prosecutor repeated his offer and changed it – it would be 1 to 2 years in prison if I would stop the trial at that point and plead guilty because it seemed clear to me that he himself did not believe what was being said up on the stand. So we had a break in the trial and my lawyer discussed this deal, this offer with me. I told him I didn’t feel I could do it and he asked me to take 10 minutes and think about it so I went to a telephone in the lobby during the trial and I called an attorney for my Diocese and I told him – I didn’t think I’d get him but I did get him – Attorney Bradford Cook, and I told him about the offer that had just been presented to me. I asked him what would be the repercussions for the Diocese in the event that I took such a deal. I told him that I was leaning so heavily against it and he said “it would make it so much more difficult for us to defend against the lawsuits.” Then I called a friend who is a canon lawyer and I asked him what would be the canonical repercussions and he said “you would be dismissed from the priesthood”, so I walked back into the courtroom and refused the deal. When I refused the deal the court became very irritated with me because I said that this deal would be a negotiated lie and I’m not participating. In the end it turned out over time that my Diocese did nothing to defend against the lawsuits. I did not even know that even before trial, settlement negotiations were underway and this is part of the problem which I’ll get into a bit later.

There was a lot prior to the trial that really disrupted our defense, and not the least being our inability in being able to obtain basic information. The trial was very underfunded. Most priests cannot afford a criminal defense. There’s been a lot of criticism of defendants like Michael Jackson who put millions into defending himself but I read that even with the millions he put in defending himself of, it was less than what the State invested into prosecuting him. Most priests cannot really defend themselves in a criminal court against criminal charges and so they are really at the mercy of either a free attorney whose own Catholic faith prompts him to want to take such a case, or a public defender and I’ve seen too many priests who are accused whose future is relegated to the care of a public defender and the public defender too often sees as his only obligation is to negotiate the best deal that he can. There’s really no effort to try to ascertain the priest’s innocence or defend against his guilt. I’ve seen that more often than not and it’s a little scary – its not the way this works on “Law and Order” at all.

Interviewer: Its very scary. Priests have lost their civil rights as far as I’m concerned.

Fr Gordon: They have. What made the trial more complicated was that before jury selection in my trial, while knowing that I maintained my innocence of the charges and knowing that we were fighting to put together a defense, I received a phone call one day from an Albuquerque Journal reporter who asked me what my feelings were about the press release that had just been issued from my diocese. I had no idea there was a

press release. I had not seen it. And he read it to me over the telephone. Nothing in this whole process left me devastated as much as this press release, and we never understood what prompted it but once before jury selection was scheduled in my trial, my diocese issued a statement saying "The Catholic Church has been a victim of the actions of Gordon MacRae just as these individuals accusing him have been." The Church mourns with these victims. It is clear that he will never again function as a priest, and here I am just about to enter into jury selection in the trial and this press release hits headlines throughout New Hampshire and then in New Mexico. And we were devastated – my defense attorney was completely demoralized. My canonist got on the phone – Fr David Deibel had contacted the chancellor from my diocese who was the author of the press release – now the auxiliary bishop and his defense was twofold: he said this was carefully crafted to answer the media inquiries about Father MacRae's case, number one and number two: we didn't even think he would even see this way out in New Mexico where I was living prior to the trial, preparing for the trial. It was devastating and my attorney said that my civil rights to a presumption of innocence and to a fair trial had just been terminated and to this day I have never received an explanation to this. The only explanation I can assume is that at that moment, the Diocese was in settlement negotiations with the attorneys for the accusers and this was something that the attorneys asked for and so it was given in exchange for a lesser settlement, I don't know.

Jury selection became very difficult because just about every Catholic juror had seen that press release and when questioned said that the declaration that I had victimized the entire Catholic Church would definitely weigh on their decision making. And so we ended up with almost an entirely non-Catholic jury because of this.

At the trial itself, there were many issues that had surfaced – it was a three ring circus. The county attorney which is the New Hampshire version of the District Attorney, the DA - the county attorney's office was being contested in a pending election and the prosecutor used the notoriety of this trial to wear his campaign button so during the trial he was reprimanded by the judge and ordered to remove the campaign button. But then some other things happened at the trial and one of them, and again the jury was just oblivious to all this.

At a point in the trial as the accuser was testifying about his claim that his testimony was actually very simple. This enormous man sat on the stand said that when he was 15, it was actually the 3 months preceding the 16th birthday, he was in my office for counselling for his drug dependency. He said that I shut the door locked it. Nobody ever went to look to see if those doors to see if they ever had locks. They did not. And then walked across the room and unzipped his fly and forced him to undergo oral sex. He said that when I finished I simply went back to my seat and we continued the counselling and that this happened for five weeks in a row – five consecutive sessions and obviously there was going to be some cross examination here, so as my attorney, who was also a big guy, stood up – the defense table was a little bit like this table – I was sitting here (indicates to his right), my attorney was sitting here (indicates to the left), the center aisle was right here (indicates further to his left). My attorney stood up to question Thomas Grover. Immediately Thomas protested – he put up his hands and turned to the judge – Judge Arthur Brennan and he said to the judge "I cant answer his questions" and the judge said "Why not?" and Thomas said "Well, because he's standing too close to him (meaning me) and I don't want to have to look at him. I can't bear it. I can't bear it to look at him during this trial".

This was not a 12 year old – this was a 27 year old man so the judge ordered my attorney to walk as far in the court room as he could physically go and to conduct his cross examination from way over here (indicating to his left) and so he did and Thomas just – when he was asked to explain why he came back from week to week after being raped as he described in my office, he said "I don't know how I got there, I repressed it" so my attorney pushed it and said "Can you explain this repression?". He said "I had out of body experiences", so my attorney asked him to explain it. The man paused and the suddenly started sobbing uncontrollably. The judge ordered a break in the trial.

During this break a woman approached my attorney and she said “There’s a problem here” and my attorney said “Well, who are you and what is it?”. She introduced herself. She said “I’ve been sitting here and I’ve been watching this and there’s a woman here in the courtroom who is influencing his testimony”. She said “At the time that you asked the question to explain his out of body experiences I saw him staring at her and so I looked at like this (Fr Gordon motions bending his head down and turning to his right to see) and she went like this (motioning to put one finger on his eye socket and pulling it down across his right cheek) and then he began sobbing on the stand. The observer who saw this said that “the issue was not that you were standing next to MacRae, the issue was that you were blocking his view of her.”

So my attorney asked for a break in the trial and the judge declared another recess and my attorney walked up to this woman and asked her name. She said her name was Pauline Goupil and she introduced herself as a therapist hired by Thomas Grover’s contingency lawyer to counsel him throughout the trial. The observer who saw this behavior said that the woman had actually done that – the signal to cry twice. The other question that prompted it was “who did you go to first, the lawyer or the police?” and Thomas began sobbing on the stand again but this woman had given him the same signal to cry, allegedly. I did not personally see this myself but it ended up in the end that two people witnessed it and so the jury was dismissed for the rest of the day, they were bewildered about what was going on. They were in the courtroom one minute, gone the next and for the entire day they were sequestered in a meeting room below the court and they had no idea what was happening up there.

Pauline Goupil took the stand and she defended her treatment file. We were supposed to have received all treatment records of Thomas Grover’s treatment before the trial but there was never any mention of her. Well, because she was retained by his contingency lawyer, her treatment of him ended up being protected by attorney/client privilege and so the judge ordered an in camera review of her file and it ended up that there was no mention of me at all in her file, except for one letter which my attorney was allowed to see and it was a letter from her to the accuser in which she said “Jim”, meaning detective McLaughlin, “tells me that MacRae is being offered a plea deal he won’t turn down, his lawyers won’t let him so we can proceed with the settlement phase.” The jury was never aware of this letter and the judge ordered that it’s privileged material and can’t be released to the public. It was put back in the file but she was barred from the court room for the remainder of the trial but it went like this all throughout the trial. It was start, stop, start, stop, the jury was present, the jury wasn’t present and we were never able to get out any facts, there was never any explanation of why the original accusations were from four years prior to these accusations. There was never any physical evidence. There was never any presentation of whether or not the rectory office doors even locked. We since learned that they had been painted over decades earlier but nobody ever bothered to go look. And then the state was...

.... BREAK TO CHANGE TAPE

Fr Gordon: Then the State was permitted to put an expert witness on the stand. Dr Leonard Fleischer EDD took the stand and his job was to educate the jury about Child Abuse Accommodation Syndrome which he was not permitted to say by name but that was pretty much his presentation and delayed reporting, that sort of thing. As a witness he was not allowed to be present in the courtroom, however, something happened that the jury never learned about. The woman who had been sitting at the back of the courtroom giving hand signals was seen in a restaurant with Dr Fleischer and during the trial and it turned out that he was a mentor of hers in a graduate program that she was in so they knew each other quite well. So Dr Fleischer’s testimony presented some verbatim quotes from the accuser on the stand which His prescience in this was just amazing. He even used terms like “out of body experiences” and that sort of thing, really corroborating for the jury that as bizarre as all this sounds, this man is telling the truth. Dr Fleischer then also told the jury that prior

to that.... Thomas Grover had testified he had been as an adolescent and an adult a patient in six residential drug treatment centers without success. One of them was Beech Hill Hospital.

Dr Fleischer told the jury that he was once a therapist at Beech Hill hospital and in his experience 80 to 90 percent of the patients there were sexually abused as children and teenagers. This uncorroborated statistical opinion swayed the jury entirely. At the end of the trial we really put on no defense. There was really no defense to put on.

One priest, the sole priest who agreed to come to the trial without a subpoena testified that the accusers claim that we had played chess on an expensive marble chess set in my office just before being raped in 1983 was not possible because I had purchased that chess set in 1986 while on vacation with this priest in Bar Harbor Maine and that he knew me to never own a previous marble chess set like that and he said that the chess set described was clearly the same one we purchased but it couldn't have been in my office in 1983.

He presented he actually still had his calendar from 1986 and it showed that we were on vacation in Bar Harbor at that time and the jury at the end asked to see a transcript of this priest's testimony but the judge denied it stating that they are going to have to go on their memory.

The judge also refused to allow the defense to bring before the jury Thomas Grover's criminal record which included charges of fraud, forgery, burglary, assault – all sorts of false pretense charges and the judge ordered that those offenses were from his juvenile record and from too long ago to be pertinent to the trial but they were from the same time period as the claims in the trial which made no sense whatsoever, so we were really crippled from offering a defense.

As the prosecution rested, the judge addressed me in open court, which is very unusual but outside the presence of the jury. The judge told me that if I take the stand in my own defense, he is going to open the door to allow the unrelated – what he called unrelated charges of the other accusers to be entered into evidence and they will simply serve to corroborate Thomas Grover's story and so my lawyer told me you cant take the stand in your own defense, so we ended up with no defense. In the end the judge instructed the jury that under New Hampshire law in a case where there is no physical evidence like this one, the jury must determine whether it believes the story of the accuser over the story of the defendant. Actually, the judge called the accuser the victim throughout the trial. He said to the jury "You must conclude whether or not you believe the story of the victim over the story of the defendant . The defendant told no story, he did not take the stand. You're not to infer guilt by that but you have to determine who you believe" and they came back in less than two hours with a guilty verdict on all counts.

Judge Brennan sentenced me to 30 times the states proffered plea deal – 33 ½ to 67 years. In New Hampshire, in the New Hampshire system at least a defendant is eligible for the lower sentence only if he publicly admits to guilt of the crime so that has been the dilemma. I would have left prison 15 years ago had I taken the deal the State offered to me. I do not regret not taking that deal.

After the trial was over, my lawyer resigned from the case. He just felt he could not defend against this case any further. There was no investigation. We needed a private investigator. There was none of that so he left the case and went back to New Mexico. I was left in the hands of a public defender and the State was offering a deal for the remaining charges involving the other two brothers and another person who had come forward during the course of the trial also alleging 20 year old behavior.

The state offered a deal of one to two years concurrent with whatever I'm going to be sentenced to so it was no time whatsoever. I never thought I could be in this kind of position but I am in a county jail awaiting sentencing. Everyone has abandoned the case. I am in contact with no one and then the State comes forward and tells me that I must take this deal. So I got called to the jail – I was in the Cheshire County Jail awaiting

sentencing – I got called to the jail director’s office and he had a call from my attorney in New Mexico who put me on the phone and let me talk to him and he told me “You have no choice. We have some good appellate issues, we might win an appeal in this trial; you will never survive two more trials; you will never survive two more appeals; you have no resources; you have no assets; you have no choice.”

And so I stood up in court two weeks later with another attorney’s hand on my back pushing me and the judge said “How do you plead in these remaining charges?” and I couldn’t answer. Judge Brennan asked it a second time and the attorney poked me in the back and then I said “guilty” and then sat down immediately. I put my head in my hands. I just couldn’t believe this was happening. And I was taken from there to the state prison and a friend of mine who was in the court was outside as I was on the set up “perp walk” for the media between the courtroom and the prison bound van and in chains and handcuffs and I turned and said to him “That was another negotiated lie” and he said “I know it was”, and that’s where it stood.

Interviewer: How do you feel?

Fr Gordon: I feel like a shower after talking about this. For years in here, stuck in this prison, there’s a mentality out there and I hear this all the time that prison inmates maintain their innocence even when they’re not. That is so far from the truth. The repercussions for claiming to be innocent in prison are astonishing, most people have no idea. There are housing units even within this prison that are considered the inner city and others that are considered the suburbs. Because I maintain my innocence I have never been eligible for the suburbs. I spent my first six years in prison in a cell with seven other inmates sharing a cell the size of this room. It’s nightmarish for most people to think of this. Most people go to the eight man cells while they’re awaiting housing in other units but because I maintained my innocence and became “program ineligible” in the prison system, I spent longer than any other New Hampshire inmate in an eight man cell. Six years as opposed to six months.

Finally after six years – around the year 2000 I was moved. I requested a move. I requested it two or three times a year and it was always denied and then finally it was granted and then I was moved to a unit where there are two per cell. They’re terribly small but - built for one but there are two. And I was there until the Wall Street Journal wrote about my case and then suddenly a few weeks later I was moved back to the eight man cells again. It was horrific and I spent another several months there, demoralized, demeaned and then was permitted to move back.

Interviewer: Now I had read in one of your blogs that when you first arrived you were beat up or something.

Fr Gordon: When I first arrived in the prison I was placed in a solitary confinement unit which is called SHU – the Special Housing Unit. It’s amazing what you can adjust to – I was locked down 23 hours a day. I was supposed to be out an hour a day but the out is simply a cage like a dog cage. I could make eleven steps across the cage and back again with chain link above me and on all sides. That was the hour out of the cell and I adjusted to that – I was there a few months and after a few months because I adjusted, I asked to remain there. I wrote a formal requested asking to remain there at least for the time being until I’m assigned better housing. I received a reply to my request: “We have no intention of moving you.” The next day I was moved to a receiving unit full of young kids who were just coming in to the prison.

On the day I was moved there someone had attached or pasted a newspaper article on the wall of the tier of cells. Nobody knew who I was at that time. The newspaper article was about my diocese’s pre-trial press release – the Church declares that it was victimized by accused priest. Somebody had put that on the wall and the next morning I was able to see it but because I was locked in a cell I wasn’t able to tear it down. The next morning my cell door opened at 5am and three men wearing stocking caps pulled over their faces carrying sections of broomsticks attacked me while I was still sleeping; and I was taken from there to the infirmary, had some X rays and then moved to another part of the prison – back to the Special Housing Unit and then from

there I went to the eight man cells. I never found out who was involved in that incident. It has never been repeated. Not for lack of trying.

I just wrote in fact last week on These Stone Walls about an incident that happened on the day Father John Geoghan was murdered in Massachusetts. A news van from Channel Nine News in Manchester WMUR parked in front of the prison here and the news reporter pondered for the camera on whether I would live out the week after the story of John Geoghan being murdered in Massachusetts and by that point I had been here nine years and the prisoners thought it was hysterical, everyone told me I was in a lot more danger from that reporter than from anyone here and I agree with that, nothing happened.

Interviewer: Wow. What do you think was behind McLaughlin? Because it all comes back to him.

Fr Gordon: I don't know. It does all come back. Every case involving an accusation with the exception of... After 2002, what prompted me to go to the Wall Street Journal, to Dorothy Rabinowitz, was that during the big settlement – during the big crisis that occurred in 2002 I was accused by two people I have never met who simply saw my name online and the released files, and decided that they were going to accuse me. There is another priest in here who pled guilty, he took a plea deal and I believe he has said, confided in me that he is guilty it's not confidence – its public knowledge. He was in the infirmary one day and shortly after I was accused by two people I have never met in 2002, he told me that he was accused by two people who he has never met and the same attorney brought each of these claims. So then I did a little research and I found out that this attorney, Peter Hutchins is his name, in 2002 brought 64 law suits – they weren't even law suits – they weren't even filed in a court of law – he simply had 64 accusers against 28 priests all of whom were listed on the Diocesan website and wanted a settlement and the Diocese wrote him a check for 5.5 million dollars. This is an issue. This is an issue that must come out into the open. The attorney actually told us the newspapers were covering that settlement.

Attorney Hutchins is quoted in both the Nashua Telegraph and the Manchester Union Leader as saying “The Diocese didn't even ask for details like names and dates or places – no corroboration whatsoever. I've never seen anything like it.” A year later he had another 60 clients and a year after that another 60 and he has come forward almost annually since then each year with people held in moderation until he obtains one mediated settlement to be followed by another, all of which ends up with a 40 per cent contingency fee.

It was then that I decided that I'm a sitting duck and that the only thing that's going to stop this is the publication of names of the accusers and nobody is going to do that so I had been in touch with Dorothy Rabinowitz and I asked her if she writes about this, how she feels about printing the names of the accusers and she had no problem with that. What was very interesting is that she wrote two articles over two days and at the end of the first day she received a call and a frantic protest of publishing the accusers' names. The call wasn't from the accusers, it was from the attorney from my diocese who argued with her that the promise not to ever reveal their names was part of the settlement and that the Diocese had entered into non-disclosure agreements with these accusers. My statement was that I was never a party to any non-disclosure agreement. I was never even told that a settlement had taken place. I wrote letters specifically forbidding

PART 2

Interviewer:... and its clear that's not ever going to go away ... and I might ask you about SNAP too. To me SNAP is key. SNAP has demanded all of this.

Fr Gordon: SNAP is key in this and so is Voice of the Faithful. Initially I was in favor of Voice of the Faithful. I thought their motives were excellent. I thought they were looking to rally the laity to respond to this whole issue. There is a lot of tragic abuse but there has also been an enormous amount of Catholic abuse of the Catholic abuse scandal and SNAP and Voice of the Faithful are largely responsible for that. They have

capitalized upon a kind of rhetoric that has nothing to do with due process rights, and both groups have organized to deny any accused priests his due process rights. What exactly their agenda is I don't know, but the Church keeps capitulating to it. Just a few days ago the Archdiocese of Boston capitulated to the demands of SNAP and Bishop-Accountability.org by publishing the names of every priest who has been accused regardless of whether he's ever been convicted of a crime or even had due process in a court of law.

Where I now live there are prison inmates whose names are subject to being publicized under Meghan's Law but every one of them has been convicted of a crime whether justly or unjustly, wrongly or rightly is beside the point, they've been convicted of a crime. In this publication of names, the bishops have organized and published their own private Meghan's Law list without regard for whether the accused priest was ever convicted of anything and it's appalling – its not Catholic. And it's appalling. And I believe there has been a presumption throughout that in every time that these people put such immense pressure on the bishops. I don't fault the bishops for being under this pressure, I fault them for caving in to it at every turn. I think that they have a belief that once they get this monkey off our back, it'll stay off our back but capitulating has simply empowered SNAP to continue and continue and continue.

There was an incident on These Stone Walls in fact, one of our readers really took this up. A woman by the name of Dorothy Stein. Dorothy Stein is not even Catholic, she's Jewish. Why she reads the blog I don't know, she's fascinated by it but she told me about an incident on CNN last October. There was a protest in Rome organized by SNAP and some SNAP and VOTF people were there carrying picket signs. Anderson Cooper on CNN in October, I think it was October 31st had on his evening talk show had John Walsh, the host of *America's Most Wanted* that's just been cancelled. I did not see this but Dorothy Stein saw it. She said that John Walsh looked at the camera and giving examples, egregious examples of institutions just being clueless about child sexual abuse. John Walsh said to the camera "Just last month a hundred thousand victims of sex abuse by priests were denied an audience with the Pope to explain to him how their lives had been shattered."

Well, this is CNN, this is global news. Dorothy fired off a – Dorothy Stein – not Dorothy Rabinowitz. Dorothy Stein fired off an email to Anderson Cooper saying "You can't get away with this. There was a protest outside of St Peter's Square involving sixty people – not a hundred thousand, though its easy to confuse such numbers" she said. She said "And of the sixty I happen to know that thirty were claiming to be victims of sexual abuse, the other thirty were activists from SNAP and VOTF using the spotlight for some agenda of their own and the so-called victims were outnumbered by reporters two to one. How can you tell the world that there were a hundred thousand people there?" and she received no reply of course, so I wrote about this.

I think there has been a sense on the part of the bishops who have circled the wagons at some point that every time we pay, every time we publish a list, every time we capitulate, we're going to get them off our back, but every time it has empowered them further and further and further to the point to at which today any accused priest is across the board denied due process civilly, criminally and canonically and that's the sad part but what makes most of these cases credible is not evidence, it's settlement. The fact that its been settled is what determines that the case is credible and these priests are left in canonical limbo for decades.

Interviewer: It's a mess. It's a total mess and the bishops don't get it.

Fr Gordon: The bishops don't get it and in 2002 when the Dallas Charter was enacted the bishops invited input from only one group and that was SNAP – they heard only one side of the story and there has been no other side of the story said since and any time there is an attempt to address another side of the story SNAP goes on the attack. SNAP left me alone entirely, never even noticed me, never had a word to say about me – nothing, until I wrote an article called "*Due Process for Accused Priests*" for the Catholic League, and all of a sudden David Clohessy issued a statement that I am a dangerous and demented man. If I'm dangerous to his agenda then that's a good thing because his agenda has become critically anti-Catholic and why the bishops

capitulate to it is a mystery to me. I think they are locked into a course of conduct and don't know what else to do.

Detective McLaughlin is a crusader. I don't know what else to say about him. He has prosecuted many priests. He's investigated many. I have a photograph of him that someone sent me standing in front of a cake and had the number 350 on it and he has a little spatula and he's smiling. The cake was a celebration of his 350th arrest posing as a fourteen year old boy, cruising the internet looking for sexual encounters with adult men. He went on from prosecuting real cases of abuse to the internet crimes. Now, a part of me understands what he's doing and agrees with it even that men who are lured to Keene, New Hampshire with the intent of having sex with teenagers that they meet online should be prosecuted, but not one of those cases has gone to trial. Not one of those cases has ever been tested. In every single instance he offers a plea deal that the accused ends up playing the game and taking, so none of these tactics are ever examined.

In one article I read about him written by a Boston Globe writer, he said that "it's my job to ferret the criminal element out of society" and he said "I'll go as far as I can until some judge tells me that I can go no further". And those are scary statements from a police officer whose job is to uphold the law, not just to prosecute crime. I believe he had as much a responsibility to investigate this case as he did to present it in court and instead of investigating he choreographed it and enabled the accusers every step of the way. Why? I could not begin to tell you. I will say this: one of the accusers has, in my case has recanted and this is something that's about to become public – I'm assuming that it will be by the time you actually....

Interviewer: This won't be out until next summer, at the earliest.

Fr Gordon: OK. One of the accusers in my case has recanted and he told an incredibly disturbing story of being called to a meeting and offered an enormous amount of money if he would join my accusers in corroborating their accusations against me. He refused, and the pressure that he was under was pretty enormous and he was actually told by somebody who is pretty high profile in this case, "Think of your wife and kids, you know, I know you're broke, I know you've got a history, I know you're a drug addict. This money could mean a lot to them." And so he said "I was left believing that all I had to do was say what they were saying and I would get a check and nothing else – I would have to do nothing else." He claimed that he agreed to this at the meeting and who all were at this meeting I'm not aware yet, but there's an investigator involved who is aware.

Interviewer: Is that Jim? Jim Abbott, the investigator. I've talked to Jim very briefly and I will talk to him about it.

Fr Gordon: He said that the next day he received a subpoena to testify before a grand jury for a new indictment which tells me that both the police detective and the prosecutor were both aware that this man was being bribed into the accusation. He said he brought the subpoena to the county attorney's office.

Interviewer: This is Jim?

Fr Gordon: No, this is the young man who was accusing me, who was presented with a bribe. He was given an amount of cash and a promise that he would obtain an enormous amount of money in a claim against the Diocese. He agreed to it, was given a subpoena to testify in front of a grand jury for a new indictment. On the morning of the testimony before the grand jury he showed up at the prosecutor's office and told a secretary "I've been up all night. I know what's going on here. This man did nothing but help me and I'm not going to be part of this." She took the subpoena and walked into an office and then five minutes later walked and said "We won't need anything further from you." He left and he kept that to himself until recently. I know that detective McLaughlin approached him with this deal – not the other way around so now I'm left to wonder

who else got such a deal and who else was approached? We don't know how many of these people ended up in front of detective McLaughlin.

But there are other details in this whole picture that are disturbing. The mother of the three Grover brothers was at that time a sex abuse investigator for Child Protective Services for the State, and as such she was aware of elements of other cases involving other priests that had been settled quietly over the years and this stuff shouldn't have happened but it did happen. Both the State and the Church agreed to these settlements. It wasn't like the Church was covering something up and hiding it from civil authorities – that's not true. She was a social worker investigating some of these cases for the State. When her sons accused me, all of the accusations contained elements of these stories involving other priests but no one investigated them and it was if that was telling the Diocese "You stay out of this because if you come to his defense, then this floodgate opens. What happened in 2002 would have happened in New Hampshire in 1994 because there would have been a floodgate of accusations.

The other priest who was accused by the same brothers fled the state and refused, when we attempted to serve the subpoena him, to testify at my trial. He left the state and nobody has ever heard from him. He has never denied the accusations against him even though he wasn't there. We simply asked him to come forward and deny this took place. He did not. We did find a series of checks written on parish accounts from him to each of these accusers but they were years later when the accusers were 16, 17, 18 years old. He never explained this. Jim Abbott found him two years ago living in Newburyport, Massachusetts and he agreed to an interview. He was very nervous over the phone. Jim said he heard another man in the background saying to him "Steve, if this is something that's going to help Gordon, I think you should do it.

Interviewer: Oh wonderful

Fr Gordon: We never knew who that was. We don't know who that was. They arranged a date to be interviewed, all we wanted Steve Scruton to do was either affirm or deny his involvement in this and on the day of the interview Jim came all the way up from New York and Fr Scruton refused to open the door. He said "I've consulted with somebody and I can't be interviewed." I wrote him a letter, and I have that letter, detailing the claims against him by the same people who accused me. I asked him to reconsider by telling the simple truth and two days after receiving that letter Fr Scruton had a mysterious fall down a flight of stairs at some therapist's office in Boston and never regained consciousness and died in January of last year, so he took the truth with him and we have been able to find out nothing. There was no obituary, there was no traditional notice of any kind. He was buried in his priestly vestments. The Diocese had claimed for all these years that they had no idea of his whereabouts. He was hiding right in plain sight.

Interviewer: That's so bizarre.

Fr Gordon: It's bizarre. There's a lot that's bizarre.

Interviewer: I know, the whole thing.

Fr Gordon: And getting to the bottom of it from inside here is very difficult. It has taken a long, long time.

Interviewer: Do you feel frustrated? Do you ever feel hopeful?

Fr Gordon: There were times that were very frustrating. In 2000 and 2001 I had really obtained the interest of the Wall Street Journal and Dorothy Rabinowitz about the case. She was investigating. I had sent her boxes of material and documents that I had found and some by Even by accident, and then in January of 2002 I received a letter from her telling me that unfortunately everything you sent us, everything we've researched, everything I have produced was destroyed in the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center because their office was right across the street and their offices were obliterated that day. That was the least of that

tragedy, but it just sent me so far back into the abyss. I began all over again accumulating everything, its so difficult because I have this much space here to keep files and documents here. I started all over again. It took me a while and then just as I began to get it underway Bishop McCormack, my bishop, came to visit me and he made an offer to me that he and the Diocese would invest \$40,000 into hiring a lawyer to investigate my situation on the condition that I challenge only the sentence and not the convictions. And then, right on the heels of that the great scandal out of Boston erupted implicating him, because he was the personnel director and that was the end of his overture and then that cast me back into the abyss again and it took several more years to wait for that to calm down enough to get someone to look at this.

Interviewer: How have you survived all this?

Fr Gordon: By losing my hair for the most part. I came in here with a full head of hair. I don't know. In 2009 I received a message from a woman in Australia who was a devout Catholic and she said "You know, I've been reading about you here and there, in the Wall street Journal and elsewhere." She said "You really need a blog. You need me to set up a blog for you." Well, prisoners don't have blogs so I found someone, Charline in Indiana who was a retired State Department diplomat. A wonderful, wonderful woman and both of these women are just amazing. And we set up something. All I have here is an old typewriter. I type an article and send it to Charline. Charline scans it. We do some editing over the telephone. I'm charged 15 cents a minute out of my commissary account for phone calls. We edit; I keep a copy; send her a copy; We do the editing; she emails it to Australia and its posted on These Stone Walls and its just amazing. The first month These Stone Walls came out in July of 2009 we had 42 readers. Six months later we had 42,000 and its just blossomed and I can count on one hand the number of toxic comments that we have had to reject which tells me there's a whole church out there ready and willing and able to hear that there's another side of this story. They're just waiting for someone to tell it.

Interviewer: That's what I want to do. How do you mobilize people? Coz I've been preaching about this and at first people are saying "I don't want to hear about it, don't talk about it" and now people have been this ship is turning slowly.

Fr Gordon: The ship is turning slowly while its sinking slowly, at least in terms of material assets and since 2002 it's topped two billion dollars in settlements nationwide – mediated settlements – not jury awards. Mediated settlements that are granted with no offer of proof whatsoever, it's just payout after payout after payout and it cannot possibly be in service to the Church. It cannot even possibly still be in service to the victims of abuse – the legitimate victims of abuse.

This is one of the things that has really encouraged me recently. Just recently These Stone Walls has attracted recently victims of sexual abuse by priests who are themselves alarmed at the proliferation of false accusations and demoralized by it. One man just left a message on his Facebook page that he is from the Boston area. He is a victim of sexual abuse by a priest and he obtained a settlement and he will always stand beside what he did and what his motives were and the healing process that he entered into but after reading These Stone Walls he is completely demoralized at what this tale of victimhood has become because he doesn't believe fifty percent of the accusations that he is reading and in good conscience he says he now has to make a statement and he has come forward saying that he cannot live with himself and his own recovery if he does not do everything in his power to help me because he believes that the case against me was a fraud and he says "It isn't in my name – this SNAP is not going to be speaking in my name" for this.

Interviewer: Good for him. It's about time. We really need this break from SNAP and the narrative that they push.

Fr Gordon: He's not the only one – there are several other that's the most encouraging thing that I have seen that they feel that true advocacy involves calling the victims to healing, not to vengeance and this is just a

state of perpetual vengeance, never ending and that is not advocacy – that’s something very toxic. And so I give this man credit for what he’s doing. I think he’s incredibly honest with himself and I welcome his participation in it.

Interviewer: What about your family? What’s our time?

Fr Gordon: We have about 40 minutes.

Interviewer: Oh good, we have plenty of time.

Fr Gordon: I grew up in the Boston area. You know, it’s interesting. I just finished a book last weekend called *Faith* by Jennifer Haigh. It is an incredible novel. It’s just recently published this year and it’s about a Boston priest who’s accused in 2002 in the height of the big explosion in Boston he’s accused in a current case. He’s innocent of the accusation. The accusation was motivated by what was in the headlines and by money. But just the story of what happened to him how everyone in the archdiocese precluded his guilt, how his family distanced themselves from him. This was the story of my life. A friend of mine even sent her publisher a message saying “do you want to meet Fr Breen?” Fr Arthur Breen is the protagonist in her story. Go to www.thesestonewalls.com – I understand she’s been looking at the site. The story could be my autobiography, but my family has stood by me from somewhat of a distance.

I have two brothers and a sister. One brother has not spoken to me since the day I was accused and there’s been no explanation, no nuancing, no nothing and it’s pretty amazing that in Jennifer Haigh’s novel that happens to the priest there too – his sister stands by him, his brother ceases to speak, to even acknowledge his existence, and that’s a very painful thing. What makes it more painful for my family and for me – when I first came in here my sister and her husband and my nieces visited me weekly – every Sunday morning they trudged up here from Boston and after a few months I had to tell them “You can’t do this every week – this can’t be your Sunday every week – I can’t permit this so we now visit once or twice a year and I talk to them weekly on the telephone.

My nieces have grown up – I’m a stranger to them today. They were little girls when I came in here seventeen years ago. Now they’re married with families of their own and they have moved on and I have let them move on and encouraged them to move on but my sister and my brother in law and my younger brother stand by me and we talk frequently and I know they read the blog. My younger brother reads comments occasionally. He’s horrified sometimes by what he reads and that’s about as much family support as I need. My sister has an issue and I understand where she’s coming from in that she feels that as her brother, I am a priest who knew thousands of people. Everyone seemed to count on me and in her view everyone wanted something from me and I was like in the center of a large aquarium all the time and then somebody dropped something really nasty into the water and everyone fled and I was all alone. She wonders what happened to the thousands of parishioners – others who knew me, who trusted me, who counted on me and then all of a sudden in one day’s time – in one headline’s time – no longer knew me.

I’ve also been in prison for seventeen years - fifteen miles from the chancery office of my diocese and I have never been visited by a priest of my diocese and I have no explanation for that. I know the diocesan officials have said whenever this comes up, that early on in my incarceration I told them through unnamed third parties that I do not want to see anyone from my diocese – that’s not true – that has never taken place and I’ve never been told who these third parties are, but now so much time has gone by that there is simply no longer a spiritual connection between us.

A couple of years ago there was a priest in my diocese who wrote an op-ed piece for one of the local newspapers and he was advocating for a change in canon law so that every priest accused could be summarily laicized by his bishop rather than wait for the long interminable process in Rome. This man was taking the

position that the best way to avoid being targeted by a witch hunt was to join it, so I wrote him a letter – and it was a friendly letter – and I said “You know I read what you wrote and I take issue with it and I’m asking you as a brother priest from the point of view of the accused, to present a case for why I believe the canonical rights of priests must be protected in these decades old claims”. A week later I got a bigger envelope from him and I opened it up and inside was my letter unopened with a post it note that said “Communications with you are neither prudent nor welcomed”. I was furious. I was appalled, I was hurt, I was stifled. Stifled was the worst part about this. But you know, I have written about this but I have never revealed his name and I won’t reveal his name. I feel an obligation to protect my brother priests from scandal, even when they’re the cause of the scandal.

Other people have been appalled at this information. I do not know how to connect with some of them. There’s one who recently wrote to me. He’s a retiree from my diocese and he said, you know his letter was rather comical. He’s lived outside the diocese for years. He was kind of known as a rebel over the years. He wrote me a letter out of the blue and he said “You know, I’ve been reading your stuff.” He said “You support the Catholic League which I despise and you despise The Voice of the Faithful which I like – how dare you!” So I wrote him back and said “Well I’m only telling the truth here” and we went back and forth. He now wants to visit me

Interviewer: I like Bill Donohue

Fr Gordon: I like Bill Donohue.

Interviewer: I think he’s a rough and tumble Irishman – I like him.

Fr Gordon: Bill Donohue wrote me a letter one day and he said “You know, I got a call from a prominent Catholic writer who is trying to dissuade me from taking up your cause “ and he said “I told the writer that I am convinced by the evidence –evidence that you know about and evidence that you don’t know about”, and I give Bill Donohue a lot of credit.

Interviewer: He stands up.

Fr Gordon: He does, he does.

Interviewer: He really is interested in the truth.

Fr Gordon: He’s very interested in the truth. He’s also seeing something now that I have also been screaming from whatever rooftop is available to me for about ten years and that is these financial and other capitulations are not in the best interests of the Church. It’s a whole other kind of coverup.

Interviewer: Yes, right. It’s a whole other scandal – the money that’s flowing out. You know you brought up the aquarium analogy – and all of these thousands of people that loved you, trusted you; then they just disappear like mist in the sky, that so has bothered me since 2002 as a priest. I’m so ticked that the Catholic laity Like, what do you make of that, that one day you’re trusted and loved and then one all of a sudden the next day it disappeared like it was never like, was it real?

Fr Gordon: That’s all it takes.

Interviewer: You must ask yourself was any of it real to any of you people.???

Fr Gordon: In a sense we’re a tabloid culture. You know this News of the World scandal in London – it kind of caught my attention that ... I don’t blame the newspaper – I blame its readers – the people who bought into this – you know, like what kind of dirt can we get on anyone today?

Interviewer: Right, it is a whole culture, it’s our whole culture..

Fr Gordon: We want the dirt and the media has obliged then they simply give us what we're willing to buy. I don't blame the Boston Globe's Spotlight team.

Interviewer: I do.

Fr Gordon: I do in the sense that the Spotlight investigation is just that – it leaves all the rest of the details in darkness and focuses an intense light in one place that's often out of context and this was out of context.

Interviewer: Yes, I confronted Walter V Robinson twice in October when I was in the office about Shanley and did he know and Walter said "Yeah, I knew."

Fr Gordon: Yes, he does know. I wrote to Robinson several years ago. There was a case involving a young man who was accusing a Boston priest. I was aware that the case was a fraud. The young man was here in this prison with me and he approached me one day and asked me He had been visited by his attorney. This was interesting – this is an interesting story. This young man's name was Randy – in his thirties, early thirties – exuded charm. He was a con artist. He was in prison for being a con artist. He was not somebody who was in my circle of friends, which was pretty small in prison, but he showed up at my cell door one day and he said - big smile, a smile that could sell a used car to anyone and he said "I was just visited by my lawyer" and I said "Really, Randy" and he said "Yes, I need to talk to you" and I said "OK, well, talk". And he said "My lawyer asked me if I was a Catholic and I told him that well sort of, I used to be." He said "my lawyer asked me if I've ever had a problem with a priest." This was 2002. He said "I knew immediately where this was going and my lawyer said that if you want to accuse a priest of something I can put 50 grand into your account by the end of this year. A \$100,000 settlement split 50/50. All I need you to do is to come up with a name, a couple of details and a place." And so Randy said "I told the lawyer" . He wouldn't tell me who the lawyer was. "I told the lawyer that there just happens to be a priest on my pod in prison who's here after being accused and the lawyer said 'This is great 'cos they have access to directories.' He said there's this big directory of Catholics and he could probably get it".

And so Randy wanted me to help him find the name of a priest who might have been in his childhood community twenty years earlier, any priest, preferably someone dead or at least somebody who's got dementia , somebody who can't really deny it, but it doesn't matter whether they deny it. So I told Randy, Randy was offering me a finder's fee from the attorney, so this is a win-win situation all around so I said "Yes, except for the poor priest who you're about to accuse" and he said "Yes, well that's why we want a dead one. You pick a dead one and there's no harm, no foul."

Well obviously I refused this deal and Randy got out of prison and the next thing I know Randy is accusing a Boston priest and he's got a settlement pending. The Globe reported this. I wrote to the Globe writer and I wrote to the Archdiocese of Boston and said that I have evidence that this is a fraud and neither one responded. The Archdiocese settled the case. The same thing happened here in New Hampshire. A young man in here. This whole scam has not been lost on prison inmates. I'm amazed sometimes at the honesty around me. This is the place where if you really want a view of the Catholic sex abuse scandal, this is the place to go for it, because these guys see right through it – right through it. They see it. I floated something one day to some prisoners who were talking to me. I said that in my estimation about a third of these claims are false and they all said "Oh no, I don't agree – it's at least half, maybe more. I know these people" they said, "This is a scam and we're all wondering why we are not getting into it." And many inmates are attempting to – I've been approached at least a dozen times from inmates who want to know if I would give them the name of a priest from their childhood community and the deal's already made – their lawyer has already consented to this – we'll bring it, write a letter, get a settlement – no questions are asked. This is tragic.

Meanwhile, I don't know if you have ever read Pornchai's story online. It's on These Stone Walls under Commentary. Pornchai's my roommate in this prison for the last three years. It's an amazing story – an

absolutely incredible story. It's a very public story now but Pornchai is 38 years old. He spent 13 years in Maine State Prison's just supermax unit – 13 years locked up 24 hours a day because he was dangerous. He exuded anger. Pornchai murdered a man at the age of 18 and was given a 45 year sentence and he's been in prison since he was 18. Pornchai was taken against his will from Thailand when he was 11 years old – just literally plucked out of Thailand and brought here for illicit purposes and yet this has gone on in this kid's life and nobody has even taken a casual notice of it and yet he has had to witness this unfolding clergy sex abuse story where someone says some priest touched me funny 30 years ago; I'm going to be a victim and I'm going to be excused from my own failed life and I'm going to be given a lucrative check and I can't explain this to Pornchai in ways that he can understand.

He converted to Catholicism last year after reading the story of St Maximillian Kolbe. He took the name Maximillian as his confirmation name. He's completely transformed his life but what happened to him is unspeakable and he has witnessed the unfolding of the sex abuse story involving the Catholic Church from afar with horror that anyone can just pick up the phone and say "This priest touched me" and be handed \$50,000 and Pornchai is going to spend the rest of his life in prison what somebody else visited upon his life, and this place is filled with people like this. So they see the sex abuse scandal very differently and they wonder when the Church is going to wake up, and they wonder when the rest of society is going to wake up.

You know, Pornchai spent his childhood living with a man who exploited him and he's now living with me. Do you think for an instant that this kid would be willing to live with a predator? As he writes it, "I know predators", and he does not believe that I am one. His story is just horrific.

Interviewer: There is so much abuse. That's the tragedy of all this.

Fr Gordon: This place, this prison is built around abuse.

Interviewer: There's this crazy creepy Catholic Church story though. I've done a couple of films in central Europe and about the communist persecution of Christians and especially the Catholic Church and this is kind of like it where they came up with all this stuff – they did the same thing, they accused priests of anything and they print it in the papers and basically if you were a Catholic and known, you have no rights. And that's what's happened here in the short 12 years that its happened in this country and the bishops are playing patty cake with SNAP and the people that are causing this.

Fr Gordon: They're afraid and SNAP is given the loudest last voice of any newspaper coverage of the scandal. Even the Wall Street Journal has done this and I have called them on it. I have written to Journal reporters who have done this who have written anything about the Pope – anything that comes up. The last paragraph is an interview with David Clohessy.

Interviewer: Who says that the Church has not done enough.

Fr Gordon: [As David Clohessy says] "The Church hasn't done enough, the Church has done nothing, the Church has changed nothing ..." The Wall Street Journal citing David Clohessy and SNAP as accurate. I called them on it and they stopped doing it. They actually stopped doing it. I actually saw a Wall Street Journal article about the sex abuse scandal in Europe and David Clohessy is not even mentioned or Barbara Blaine not even mentioned in it. I'm amazed that its happened finally but I think I embarrassed them into it.

Interviewer: I hope somebody does – because the media is in on it - with the Globe and the New York Times – they are in on it – as you said, Laurie Goodstein or whoever her name, she was in Rome while SNAP was there – why is Laurie Goodstein in Rome at the same exact time that SNAP was there; obviously they're working together.

Fr Gordon: Yes.

Interviewer: Obviously Anderson was there because .. the bishop from Belgium – it was all connected.

Fr Gordon: Exactly.

Interviewer: Anything else? This is great. We've got so much to work with. So OK, I'm going to contact Dorothy. Is it OK to speak with Jim Abbott?

Fr Gordon: It is in a sense but be aware that he's limited in what he can say

Interviewer: You wanted me to ask him can I speak to him.

Fr Gordon: Yes, and I will tell him Yes.

Interviewer: And everything can be off the record until ... now when's your case coming up.

Fr Gordon: I don't know... Off the record – I just received finally an appellate brief that's just been two years in the making. I have a very good attorney in New York City who has taken this case and we have involved in fundraising trying to keep it going – that's been the biggest obstacle. Jim Abbott has tremendous credentials as a

Interviewer: Former FBI agent

Fr Gordon: 40 years as a special agent supervisor in charge of covert operations for the New York region of the FBI. It's a little hard to top that investigatory credential. Jim has spent two years and over 1,000 hours in direct investigation of the case. He has interviewed everyone who would agree to speak to him. None of the accusers would agree to speak with him, but

Interviewer: Except for this one...

Fr Gordon: Except for this one and some of the family members of others have been helpful. There's been an enormous amount of information that has surfaced.

Interviewer: I hope people go after this McLaughlin

Fr Gordon: Whoa ... McLaughlin I believe is a very dangerous man, not just to me but to others. He's a crusader and I think his target was never me – it was the Catholic Church. It didn't matter which priests he brought down, he took great personal pleasure and a sense of accomplishment in destroying the so far four priests he has investigated.

Interviewer: What about Brennan the judge?

Fr Gordon: I don't really have an explanation For Brennan. I believe he was biased, well in this sense, this is one thing I have been able to ascertain. The mother of the accusers was, as I said, a sex abuse investigator for Child Protective Services in New Hampshire. At the time of my trial she was present in the courtroom even testifying as the aggrieved mother of four young men who trusted their priest and were raped by him and in her story and world view. I didn't realize this until the very end of the trial but she wept one day on the stand recounting how she and her sons had come to trust me and how she was oblivious to all this that was happening, and then one day, on that day after she testified and there was a short break and a lawyer who had been present in the courtroom but not involved in the case walked up to me in the men's room outside in the lobby. I was still a free man then. He said "You know, there's something really strange going on here", and I said "Really?". He said "Oh yeah, you know she testifies in this court, in front of this judge all the time and she's always cool, calm, collected, succinct, precise no matter how horrible or horrific what she's saying and it dawned on me she and this judge know each other. She has testified in his court as a State's witness on numerous sexual assault cases as the representative of Child Protective Services and now here she is in his presence as the victim – how can this be?" And I was never able to get an answer to that question.

Then it also turns out that I am not the first person her son, the one at trial, Thomas accused. He also accused her husband of sexual abuse. His adoptive - his brothers were all adopted - his adoptive father. I understand at some point he recanted it after accusing me but we were never made aware of that – this was news to me. It turned out that in a treatment program for his drug addiction he claimed on the witness stand that he told his therapist that I sexually abused him. The therapist who could not really direct herself to this during the trial because of confidentiality issues, has since ascertained that he did not accuse me, that the person that he accused was his own adoptive father and that the only time he ever used my name was in his discharge contract. He wrote my name as his choice of contact person in sobriety and she said “There’s no way that we would have let that go by if he was accusing him”, but that somehow never ended up in front of the jury and that’s the other issue, is that sex abuse claimants are seen as victims throughout the system from day one and so their reputation is protected and their name is protected.

I believe that the only reason I have not been continually subjected to false claims by people I do not even know is that it became clear that their names were going to be publicized. All of a sudden it halted in my regard but not in regard to most other priests so I have encouraged priests that if the accusation is in fact false, you must publicize the name of your accuser in whatever way possible. If the media won’t do it, find another way to do it. Do it, write a blog post, something, because that’s the only thing that’s going to stop this tidal wave is when false accusers are exposed.

Interviewer: Do you think that the mother believes it? What dynamic do you think is going on there?

Fr Gordon: I don’t know. I don’t know.

Interviewer: If you saw her in the street What would you say?

Fr Gordon: You know it’s funny, I dreamed of that. I’ve dreamed that I’ve been outside of prison and ran into her on the street and said “You know, it isn’t true – it was never true. You know that, right?” and she gives me a look in the dream as if to say “Well, yeah” but it ends right there. Nothing is ever said. I don’t know what she believes..... I don’t know.

You know there was an incident involving her family – it was actually at the time I first met her family. I was driving through her town. I was actually stationed – I spent a summer internship in a neighboring community. I was driving through her town – it was a little town called Marlborough just outside of Keene, New Hampshire. One of her sons was in the street flagging down a car, and I was the car. I pulled over and asked him what was wrong. He said his little brother drowned in their pool and he can’t get help so I pulled in to the side street. I pulled into their driveway. I went to their back yard with him and there were three or four of her teenage kids there and they had a six year old boy – a little African American boy. These were African American and native American adopted kids.

He was on the ground and pale and the next door neighbor was a nurse and she was trying to revive him and I asked her how long she had been trying and she said “a couple of minutes” and she was very frightened that she had lost him and she had the boy on his back and she was trying to give him mouth to mouth but she was getting no air in and I realized that his abdomen was distended so I grabbed him and turned him over and squeezed and the water came gushing out of his mouth and lungs and then I smacked him in the buttocks and he started to cry and it cleared his lungs. It wasn’t a hard smack but it saved his life and the nurse said “That’s about the most incredible thing I’ve ever seen”, she said, “I’ve never even thought of that. It’s done in childbirth to clear the lungs”. And he started coughing and choking and this town had a volunteer ambulance crew and I stayed there with him..

It took 90 minutes to get the ambulance there. Got him to the hospital and the doctors told his mother that I had saved his life by this and she thanked me and we became friends. She presented in court that I used this

incident to infiltrate myself into her family to take advantage of her sons and that to me was the most the most hideous part of all of their testimony was that statement ; that I was presented as being subhuman in that way. I don't know what she's thinking. I don't know how she justifies it. I know that money talks and money spoke very loudly in this case. And there are again, aspects of the money involved that I think are going to come out in time and the role that it played, but it played a predominant role.

Interviewer: Oh wow. What a wonderful interview. I think we have a lot to work with and I really appreciate your willingness to trust me and I am hoping for the best that I can make a compelling, you know - argument that there are lots – and I agree, I think there are fifty percent – and I told that to Robinson and that's why he refused to speak to me on camera he said "I only believe there's a few" but I think its fifty percent at least.

Fr Gordon: The Globe doesn't want to be in a position of having to take any of this back

Interviewer: No they will not take any of this back. But I'm going to try. At least I need to say that they declined to give an interview .

POST INTERVIEW CHIT CHAT