

March 20, 2002

To Whom It May Concern:

My mother has asked me to write this for you, although in all honesty, I don't really see much point to it. It happened over 35 years ago, to a man who has been dead and buried for almost 6 years. However, it is my fault that recently my mother found out about this incident, and if this will help restore the peace I feel I shattered for her, I will do as she asked. My brother shared a secret with me, a secret shame and horror and humiliation. I kept that secret for over 20 years, and would have continued to do so, but for a combination of circumstances, that I basically misinterpreted. My mother and I were talking about the Father Gaegan cases, and how it has affected the church, the priests, the kids etc. While we were talking I got the impression that my mother was aware of what my brother had been through, thus I made what I thought were vague references to it a couple of times. Shortly my mother picked up on it and asked me straight out what I was referring to, and I blurted out "Father McDonagh raped [redacted]" Believe me, that was the last thing I would have planned to say, but it's out there now, much to my chagrin, and I guess we all have to live with the consequences of my big mouth. My mother says it has helped her put pieces together that never made sense before, and I pray that's true, because I can't erase my words. So now I sit here and type and erase, type and erase. Who knows, maybe this is my penance for thoughtlessness.

I loved my brother [redacted] very much. In my eyes, for many years, he could do no wrong. He was smart, handsome, talented, popular, loving and sensitive. He would never kill a bug even in the house, but would catch it and release it outside. There were times that I had done something wrong and he took the blame for it, or if we had both been involved, he said it was his idea, often taking my punishment as well as his own. We had the normal kid disagreements and arguments, he was no saint, and I'm afraid I was more than half hellion, but it was never anything really big. I always knew that if I needed him, he would be there for me. Then towards the end of his high school, in 1964-65, things started to change. He gradually became really withdrawn and moody. He was rarely home, and when he was, he would stay up in his room, by himself, to the extent that my father referred to it as him hiding in his "ivory tower, above us all". He started getting in trouble, and was always having awful arguments and fights with my parents, especially my father, until they would just scream at each other, and sometimes it turned violent. I used to hide on the stairs and peak through the railing, watching them go at it in the living room, and it scared me so much. I know now, that he was also starting to experiment with both drugs and alcohol, which obviously, only made things worse. It all came to a head in the fall of 1965, when he was enrolled in the University of New Hampshire. He must have gotten into some more trouble there, because my parents had to go up to the school to talk to the counselors and they left me "in charge" of the family and household while they were gone. This was a really big thing for me, being 13 1/2, and I took it very seriously. I was responsible for what happened while they were gone, and in

I will
not accept

never
mis (completely deny it)

my eyes I blew it, and unconsciously, I think I punished myself for it for many years through my own self-destructive behavior. I remember that I was in the kitchen on a beautiful fall day, making apple turnovers, when in walked [REDACTED]. Now, I knew he was supposed to be in NH with the counselors and my parents, but instead he was in [REDACTED]. Something was obviously very wrong! Yet he told me everything would be all right, went upstairs, packed a suitcase, and left. My world, life and family quickly fell apart, but that's another story.

No one knew where [REDACTED] had gone, although now we know he went to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I was so excited he was home, but quickly learned that my big brother was long gone and a very different man had come back in his place. At one point during his stay, my mother thought he was having a nervous breakdown, or something and called an ambulance to take him to the hospital. Later he told me that he had taken LSD and was talking crazy; no wonder she was so afraid! Anyway, after a short time in Boston, he was gone again, heading toward [REDACTED] this time, I think. A pattern developed over the years.

[REDACTED] He became really sick with pneumonia, and was living in an abandoned building with no heat. Again he claimed he wanted to come home, but by this time my parents were a little wiser, and sent a plane ticket instead of money, which made him furious! After that we lost track of him completely, for many years.

Around the time of the birth of my third child, in December 1977, [REDACTED] was admitted to a psychiatric hospital in [REDACTED] after a suicide attempt. The doctor called my parents, believing [REDACTED] needed to know his family still cared about him. My mother rallied once again and contacted him. She also called me in [REDACTED] and asked me to call him as well, which I did. I had changed completely since the last time I had talked to him, and [REDACTED] didn't approve of most of the changes. (Like him, I had also been very involved with the whole 1960's and 70's anti-establishment drug scene.) The thing he objected to most was the fact that I had become a Born Again Christian and was attending a Southern Baptist Church. This was during the time that Anita Bryant, who was also a Southern Baptist, was leading a big anti-gay crusade, and by then, he was openly living as a homosexual. Somehow in [REDACTED] mind, I was guilty of hate, gay bashing and bigotry because I also attended a Southern Baptist church, which led to some interesting conversations, to say the least. It was during one of these arguments, that he started screaming about the "bastard who raped" him, which obviously got my attention. Between then and the time that he died we talked

about this several times. I know I never got the entire story, nor all the details, but this is what I do know.

My brother [REDACTED] was a victim of sexual abuse at the hands of a Catholic priest when he was in his teens. The priest's name was Father McDonagh, and he was assigned to the Incarnation Church in Melrose, Mass in the 1960's and maybe longer. I know that Father McDonagh blamed [REDACTED] and told him that he had "caused Father to sin". I know he was warned never to tell anyone, because it was his fault and he could go to hell for it. I know my brother went to the priest for help, counseling and guidance and received violence, betrayal, and brutality instead. I know that my brother lived a life of torment and self-hatred, which he tried to cover with drugs and alcohol for years. I know he worked as a gay prostitute for years to support his habits. I believe this is probably how he contracted the HIV virus he suffered with for over 10 years. I know he finally died from full-blown AIDS before he was fifty. I know that it was a colossal waste of a brilliant mind and loving spirit and life that was lost to his family and the world forever. I know I hold Father McDonagh and the Catholic Church responsible for allowing this to happen, not just to my brother, who I adored and lost, but to hundreds of children, over and over and over, protecting the offenders and not the victims. Despite how strict, ingrained and involved my Catholic upbringing, I know I will never return to a church that could allow such things to happen.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

never happened