

STATEMENT OF

My name is

I live at

My birthdate is

Sometime in the summer of 1986, I moved with my family to Heath, Massachusetts from the state of Connecticut. When our family first began living in Heath, Massachusetts, we were befriended by a priest by the name of Father Richard L. LaVigne, whose parish is ^{St. Joseph in} Shelburne Falls, located about nine miles from Heath. Father LaVigne visited our house frequently and acted in a very friendly, big brotherly way towards me and my brothers. In the fall of 1986, my family began attending the church in Shelburne Falls. At some point, Father LaVigne asked my mother if I would like to be altar boy, and I agreed, as I had served as an altar boy at our church in Connecticut before (sometime later, my brother and my brother also became altar boys at the same church serving under Father LaVigne).

Father LaVigne was the only Catholic priest at the parish in Shelburne Falls, but on occasions, ~~when he was absent,~~ ^{on week-ends} Father Thrasher would fill in for him. When I first began serving as an altar boy in the Fall of 1986 there were about

eight altar boys ranging in age from seven to eighteen. I was then thirteen years old. My duties as altar boy included washing the priest's hands during the service, and during the consecration to give the wine and water to the priest. Most of my work as altar boy occurred on Sundays and on religious holidays.

Father LaVigne would be very outgoing, friendly and joking whenever he visited our family in Heath. His visits continued after I had started to become an altar boy, and frequently involved staying for dinner. His personality was much more grave and serious when dealing with parishioners in general.

After I had been an altar boy for sometime, approximately in the Spring of 1987, Father LaVigne asked me to start doing various jobs at the church, including mowing the lawn, carpentry and other miscellaneous functions. I did these on my personal time after work. As my school was in Shelburne Falls, Father LaVigne would frequently pick me up at school and take me back to the church where I would do the work. He would then either drive me home or my parents would come and get me. On days when I was serving as an altar boy, my parents would come to church with me, stay for the service and then generally take me back, but as time wore on sometimes Father LaVigne would ask me to stay for supper.

When I was doing the various jobs that Father LaVigne asked me to perform in the afternoon, he would sometimes give me a snack before I did the work and also talk with me. The more that I worked at the church, the more Father LaVigne would cut short the work and bring me into his personal living quarters and spend social time with me. On occasion, Father LaVigne would invite my parents and me to supper in his personal quarters. Sometimes he would ask them if I could stay over night.

As I spent more social time with Father LaVigne he began telling me dirty jokes in private, most of them about men's penises. I noticed he would never tell such jokes in front of my parents or in front of anyone else, only when I was alone in his presence. Social things that Father LaVigne would do when I was at the parish would include playing tapes of religious music for me, taking me out to an ice cream parlor in Shelburne Falls, or taking me to the movies in Greenfield. On those occasions Father LaVigne would dress in street clothing. On occasions when we went to the movies in Greenfield, Father LaVigne would put his arm around me. I was embarrassed that some of my friends might notice us. However, there was no further contact of a physical nature at this point. I thought of Father LaVigne as having a strange, locker room sense of humor, but had no suspicion of anything

else. I had never had any sexual experience of any kind before, and had no basis upon which to rest any suspicion.

In late May or early June of 1987, Father LaVigne told me that he was going on vacation in Arizona, and asked me if I would like to go with him. I had never been anywhere outside of New England, and was thrilled for the opportunity to travel. Father LaVigne offered to pay and did in fact pay for the entire trip. My parent's, trusting Father LaVigne, said that I could go.

Father LaVigne offered even to pay for clothes for me. He took me shopping in North Hampton and took control over what clothes I would buy, even though I did not like them myself and would not have worn them except for my feeling of obligation to Father LaVigne. He picked out underwear that was peculiarly tight on me and told me when I protested that that is the way underwear is suppose to fit. Everything was purchased to his taste. He even bought matching bathing suits for the two of us so that we would look the same. He insisted on going into the dressing room with me and watching me while I undressed. He also bought me "odd" pieces of clothing like jock straps. When I would pick out a shirt that I liked he would say, "No, that is to clashy, how about this?" When we left for the airport in late June, my father told me that "if anything goes wrong I will find a way of getting you back

home". The trip took about a couple of weeks starting in late June and ending in early July. I still have the plane ticket stubs from that trip.

We stayed in Phoenix at the house of friends of Father LaVigne, an elderly couple who welcomed us and left shortly thereafter, leaving the house to Father LaVigne and me. The first couple of days were fine. We spent a lot of time swimming in the pool that was in the backyard of the house and walking around downtown Phoenix and going out to eat. Then one night, Father asked me if I wanted to sleep in his bed, seeing he had an air conditioner in his room. It can get pretty hot in Arizona, and it was then, so Father persuaded me to sleep in his bed with him. Well, we were both lying there and he started to tickle my back. When he asked me if I would tickle his back, I did, but it made me feel uncomfortable. Soon, I fell asleep and was awakened and startled to find Father LaVigne's hand on my penis. I was terrified, I could not move! I was conscious of what was happening, but Father did not realize that I was awake. He thought I was sleeping, but I spoke up and said, "Why do you have your hand on my dick?" He quickly removed his hand and said, [REDACTED] go to the bathroom, I am tired of keeping my hand on you." (Father knew I was a bedwetter at one time.) He always turned everything into a cruel joke, because he said, "If you started to go, I was going to squeeze it." This

was the first of a number of incidences of sexual abuse and contact.

For a few days, everything cooled down as far as Father making me feel uncomfortable, but shortly after that, the next sexual advance took place in the swimming pool in the back yard of the house we were staying. It was private and we would go swimming almost every night to cool off. One night Father asked me if I wanted to go "skinny dipping". He said, "No one will see us." I did not care, I was not about to do that. Father got violently mad and he would yell such things as "You're no fun! Friendship is based on trust and if you don't trust me, what are you doing here?"

Swimming every night is fun, but when you walk around in a wet bathing suit, you tend to get chafe marks. Well, sure enough, Father noticed it and asked what it was. I told him it was chafe marks and Father said, "I am responsible for anything that happens to you while we are on vacation." then he said to me, "go into the bathroom and pull down your pants." He began checking my penis to see if any chafe marks were on it. He said that there was a rash and it needed medication. Soon Father came back with the medication and told me to go into the bedroom and lie down on the bed, and he would put the medication on. Remembering the previous encounter and being afraid, I said to Father that I would put

the medication on myself, but in his usual manipulation, he said to me, "I'll put it on because there is a right way and a wrong way to apply it." So, there I was on the bed, scared and lying on my back with my legs spread wide open, allowing this priest to put medication on my penis. He would apply a little of the medication and sit back and make conversation, only to prolong the application. I felt very humiliated and Father said, "You are so trustful. If anyone knew I was doing this to you, I would get fired. You're not going to tell anyone are you?" Being very upset inside, I smiled nervously, then it was over. He only applied the medication that one time, but periodically throughout the rest of the vacation, he would touch my private area. Throughout all of these terrible events, I was too emotionally scared to call home.

The night after Father LaVigne applied the medication to me as described above, he tried to persuade me to sleep in the nude on his bed. I refused, remembering the previous incidents, and he became angry and said "okay, don't come to me if you feel chafed tomorrow". Throughout the trip I was very scared, puzzled and confused, but felt that if I tried to get any help, Father LaVigne would get very angry. I was also intimidated physically by him as he is 6'1", with a full build, and I was only about 5'7" at the time and very slight.

A side trip we took during the Arizona trip was to the Grand Canyon. This was a camping trip and Father LaVigne zipped two bags together and forced me to sleep next to him. He constantly tried to fondle my private parts at night and I had to push him away forcefully. He said repeatedly to me, "What's wrong with you, don't you trust me?". Frequently during the trip, Father LaVigne would come up to me when I wasn't looking and with the back of his hand whack my testicles and laugh when I complained about the pain. He also would try to tickle me at night and reach for my genitals (I was still sleeping in the same bed in his room, as it was the only air conditioned room in the house). Whenever I would resist his attempts he would continue to ask me what was wrong with me, tell me that friendship was based on trust, and ask me "do you think I'm trying to do something to you?" I would mostly remain silent during those times. Father LaVigne took several pictures of me during the trip, and I believe I may have taken some pictures of him. They would show that he selected the same bathing suit for the both of us before we went on the trip.

At the end of the trip, as we were returning from Arizona, Father LaVigne asked me if I liked the trip. Not wanting to appear ungrateful, I said yes. Then Father LaVigne stated that if people knew what had happened they would think he was strange. He then said "you're not going to tell anyone about

it are you?", I shook my head to indicate no. Father LaVigne also said that "the problem with the priesthood is that you can't be yourself. I like vacations because then I can be myself again for awhile. I rarely see anyone I know while I am on vacation". He then asked me if I would like to go on a trip again; I was non committal and said maybe. I was scared at the time to tell him otherwise.

During the Arizona trip Father LaVigne at one point started allowing me to drive his car, although I had no permit to drive. While warning me (during our flight home) not to tell anyone about what had happened on the trip, he brought up the driving and told me that "if you tell anyone what happened, I will just have to tell your parents about your driving illegally".

I noticed that when we went to restaurants in Arizona, Father LaVigne would become very loud and demanding when dealing with waitresses and make extremely irrational demands for service. This was a side of his personality that I had never witnessed before.

When we returned from the trip from Arizona, it was approximately 9:00 when we arrived in Shelburne Falls. Although Father LaVigne could have taken me home he called my parents and said that I would spend the night with him at the

Rectory. When we arrived, I had to go to the bathroom, and while I was there, Father LaVigne came walking right in as though he were looking for something in the vanity. His eyes kept glancing at my private area and again I was humiliated! There I was, sitting on the toilet while he was pretending to look for something in the vanity, but he would never take anything out. After Father left the bathroom, I finished up and came out. He asked me, "Did you wipe up?" I said "Yes". Then he began telling me how to wipe my own rectum and started wiping me himself. ^{Putting his finger in my rectum, and I could tell because I know ①} He told me that I did not know how to "clean myself" and directed me to "go hop in the shower", which I did. I felt sick and embarrassed! Right in the middle of my shower, he walked in the bathroom and threw cold water over the top of the shower stall onto me. Then Father said, "Don't forget to wash under your arm pits and under your sack." When I got out of the shower, I started to dry off while he stood watching me and glancing at my private area. Then Father said, "You dried off wrong." So, he finished drying me off, wiping my penis and rectum himself. I got dressed and he insisted I sleep in his bed because he had an air conditioner in his bedroom. Father said it was alright to hug, which made me feel uncomfortable. Then ~~he said~~ he would not hug, he would "embrace" (his words) and he said, "God wants everyone to get along and care for one another and some people express this differently. You can express how you feel by touching and embracing, even men".

① what it feels like to wipe my self with toilet paper, and I know the difference between that and and finger in my rectum.

When we returned to my family's house the next day, Father LaVigne was aggressive about doing all the talking about the trip, purposely not letting me get a word in edgewise. I did not tell my parents what had happened, as I was still afraid of what Father LaVigne might do. I decided to keep the incident to myself and hope that time would solve things and that Father LaVigne would not pursue me any further.

Several days later, Father LaVigne called and tried to get me to come down to the Rectory. I tried to put him off with various excuses, but after a week or so he succeeded in persuading me to come down there. When I went back, supposedly to do work, Father LaVigne prepared lunch, had me do minimal yard work and then took me to Northhampton to see a French movie. We then went back to the Rectory. I was afraid of what would happen and said that I had to call back home and tried to use excuses to go home to get ready for school. Father LaVigne got mad and refused to take me home. He said, "Tell your parents that I can't take you home." I then had to call my parents to get them to come get me. For some weeks after that time, Father LaVigne called and tried to get me to come down to the Rectory and I would resist as much as I could. I was still an altar boy, so I did serve at the church on Sundays. I also continued to do odd jobs, but refused to stay overnight.

That winter I got a job at Mount Snow and therefore cut back on doing odd jobs at the rectory. Father LaVigne continued to call and ask me if I wanted to go on trips. On one occasion in early December, I did agree to go to New York City with Father LaVigne, where we stayed at his friend's house from Friday through Monday. It was basically a sight-seeing trip. On that trip he did not try to take advantage of me, and I believe he was trying to regain some sort of trust.

Through the winter of 1987-88, as I started working more and more at Mount Snow, I stopped doing odd jobs at the Parish. However, in early January, in the week after New Year's Day, a kit for a grandfather clock that I had ordered, while in the company of Father LaVigne, arrived at the Rectory. (I had mentioned wanting to to build a clock and Father LaVigne had volunteered to take care of delivery expenses, although I had paid for the kit myself). Without telling me, Father LaVigne arranged to have the kit delivered to the Rectory. When it arrived, Father LaVigne called to tell me that it was there and invited me down to the Rectory. My parents delivered me to the Rectory. As soon as I saw the boxes, I was excited and wanted to get started working on the clock. However, Father LaVigne insisted on me giving him a hug first. We then worked on the clock together that evening and for several nights thereafter. I stayed overnight several

times that week, because we were staying up late working on the clock. On those occasions Father LaVigne forced me to get in bed with him. He got on top of me and started reaching under my underwear to fondle my pubic hair and penis. I would struggle very hard to get him to stop, but he would not listen and would not give up until I finally became passive and gave up the struggle. The nights that I stayed there were about four out of seven days. On a couple of occasions when I stayed over I tried to tell Father LaVigne that I had better call my parents to ask whether I can stay here. Father LaVigne claimed that he had already called my father and obtained permission. In fact, my father had never heard from him, as I found out the next day, when my father asked me where I had been and why I had not called him. During these night visits, Father LaVigne, when I tried to resist his advances, kept saying, "Come on, what's wrong with you; don't you trust me?" After the clock was built, Father LaVigne kept asking me to come to the Rectory to spend evenings and frequently nights. He volunteered to write me school papers for me and did so much work on them that my teachers openly accused me of submitting work that was not my own. When he was on top of me in bed trying to fondle me, he responded to my resistance by saying "We're all God's children, we express our love in different ways. This is my way, this is how I express it, there is nothing wrong with it". I never said

anything in those times because I was so frightened. I could only resist by being passive.

Frequently, when I was at the Rectory, Father LaVigne would hide the clock that we had built and tell me to go upstairs and make no noise when anyone was meeting with him. At one point when I dropped something while I was upstairs (during a meeting he was conducting with members of the parish), he came up afterwards and was very angry. He made a point of hiding me whenever Father Thrasher, his occasional substitute, was present in the Rectory. One evening, when Father LaVigne was returning with me to the Rectory, he discovered that Father Thrasher was there. He forced me to get on his back and ride piggyback upstairs to his room so that Father Thrasher would not hear two sets of footsteps. Whenever I was at the Rectory overnight, Father LaVigne would lock all the doors to his quarters so that no one could find out I was there. During visits overnight, Father LaVigne would frequently brush my teeth for me and wipe my rectum, forcing me to push my head into his private area as he did so.

Other behavior would include hitting me in my testicles when I was not looking, on a number of occasions, and laughing when I told him to stop and saying "come on that doesn't hurt". He would also grab my underwear from behind and give me wedgies and just laugh when I complained.

Father LaVigne would pick me up at school, in order to take me back to the Rectory to do chores. If he saw me with any girls he would get very upset and curious, although I had no girlfriends. He more than once said "I know why you want a girlfriend, to have sex with her", and he would discourage me from having girlfriends.

During this time, Father LaVigne started offering me gifts. He personally paid for me to have braces and at one point offered to give me a car. The cost of the braces was over \$1,300, and I felt very guilty and obligated about this, because my parents would not have been able to afford the work. On a few occasions I went up to Father LaVigne's private house in Ashfield, Massachusetts. Curiously on those occasions although Father LaVigne would force me to sleep with him and try to snuggle, he was not as aggressive about sexual contact. It was at the Rectory that he was most aggressive. In addition to the sexual contact at the Rectory, Father LaVigne would frequently insist on washing me and cleaning my rectum, claiming that I did not know how to do it.

In the spring of 1988, I went on a trip to Pennsylvania with Father LaVigne in the Pennsylvania Dutch Country. It was a four day trip, purely a vacation for Father LaVigne. We stayed in hotels and at camp sights. On these occasions Father LaVigne repeated the same kind of sexual behavior as at

the Rectory, getting on top of me, grabbing my pubic hairs and penis, pinning me down beneath him and pushing his body into mine and rocking back and forth. Again as in all the other occasions, my only available defense was to be passive. Around Easter of 1986, I stopped being the altar boy on Sundays. Thereafter I only served as altar boy during holy weeks. That summer the visits continued on about a once a week basis, each time with the excuse of me doing yard work, but Father LaVigne really wanted me there for personal reasons. I would never do very much yard work and he would always divert me to other activities. I continued to be intimidated and scared of resisting Father LaVigne. He had been paying orthodontia expenses for sometime, which my family could not have afforded. He also had threatened to expose the fact that I had driven the car illegally and that on occasions I had been drinking wine at the Rectory, which he had freely given me. (My family did not allow me to ever drink at home, and as far as I knew, they were not aware of me ever drinking.) I also felt that Father LaVigne would find a way to discredit any story that I might tell and then take revenge on me.

The same pattern of once a week visits went on during the fall of that year, which was 1988. I took a three day trip to Canada with Father LaVigne. We stayed in either hotels or in camp sights. The same kind of sexual assaults that had

happened on the Pennsylvania trip or in the Rectory occurred as well. Father LaVigne spoke French well, and seemed to enjoy speaking French in front of me without translating what he was saying. I was totally dependent upon him for communication. After we returned from the Canada trip, I tried to cut back on visits to the Rectory and succeeded in reducing them to once a month. However, Father LaVigne kept on calling me constantly at home and trying to persuade me to come visit him. For the rest of that academic year, visits were approximately once per month. During those visits Father LaVigne would continue to try to engage me in sexual conduct. He also kept pressuring me with offers of help and gifts, offering to help me with school work etc. When it was obvious that I was continuing to resist and trying to cut back the visits, he complained "there is a wall between us, why don't you come over and we'll talk about it". After the end of that school year, in June of 1989, Father LaVigne started persisting again with a request that I accompany him on vacation. I was openly hesitant about going with him, and because he was annoyed at my indecision, he said "I don't want to pay for you in advance and have you drop out at the last minute. So if you want to go, you will have to pay your own way". I finally decided to go, both because of the ongoing sense of obligation that he had built up in me (he had continued to pay for orthodontia expenses) and because I did want to see California. Father LaVigne also pressured me by

acting as if his vacation would be ruined if I did not go with him. On the trip, Father LaVigne paid for all expenses but the plane ticket, which I personally paid for.

In California we stayed in a series of motels and camped out. The same patterns that occurred on the Pennsylvania and Canada trips occurred on this. When I continued to try to resist his sexual conduct, Father LaVigne said "You're no fun; I don't know why you come on these trips". While saying this he would be holding me by the shoulders and shaking me and trying to get me to submit. While on the California trip, I tried to treat it as simply a sight-seeing trip. I consciously tried to make a barrier between me and Father LaVigne with respect to his sexual conduct. He was obviously getting more nervous about the relationship and what would happen if it stopped. I remember him saying at one point

I enjoy your company; you're the only one who knows how I feel, you're the only one who knows how I truly feel".

At one point, Father LaVigne had also threatened to move out of Shelburne Falls so that he would never see me again. I believe he did this to see how I reacted. I reacted passively to this threat and I believe he was upset by my lack of response.

I continued to be concerned about how my orthodontia expenses would be paid for. In fact, Father LaVigne eventually stopped paying for the orthodontia after we had returned from the California trip. At some later point, when I visited the orthodontist for treatment, he asked me whether I was still friends with Father LaVigne and when I said no the orthodontist said "He sure is a strange person". My father at great personal hardship and expense then had to assume the costs of completing the orthodontia because we had no dental insurance. (My father could not pay, so Father LaVigne having the commitment paid for the whole treatment)

I understand that Father LaVigne also began paying orthodontia expenses for a friend of mine, at some time before the summer of 1990.

After the California trip, Father LaVigne knew that I wanted out of the relationship. He told me, "You call me, I won't call you". However, in spite of saying that, he did call me constantly, and whenever I would answer he would say "What's the matter, you haven't called in a while".

To try to ease the situation I would occasionally visit at the Rectory, but only in the daytime and would not stay over at night. Whenever I would talk to him or visit him he would quiz me about why I had changed. By this time I had my own car and was therefore able to drive myself away after visits.

The visits were at most once per month during the next year. In the early fall of 1990, members of my own religious community, The Holy Trinity Lay Community, stopped going to church in Shelburne Falls because a difference of opinion about how religious services should be conducted. I used this fact as an excuse to tell Father LaVigne in a phone conversation that we should discontinue any visits. He responded "But we've been friends for so long; why let this ruin our friendship". He later called and said "I am reminding you that I had long ago said that if the relationship ever stopped it would be your fault". He then demanded that I return all gifts that he had ever given to me, and asked me to come to the Rectory. I did go to the Parish and swap items with Father LaVigne, returning gifts that he had made to me and taking back some wooden objects that I had made or given to him.

At that point, Father LaVigne asked me "don't you want to reconsider?" He asked me in for a cup of coffee, I said no. I could see in his expression that he appeared to be quite concerned and fearful.

I have subsequently learned that about the time that Holy Trinity Lay Community decided to stop going to the Parish, Father LaVigne, after asking my father why the decision had been made and being told of the reason, then asked "What does

think of this?" This puzzled my father, since I had nothing to do with the decision. I suspect that Father LaVigne was trying to discover whether I had told anybody anything about his prior misconduct.

In the spring of 1991, Father LaVigne sent a confirmation card to me upon my officially coming of age in the Catholic church. When I graduated from high school in May of 1991, Father LaVigne sent me a card "now you're stepping into the real world. There are plenty of decisions you will have to make. I know you'll make the right decisions". Also on the card he wrote, "I thought you would like to know that David SPR-001 (a boy whose name Father LaVigne had mentioned in the past during our conversations of being troubled) committed suicide". I thought it extremely odd that he would have included this information on a graduation card and can only conclude that he was trying to warn me not to reveal anything.

During my last year in high school, I was told by numerous class mates that they thought Father LaVigne was a homosexual and should be avoided. I kept all information about my own experience with Father LaVigne confidential and never told any one about it until now. I am emotionally scared, and it is very hard for me to trust people. I hate myself for allowing Father LaVigne to abuse me. When I could no longer keep it to myself I finally told some of these details to my sister, and

she told my parents. I am afraid that this sexual abuse may have happened to other boys and is happening now. I believe he abused my brother, who was only eight years old at the time, and I understand that he has taken other boys on vacation with him during the summer of 1991 to Arizona.

This is my statement I made this on the second or third week of September it was confirmed on the month of October 1991.