

## THE TRIAL *THE CASE AGAINST FATHER GORDON MACRAE*

On the 5th of May in 1993, Father Gordon MacRae had dinner with a few friends in Albuquerque, New Mexico. They quietly discussed months of grueling media coverage about their place of work and ministry. For the previous five years, Gordon MacRae had been director of admissions for the Paraclete Center for priests in Jemez Springs, New Mexico. The center provided spiritual renewal and psychological treatment for priests from throughout the continent who suffered "burn-out," chronic depression, and other plagues of our time. Some came to the center propelled by accusations of sexual misconduct. One of these, Father James Porter, became notorious for drawing hundreds of claims for civil damages against the dioceses where he served and against the New Mexico center where he had been treated some 25 years earlier.

Gordon MacRae returned from that dinner with his friends troubled by the growing culture of accusation and monetary demands brought years or decades after claims of abuse. At the meeting, he argued that priests so accused faced an impossibly steep climb if they were in fact innocent. A few who had been sent to the center because of such accusations maintained their innocence against an increasing climate of condemnation - even within the Church - for merely being accused. *"It is our job to treat these men,"* he argued, *"not prosecute them."*

Within an hour of his return from dinner on that day, Gordon MacRae opened his door to two police officers. A few nights earlier, he was awoken in the small apartment by the noise of a skirmish between police and a neighbor he did not know. He thought the officers were there to seek witnesses of the brawl. They asked MacRae for his name, and then informed him that he was named in a secret indictment in the State of New Hampshire where he stands accused of sexual abuse from a decade or more earlier. The officers had a warrant for his arrest which identified the time period of the claims as sometime between 1978 and 1983. It also identified the accusers only as "J.G." and "T.G." For the next three days, sitting in the Bernalillo County Jail, MacRae wracked his brain trying to figure out who these accusers were. He remembered two brothers with those initials, but dismissed accusations from them as beyond the realm of possibility.

It was not until a New Mexico court released him on personal recognizance that he learned that what he considered impossible was in fact true, and even worse than he thought. He was being accused in demands for monetary settlement by John, Thomas, and David Grover, three brothers from a family of eight multiracial adopted children he had known many years earlier. All three attributed to the priest in their civil claims responsibility for their pervasive drug and alcohol problems, and, in one case, his criminal history.

As a result of these charges, Gordon MacRae is today Inmate MacRae, No. 67546, having thus far served 14 years of a 67-year prison sentence imposed by the Honorable Arthur Brennan after a trial with no evidence or corroboration whatsoever. If he had taken the State's repeatedly offered deal in exchange for a guilty plea, MacRae would have left prison over ten years ago. As it stands, he will be in prison until the age of 108. At this writing, he is 55 years old. David, Thomas, and John Grover are now respectively 43, 41, and 40 years of age.

At trial, and in various statements and interviews, the three men claimed in 1993 to have first gone to a police detective who sent them to personal injury lawyers. The detective claimed, under oath at trial, that the brothers first went to lawyers who then sent them to the detective. The defense never got to the bottom of who went to whom first with these claims. Any monetary motive for bringing the claims became muddled in conflicting statements that have never been explained.

As with all such claims, however, the Church institutions named in civil lawsuits were anxious to settle with as little publicity, and as much distance from the accused, as possible. The arrest of Father MacRae generated headlines in New Hampshire where he once served, but little beyond a yawn from the New Mexico press where his employers were beleaguered by sensational coverage of the infamous Father Porter case. Prosecutors in New Hampshire weren't having this. In what today is known as a "Nifong tactic", the prosecutor faxed 40 pages of inflammatory reports of the Grover brothers' claims directly to an Albuquerque newspaper. This generated a headline in the **Albuquerque Journal** late in May of 1993: "Paraclete Official Indicted for Rape." Trial by media was now in full swing. Back in his own diocese, the priest's bishop and his lawyers didn't wait for a trial. They issued a press release that summarily convicted the accused priest: *"The Church has been a victim of the actions of Gordon MacRae just as these individuals have been. We mourn with those who were victimized before the discovery of these crimes."* There was little left for a jury to do.

Late in 1994, a criminal trial commenced in Cheshire County Superior Court in New Hampshire. The trial involved only the claims of one of the three brothers, Thomas Grover. Despite immense pre-trial media hype and rhetoric generated by the prosecutor, the actual testimony of the accuser was quite simple. The 225 pound, almost 30-year-old Thomas Grover wept dramatically as he described having sought MacRae out for counseling for his drug problem in the months preceding his 16th birthday some 12 or so years earlier. (In earlier reports of interviews with the police detective, all three accusers repeatedly revised their stories first claiming that they were 10 or 11 years old when abused. In one report, the detective wrote of having given them a copy of Father MacRae's resume as a "reference.")

Having been carefully coached by his personal injury lawyer and a therapist retained by the lawyer, the accuser testified that when he was not quite 16, he had five weekly appointments in MacRae's rectory office to discuss his problems, and claimed that he was berated, made to cry, and then raped at each of these sessions. Pressed by the defense for an explanation of why he would return for four subsequent sessions after having been raped, the accuser cried on cue while talking incoherently about having out-of-body experiences, and having "repressed" the memory of being raped from week to week. The coaching therapist was barred from the courtroom after she was observed signaling Thomas Grover to cry, a complaint the jury never heard. Her treatment file - inadmissible for the jury to see - revealed a letter from the therapist to Mr. Grover complaining that he hadn't shown up for one of his pre-trial sessions. *"I have some news,"* the letter announced. *"Jim (McLaughlin) told me that MacRae is being offered a plea deal his lawyer won't refuse so there won't be a trial. We can just move on with the settlement."* "Jim" is the police detective who choreographed this case for trial.

The plea deal statement was accurate. Verbally, and in writing, MacRae and his lawyer were offered a sentence of one to three years in exchange for a guilty plea. Entirely unknown to his jury, MacRae refused this offer six months before trial, and again a week before trial, and again right after Thomas Grover's testimony in the middle of trial. In the end, he was sentenced to prison for 67 years for maintaining his Constitutional right to trial and a presumption of innocence that never existed.

Following Mr. Grover's bizarre testimony, the State was allowed to put an expert witness on the stand. Leonard Fleischer, Ed.D., who, it later turned out was a mentor for the therapist barred from the court, testified about delayed reporting, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, out-of-body experiences, and - though not by name - so-called Child Abuse Accommodation Syndrome. Dr. Fleischer placed before the jury a statistic that got their attention. Thomas Grover had been in six residential drug treatment centers. Dr. Fleischer testified - with no evidence or substantiation - that 80 percent of men in drug treatment programs were sexually abused. The NH appeals court later ruled, and the prosecutor conceded, that this testimony should not have been allowed. It was dismissed by the court, however, as "harmless error." Grover's drug abuse and criminal history were now evidence of MacRae's guilt instead of his own. In this trial, it would be the only evidence offered.

When the prosecution rested, the judge admonished MacRae outside the presence of the jury that if he took the stand in his own defense, the judge would "open the door" to permit each of the accusing Grover brothers to testify about their respective claims, therefore creating a false sense of corroboration of all the claims. A fourth person, and then a fifth, had jumped aboard with their own claims and demands for settlement. One of these, Lawrence Carnevale, had accused the priest three times over the previous 11 years, each time with wildly different claims that were dismissed as unfounded. The other claimant came forward after privately trying to blackmail the priest, and then left the country to avoid the trial.

The judge's warning left little in the way of defense witnesses. Two priests who lived and worked with Father MacRae, and who would have been the only witnesses to the impossibility of the claims, had both died. Father Stephen Scruton, named by two of the Grover brothers as also having sexually assaulted them, fled the state when MacRae's lawyers tried to subpoena him. The jury never heard his name, or the fact that he was also accused. One priest stepped forward with knowledge that at least a part of Thomas Grover's testimony was demonstrably false. Grover had claimed in police reports that MacRae's office contained a large expensive looking marble chess set and board that he saw there when being assaulted in 1983. Father Moe Rochefort testified that this was not possible. He said that in the many years he and Father MacRae had been close friends, MacRae owned only one such marble chess set - one they purchased together while vacationing in Bar Harbor, Maine in 1986. Grover could not have seen that chess set until he was 19 years old. In closing arguments, the prosecutor insinuated that Father Rochefort could not prove a negative - that MacRae never had another marble chess set. While deliberating, the jury returned to the court with a question. They wanted to see and review a written transcript of Father Rochefort's testimony. The judge denied the jury's request, and told them they must rely solely on their memory of that testimony.

One witness for the defense was Ms. Debra Collett, a counselor in one of the drug programs Grover had attended. Mr. Grover claimed in police interviews and in his testimony that he told Ms. Collett that he had been a victim of sexual abuse, and claimed that he named Father MacRae as the abuser. Ms. Collett refused to be interviewed without a signed release from Grover, and Grover was counseled by his lawyer not to sign that release. In a hearing without the jury present, Ms. Collett was ordered by the court to testify about the claim. She said that it was true that Thomas Grover claimed to have been a victim of sexual abuse while in treatment, but did NOT name MacRae or anyone else as the abuser. Subsequently, she testified, Thomas Grover was required to sign a discharge contract on which he had to identify the name of the person he planned to ask for assistance in sobriety. She produced for the court that discharge contract signed by Thomas Grover. Grover had identified Gordon MacRae as the person he planned to ask to be his post-treatment sponsor. Ms. Collett was then discharged as a witness. After a break to confer with handlers, Grover was recalled to the stand for rebuttal. He now changed his story. Grover added that Ms. Collett did not believe his claims of abuse, called MacRae to warn him of the charge, and then forced him to write MacRae's name on his discharge contract. Because Debra Collett had been discharged as a witness, however, the judge would not permit MacRae's defense to recall her to refute this bizarre claim.

Beyond the unresolved question concerning testimony about the marble chess set, the jury deliberated for less than two hours. In closing instructions, Judge Brennan told the jury that this case comes down to one person's word against another's. The defendant, he pointed out, did not testify in his own defense. Their charge was simply to determine whether they believe the testimony of the claimant. In closing arguments, the prosecutor repeatedly cited the high profile Massachusetts case against Father James Porter, drew a comparison between Father Gordon MacRae and Adolph Hitler, asked the jury to disregard Ms. Collett's version of events, and then repeated Leonard Fleischer's claim that 80 percent of men in drug treatment were sexually abused as children. Gordon MacRae was quickly convicted on all counts.

Throughout this trial, Judge Brennan referred to Thomas Grover before the jury as "the victim." Because the claims of the three brothers - and that of Lawrence Carnevale - were severed for trial, the case brought

by Thomas Grover was tried in a vacuum. The matter of whether these brothers acted in concert - all three brought their more than ten to fifteen years-old claims within weeks of each other - remained a mystery. When asked whether he first brought his claim to a lawyer or the police, Thomas Grover refused to answer. The judge interpreted this for the jury as the result of his limiting order not to mention the claims of his brothers. His resultant instruction to the jury became that evening's headline in the **Keene (NH) Sentinel**: "Judge Tells MacRae Jury to Disregard Inconsistencies." As has been written elsewhere, they had much to disregard.

Gordon MacRae was remanded to a county jail on September 23, 1994 to await sentencing. The trial took place against the backdrop of local elections. The prosecutor was reprimanded during the trial for wearing his campaign button before the cameras in this high profile trial. When it all concluded, the **Keene Sentinel** reported, "MacRae Prosecutor Fired." A few weeks later, while awaiting sentencing, Gordon MacRae was offered a new deal. He could make the rest of this case go away with a sentence of one to two years to be served concurrently with whatever he receives for the Thomas Grover trial. MacRae's lawyer abandoned the case. It was to be turned over to a public defender. He had exhausted his assets on the one trial. Everyone involved urged him to take the new deal. He reported that he had little choice. In exchange for agreeing to a one-year sentence, the rest of the case was over.

Both Gordon MacRae and his trial attorney, now deceased, described this plea deal at the time as "a negotiated lie." Six weeks later, MacRae was sentenced for the charges brought by Thomas Grover. Mr. Grover did not show up for the sentencing hearing, however, so the Judge allowed his brothers to testify again about the concurrent claims for which the priest had already been sentenced. When sentencing the priest again, Judge Brennan added some testimony of his own into the public record. "*This Court has seen clear and convincing evidence that you created child pornography of your victims.*" No such evidence ever surfaced during trial, nor have MacRae or his lawyers ever seen any. The investigating police detective adds, today, "*There was never any evidence of child pornography.*" Somehow, this was clear and convincing to Judge Brennan. Citing the priest's lack of remorse, his insistence on a trial, and his refusal to take proffered plea deals, Judge Brennan sentenced MacRae to five consecutive prison terms for a total of 34 to 67 years. To be eligible for parole from one consecutive sentence to the next, MacRae would have to openly admit guilt for all claims. Short of that, he must serve the maximum period of each of the five consecutive terms. He was sentenced to prison in the Thomas Grover case at age 41. He will complete his sentence at age 108.

After the Grover trial, each of the accusing brothers received a six-figure settlement from the Catholic Diocese of Manchester. The civil claim brought by Lawrence Carnevale was dismissed by the court. When the money began to flow, a fourth Grover brother jumped aboard with his own claim. Despite having been cited in a police interview as insistent that nothing ever occurred between him and MacRae. Jay Grover, now age 45 obtained an undisclosed settlement with a private demand to the Church that was never filed in court. MacRae has never been able to learn the amount of the settlement or even the details of what Jay Grover claimed.

## **THE BACKGROUND**

If the testimony against Father Gordon MacRae was, on its surface, troubling and confusing, the claims and coincidences that never made their way into court transcripts were much more so. Severing the Grover claims for trial resulted in a trial with tunnel vision. The broader view is most interesting.

The first of the Grover brothers to be interviewed with a claim was Thomas Grover's younger brother, Jonathan Grover, now age 40. The interviews were conducted by a Keene police detective, James McLaughlin.

During a stint in the U.S. Navy in 1988/89, Jon Grover was arrested for DUI near his base. This resulted in his discharge from the Navy. It was not until three years later, in late 1992, that Jon Grover was interviewed by Det. McLaughlin. The claims made in that interview were highly specific:

**From an August 8, 1992 Report by Det. McLaughlin:**

*"When Jon [Grover] was 12 or 13 years old...at the YMCA Father MacRae would have Grover take a whirl pool with him and at times Father [Stephen] Scruton would join them... During these times Grover would be seated in the whirlpool and both Father MacRae and Father Scruton... would alternate in rubbing their foot against his genitals. Grover was unsure if the priests were acting in concert."*

There is no sign in any reports that the above claim was investigated. Even rudimentary investigation would have dismissed the claim as false. MacRae was not assigned in Keene until June of 1983 when Jon Grover was 14 years of age. He had not joined the Keene YMCA Fitness Center, where the whirl pool was located, until 1984 when Grover was 15. Father Stephen Scruton was not in Keene until June of 1985 when Jon Grover was 16. There was a far greater problem with the claim, however, and it has never been explained.

A year before the above report was written, Det. McLaughlin investigated Father Stephen Scruton for another claim brought by a Keene high school classmate of the Grover brothers named Todd Biltcliffe. The claim resulted in Father Scruton's arrest in 1991, a guilty plea, and an undisclosed financial settlement for Todd Biltcliffe by the Diocese of Manchester. Det. McLaughlin's report of the Biltcliffe claim is hauntingly familiar:

**From a June 20, 1990 Report by Det. McLaughlin:**

*"Todd [Biltcliffe) went to the YMCA with Father Scruton. They decided to use the hot tub. At one point, Father Scruton took one of his feet and placed it between Todd's legs and began stroking his genitals. The touching was intentional and not a mistake. A rubbing motion was used by Father Scruton."*

There is nothing in the detective's 1992 Grover report that suggests he was even vaguely reminded of what he wrote in his 1990 Biltcliffe report. The Biltcliffe claim about Father Scruton was alleged to have happened in 1986 when Biltcliffe was 15 years old, but it was not brought until four years later. McLaughlin's file of the Jon Grover claim reveals no mention of the Scruton/Biltcliffe charge and settlement. His file of the 1990/91 Biltcliffe claim, however, reveals two remarkable items. First, the question of a monetary settlement from the Church does not seem to originate with Biltcliffe, but with McLaughlin who wrote, *"I asked Todd what he thought of a civil lawsuit."* Secondly, the Biltcliffe file contained a strange document: a transcript of a November, 1988 "Geraldo Rivera Show" entitled "The Church's Sexual Watergate." The transcript is a facimile copy that appears to have been transmitted directly from the Geraldo Live show to the Keene Police Department on the same date it aired: Nov. 14, 1988.

**What follows is a segment of the transcript:**

**Geraldo:** *"What did the priest do to you, Greg?"*

**Greg Ridel:** *"Around the age of 12 or so, he and I went to a YMCA. And I was an altar boy at the time. And the first time I was ever touched, he began stroking my penis in a sauna, I believe it was, at the YMCA."*

If the above three accounts appeared in novels, or in television scripts, the writers of two of them would surely be accused of plagiarism. The Scruton claim by Todd Biltcliffe ended in a guilty plea, so the Geraldo transcript remained undiscovered by Father Scruton's lawyer. Nonetheless, McLaughlin's file reveals that Scruton and his lawyer repeatedly protested that the claim described by Todd Biltcliffe never took place. Presumably, Scruton entered into a plea deal because he was an easy target. He had two previous sexual misconduct arrests in New Hampshire, one of them in Keene in 1987.

The report of Det. McLaughlin's August 1992 interview with Jon Grover revealed other highly specific claims that he was assaulted simultaneously by both priests. The chronological problem aside - Scruton was not in Keene until Jon Grover was 16 years old - Scruton presence in these reports is clear:

*"Grover also gave information about another priest identified as Father Scruton as also sexually abusing him on at least two occasions." **Case No. 93110850 08AUG92.***

*"When Grover was twelve or thirteen years old he would spend nights in the Keene rectory. Father MacRae would fondle and perform fellatio on Grover when he spent the night.... Another priest, believed to be Father Scruton came into the room and continued the oral sex on Grover." **18AUG92.***

*"I spoke with Jon Grover and asked him to think of the two incidents of fellatio by Father MacRae which took place in the rectory during the summer of 1983....I asked Jon Grover about who might have seen him stay the night in the rectory. Jon stated that Father Scruton was a witness to his having stayed the night." **Case No. 93010850 07DEC93.***

**From a letter of Det. McLaughlin posing as Jon Grover 05 OCT 92:**

*"Another thing I need an answer to is about Father Scruton. One night you were having oral sex with me and then left. Father Scruton came in and finished. Were you doing a favor for him? Shouldn't you have asked me first? The sex between us was very special to me. I trust you have not told others about our past sex. I have never told and never will."*

The last item, the letter, is especially interesting. McLaughlin's report indicates that he asked Jon Grover to write the letter, but Grover complained that he did not want to. McLaughlin then wrote the letter posing as Grover and forging Grover's signature. There is no indication in the report that Jon Grover was even aware of the content of the letter. Father MacRae's reply was also specific: *"Whoever you are, I now know that you are not Jon Grover. Jon Grover would be aware that what is described in that letter never took place."* **Letter of Fr. MacRae dated Oct. 11, 1992.**

In the above cited reports, Det. McLaughlin wrote of consulting a contingency lawyer for Jon Grover to bring a claim. At some point, McLaughlin, or Grover, or both realized that the chronology problem regarding Father Scruton was irreconcilable, while the chronology involving MacRae needed rehabilitation. McLaughlin wrote of giving the Grover claimants a copy of MacRae's resume to assist with a revised chronology. A new report was generated, and Scruton's connection with this case just faded away. McLaughlin repaired the damage:

*"Grover now believes he was 14, and not 12, when the assaults occurred in the Keene rectory. Jon also believes he was 13, and not 11, when assaulted in Hampton. It has been my experience with adult male survivors of sexual abuse that they frequently recall their being younger than they actually were at the onset of sexual abuse." **Report Dated 16 MAR 93.***

It was a convenient fix, but still did not explain the repeated claims about Scruton who was not in Keene until 1985 when Jon Grover was 16, Thomas Grover was 18, and David Grover was 19 and in the U.S.

Army. This has never been explained. In written Interrogatories prepared under oath, McLaughlin was asked about the other priest he who he claimed to have assaulted 12-year-old Jon Grover:

**Q:** *"Have you ever had a conversation with Rev. Stephen Scruton regarding Gordon MacRae? If so, please indicate the date(s) of the conversation(s) and provide a copy of your report(s)."*

**A:** *"On occasion, I have had conversations with Reverend Stephen Scruton, however, I have no recollection of ever discussing any actions of Gordon MacRae with the Reverend Scruton."*

If the claims of Jonathan Grover were irreconcilable, those of David Grover defied logic. In a 1988 report of being questioned by Det. McLaughlin, David Grover told a story of being "uncomfortable" when MacRae allegedly massaged his back during an overnight stay in the Keene rectory when David was 12 years old. That was the extent of David's first claim, but MacRae was never in the Keene rectory, and certainly never slept there, until June of 1983, just weeks before David turned 18, and a month before he joined the U.S. Army.

In 1993, David claimed to have been driving his truck when he heard news reports of settlements in the Massachusetts Father Porter case. McLaughlin's report has David Grover pulling his truck over to weep as the flood of memories of his own abuse by a priest came to mind. David Grover, now 44, had two interviews with Det. McLaughlin. In the first, he detailed years of oral and anal rape by MacRae during overnight stays at the Keene rectory when David was 12 to 14 years old. This would have been between 1977 and 1979. An immediate problem was that the two had not even met until 1979, and MacRae was never in the Keene rectory until 1983.

Two months later in 1993, David Grover had a new interview with Det. McLaughlin. The earlier claims of being sodomized between the ages of 12 and 14 seemed to have been forgotten. In this new version of events, David spoke of traveling with MacRae to another Church rectory - this one in Hudson, New Hampshire in the Spring of 1982. David would have been 16. McLaughlin has David Grover here reporting that *"he went with MacRae to Hudson because they had a positive relationship and he didn't think that anything could be wrong."* Putting aside the earlier claims of rape, David now claimed that MacRae brought him into the Hudson rectory, told him to do whatever he is told, and then left David there to be forcibly raped at age 16 by two unnamed priests. According to the report, MacRae came back to retrieve David, and then they went to a movie together. Grover even named the film: "Star Trek: The Wrath of Kahn."

The Hudson story became miraculously transformed over repeated tellings. By the time it ended up in a civil lawsuit - naming the Diocese of Manchester, Father Gordon MacRae, and Father John Doe I and II as defendants - David was 12 again and not 16. In police reports, David clearly placed this story on a Saturday afternoon in April of 1982 in a first floor bedroom in the Hudson rectory with a picture of Jesus on the wall. Mysteriously, criminal charges were never brought against Gordon MacRae in regard to David Grover's claims, and no evidence of an investigation has ever surfaced. No one has questioned the dozen people who lived and/or worked there in 1982. Several wrote in response to questionnaires, however, that what David described was impossible. This rectory has never had a first floor bedroom as David described. But time revealed something far more troubling about David Grover's claim. There were three priests assigned to St. John's Rectory in Hudson in the Spring of 1982. Though it did not become public until a blanket release of documents following an Attorney General's investigation of the Diocese in 2003, there were in fact two priests investigated by the State Division of Child Protective Services (DCYF) in Hudson in 1982. The case resulted in a founded complaint of child sexual abuse. The two priests were Rev. Stephen Scruton and Rev. Mark Fleming. After a leave of absence following his sexual

misconduct arrest in an unrelated case in 1984, Scruton was reassigned by the Diocese in 1985 as pastor of St. Bernard Parish in Keene. Father Fleming quietly left the Diocese during the 1982 investigation.

The apparent influence of the 1982 Hudson investigation the Grover and Carnevale claims against Father MacRae is evident. Lawrence Carnevale, when making his third revision of abuse allegations against MacRae in 1993 asserted that another priest walked in on and witnessed his sexual assault by MacRae. In Hudson in 1982, the State investigated a claim that Father Scruton walked in on and witnessed an assault by Father Mark Fleming. Jon Grover claimed in 1992/3 that Father Scruton came into the room when he was being assaulted by MacRae. The same claim was made of Scruton and Fleming in Hudson a decade earlier. In his second interview with Det. McLaughlin, David Grover claimed to have been raped at age 16 in the same place, and at the same time, that two priests there were secretly investigated by the State for their assaults on three young brothers. How could this be?

The problem with David Grover's Hudson claim is that he pretended he could not identify either of the two priests he claimed assaulted him. At the time he made this claim (1993) David Grover was quite familiar with both Father Stephen Scruton and Father Mark Fleming. Scruton became David's pastor in Keene in 1985. Though he was in the Army, he came home on leave for visits and attended Mass with his family. Yet he never seemed to recognize that the priest now standing before him at Sunday Mass is the same man who raped him at age 16. David Grover did not make the Hudson claims until his second interview with Det. McLaughlin. There are three ways he could have learned of the Hudson case.

One way was from McLaughlin himself. In various places in reports it became clear that he provided the Grover brothers with tools to both enhance and clarify their claims (e.g., giving them MacRae's resume to fix their chronology problems). In 1987, the Grovers' mother, Patricia Grover, became a social worker investigating sexual abuse complaints for the Keene office of DCYF. It is quite possible she learned from internal documents of the 1982 Hudson case. Finally, and perhaps most disturbingly, David Grover's contingency lawyer, Mark Abramson of the Manchester firm of Abramson, Reis and Brown, also represented the three Hudson claimants in the 1982 case.

Each of the three Grover brothers also knew Father Mark Fleming. Prior to being ordained a priest and assigned in Hudson, Mark Fleming worked as a deacon-intern for two years in Keene in 1980 and 1981. At least one former Church official responded in a questionnaire that Father Fleming's ordination to priesthood was delayed a year because of an allegation of sexual misconduct in Keene.

The trail of influence and insinuation left by Father Stephen Scruton throughout the Grover brothers' claims has never been explained. Scruton refused to respond to multiple attempts to obtain his comment. Before MacRae's 1994 trial, Scruton declined to respond to several questionnaires. When MacRae's attorney sought a subpoena to force Scruton to be deposed, he left the state to avoid it. MacRae's jury never heard Scruton's name, and the news media has never reported on his ties to this case. Det. McLaughlin denied under oath that he has ever even questioned Father Scruton about the Grovers' claims. There are other questions that remain unanswered. In one 1993 McLaughlin report, Jon Grover claimed that MacRae has paid for his silence in the form of multiple checks in even amounts when he was 14 to 16 years of age. This claim was not investigated by police. An investigation of Father MacRae's personal account from 1982 to 1987 revealed no checks to the Grover brothers and only one check to their family, a \$25 check made out to Mrs. Patricia Grover in 1983. Parish accounts reveal several payroll checks issued to Thomas and John Grover. These were all for even amounts as described by Jon Grover. However they were all issued between 1985 and 1987, and were filled out and signed by the same person: Rev. Stephen Scruton.