

FROM THE DESK OF

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In regards to the "Credibly Accused" Catholic priest Normand J. Demers and what I know he is Credibly Accused of and how that has had a deeply detrimental effect on my life.

I recall being about five years old when my parents Thomas and Roberta Houllahan made the unfortunate decision to attend St. Joseph's Catholic church at 92 Hope st. in Providence, R.I. next to Brown University. I distinctly recall upon first visit not wanting to go into this place and that I thought it felt like death.

When I was seven my younger brother Michael was gravely ill with a heart defect. Michael spent months in the hospital and had actually died once on the operating table, the open heart procedure was highly invasive and left a massive scar on my brother's chest. I remember my parents being in a great deal of stress and emotional pain about Michael and his hospital stay. I remember visiting the Potter wing of Rhode Island Hospital and seeing other kids there in various states, many of them dying. This was also very difficult and confusing to me as a kid.

It was during this family tragedy that the "credibly accused" Catholic priest Normand J. Demers first took advantage of his position to sexually assault me. I remember being in the basement during Sunday school class of the rectory when one of the old Nuns came to get me. The Nun took me upstairs and I will forever remember looking directly into the eyes of one of the foreign boys who lived there with Demers as the Nun brought me up from the basement and then to the stairs to the second floor.

When the old nun had got me to the second floor she put something over my face. What I can recall of happened next has taken some time and effort and pain and therapy to remember. I remember pain and being pushed face down on a couch. The pain was from Demers pegging my asshole with one of his fat fingers. I could feel the big gold square ring he always wore on his finger. Demers was saying some things I did not understand maybe insane gibberish maybe it was Latin.

I could see another man, the odd slender disco man who was always at the back of the church every Sunday was there too. That man was naked and on all fours like a dog begging. At some point during the ritual Demers signaled the other man that he could have me. I recall that man jumping on top of me and something going in my mouth. I was also still somewhat drugged and the other thing I remember was being smothered again. I also then remember being on a bench or seat in the dingy room on the first floor dazed.

I remember another time on another day when they told me I had won a prize, a plastic deer, and I went in a room near the kitchen but I do not recall any more other than the shape of the room and the color of the newly installed orange countertops I passed into the kitchen. There is a definite gap from that time and remember I had looked for that plastic deer for years after the incident and it was often in my thoughts to the extent that I confused it with a metal horse sculpture at my parents that was a gift from a neighbor.

I clearly remember that Demers always had a half dozen or so foreign boys living at the rectory with him all the time I had attended church and CCD class there. He was clear in his sermons that he procured these boys from schools and orphanages outside of the US that he either founded or had association with. What he was less than forthcoming about but was obvious is that he rotated the boys in and out of the rectory and back to where they came from after their usefulness to him was over. Their numbers stayed mostly the same but the faces changed.

My family attended St. Joseph's for nine years from the time I was five to the time I was fourteen. After the initial assaults Demers would make sure to harass me at any possible opportunity. He had visited my parents house a number of times. Demers paid particular attention to making sure he did not miss shaking hands at the end of the Mass and that was to make sure the gold ring that had been up your ass got kissed so to speak every Sunday.

And speaking of Sunday the CCD school class was some level of enforcement or horror every week in one instance Demers had screamed at a girl I was sitting next to because she had a short "boys" hair cut. I think he was particularly angry at this girl because he thought she was a new boy.

In another particularly horrific instance Demers appeared to tell the Sunday school class about how two of the boys from class who had attended Moses Brown School had climbed an electrical pole that Friday and grabbed the wires, with one of them dying and the other being incredibly injured. Demers spent a lot of time describing to the class how the boys penis had melted and fallen off in pieces. I remember these boys and that they and Demers had tension the previous Sunday. Many years later I recalled this to a friend who had gone to Moses Brown who remembered the boy who was injured and how he had lost a leg and maybe an arm. She described him as a "golden boy" and that they didn't understand why he would do such a thing.

As time at St. Joseph's went on my parents had more and more issues with Demers, there were two particular areas of friction. The first was that they and other parents had wanted more oversight and input into the curriculum and classes for

CCD, this is something that Demers insisted was solely his ability and responsibility and he went as far as insisting that he was the only qualified teacher.

The final straw that made my parents leave this church was a particular sermon when Demers was in "Stormin' Norman" mode and went on and on about all the prisoners in the ACI being scum. My father worked at the ACI as a Social Worker. What was not in his sermon was that Demers had been fired from the ACI a year or two before my family went to St. Joseph's and that Demers was fired due to a sex scandal with prisoners. Evidently the Bishop and management saw fit to give Demers a promotion and a choice parish with a mansion instead of punishment for that scandal.

After that my parents had had enough of "Stormin' Norman" Demers and left the St. Joseph's parish. I was fourteen and I had become withdrawn and very depressed over the years. My parents had sent me to several psychologists but they perhaps were not as familiar with the signs of child sexual assault then. As I entered puberty and had begun to have a attraction to girls and I also found myself feeling disgusted by my body and that I felt my skin crawled with maggots and that no girl would like me and they would be repulsed by how worthless and disgusting I was. A girl in High School actually asked me to pom and I went but was too messed up to respond to her and to this day it makes me feel bad that must have felt like rejection to her and made her feel bad. I didn't get myself a girlfriend until I was twenty five despite being fairly good looking and smart.

I managed to get an after school job at a HiFi store called Tweeter etc. which was on Thayer st. and had a big glass front window. At some point Demers began showing up when I was working, he would come in with a small Radio Shack tape recorder and always when I was there alone or other staff were in the other rooms. He was there to say demeaning things to me but he had the excuse that his cheap tape recorder was broken. The last time I ever saw him which was maybe the forth or fifth time he told me that he "knew I would be a dropout and never amount to anything" I was sixteen or seventeen in high school and just trying to cope with feeling dirty depressed and worthless. I do not have the words to describe in this brief summary how badly the feelings of self loathing and the presence of a psychotic religious sadist pedophile stalker broke my psychology and shorted out all of my emotional circuit breakers.

I knew several other boys who had attended St Joseph's Jay C. That went to Classical High School at the same time I did. Jay had dated my neighbor Jess N. I sometimes would give people rides to school when I had obtained a old green Saab and Jay C would sometimes get a lift from me. Jay would take allot of drugs before class just to get by. He had another friend who had been at St. Joseph's too and while

I cannot recall his name I know he inherited some money and subsequently overdosed. Jay C. had a shortened life. I did not really know him well but I think I understood what he was going through even though he handled it differently than I did.

In 2016 I contacted the woman who had Demers arrested and jailed in Haiti in 1989 she told me her story. She told me that she volunteered to work at the school and orphanage in Haiti after graduation from college. She had traveled to Haiti to work at the Haitian Project / Louverture Cleary School where Normand Demers was the founder and first director. She described being picked up at the airport by Demers and instead of being brought directly to the school as expected he took her an hour in the opposite direction to a resort hotel where he had arranged to spend the night with a teenage boy in a hotel room.

She also described in more specific detail why as a 22yr old she found the courage to stand up for and with the children there to have Demers arrested in 1989. She described how Kenneth Angell and Bishop Gelineau pleaded with her to sign papers to have Demers released from Haitian jail and they promised her that he would be prosecuted in Rhode Island, she eventually acquiesced to the pressure and Demers was released. Upon return Demers was not punished he was just moved to East Providence and in 1993 when the RI Diocese adopted an abuse prevention program nothing was done about Demers he remained in a parish until 2002.

Our final part of the conversation about Haiti was her saying that the greatest regret was not to have made sure that Normand Demers stayed in the small jail cell in Haiti and she wished he had died there, hopefully to have been beaten to death by the other prisoners. I guess this is why I never saw Demers again after that day at Tweeter etc. the HiFi store when he told me I would amount to nothing. How many boys were brought from their country to this place and sent back how many photos taken? Surely there must have been records of passports flights and visas.

I learned years later from my mom about a couple who attended St Josephs and I reached out to the man by phone and he told me that he and his ex wife had witnessed a party that Demers had at the St Josephs's rectory where these young boys were paraded about wearing only diapers. This couple had noted that Demers had photos of undressed boys on the walls in his personal quarters. the man was an attorney and had worked for the church they failed to call the police or say anything about this. He only described his wife as saying that they needed to get the hell out of there when they had been at his party. This dovetails with the nun who found something disturbing in the copy machine at the rectory one morning.

The full extent of Demers abject and blatant criminality may never be fully known. The fact that the criminality was aided and abetted by the hierarchical management of the church appears obvious to me. They could have saved me and hundreds of other boys untold pain collapsed visions and trajectories of futures and early deaths from suicide and addiction by firing him after the events and scandal at the ACI. Instead the Bishop assigned Demers a "Epstein" mansion on the prestigious East Side of Providence.

This is a very brief synopsis of the story of my own personal burden and tragedy so far but it does not begin to cover the scope and detail of my experience nor the wider issue of how men like Demers are empowered and easily escape justice. I first emailed my attorney in 2007 about finding some justice and holding the institution to account and it has been like stirring cold molasses in this the Catholic Caliphate of Rhode Island ever since. The ultimate conclusion of this so far has been that getting this off my chest after years of talking about it and going to therapy. What a more than full time job 24/7/365 to keep myself together psychologically and functioning is now more like a chronic illness or an itch that is impossible to scratch.

. The other conclusion so far had been getting this seen by the public. The case that went to a lower court for dismissal and then to the RI Supreme Court for dismissal. In listening to the tape of Judge McKenna Goldberg's arguments in the case about aiding abetting procuring counseling hiring and commanding the clergy and how culpability cannot be the bishop because he (allegedly) was not present it makes me think this logic would have let Osama Bin Laden off the hook because he did not fly the planes or Gotti off because he did not personally pull the trigger. In a sense I agree with her it is not "the bishop" but clearly at least three consecutive bishops and likely many more. There is no possibility that Normand Demers could have done all the horrific things he did alone, he had a wide range of co-conspirators in the hierarchy of the Catholic corporation and outside as well.

The last bishop Tom Tobin may not have presided over Normand Demers but he had his own crop of hidden monsters. This included the priest James Jackson who was arrested in 2021 in possession of the most heinous images. Bishop Tobin thought it wise to attempt to hire the coach at the middle of the fat measuring scandal and his last act was to move a three times already moved sexual danger priest to St. Joseph's where Demers once ruled. Clearly the management of the Catholic corporation and many if not all other religious organizations who ascribe to and are regularly caught fielding these men feel they are well above and beyond the law or consequences. I must have been a fool to have listened to the teachers in Civics class in the Providence public school system explain that nobody was above the law.

