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Graphic Testimony from Witness

By Terri Saunders
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Fernand Vivarais delivered what could be the least amount of evidence heard at the Cornwall Public Inquiry from an alleged victim but also some of the most hard-hitting.

Vivarais told the commission Tuesday he was sexually assaulted by a city priest, Rev. Carl Stone, when he was 12 years old in the 1950s. Stone passed away in December 2006 and no criminal charges were ever laid against him in relation to Vivarais' allegations.

Vivarais spoke quickly as recalled the night he says Stone got into bed with him and sexually abused him during a trip to Montreal.

"He got me in a big bear hug and he humped me like a dog," said Vivarais, his eyes cast downward as he tapped the palm of one hand with a pen. "It happened three times."

Vivarais recalls waking up in the morning when Stone got out of the bed to take a shower.

"I laid there with semen all over me, dried," said Vivarais, his voice trembling slightly. "I tried to wipe myself off with a blanket."

Vivarais, who is now a 60-year-old husband and father, said he has not felt clean since the alleged assault.

"I would wash and scrub and I couldn't get it off," said Vivarais. "I still don't have it off me. Even now, I'll just get in the shower thinking I can get clean, but I can't."

Vivarais, who spent less than an hour in total on the witness stand, said he would see the priest from time to time in later years, but he always felt intimidated by Stone.

"He would drive by me and make the sound, 'Shhhhhhhh,'" said Vivarais. "I was really afraid of him. I thought if I told anyone, he'd kill me."

Vivarais said he wasn't aware he could have approached an agency such as the Children's Aid Society for help and didn't go to police because he didn't think what the priest had done would result in any sort of punishment.

"Well, there was never any penetration," said Vivarais. "I didn't feel like it was a crime. I couldn't do it. I just never did it."

Finally last year, he approached a police officer in Cornwall who told him because the alleged incident occurred outside the city, there was nothing local police could do about it.

Vivarais said he no longer has faith in God, the church or priests since the alleged assault and couldn't attend his own nephew's funeral because he was unable to go inside the sanctuary.

He also said he hopes the community embraces those victims who have come to the inquiry to tell their stories.

"I've seen other guys come here and they're not being believed, or they're called liars and people say it didn't happen," said Vivarais. "It did happen to me and it's not right."

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