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## **Sexual Abuse Victim Wants Names, Not Silence**

Albany He Says He Was a "Share Toy" for Several Priests, and Wants Diocese to Name His Abusers

By Andrew Tilghman  
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The Rev. David Bentley was a young priest who appeared to love children.

Back in the 1970s, the quiet and lanky man sometimes brought carloads of foster kids over to his mother's house on South Allen Street for a home-cooked meal.

He often took one troubled boy on overnight stays at rectories, where the two would lounge around and watch television with other clerics, then say good night and head off to bed — together.

"How could they not have known? What did they think was going on?" said the victim, now a 40-year-old married father in the Capital Region, who said Bentley molested him "hundreds of times" beginning when he was a 9-year-old foster child.

What separates this man's story from similar ones is his claim that Bentley not only molested him but also used him as what the victim described as a "share toy" and permitted other priests to sexually abuse him.

Over the past decade, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany has agreed to pay nearly a half-million dollars to this man, who spoke to the Times Union on the condition that he not be identified. During that time, he has kept detailed records of his dealings with the diocese and Bishop Howard Hubbard.

This month, he made some of those documents available to the Times Union, lending credibility to his account that numerous priests molested him in the 1970s and that church leaders refused to help him identify them.

Hubbard's predecessor and the head of the diocese during some of those years, Bishop Edwin Broderick, was reluctant to talk about the revelations of sexual abuse in the diocese during his tenure when reached by telephone last week at his home on Park Avenue in Manhattan.

"I have no recollection of that. That was some time ago," he said. "I'm not anxious to discuss that." One year after the Catholic Church's sexual abuse scandal erupted in Boston and rippled across the nation, several new lawsuits against the Albany diocese, previously confidential documents and accounts from victims coming forward offer new insight into the culture and extent of pedophile priests who served in the Capital Region three decades ago.

On July 1, 2002, Hubbard sent Bentley's victim a letter, apologizing for the "great harm" he "sustained as the result of sexual misconduct by representatives of the Church."

The letter — and, in particular, the use of the plural reference "representatives" — marks the first evidence that Hubbard and the diocese knew last year not only that some priests had more than one victim, but also that some victims had more than one abuser.

"It's not the first time that we've heard about priests who would kind of pass their victims off to other priests," said Mary Gale Frawley-O'Dae, a Rockland County psychologist who specializes in sexual abuse and was chosen by Catholic bishops to speak at their conference in Dallas last June.

Based on her study of dioceses around the country, she said, "I think in some cases priests colluded with one another in their abusive activities."

According to the victim, Bentley first approached him when he was 9 years old and living at the Albany Home for Children, where Bentley, still a seminarian, was a volunteer. The boy, who came

from a broken home, was sometimes violent. Bentley's frequent sexual abuse continued for eight years, until 1980, the victim said last week.

Bentley would invite him on overnight stays — at parish rectories and on trips to Cape Cod and New Jersey — where Bentley would permit other men to sodomize him, he said. Precisely how many men abused him, he said he does not know.

Hubbard and other church officials have declined to discuss the man's account. The diocese cites several pending lawsuits, including one filed last month in which the man accused Hubbard and a church therapist, Sister Anne Bryan Smollin, of working together to manipulate him and stop him from hiring a lawyer.

"The diocese prefers to offer its responses in a court of law where the facts can be evaluated fairly instead of in the news media," the diocese said Thursday in a statement responding to detailed written questions from the Times Union.

The statement said, "Bishop Hubbard has, on many occasions, acknowledged with deep regret and apologized for the misconduct of priests in the diocese, and for the harm this has caused victims, their families and the entire community."

In an interview earlier last week, Hubbard said he knew nothing about Bentley's problem with young boys until 1986, when someone — he would not say who — from outside the church notified him of an incident of Bentley's sexual abuse.

Bentley, who is now 60 and is believed to be living with relatives near Syracuse, could not be reached for comment.

Bentley's victim, who entered into a confidential settlement with the church in 1994, contacted the church again in April 2002, a time when the Albany diocese was facing increasing public pressure to revisit its policy for handling victims of sexual abuse. He was destitute, emotionally troubled and, he said, intent on learning his other abusers' identities and whether they were still priests.

Hubbard, the man said, showered him with attention. Diocese officials acknowledged that the bishop met with the man dozens of times and took an active interest in his church counseling. The victim recalled dates, locations and descriptions of his abusers and said Hubbard helped him identify two men believed to have molested him.

The bishop provided names and photographs of a church volunteer and a former parish priest — who once lived with Bentley at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception rectory in Albany — according to copies of the photographs and a memorandum from Hubbard that the man provided to the Times Union.

Because the newspaper has been unable to verify the allegations against the two alleged abusers, the names are being withheld. The diocese declined to confirm any allegations about the two individuals.

When the man pressed to know more names, the diocese offered money. He received \$75,000 in May, then another \$150,000 in August, followed by a promise of \$25,000 a year for the next five years, church officials confirmed.

In November, church officials and the man had a falling out, which he attributes to their refusal to come forth with additional names.

"The most important thing to me was to confront my abusers. I want to say 'Hey. Hey you. You. Come here. You get down on your knees and you apologize to me,' " he said. This man's account of abuse and other allegations that have surfaced in the past year focus on the 1970s, which were years of transition for the church, for the Albany diocese and for Howard Hubbard, who became the bishop in 1977.

A leadership shake-up occurred in September 1976, when Bishop Broderick returned to New York City, where he had been an auxiliary bishop, to work for Catholic Relief Services. Broderick had led the Albany diocese for seven years, and his departure came as a surprise to many inside and outside the church.

At the same time, the diocesan chancellor, the Rev. C. Howard Russell, took a leave of absence, left the Albany area and did not return.

The vice chancellor, the Rev. John Bertolucci, was reassigned to a small parish in Little Falls. Last year, Bertolucci, who went on to a leading role in the national Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement, admitted that he had sex with boys as young as 12 in the 1970s, and Hubbard barred him from active ministry.

At least nine Albany priests now named as pedophiles and no longer serving in public ministry had a range of roles in the 1970s — in the chancery, in schools and in parishes across the 14-county diocese.

It was 1976 that marked the ordination of the Rev. Mark Haight, whose serial abuse of one Schenectady teenager would force the diocese to pay a legal settlement of nearly \$1 million in 1997, its largest ever.

Also in 1976, Bentley was an assistant principal at Cardinal McCloskey High School in Albany, church records show. The following year, he became principal at Vincentian Institute, where he replaced the Rev. Edward Pratt. Pratt, also a former vice chancellor of the diocese, was removed from the ministry last year for sexual abuse, church records show.

Several Albany diocesan priests who worked in the 1970s alongside men now publicly known as pedophiles, in interviews last week, said the revelations of sexual abuse came as a total shock. Others refused to discuss the issue.

What they saw, or should have seen, is hard to say, said Frawley-O'Dae, the psychologist.

"This wasn't happening in a basement somewhere. This was happening day in and day out in parishes throughout the country," she said.

"People saw signs that they were not able to respond to. And in many ways, this is the way that society in general has responded to sexual abuse," she said. On March 27, 1977, Hubbard, widely known for his grass-roots ministry in Albany's South End, was ordained as bishop, chosen by Pope Paul VI to be, at age 38, the youngest bishop in the country at that time. Over the years, Hubbard would earn a national reputation as a liberal cleric. Hubbard was an outspoken opponent of the zero-tolerance rule that was adopted at a meeting in June of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Hubbard called the rule "simplistic" and out of step with Christian principles of forgiveness.

The bishop's actions regarding David Bentley are unique in that he was the only priest Hubbard removed before the national policy of zero-tolerance forced him to bar from the active ministry all priests known to have sexually abused even one child. The diocese has declined to say how many complaints it has received concerning Bentley's sexual abuse of children.

After Vincentian Institute closed in 1977, Bentley was assigned to Albany Medical Center Hospital. Hospital ministries were long considered safe and appropriate assignments for priests known to have a problem with pedophilia, church officials have said.

Church officials said Bentley underwent treatment in 1986 and briefly returned to Albany Medical Center before leaving the Albany area. He served in Africa and at parishes in Ohio and New Mexico, church officials have said.

His victim said he contacted the diocese about his abuse for the first time in 1994. That year the diocese secretly paid him \$150,000 to release it from any liability related to Bentley's misconduct, church officials have acknowledged. The man said he told Hubbard in 1994 about his many molesters.

But the Rev. Kenneth Doyle, diocesan chancellor and spokesman, has said the man was lying and that he never made allegations about other abusers in 1994.

Angered and frustrated after his falling out with the church this past November, the victim hired an attorney, John Aretakis, who represents more than two dozen others claiming Albany diocesan priests sexually abused them. It was only in recent weeks that Bentley's victim decided to speak publicly

about the abuse.

Hubbard's personal involvement in handling victims' complaints and arranging legal settlements during the past decade is unusual, said Mark Furnish, himself a victim of sexual abuse by a priest in Rochester.

"Hubbard seems to have had more intimate contact with the victims. He would actually sit down with the victims and work out agreements," said Furnish, an attorney for the state Senate.

Furnish has helped organize support groups and has spoken with victims from many dioceses, including about a dozen from Albany. He said he has spoken to at least two other people who have said Bentley has abused them, but who have not come forward.

"I think the diocese here handed out more of these agreements and were quicker to settle these agreements than other places. They were very good at damage control in the 1990s, when people were starting to come forward," Furnish said.

Last year, the diocese acknowledged it has paid out more than \$2.3 million in confidential settlements to victims of sexual abuse by priests during the past 25 years.

A new diocesan policy calls for a sexual misconduct panel to review all future payments to victims of sexual abuse, and the total amount paid out will be announced annually, Doyle said.

As a more complete picture of the Albany diocese emerges, one question continues to arise: Who knew what — and when?

"You can't tell me somebody didn't know something was going on. Why would Father So-and-So come in and ask Johnny Jones to leave the classroom and go over to the rectory with him? And when Johnny Jones came in, why was Father So-and-So's door always closed?" Frawley-O'Dae said.

FACTS:Chronology 1972 — David Bentley meets 9-year-old foster child at Albany Home for Children. 1975 — Bentley ordained a priest. 1976 — Bishop Edwin Broderick leaves Albany.Vice Chancellor John Bertolucci reassigned to Little Falls. 1976 — Rev. Mark Haight ordained a priest. 1977 — Ordination of Bishop Howard Hubbard.Bentley succeeds Rev. Edward Pratt as Vincentian Institute principal. 1986 — Bentley undergoes treatment for sexual problems. 1994 — Albany diocese pays Bentley's victim \$150,000. 1997 — Albany diocese pays Haight's victim \$997,500. 2002 — Bentley's victim contacts church seeking names of his abusers.Bishop Hubbard bars six priests, including Bentley, Bertolucci and Pratt, from public ministry.2003 — Diocese acknowledges having paid Bentley's victim \$225,000 in summer 2002.

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