

Stolen youth

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Family of sexually abused man protests priest's early prison release

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TAMWORTH, Ont. — The picture of Danny Bodzasy as a young boy, wearing his hockey gear and a smile, makes his mother shake her head with quiet rage.

It's the last picture taken of her son, now 22, looking happy. It was probably one of the last times he ever felt that way.

When Bodzasy was 11 years old, bursting with that incredible energy of childhood, he was sexually assaulted by his teacher — a man who became his family's priest and their deeply trusted friend.

Week after week, over the next four years, Rev. Richard Racine justified one boy's shattered innocence with the quietly whispered words that there was nothing more natural than the fellatio and fondling Racine so deeply desired.

But today, when Racine, 47, walks out of the Brampton prison where he served five months of a 15-month sentence for the sexual assaults, the numb, withdrawn man that Bodzasy has become doesn't see it that way.

"He was a friend, he was an elder and he was a priest. I was brought up to trust those people and he was all three," Bodzasy said in an interview. (The Star's usual policy is not to name sexual assault victims, but in this case Bodzasy wanted his name used.)

His family is so outraged over Racine's release, and a system that doesn't require that victims be notified of parole hearings, that they are planning to picket the Ontario Correctional Centre on McLaughlin Rd. when the priest walks out today.

Bodzasy, who talks in a monotone voice with long silences between his sentences, is comforted by the solid presence of Susan Smyth, a 49-year-old family friend who sat with him



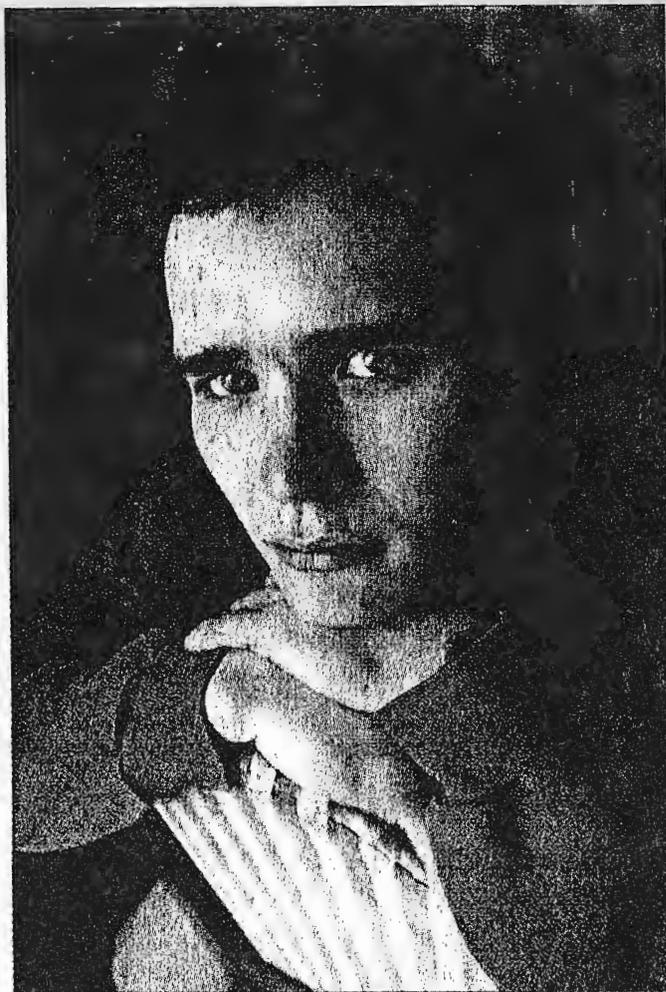
RICHARD RACINE: Out after serving 5 months.

community 30 kilometres (19 miles) north of Napanee, where farmhouses are surrounded by old, heavy-set trees, no one suspected why a little boy began withdrawing into his own sad world.

"When the abuse first started, he (Racine) told me it was normal, that everybody did it," Bodzasy said. "Now I just want to let everybody know that you can't trust as many people as you thought you could."

His pain is mirrored by his mother, Lila, 45, whose sad eyes cast a shadow over her pretty, youthful face.

Racine, who taught Danny at a local separate school, was her confidant, calming her worries about her increasingly difficult son with offers of help. He took



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DANNY BODZASY: For four years, as a boy, left, he was abused by family friend and priest Richard Racine.

grab at it."

Lila and her husband, Julius, 49, watched their third child lose his happy-go-lucky self and grow into a man who walks through a room like he'd give anything just to become invisible.

"I don't go to church any more," she said quietly.

"I know what I did was wrong," Rev. Richard Racine said in a telephone interview from prison this week. "I've taken some very serious steps to correct this.

"I was castrated. I had my testicles removed.

"I felt out of control. I felt also that I was wearing two faces, two masks. I was doing something morally objectionable and at the same time I knew I

of this, I said, 'Look, I want this to be permanent,' and I was physically castrated.

"I felt I could live a life. I didn't deal with my problems before then. I can deal with them now."

Racine will spend the next several months at Southdown Home, a 40-bed treatment centre for Christian church employees, located north of Toronto in Aurora.

The priest, who was sentenced Jan. 10 after pleading guilty to sexual assault, gross indecency and attempted buggery, said he has acknowledged that his sexual desires have ruined a young man's life.

"What I did to the young lad was very bad. He came to see me a few months before I was arrested and told me he was going for counselling and I en-

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— DANNY BODZASY, VICTIM

couldn't stop.

"There was a compulsive part of my behavior that I did not like. I thought of suicide. And

couraged him.

"I said 'Danny, yes, go to counselling,' knowing full well what was going to happen to