

# Sense of Betrayal, Guilt Haunted Abused Man

## Lawsuit Against Priest Ends Lifelong Anguish

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The telephone rang while Phil Saviano was upstairs doing his homework. He heard his mother talk for a while and then she summoned him to the phone.

"Who is it?" asked Saviano, who at age 13 wondered what friends of his would bother to talk to his mother for so long.

It was Father David Holley, the priest who'd married his brother, listened to his confessions — and who several years earlier had sexually molested him whenever he got the chance.

With his mother just 3 feet away, the boy listened as Holley launched into a sexually explicit recitation about what Saviano's body must look like since he'd gone through puberty.

"You can imagine how I felt with my mother sitting right there," Saviano said. "Not being able to respond to him. Not being able to hang up quickly because that would arouse suspicion.

"He was getting his kicks, and I was feeling, as usual, trapped in a situation that I couldn't figure how to get out of. In many ways, that was a familiar feeling for me with Father Holley," said Saviano, now 41.

When Saviano finally hung up the phone, he turned to his mother.

"Boy, isn't he a wonderful priest," Saviano recalls her saying. "Even though he's been gone from this parish for two years, he still thinks enough about you kids to call and see how you're doing."

Saviano remembers how angry he felt. And how alone.



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Saviano just walked back upstairs without a word. His mother died in 1976, never knowing her son was abused by a pedophile priest.

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When Holley first came to East Douglas, Mass., in 1964 he was a refreshing change from the reserved, stuffy older priests who served in Saviano's parish.

Holley was outgoing — the type of person who always had a funny story to tell.

He first attracted Saviano and other boys by telling jokes and doing card tricks.

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Saviano lived down the street from the rectory, and delivered newspapers there. He also attended Mass and catechism classes.

He remembers the day he and three other boys were up in the choir loft with Holley. This time, the cards in Holley's hands had pornographic pictures on

them. His funny stories became off-color jokes.

"It was like it was going to be our little secret. He was gradually sort of drawing us in. Very slowly seeing how far he could go with us . . . and as time went on it kept escalating."

Holley maintained earlier this year that he had sex with from 25 to 35 minors in the past 30 years.

But Albuquerque attorney Bruce Pasternack, who filed suit on behalf of 10 of Holley's New Mexico victims, has been quoted as saying that Holley could rival former priest James Porter. Porter is alleged to have about 100 victims across the country.

Holley's victims say the priest sodomized them. Some of the acts involved altar boys, who contend Holley would molest them minutes before he would walk out and say Mass.

Sometimes, the victims say, Holley would wait until the church was empty and the sex would occur at the altar.

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Saviano said he hated going near the

rectory because he knew Holley would find him. Ultimately he quit his paper route to try to avoid the priest, but never felt he could tell his parents, who were strict Catholics.

As is typical in child sex abuse, Saviano felt too guilty.

"We were just naive little kids. I thought, 'Even if I'm not responsible for his sexual activity, at what point was I responsible? Was it my fault because I didn't tell anybody about the playing cards?'"

Saviano recalled when Holley performed his older brother's wedding ceremony.

"He was at the breakfast beforehand. He came to dinner with the family afterward and sat at the head table." All the while, all Saviano could think about was how this respected priest was molesting him.

Saviano kept these horrors to himself until reading a small article last year in the Boston Globe about a priest who had been sued in New Mexico for abusing children.

"I almost fell off my chair when I saw it was Father Holley," he said. "Suddenly I realized that nobody had ever tried to stop this guy."

Saviano decided to come forward to support the Alamogordo victims who filed the suit, and has since joined three other men from Worcester, Mass., in a separate suit.

But he doesn't blame Holley alone.

"He was a screw-up as an adult and he didn't even have a happy childhood. Now the remaining years of his life are certainly not going to be very happy either. Unfortunately, there's been a whole lot of people over the years who contributed to this situation."