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CRISIS IN THE CHURCH

WHAT HOLLEY'S ACCUSERS SAY

"He told us he had the ability to send us to hell if any of us told."

— Robert Curtis, 33, Albuquerque lawyer

"At first I was so angry. It was as if it happened to my own son. He was 10 years old, just a boy, not just Bob, my husband."

— Annette Curtis, wife of Robert Curtis

"I looked to him as a father."

— Edward Beck, 31, El Paso real-estate agent

"This destroys your self-esteem and self-worth."

— Mark Sanchez, 33, Albuquerque meat cutter

"We were the victims. We were tricked. We are not responsible for this. David Holley is. We're not kids anymore. We're capable of taking care of business, and we are."

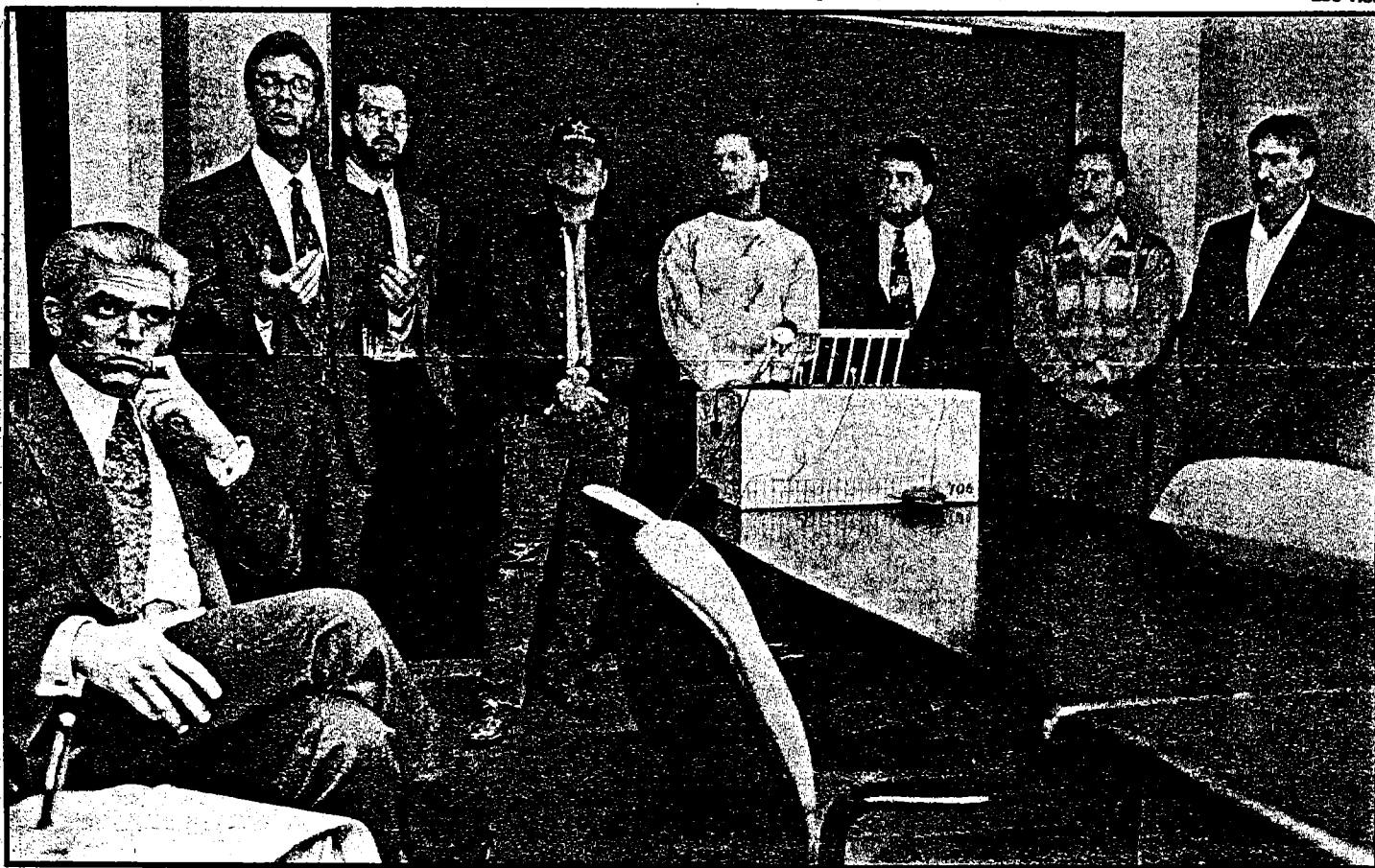
— Noel Clark, 31, Hobbs guidance counselor

"All of us have kids, I have kids, and it scares me to death. I'm afraid my kids will be molested, too."

— Scott Bruce, 32, lives in Antioch, Calif.

"I don't have pity for him. I hope he sees this on TV, has a heart attack and drops dead. There are priests that are good out there, but this is going to tear (any good ones) up."

— Eddie Francis, 31, Alamogordo city worker



Leo Hsu

PRESS CONFERENCE: Attorney Bruce Pasternack (left) held a press conference Wednesday at which seven men came forward alleging that they were molested as children by David Holley, a priest. The men are (from left) Robert

Curtis, Noel Clark, Gary Sanchez, Mark Sanchez, Eddie Beck, Eddie Francis and Scott Bruce. Pasternack called the men heroes. "These men have come to give courage to those who have had this happen to them."

'He said I'd go to hell'

■ An Albuquerque man said he buried the memories but not the voice of the priest he says sexually abused him years ago. Seven men went public with their accusations against the former Alamogordo pastor.

By CARY TYLER
Staff reporter

Twenty years later Robert Curtis still remembered the voice.

He had buried other memories, but when recollections forced their way to consciousness, the Albuquerque lawyer went to the source of the voice.

He said he telephoned the Rev. David Holley, a retired priest now living in Denver.

Curtis said he recognized the voice immediately.

"This was the guy who told me as an 11-year-old boy that I'd go to hell if I ever said anything," Curtis said.

On Wednesday, Curtis and six other men spoke out publicly to accuse Holley of molesting them while they were children.

A total of eight men on Wednesday added their names

to a civil lawsuit filed in state District Court in Albuquerque earlier this month.

Besides Curtis, new plaintiffs are Gary Sanchez of Albuquerque, Noel Clark of Hobbs, Michael Sandoval of Wheat Ridge, Colo., and brothers Edward and Gregg Francis of Alamogordo and Andrew Francis of Tulsa, Okla., and Scott Bruce of Antioch, Calif.

Attorney Bruce Pasternack initially sued Holley on behalf of Joseph Hafemann of Hennepin County, Minn., and Mark Sanchez of Albuquerque, Gary Sanchez's brother.

Another alleged victim, Ed Beck of El Paso, appeared at the news conference and said he plans to file suit in Texas.

The men are alleging Holley repeatedly sexually molested them by "performing a variety



FAMILY MEMBERS LISTEN: Carla Clark (sitting) and other family members of seven men listen as they describe what they say the Rev. David Holley did to them as children.

of non-consensual sex acts" on them.

The lawsuit alleges the molestations occurred when Holley was a priest in Alamogordo between 1971 and 1976.

Please see **CURTIS/A9**

CURTIS From A1

Defendants include Holley, the archdioceses of El Paso and Worcester, Mass., and the Servants of the Paraclete, a retreat for troubled priests in Jemez Springs.

Holley, 65, has been unavailable for comment.

Curtis, now 33 and married with two children, said he had buried memories of the alleged molestation.

Learning of multiple accusations against former priest James Porter, though, forced him to face his past, Curtis said.

Curtis said even though he had suppressed the memories, the effects stayed with him.

"Whenever I got involved with helping abused children or there was any publicity about pedophiles, I intentionally avoided certain issues," Curtis

said. "I subconsciously kept trying to put it away."

He said he tried to track Holley down to confront him with questions: Did Holley still work with children? Why did Holley do what he did?

Holley, Curtis said, did not recognize his voice.

Curtis was not raised a Catholic but began attending St. Jude Mission in Alamogordo with his friends.

Curtis said he was 11 when Holley performed oral sex on him. The priest threatened him into silence, he said.

"He said he had the ability to



Curtis

send us to hell if any of us told," Curtis said.

"He told us that if we married and ever got a divorce, our wives would represent the devil incarnate. He said the best relationship was two men together."

That threat coupled with the power of the Catholic Church forced him to put the bad memories away and try to forget them, Curtis said.

Curtis said he almost did not sue.

"Then I realized that I didn't do anything wrong," Curtis said. "I realized I had an obligation to stop this once and for all."

The revelations shocked Curtis' wife, Annette, who was raised a Catholic.

"It was almost as if it happened to my own son. He was 10 years old, just a boy, not just

Bob, my husband," she said.

"It tore me apart to know of him going through that."

Annette said the revelations have strengthened her family.

"He is so intense with relationship with me and his children," Annette Curtis said.

"I think he realized how fragile life can be. It's good to see so much healing come from all this."

Although he had days where he doubted religion, Robert Curtis said he is a strong church member of a non-denominational Christian church.

"Holley was not God's representative. Jesus Christ is," Curtis said.

"He needs help ... He doesn't need to be executed."