

# Daily Democrat

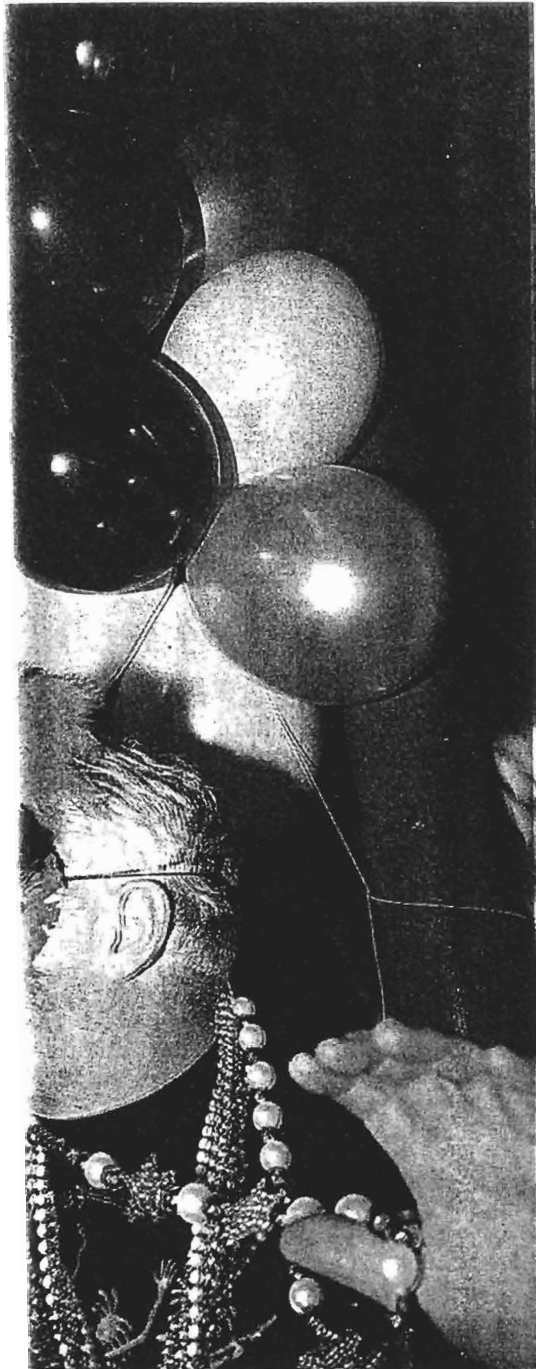
The Region's Largest Newspaper

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Today 28

ROCHESTER, N.H., WEDNESDAY EVENING, MARCH 5, 2003

130th Year — No. 220

...y kiss



Aaron Rohde/Staff photographer  
...ger of Kittery, Maine share a kiss at the  
... Fat Tuesday celebration.

## Abuser went on to teach

### Priest worked at Spaulding High, Elizabeth Seton School

By SEAN MURPHY  
Democrat Staff Writer

ROCHESTER — A file on an ex-priest indicates there were complaints against him as recently as the 1990s while he was a teacher at two local schools, but other sources are not confirming some of the complaints.

The file, concerning former priest Leo Landry, is part of a 9,000-page package the New Hampshire attorney general's office released on Monday.

Reports from the Rochester Police Department and one of the attorney general's investigators indicate there were allegations in 1994 and 1998, but it is unclear why Landry was never prosecuted.

A memorandum by Rockingham County Sheriff's Department Sgt. Brenda Blonigen, one of the attorney general's sexual abuse task force investigators, said she spoke to a woman about a student at Spaulding High School. Landry was employed at the school from 1974 to 1994, working in the

foreign language department as a Latin teacher.

The woman told of her son, who claimed Landry kissed him, fondled him and "taught him how to masturbate," according to Blonigen's account.

No other sexual activity was described, and the mother's and son's names were blacked out.

The memorandum indicated the mother "immediately called and reported it to the police, as well as the school department," and that the woman believed Landry was terminated by the school as a result. Her son declined to



☆ **Abuser**

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press charges, the memorandum said.

Rochester Assistant School Superintendent Mike Hopkins would not comment this morning on whether there were any sexual misconduct allegations against Landry and also said he resigned, denying the former priest was terminated. Police officials could not confirm a report had ever been filed in 1994.

Former Rochester Police Chief Dan Auger said this morning that he took over as chief in 1995 and could not confirm any complaints about Landry. He said he had a vague memory of something, but "I wouldn't want to speculate."

The lack of the victim pressing charges does not necessarily

stop police from pursuing charges, though, Auger said.

"We've gone ahead before, even when the victims don't want to," he said.

Rochester police Capt. Doug Donlon was with the department then, but did not recall a report stemming from Landry's time at Spaulding and found no records of one.

"I can't confirm that we took a complaint for that," he said.

There were records, Donlon said, regarding allegations out of St. Elizabeth Seton School in Rochester in 1998 from two unnamed girls, ages 11 and 12, that were similar to the reports in the attorney general's package.

Landry told investigators after he "retired from high

school," he worked for a year at St. Elizabeth's Seton School, teaching French to sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders.

The reports alleged that Landry showed hostility toward the girls, slapping them on the buttocks, forcibly grabbing them and using derogatory language. One girl even alleged Landry briefly touched her breast.

The case was referred to Tom Hart, who was an investigator at the time with the Strafford County Attorney's Office. He was not available for comment this morning.

County Attorney Janice Rundles said neither of the alleged incidents took place when she was county attorney, and therefore she did not recall what, if anything, the county attorney's office did with the claims.

Calls to St. Elizabeth Seton School were referred to the Diocese of Manchester, which did not immediately return calls to Foster's Daily Democrat.

Other information in Landry's file indicate incidents of sexual misconduct for almost his entire career with the church, most of which he admitted to himself in interviews.

Statements from the priest show he talked to high-ranking church officials, but never outright asked for help — nor do his superiors ever offer it.

Several hundred pages referring to Landry consist of transcripts of interviews last fall with five victims and the priest himself as well as police reports and memorandums from the attorney general's task force investigating the Diocese of Manchester.

Landry admitted to multiple acts of molestation, all with boys in their early to mid-teens. Landry said the sexual acts consisted of mutual fondling at the most.

Many interviews with some of the victims — all men now in their 40s — do not dispute this, except one from Manchester, a parishioner at St. Anne's Parish.

"He was kind of like, in charge of the altar boys," said

the victim, who was not named.

The victim said Landry abused him "over 200" times and also performed oral sex on him. The victim also said Landry brought him to the mobile home of the priest's sister while no one was there and also performed sexual acts with him in his car, the church rectory, and even on church grounds.

Landry's problem was first brought to the church's attention long before he came to New Hampshire, according to the priest's statements. Landry served as a priest — never as a pastor — at parishes in Massachusetts, Canada and Virginia before coming to New Hampshire in 1965.

Initially, he worked with the Stigmatine Fathers, an order of priests, under the "provincial" or order leader, the Rev. Charles Egan.

Landry admitted to having sexual contact with several boys during other assignments when he was confronted by Egan while serving at a parish in Agawam, Mass., in the early 1960s.

Landry said he could not recall the exact year, but Egan told him that because of "rumors" he was abusing boys, the priest would have to visit a psychiatrist in Boston whom the documents do not name.

Landry said all the doctor wanted to talk about was the priest's dreams, which he had no problems with and were not related to what Landry now knew was his sexual problem.

In the transcript, task force investigator Anthony Fowler asked if Landry had tried to tell the psychiatrist about his problems with sexual activity with minors.

Landry replied, "Yes, I did. Especially the first one I tried to tell him you know that I had this problem and ah and it was like he was shutting me off when I was telling him this. He would stop me and he wasn't, it was like I felt he wasn't interested in that. He wanted my dreams."

Landry said the sessions ended quickly and later told

investigators he thought the Stigmatines had gotten the therapy for free because the psychiatrist was doing some sort of experiment or study. Landry said he and Egan never discussed the situation again.

Landry was also brought to the church's attention a few years later in about 1966. He had just been transferred from Somersworth to St. Anne's Parish in Manchester.

On one of many camping trips with teen-age boys, Landry said he thought he was spotted fondling one of the boys, a former Somersworth parishioner.

Within a few weeks, Bishop Ernest J. Primeau called Landry in to discuss a complaint of abuse filed with the church regarding the incident.

"He said, 'Is this true that you touched this boy?' and I said to him, 'I wish I could tell you that it wasn't true,'" Landry said.

In response, Primeau told Landry to stay away from Somersworth, stay away from the boy, and write a letter of apology to his mother.

Landry stayed away, but never wrote the letter, explaining, "I didn't know how, I really didn't know how, you know, you know, sit down and almost, like, face the woman, you know, say, 'Hey, sorry I touched your kid.'"

As with the psychiatrist incident, Landry never heard another word about the situation from the diocese, and knew nothing of any other action it may have taken.

The only other diocesan contact the transcripts mention occurred last year when Landry, after reading an article in the newspaper alleging detailed sex acts, contacted the church and ultimately Edward Arsenault, the diocesan spokesman.

The story detailed sexual acts that never took place, Landry said. Transcripts of interviews with victims do not indicate any discussion of the allegations.

Arsenault did not want to discuss sexual misconduct allegations, according to Landry, but said he could refer him to a good lawyer in case the priest

wanted to sue for damages.

Although no offers were made, Landry said he got the impression the church would help pay for litigation if he decided to sue.

Beyond that, Landry said he has received no contact from the Diocese of Manchester regarding sexual abuse. He received no retirement benefits or other support. Even the Stigmatine Fathers only gave Landry a one-time payment of \$1,000 after he retired.

At one point, when asked if he understood his pedophilia problem, Landry spoke as a man alone searching for answers.

"I, I didn't know, you know, and that's what I was looking for. You know, you know it's the old cause and effect thing. This is the effect. You know let's try to find the cause. I could never find the cause. You know I was searching. I went to several people you know for help, priests you know as spiritual fathers for this help," he said.

Landry defined "spiritual father" as someone with whom he could discuss his problem in a confidential atmosphere similar to confession.

"You know you don't just go up to a monastery and just say, 'I want you to be my spiritual father.' You wait, you know, and then ... maybe you'd say, 'Father what's your name. I'd like to come to confession to you again. There maybe over a period of time you know if you felt comfortable and then you could talk to him about this problem. Sometimes this was a very difficult thing to find," he said.

Jim Rosenberg, one of the principal investigators for the attorney general's office, asked Landry to describe what he felt the diocese should have done.

Landry said, "You know I really felt that I should have been taken out, you know, and I should have, you know, (been) given some kind of help so that perhaps, you know, I could have done other jobs besides."

Landry also blamed what he called the "system" of church politics, expressing frustration with factors he felt took advan-

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Landry also blamed what he called the "system" of church politics, expressing frustration with pastors he felt took advantage of their position of influence over him.

Landry also flatly stated that the church could not help him. "You wouldn't even think about using the diocese because you know that was trouble ... because you don't know, you know you'd get transferred and whatever and all over the place. There was no help there. There was no help there," he said.

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receive \$15 billion in loans now that its had turned down a tens of thousands of troops to use the base to attack Iraq.

"The particular part we've been talking about was predicated on a plan for the use of Iraq," Ari Fleischer, House spokesman, said. Fleischer added that House was not going to increase the amount of grants and loans to secure Turkish approval.

With 200,000 American military personnel in Iraq, 60,000 more on their way, the military declined to give a timetable other than to say the military was ready to leave by the end of President Bush's second term.

But many diplomatic issues remain unresolved. With the non-UN issue unsettled and no alternative — despite the 101st Airborne Division's arrival in Kuwait — still one to be resolved, military officials said the deployment could be delayed until next March.

That could fit with diplomatic and military needs. A vote late next week by the Security Council would roughly coincide with the arrival in Kuwait of the 101st Airborne's 1st Brigade. Other units in Kuwait would deploy north faster.

Administration of a vote on the Security Council resolution effective in Iraq could come as early as next week, after H

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