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ABUSED IN SCOUTING

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I am writing you on the subject of the pedophile scandals that are being confronted by the Catholic Church and Boy Scouts of America. It is in the pursuit of accountability, recovery and prevention of the victims that this is being written. The story I want to share goes to the pervasiveness of the problem within powerful institutions that allow pedophiles to sexually abuse children by concealing and hiding their crimes. I am a victim of a pedophile and the institutions that allow it. I am a victim of a pedophile, the Catholic Church, the BSA, and the US military. Powerful institutions in which pedophiles are allowed to thrive. I am a testament to the longterm mental, physical and emotional consequences. Please allow me to give some background.

I was born a military dependent in New York in 1953 to a staunch Catholic family. This was at a time when society, through religious indoctrination, treated anything on the subject of sex as taboo and as a subject not to be discussed. My father was a B-17 bombardier who was shot down, captured, and spent the remainder of World War II in a German prisoner of war camp. He retired from the Air Force in the early 1970s with the rank of Lt. Col. and is now buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

In 1964, at the age of eleven, my family was stationed at a military base in Peshawar, Pakistan. This was during the height of the cold war, one year after Kennedy's assassination. The base was actually a spy station and it was the base that Gary Francis Powers flew the U2 out of. Along with the Air Force, a small contingency of the Army was stationed there. There was a Boy Scout troop on the base whose troop leader was Major Frank J. Knapp of the United States Army. It turns out that the Major had a sexual appetite for little boys. Even though I am unable to recall all the suppressed memories of it, I recall the troop leader entering my tent with the Boy Scout Manual after the troop had retired to their individual tents for the evening. The Major laid the manual on my lap and started fondling my genitals. I was clueless that the behavior was inappropriate and thus never mentioned it. I recall being taken by my father to an office where I was seated without my fathers presence to be interviewed by the OSI (Office of Special Investigation). I remember that shortly after the interview my family were reassigned to Rhein Main Air Force base. I received no counseling and my parents did not discuss the incident with me. It was swept under the rug and never mentioned again while I was left to eternalize all the many negative emotions and psychological trauma that occurs with the sexual exploitation of children.

Fast forward to adulthood puts me in college studying law and becoming a policeman. A course of action I would describe as a path to power in order to defend, protect and get justice for the wounded boy inside of me and other victims of the monsters that prey on the defenseless. I am 66 years old now and the longterm effects of suppressed child sexual trauma are revealing. I am being treated for severe epileptic seizures, PTSD, depression, sleep deprivation, nightmares and severe disabling mental illness. In spite of these tremendous challenges I continue to seek accountability, justice and the answers to the questions that have haunted me my entire life.

What happened if anything to Major Frank J. Knapp? Was he allowed to continue his abuse? What happened to his other victims? What happened to the OSI investigation? Was it covered up? Who would a coverup involve in the chain of command? Would it be the cross branches of service and the Joint Chiefs of Command? How does one get justice, accountability and help when up against such daunting power? Every inquiry I have made is met with a wall, be it statute of limitations, the military's involvement, etc...

As news reports of victims of the Catholic Church and BSA come forward seeking accountability, my abuse implicates the military at a time and place that in itself seems impenetrable and thus hopeless. The new development in the BSA case regarding the extension of the statute of limitations for cases being brought forward within NY State allows progress in bringing justice, accountability and prevention to this hidden danger to our children. I was born in NY and contacted the law firm handling the lawsuit against BSA. I have agreed to be represented by them and for the first time in my life there is a small glimmer of hope for me to maybe get some answers. But, due to the military's involvement, it is difficult hanging on to hope in what seems hopeless in light of the circumstances. Still, I hang on, tell my story when allowed.

I am proud of my dad's service to this country but harbor tremendous pain and anger at the way that service was dishonored by harboring and protecting pedophiles while keeping the victims silent.

The negative physiological impact on children who were taught to not question authority figures has resulted in leaving them vulnerable and powerless to abuse of that authority by predatory child molesters. The ideology of domination and subordination that is central to patriarchy has permeated our culture and its institutions with the belief that a smaller fraction of the human population is superior to the other. No society would let what happens to women and children in this culture if at some level it did not have contempt for them. We allow women and children to be raped at a rate that can lead to no other conclusion except that we place a lesser value on their lives.

Sincerely,

Stephen R. Rutledge