



Dear Friends,

“‘Repressed-recovered memories’, ‘dissociative amnesia’ and related concepts are best described as pernicious psychiatric folklore devoid of convincing scientific evidence. Such theories are quite incapable of reliably assisting the legal process. In our collective opinion, these unsupported, controversial notions have caused incalculable harm to the fields of psychology and psychiatry, damaged tens of thousands of families, severely harmed the credibility of mental health professionals, and misled the legislative, civil, criminal, and family legal systems into many miscarriages of justice.”^[1]

This powerful clear statement is from an *amicus*^[2] brief filed in the Shanley case. The statement is highly significant because it was signed by almost 100 distinguished psychologists and psychiatrists. (See page 3)

Given such a commanding statement from so many eminent scientists, the massive research literature demonstrating the ease with which false beliefs may develop, and the lack of scientific evidence for repression, it is reasonable to ask why there is still a “memory war,” why people still call the Foundation, why we still read of lawsuits in which evidence is based only on claims of recovered repressed memory. As some of the letters and articles in this issue of the newsletter demonstrate, the problem of FMS, unfortunately, seems still to be with us.

The notions of repression and multiple personality are deeply embedded in our cultural belief. Unless there is a concerted movement by professional organizations or greater responsibility shown in the media, recovered repressed memories and multiple personality are likely to remain in the popular culture even as they are increasingly viewed skeptically in legal circles. The public is subjected to far more examples of acceptance of recovered memories than they are of skeptical analysis. It’s a lot more engaging to read about someone who explains his or her life-long problems by recovering memories of child abuse than it is to read scholarly articles or technical documents.

September delivered an example of the problem. The

television program “Lie to Me” aired a segment in which an individual with multiple personalities was encouraged to use hypnosis as a way to recover repressed memories. ^[3] (See page 9) The series is about a professor who uses facial expressions to determine if a person is lying. “Lie to Me” claims to be based on the scientific research of psychologist Paul Ekman, Ph.D., who is a consultant to the show. (See page 9.)

Following are some comments from the program:

minute 16: Three characters in conversation: “Trisha’s got it, multiple personality disorder...the holy grail of psychiatry...dissociative identity disorder”

minute 19: “In their conscious life the alters aren’t aware of each other. Hopefully hypnosis will allow [the doctor] to tap into their shared unconscious.”

minute 20: Under hypnosis the subject is asked: “Did anything bad happen to you? You know, when you were younger?”

In an interview with a reporter from *Popular Mechanics*, Ekman said that the professional and scientific elements on the show are around 90 percent accurate. He said that the character based on him was:

“[Y]ounger, edgier, arrogant, brusque, and he’s English. But the science that he does, and the applications, are exactly what I’ve been doing, particularly in the past five years, in applying this with law enforcement and national security.” ^[4]

The author of the article noted:

“But if the show is informative and entertaining, the upside for Ekman will be huge: He has written 15 books, but just the first episode of “Lie to Me” will reach more people than even his most popular title. “

How much more likely is it that the public will see the

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The next newsletter will be sent in January 2010.	

television program as opposed to reading a legal brief signed by 100 scientists? For those of us who are familiar with the science of memory, this segment of "Lie to Me" raises ethical questions and doubts about the scientific accuracy of all the other programs.

Dr. Ekman provides comments on the episodes of "Lie to Me." Following is what he said about this program.

"Loker [the hero's chief assistant] heralds what is going to come next by crediting handwriting as a reflection of personality – very few scientists who have studied the issue do. A few seconds later Lightman says Trisha has Multiple Personality Disorder. Foster corrects him substituting the more recent label: Dissociative Identity Disorder. She notes that the existence of such a disorder is just barely more plausible than psychic phenomena. While Loker calls it the Holy Grail of psychiatry, there actually is strong disagreement among mental health professionals about whether it is a legitimate diagnosis of a mental disorder which really occurs rather than a suggestible patient's creation based on media depictions or a therapist's belief in it. But it sets the stage for an entertaining story and some great acting."^[5]

An entertaining story! Great acting! Not a word about the dangers of using of hypnosis to recover a memory. Apparently, Dr. Ekman is completely unaware of how the unscientific belief in using hypnosis to recover memories has destroyed families and people's lives.^[6] Further, already by 1993, 25 U.S. state supreme courts had ruled on the inadmissibility of a witness testifying if he or she had been hypnotized to enhance memory of the event in question. Since the legal system recognized the dangers of enhancing memory via hypnosis, it seems unfortunate that therapists and the media cannot also take heed.

Belief in recovered repressed memories and multiple personality are also kept alive by groups such as S.M.A.R.T. (Stop Mind Control and Ritual Torture). On page 7 there are some comments about a recent conference of this group. Would you be surprised to learn that members consider the director of the FMSF to be an arch villain? Would it surprise you to learn that this group is listed as a conference sponsor along with groups such as the American Psychological Association and the San Diego School of Medicine?

Some therapists continue to perpetuate the belief in repressed memories. In a story that would be very funny if it did not reflect so much danger, a 75-year-old FMSF mother was told by a therapist that: "You were sexually abused by your father when you were a little girl." He then proposed to help her find her repressed memories. (See page 14) Would you be surprised to learn that the mother fled from the office?

The Shanley case in Massachusetts (page 3) and a case in Indiana (page 6) are evidence that the confusion about the scientific status of recovered repressed memories is still draining financial and legal resources. As long as the media

continue to mislead the public with programs such as "Lie to Me," the problems associated with recovered repressed memories will drag on.

All of this sounds depressing, but progress crawls on in spite of ignorance and irresponsibility. Although there was some good publicity when the *amicus* signed by 100 scientists was filed, there will likely be more when the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court makes a decision about the scientific status of recovered repressed memories in that state. If they decide that recovered repressed memories are not reliable, that moves us closer to the day when the FMSF is no longer needed.

We continue to see progress in fewer calls and letters to the Foundation. We see progress in a smaller Bulletin Board list in this newsletter. How many organizations want to put themselves out of business as we do?

In the meantime, we continue to do what we can to educate people that recovered repressed memories are without scientific foundation. FMSF members are critical in this effort. Writing letters about television programs that provide misinformation is one important way to help. Your gifts to the Foundation in our only fund raising effort are another. We thank you for your generosity.

Pamela

1. Barden, R. C. (2009, August). Brief of *Amicus Curiae* of the International Committee of Social, Psychiatric, Psychological, Cognitive Science, Neuroscience, and Neurological Scientists submitted in MA v. Shanley.
2. An *amicus curie* brief is a "friend of the court" brief from someone who is not a party to a case but who offers information on some other aspect of the case to assist the court in deciding a matter before it.
3. Baun, S., Producer. (2009, September 28). The Core of It. "Lie to Me." Fox.
4. Kramer, S.E. (2009, January 21). The (Real!) science behind Lie to Me. *Popular Mechanics*. Retrieved on September 25, 2009 from: <http://www.popularmechanics.com/science/research/4300722.html>
5. (<http://fox.com/blogs/lietome/>)
6. If you want to let Dr. Ekman learn about the tragedy that can result from professionals who accept an "entertaining story" and "great acting" over scientific responsibility you could send him a copy of your story. Paul Ekman, Ph.D., Paul Ekman Group Llc., 4096 Piedmont Ave. 367, Oakland, CA 94611.



Correction

In the *FMSF Summer Newsletter* we wrote: in 1991 Colin Ross said MPD affects 1% of population. (The population in 1990 was 248,709,873 million. One percent would be 248,710 people with multiple personality.)

Bruce Robinson of Religious Tolerance.org was one of several to write to us with the correct estimate of people with multiple personality disorder.

"I think that the 1% figure is what Dr. Ross estimated. But that would make 2,487,098 million MPD'ers."

100 Scientists Sign *Amicus Brief* Filed in the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in Appeal of Former Priest Paul R. Shanley

Almost 100 scientists signed the *amicus brief* of The International Committee of Social, Psychiatric, Psychological, Cognitive Science, Neuroscience, and Neurological Scientists [1] that was filed this summer in the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in the case of former priest Paul R. Shanley. The brief addresses the issue of the scientific status of repressed and recovered memories.

“Repressed-recovered memories’, ‘dissociative amnesia’ and related concepts are best described as pernicious psychiatric folklore devoid of convincing scientific evidence. Such theories are quite incapable of reliably assisting the legal process. In our collective opinion, these unsupported, controversial notions have caused incalculable harm to the fields of psychology and psychiatry, damaged tens of thousands of families, severely harmed the credibility of mental health professionals, and misled the legislative, civil, criminal, and family legal systems into many miscarriages of justice.”

Paul Shanley was convicted in 2005 of assaulting and raping Paul Busa who claimed to have recovered repressed memories of the abuse that he said began when he was age six and continued until he was 12. (See below for report of the case.)

After the trial decision, Cambridge appellate attorney Robert F. Shaw, Jr., petitioned the Supreme Judicial Court to consider Shanley’s appeal for a new trial. Shaw believes that the Court granted this appeal because, “This case involves a very difficult issue. . . repressed memory...”[2] Among the issues raised by Shaw was the argument that in the trial, prosecutors failed to demonstrate that “repressed memory” evidence is admissible and that Shanley’s trial lawyer inadequately challenged “repressed memory” evi-

dence.

The FMS Foundation also filed an *amicus brief* that focused on the lack of scientific evidence for repressed memories. A brief arguing that the scientific community does accept repressed and recovered memories was filed by the Leadership Council. (See A.K.A. p. 4)

In September 2009, the Court heard oral arguments in the case. The Court is expected to announce its decision within 180 days on whether Shanley should have another trial.

1. Barden, R. C. (2009, August). Brief of *Amicus Curiae* of the International Committee of Social, Psychiatric, Psychological, Cognitive Science, Neuroscience, and Neurological Scientists submitted in Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. Paul R. Shanley, No. SJC-10382, Supreme Judicial Court, Middlesex Ct. Massachusetts. The brief including brief biographies of the signers is available at:

<http://ncrj.org/Shanley/Shanley%20AMICUS%20as%20FILED%2009z.pdf>

2. Murphy, S. (2009, January 27). SJC to hear appeal by ex-priest in abuse case. Boston Globe. Retrieved on January 27, 2009 from http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2009/01/27/sjc_to_hear_appeal_by_ex_priest_in_abuse_case?mode=PF.

* * *

Reprinted from FMSF Newsletter 14 (2), 2005 PAUL SHANLEY CASE

Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. Paul Shanley, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Middlesex SS Superior Court, No. 2002-0894

On February 7, 2005, a Boston jury found defrocked Roman Catholic priest Paul Shanley guilty of sexually abusing now 27-year-old Boston fireman Paul Busa when he was a young child. Shanley, age 74, was sentenced to 12-15 years in prison.

The evidence in the case consisted entirely of Busa’s recovered memories. Busa testified that his girlfriend called him on January 31 to tell him about a Boston Globe article about Shanley.[1] Busa said he was surprised because everyone had liked Shanley. His girlfriend called again on February 11 to tell him that his friend Gregory Ford was accusing Shanley. Busa then

called Ford. He testified that his own memories then started coming back. “I felt like my world was coming to an end.”[2] At the time, Busa was a military police officer in Colorado.

On February 12, Busa visited a military therapist and then flew to Boston. According to investigative reporter Jo Ann Wypijewski,[3] the ticket was paid for by attorney Rod MacLeish who was representing Ford. Busa met with the same mental health professionals as Ford and he also retained MacLeish. After Busa returned to Colorado and entered counseling, he was told to start a journal of his memories. He backdated the journal to February 1. Busa was discharged from the military in April.

In the 1970s, Father Shanley was known as a charismatic “street priest” who worked with troubled adolescents and supported gay rights. Until the criminal trial, no one had ever accused Shanley of being sexually involved with young children. There were, however, claims of his involvement with adolescents or young adults in the 60s and 70s.

After the publication of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Boston Globe* series and a later press conference by attorney MacLeish, Shanley became one of, if not the, most high-profile figures in the church abuse scandals. Shanley is one of the few priests to be criminally charged in Massachusetts. Because he had moved to California in 1990, the clock stopped on the 15 year statute of limitations.

There were two young men, besides Ford and Busa who made claims against Shanley. They all attended the same Catholic religious classes at St. Jean L’Evangliste in Newton, Mass. They all said that Shanley would take them out of class and rape them in the rectory, confessional and restroom from the time they were six until they were 11 or 12. They all claimed that they immediately forgot being raped or abused and that they

recovered the memories after the *Globe* article. They all had the same lawyer. There is no record of any person during those years who noticed anything unusual involving the boys and Shanley.

In April 2004, all four received settlements from the Church in civil cases. Ford is said to have received more than \$1.4 million and Busa received \$500,000.

In July 2004, prosecutors said that “in order to make this the most manageable case for a jury to hear,” it would drop Ford and another person from the case. A great deal had been learned about Gregory Ford and his life that caused many questions about the reliability of his memories. The other accuser was dropped on the day jury selection began because no one could find him.

The trial began in mid-January and was shown on CourtTV. Busa sobbed during some of his highly emotional testimony, and his wife described his awful pain and suffering after he recovered memories. Classmates and two former teachers from the school took the stand. None of the classmates testified that they ever saw Shanley remove anyone from class, although students were sent out of the class. One student testified that he had once been sent to Shanley who had told him to stop giving the teacher a hard time and sent him right back to class. Under cross-examination, teachers could not recall Shanley taking children out of class. One stated that Busa would not even have been in the religious class at the age he claimed.

James Chu, M.D., an associate professor at Harvard Medical School, was an expert for the prosecution. He testified that repressed memory is more common among people who suffered repeated trauma as children than in those who suffered a single traumatic event. “It really is more this repeated trauma that tends to be forgotten by some mechanism.” He noted that

memories can return in a flood of images and physical symptoms such as anxiety and sleeplessness, all of which Busa said he experienced. Dr. Chu used the term “dissociative barrier” to describe the mechanism that keeps traumatic memories locked up. Under cross-examination, Chu acknowledged the intense debate about the validity of repressed memories and that false memories can be implanted.

Elizabeth Loftus, Ph.D., the only witness for the defense, testified that her research shows that people can come to sincerely believe implanted memories. On cross-examination, prosecutor Rooney asked Loftus about statements she had made about repressed memories in the past that were at odds with her current statements. Loftus was unable to complete her answers, and defense attorney Mondano did not follow up on redirect.

In closing arguments, Prosecutor Rooney said that the emotion Busa showed when he testified was evidence that he was not fabricating his claims. “The emotions were raw. They were real. They were reflective of the pain he experienced,” she said. In his closing, defense attorney Frank Mondano argued that Busa’s story was not reliable and that he made up the story to get the money from a civil trial. Prosecutor Rooney argued that Busa already had the money from the civil trial so that would not explain his willingness to endure the pain of the criminal trial.

The jury deliberated 13 hours before reaching its decision. Jury member Victoria Blier remarked that the jury agreed after discussion that you can experience something up to a point, and then not think about it and have plenty of other things in your life that are more important.

1. Pfeiffer, S. (2002, January 31). Famed 'street priest' preyed upon boys. *Boston Globe*, p. A21.
2. Lavoie, D. (2005, January 26). Shanley's accuser testifies at child rape trial. Associated Press State & Local Wire, 4:56 Wednesday, BC.

3. Wypijewski, J. (2004, September-October). The passion of Father Paul Shanley. *Legal Affairs*. Retrieved February 9, 2005, from http://www.legalaffairs.org/issues/September-October2004/features_wypijewski_sepoct04.html.

Ballou, B., & Lawrence, J. (2005, February 8). Shanley guilty; verdict delivers 'victory,' vindication. *Boston Herald*, p. 7.

Kukjian, S., & Cullen, K. (2002, June 21). Grand jury indicts Shanley, charges rape of four boys. *Boston Globe*, p. A22.

Lavoie, D. (2005, January 31). State wraps up case against defrocked priest. Associated Press.

Lavoie, D. (2005, February 7). Defrocked priest convicted in notorious clergy sex abuse case. Associated Press, Monday, BC.

Comments from Jurors

Jury Member Patrick Kierce: “It must have come back to him...His health, his wife. It was heartfelt. He didn't have much of anything else to go on.”

Weiss, J. (2005, February 8). Jury convicts Shanley of raping child victim. *Boston Globe*, p. A1.

Jury Member Victoria Blier: “I think one of the more convincing things that was spoken by a lot of people was that the victim had already won a civil case and had already been awarded half a million dollars and had no motivation, no reason, to pursue the criminal case other than personal conviction.”

Saltzman, J. (2005, February 8). Compelling witness overrode questions on memories. *Boston Globe*, p. B5.



A.K.A.

“I don't know what you mean by 'glory,’” Alice said.

Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. “Of course you don't—till I tell you. ‘I meant there's a nice knock-down argument for you!’”

“But ‘glory’ doesn't mean ‘a nice knock-down argument,’” Alice objected.

“When I use a word,” *Humpty Dumpty* said in rather a scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to

mean neither more nor less.”

“The question is,” said Alice, “whether you can make words mean so many different things.”

“The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master—that’s all.”

Lewis Carroll.

Through the Looking Glass

Humpty Dumpty came to mind when we read an *amicus* filed in support of the prosecution in the Shanley case.^[1] The following terms were all used in this brief in reference to the repression and recovery of traumatic memories: “delayed memory,” “delayed recall,” “dissociative amnesia,” “dissociative memory loss,” “dissociative phenomena,” “dissociative state,” “motivated forgetting,” “post traumatic amnesia,” “psychogenic amnesia,” “psychogenic shock,” “recovered memory,” “repression,” “repressed memory,” and “traumatic amnesia.” Because some of these terms have other meanings that involve no controversy, their use confuses and obscures the focus of the issue: the scientific status of repression.

One example of the confusion: “dissociative phenomena” is a *category* that includes “dissociative amnesia,” (repression), the focus of the arguments in this legal case. The category dissociative phenomena also includes “dissociative identity disorder” (multiple personality disorder), “dissociative fugue,” “depersonalization disorder,” and “dissociative disorders not otherwise specified.” “Depersonalization,” in which an individual feels that he or she is watching life go by, is a fairly common experience. It is not controversial in the sense that claims of dissociative amnesia and multiple personality are controversial. “Psychogenic shock” and “motivated forgetting” are not controversial concepts; nor do they refer to the repression and recovery of memories.

The memory wars have been going on for two decades, plenty of time for proponents of repression and recovery of memory to have established precise terms and concepts. Unfortunately, to read some papers in support of repression is to take a trip *Through the Looking Glass*.

1. Murphy, W. (2009). Brief of the Leadership Council as Amicus Curiae. Submitted in Massachusetts v. Shanley, SJC No. 10382, AC No. 2007-P-0886

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To Laugh or Cry?

The program for the Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis 60th Annual Workshops & Scientific Program Conference (October 21-25, 2009 in Reno, Nevada) includes the workshops described below that will be given on October 24. Comment seems superfluous.

The Tapping Cure

Roberta Temes, PhD, Downstate Medical School, New York, NY

In the Tapping Cure workshop I will teach and demonstrate the methods of tapping for phobia relief, anxiety and PTSD. I will present the latest research and talk about the controversies in the field, too. Energy Psychology (EP) refers to the various techniques that combine the ideas of traditional Western psychotherapy with acupuncture and other Eastern approaches to medicine. The Tapping Cure is a form of EP. Its science is not yet known – clinical trials and double-blind studies now being conducted at Kaiser Permanente in CA – but the results are in. It works. By gently tapping on specific body parts while at the same time speaking certain words, it is possible to separate a painful negative emotion from a particular memory. This is as incredible as is the success of a hypnosis session.

* * *

Beyond the Body: Hypnotic Inductions to Align the Human Energy Field

Dolores J. Bjorkman, MSW, RN,
private practice

Experiments in physics over the past 100 years are describing a universe made of only energy. The energetic mechanisms by which matter exists and communicates are being explored. In this workshop, scientific concepts that explain the Human Energy Field will be introduced. Three dimensions of the Human Energy Field—Aura, Hara, and Core Essence—will be identified. The workshop will focus on the anatomy and physiology of the Auric Field. The significance of the Auric Field in physical and mental health will be explored. Participants will experience an induction to strengthen the Auric Field. Design of inductions to target specific issues will be discussed.

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Memory Reconsolidation: Modification of Old Memories

McGowan, K. (2009, July/August). Out of the past. *Discover*, 30(7).

Recent findings in neuroscience show that we alter our memories just by remembering them. In this article, Kathleen McGowan tells the interesting story of Karim Nader, a young postdoc, whose theory about memory reconsolidation challenged established views of memory. She describes the process of his theory becoming the accepted view. In an exceptionally clear manner, she explains the nature of the research and the current scientific understanding of memory.

“For a hundred years, people thought memory was wired into the brain. Instead, we find it can be rewired – you can add false information to it, make it stronger, make it weaker, and possibly even make it dis-

appear.” Karim Nadar. Quoted in *Out of the past*.

“Reconsolidation suggests that when you use a memory, the one you had originally is no longer valid or maybe no longer accessible.” Joseph Le Doux. Quoted in *Out of the past*.

Even though we are not aware of it, people are continually rewriting our life stories. McGowen explains: “Every time we remember, it seems, we add new details, shade the facts, prune and tweak.” She observes that memory is very much like imagination in that both conjure a world that never existed until “forged by our minds.” Both memory and imagination allow you to “put yourself in a time and place other than the one we actually occupy.

“When people are instructed to imagine events that might happen in their personal future and then to remember actual events in the past, we find extensive and very striking overlap in areas of brain activation.” Daniel Schacter. Quoted in *Out of the past*.



\$5 Million Settlement in John Stoll Case

In September 2009, John Stoll agreed to accept \$5 Million that he Kern County California Board of Supervisors voted to settle a lawsuit filed by Stoll who was wrongly imprisoned.

The 2008 documentary *Witch Hunt* ^[1] featured John Stoll, who spent almost 20 years in prison before being released in 2004. Stoll was one of the 30 people convicted in the California Kern County (Bakersfield) child abuse hysteria in the early 1980s.

The judge who ordered his release noted that prosecutors had presented no physical evidence at the original trial and that none of the six children who accused Stoll had been examined by doctors. The case rested solely on the children’s testimony. Four of the

six accusers later testified that they had lied on the stand, saying they were coerced.

Indeed, as early as 1986, a year-long investigation of the Kern County cases by the California Attorney General’s Office concluded that local authorities had used “suggestive” questioning that led children to give answers that they wanted. At that time, the “attorney general said there was both a shortage of corroborating evidence and that some alleged victims were simply parroting what they were told in questioning or what they heard other children say.” ^[2] Yet, Stoll remained in prison until the Innocence Project took up his cause.

1. *Witch Hunt* was produced and narrated by Sean Penn. (See *FMSF Newsletter 18(1)* Winter 2009) The video can be purchased at: <http://witchhuntmovie.com/crew.html>

2. Boren, J. (2004, May 9). Botched child molestation cases meted out injustice. *Fresno Bee*, p. F3.



Did Texas Execute an Innocent Man?

Grann, D. (2009, September 7) Trial by fire. *New Yorker*, p. 42-63.

Available at:

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2009/09/07/090907fa_fact_grann

Although this article is not about memory or false memory, it is about the justice system and we think it is important enough to mention.

In “Trial by Fire,” David Grann tells the tragic story of the 2005 execution in Texas of Todd Willingham for triple homicide. Willingham was convicted of setting his house on fire and killing his three children. Grann exposes the fact that Texas officials ignored reports by fire scientists that showed clearly there was no evidence of arson. The parole board that reviews applications for clemency did not even bother to read the report that would have shown that he was not guilty.

In 2005, Texas established a commission to investigate error and mis-

conduct by forensic scientists. The Willingham case is one of first to be reviewed, Grann writes. Texas could be the first state to acknowledge that it carried out the “execution of a legally and factually innocent person.”



Indiana Clergy Case: The Ongoing Debate

King, R. (2009, August 21). Priest abuse hearing hinges on memory, time.

Indianapolis Star, A-1.

The scientific status of repressed memories was the focus of a hearing on August 21, 2009 in Indianapolis, Indiana at Marion Super Court before Judge David Dreyer.

The case is about John Doe, a 44-year-old business man, now living in another state, who claims that in therapy in 2003 he began to recover memories that priest Harry Monroe had abused him when he was an altar boy.

The facts of the case were not contested. There are 13 lawsuits filed against this former priest and he has confessed that he abused at least five of the people who have brought suits. John Doe RG’s suit, however, is the only one that involved repressed memories. None of the other cases was prosecuted because the statute of limitations had expired.

Does the fact that the victim had repressed his memories change the statute of limitations? The legal debate focused on whether trauma victims can truly lose access to their memories of abuse and later recover them. The expert for John Doe RG was James A. Chu, M.D., associate professor of psychiatry at Harvard University. Chu stated that among clinicians there is no real debate about the validity of repressed memories. He said that the only doubters of repressed memory were people who work in laboratories and who do not treat patients. The expert for the archdiocese was Harrison Pope, M.D., professor of psychiatry at Harvard University who

wrote in an affidavit that there are serious questions about repressed memories in the scientific community and that there is a lack of consensus about them.

Attorney Pat Noaker who represents John Doe RG argued that statute does not apply if memories are repressed – that a person has a two-year window in which to file after recovering the memories. Attorney Jay Mercer who represents the archdiocese argued that an exception to the statute of limitations should not be granted because of the lack of scientific consensus about repressed memories.

After the arguments, Judge Dreyer asked attorneys to give him more information about the relationship between “dissociative amnesia” and “repressed memory.” The judge noted that “dissociative amnesia” is listed in the DSM-IV and that “repressed memory” is not listed. He said that acceptance in the desk reference would be a simple way of deciding the credibility of the science and whether to allow testimony.

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The Rutherford Family Speaks to FMS Families

The DVD made by the Rutherford family is *the* most popular DVD of FMSF families. It covers the complete story from accusation, to retraction and reconciliation. Family members describe the things they did to cope and to help reunite. Of particular interest are Beth Rutherford’s comments about what her family did that helped her to retract and return.

Available in DVD format only:

To order send request to

FMSF -DVD, 1955 Locust St.

Philadelphia, PA 19103

\$10.00 per DVD; Canada add \$4.00;

other countries add \$10.00

Make checks payable to FMS

Foundation

Proponents of Repressed Memories: S.M.A.R.T.

‘There are thousands more survivors out there who have yet to learn what they have been through.’ [1]

In August 2009, the Twelfth Annual Ritual Abuse, Secretive Organizations and Mind Control Conference was held in Windsor Locks, Connecticut.^[2] Doug Mesner, a young investigative journalist, attended the conference and wrote a two-part description of it for *The Examiner*. After the first part was posted, the *Examiner* editor received so many complaints that he removed the article and did not post the second part. In fact, the editor posted material written by the organizer of the conference, survivor Neil Brick. The Mesner articles can still be read, however.

Report from the S.M.A.R.T. Ritual Abuse/Mind-Control Conference 2009, #1

Doug Mesner. Available at <http://www.process.org/discept/2009/08/25/report-from-the-s-m-a-r-t-ritual-abusemind-control-conference-2009/>

Report from the S.M.A.R.T. Ritual Abuse/Mind-Control Conference 2009, #2

Doug Mesner. Available at <http://www.process.org/discept/2009/08/31/report-from-the-s-m-a-r-t-ritual-abusemind-control-conference-2009-part-2/>

Below are some excerpts from the Mesner articles.

“The S.M.A.R.T conferences are an opportunity for the victims of the satanic conspiracy to exchange their horrific tales, offer support to one another and, most importantly “just be believed”. Victims are encouraged to bring an accompanying “support person”, as much of the material covered in the 2-day series of talks is considered to be “triggering” (that is to say, it may cause flashbacks in the similarly traumatized).”

“Almost all of the self-proclaimed victims of Satanic Ritual Abuse, like Labrier, have “recovered” their “mem-

ories” of these alleged early traumas while undergoing psychiatric therapy.”

“To Neil Brick, the FMSF is nothing more than a group of “pedophile sympathizers”, the executive director of which – Pamela Freyd – serves as the oft-cited arch-villain of the conference. There is Satan, and there is Pamela Freyd. Without them, the world would be okay, and no children would ever get hurt...”

“The attendees at the conference, whether out of politeness or sheer credulity, seem prepared to believe anything. Nobody shows a hint of doubt when a speaker by the name of “Royal”, at all of about forty years of age, stands before us to claim that she was a personal slave to Nazi doctor Josef Mengele.”

“Juliane expresses gratitude to former S.M.A.R.T. conference speaker Brice Taylor (after expressing disdain for “The Media”, and the requisite loathing of the False Memory Syndrome Foundation [FMSF]). . . . Brice Taylor’s book “Thanks for The Memories” details her personal recovered memories of satanic sexual abuse within the highest levels of the United States government – from John F. Kennedy to Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, to Ronald Reagan. Claiming to have been owned as a mind-controlled sex slave by late comedian Bob Hope – who later passed her off to Henry Kissinger – Taylor is a favorite in the mentally fractured fringe, her book a classic in the folk genre of delusional conspiracy theory literature. A twistedly prurient work describing outrageous pedophilic orgies among the famous and affluent, Taylor’s work has been described as “porno for paranoids” – its claims so far-flung and unlikely that, as far as I know, nobody has seen the need to disprove it. But then, this lack of a definitive debunking puts Taylor’s book in a class above several of the Ritual Abuse/Satanic Panic movement’s foundational texts.”

Is all this to be laughed at? Is it any different from a group of UFO-believers? Unfortunately, a conference such

as this *is* a problem. Believers in satanic conspiracies have devastated their own lives, have destroyed their families' lives, and have usurped untold resources of law enforcement and the justice system agencies. An organization such as S.M.A.R.T. gains credibility when a conference such as the 14th International Conference on violence, Abuse and Trauma presented by Alliant International University includes the organization in its program as a collaborator along with the American Psychological Association and the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine and others.^[3]

1. Neil Brick, organizer of the 2003 Stop Mind Control and Ritual Torture Conference in Connecticut as reported in Rucker, P. (2003, September 4). *Speak of the Devil: Victimized by satanic cults and the CIA or just plain crazy? A look at the recent SMART conference at Windsor Locks.* Hartford Advocate.

Available at <http://www.rickross.com/reference/satanism/satanism86.html>

2. Some of the talks from this conference are available on the website of the group that organized it: S.M.A.R.T. See:

<http://ritualabuse.us/smart-conference/2009-conference/>

3. Program available at: <http://www.ivatcenters.org/Conferences/14thProgramBooklet6-17-09.pdf>



**Case Against William H. Ayres,
M.D. Ends in Mistrial
Case SC064366 Filed 8/21/07 San
Mateo, California.**

In July 2009, Judge Beth Freeman of the San Mateo County Superior Court declared a mistrial after the jury remained deadlocked for two weeks of deliberations following the molestation trial of William Hamilton Ayres, M.D. Ayres had been tried on numerous counts of lewd and lascivious conduct with a child under the age of 14. Six former patients claimed he had sexually abused them while performing medical evaluations between 1988 and 1996. ^[1] After interviewing jury members,

Prosecutor Melissa McKowan stat-

ed that the San Mateo District Attorney's office will retry the case. A new trial is expected to begin in early 2010.

Dr. Ayres, a 77-year-old retired child psychiatrist, has been prominent in the community and he is a former president of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Over the years, Ayres likely conducted about two thousand forensic examinations on juveniles who were referred to him by the San Mateo County Juvenile Court and by area school districts. He acknowledged that he sometimes conducted physical examinations of patients and that sometimes these included genital examination, but he denied ever abusing any patients. In 2006, Ayres explained: "Child psychiatrists are physicians. Physical examinations are things that we are trained to do." ^[2]

San Francisco attorney Doren Weinberg represented William Ayres.

The case against Ayres had its foundation in 2002 when a former patient contacted the San Mateo police to say that Ayres had molested him in 1976. The police launched a criminal investigation that ended when the United States Supreme Court struck down a California law that had retroactively extended the statute of limitations in child abuse cases. ^[3] In 2003, the former patient filed a civil suit against Ayres who later who agreed to a confidential settlement.

The story of how that patient came to contact the police in 2002 and the subsequent development of the case is interesting. At the suggestion of a friend, the man, who was an aspiring writer, contacted Victoria Balfour, a New York freelance writer and victims' rights advocate, to get tips about how to find writing work. In the conversation, the man happened to mention that Dr. Ayres had abused him. Balfour who has written that she had been molested as a child, ^[4] started to encourage the man to contact the

police. After four months of her urging, he did indeed contact the San Mateo police.

After the police dropped their case, Balfour aggressively sought evidence that Ayres had abused others. She placed postings online and by 2005, had compiled a list of 15 possible victims. She went to the police who asked for her information. The police then seized more than 800 patient records from Ayres' former patients. They sifted through the records and found thirty-seven men who said that Ayres had abused them. Only a few of those cases, however, fell within the statute of limitations.

San Mateo police captain Mike Callagy credited Balfour for her work stating: "I don't know if the victims would have come forward without her encouragement." ^[5] The San Mateo Chief Deputy District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe said: "She basically had a quest to bring Dr. Ayres to justice. She worked, at times without a lot of appreciation, to get it into police officers' hands."^[6]

In September, Victoria Balfour was honored for her work in this case. She received the Award for Excellence in the Media from the 14th International Conference on Violence, Abuse, and Trauma that was held in San Diego from September 23-26, 2009. Colin Ross, M.D., and Robert Mungadze, Ph.D., were speakers at this conference. Among the many organizations listed as supporters of the conference was "SMART Ritual Abuse Newsletters & Conferences."

1. Durand, M. (2009, July 28). Ayres case ends in mistrial. *The Daily Journal*. Retrieved on July 29, 2009 from: http://www.smdailyjournal.com/article_preview.php?id=113975

2. Williamson, K. (2007, April 6). *The Examiner*. Retrieved on July 29, 2009 from: http://www.examiner.com/printa-659821-Child_psychiatrist_charged_with_molesting_patients.html

3. *Stogner v. California*, 539 U.S. 607 (2003).

4. Balfour, V. (1999) A thin line. *Vogue*.

5. Cote, J. (2007, April 23). Case against psychiatrist took years to assemble. Writer and

advocate for alleged victims pushed molest probe. San Francisco Chronicle. Retrieved on July 29, 2009 from <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2007/04/23/MNGE-QPDMON1.DTL&type=printable>

6. Maher, S. (2009, September 24) Journalist honored for role in Ayres child abuse prosecution. The Oakland Tribune. Retrieved on September 28, 2009 from http://www.insidebayarea.com/sanmateocountytimes/localnews/ci_13415139?source=rss

The "William Hamilton Ayres Watchdog Site" has complete, though perhaps biased, coverage of the trial.

<http://williamayreswatch.blogspot.com/>



"Lie To Me" Lied: Relentless Media Mention of Repressed Memories and MPD

In September 2009, the television program "Lie to Me" aired a segment in which an individual was encouraged to use hypnosis as a way to recover repressed memories.^[1] This was disappointing, especially because the program is based on the work and life of Paul Ekman, Ph.D. who also serves as a consultant. How sad that such a prominent psychologist was unable to prevent damaging misinformation from misleading the public. Indeed, the suggestion that hypnosis is an accurate way to recover repressed memories is a "lie." The program lied to the public!

The incident reminded us that a few years ago we collected reviews of plays, movies, and books that mentioned repressed memories. The following items were just some of the many references that crossed our desk in 2005 in response to a daily search for repressed memories.

The number of references helps to explain why belief in repressed memories will likely remain. When people see or hear something over and over, they tend to accept it.

1. The Core of It. (2009, September 28). Fox.

* * *

"So devastating is sexual abuse to the human psyche that victims often repress the memory."

Chambers, P. (2005, January 22). Take

the taboo out of talking about sexual abuse. *The Advocate* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana), 1F.

"Lewis's best friend is Gary, who is unemployed and lives off the settlement money from the psychologist who helped him 'recover' false memories of ritual child abuse and goat slaughter at the hands of his now-estranged parents."

Kevin Chong, (2005, January 29). Book Review: *Home Land*. *Globe and Mail*, D5.

"In today's broadcast Dr. Stan Katz advises Bethany to use hypnosis to recover memories."

(2009, February 11). Description of "Starting Over" a daytime reality program. www.startingovery.com/showguide/full-story.html

"On March 1 viewers will learn that Viki's tender, caring daughter Jessica... has also developed MPD."

Logan, M. (2009, February 27). On Soaps: Just like mama. (Llanview). *TV Guide*.

"[Sabina Spielrein, Jung's first analysand] remembers a pogrom in her hometown of Rostov, Russia. Amid the flames, she sees her father's face, and repressed memories of incest come flooding forth."

Kanfer, E. (2005, March 1). Buried childhoods. *The New Leader*, 88(2), 45.

"Jack is subjected to the snarly shrink's unorthodox memory-recovery treatment, which basically involves sticking patients in morgue drawers and slamming them shut until they scream themselves back into sanity."

Pevere, G. (2005, March 4). Jacket made of thin material. *Toronto Star*, D3.

"Whatever side of the fence you

sit on regarding this volatile issue, by the end of the evening recovered memory has been trivialized."

Grant, J. A. (2005, March 7). 'Reckoning' trivializes hot topic. *Daily News*, 26.

"This is all distraction, diversion, multiple ways not to deal with the difficult big issues that Picoult seems to have thought she would deal with here – repressed memory of childhood sexual abuse – but then simply blurted out in a rush and left the state."

Hill, I. (2005, March 27). Review of *Vanishing Acts*. *Washington Post*, T6.

"Then the police discover a link between the victims: they all had young female relatives who are patients of Nathan Malik, a psychologist who specializes in helping sufferers of childhood sexual abuse to recover suppressed memories."

Kerridge, J. (2005, April 30). Books. Review of "Blood Memory" *The Daily Telegraph* (London), 10.

"On one level, Odum's affliction can be reduced to a case of multiple personality disorder triggered by a repressed childhood trauma."

Reich, T. (2005, May 1). Review of "A Master of Tradecraft Legends: A Novel of Dissimulation." *The New Leader*, 88(3).

"The dreams confuse Mary, but her husband Holmes believes they're rooted in repressed memories of her San Francisco childhood during the great quake and fire."

Review of "Locked Rooms." (2005, May 1). *Kirkus Reviews*.

"I would like to forget all these horrible things completely, and for more than 20 years I unconsciously succeeded in doing just that."

Taylor, T. (2005, May 2). Truth, History and Honor Killing. Review of "Burned Alive". Antiwar.com

"The film, described by HBO as an 'intimate psychological journey,' focuses on a Toledo firefighter confronting his abuse after years of repressing his memories."

Chadwich, J. (2005, May 11). Victims hope film inspires change in law; Abuse story screened in Trenton. Review of film "Twist of Faith." *The Record* (Bergen County, NJ, A4).

"... believes that the nightmares and nosebleeds that afflict him throughout adolescence are results of an alien abduction that occurred in the summer of 1981."

Scott, A.O. (2005, May 6). Review "Mysterious Skin." *New York Times*, E 13.

"Sam encourages Danny to investigate why Victoria's piano playing seems to stir repressed childhood memories of his life before 'Uncle' Bart."

Lumenick, L. (2005, May 13). Jet propelled. Review of movie "Unleashed." *New York Post*, 49.

"For 20 years, she [Catherine Oxenberg] suffered from bulimia in secret; then, while trying to overcome the eating disorder, she recovered memories of sexual abuse from her childhood."

Strauss, C. & Warrick, P. (2005, May 16). "The Princess Diarist". Her life now a reality show, blue-blooded actress Catherine Oxenberg opens up about family and her battle with bulimia. *People*, 101.

"Her doctor diagnoses her condition as dissociative identity disorder, 'which is sort of multiple personality disorder,' she said."

Martin, D. (2005, May 3). Woman's mental illness leads to the state. Review of play "Five Bottles in a Six-Pack." *Express-News*, 19H (San Antonio, TX).

"The sisters warn that coming forward is like taking the lid off something terrible, allowing suppressed memories to suddenly become real."

Gyulai, L. (2005, June 20). Title: Jeannie and Anne-Marie Hilton; Victims' Advocates, Quebec. *Time*, 49.

"The state attorney general assigns Beaumont a cold case after a nun, Sister Mary Katherine, reports horrific dreams that indicate a long-repressed memory of witnessing a murder."

Review of "Long Time Gone" (2005, June 20). *Publishers Weekly*, 62.

"The death of his childhood sexual obsession seduces Billy Bagwell back to his hometown and to the dark depths of repressed memories..."

Mystery Prepub "Killing Neptune's Daughter." (2005, July 15). *Library Journal*, 58.

"Although the novella purports to be an extended narrative that is as much an exercise in the retrieval of repressed memories....."

Maier, H. (2005, July 23). Review of "The Lost Thoughts of Soldiers." *Courier-Mail*.

"After he met the Blunts, says his wife, Janet, 'it became a full-fledged recovered memory and painful for him'"

Smolowe, J. & Stoyloff, N. (2005, July 25). The Secrets Spill Out: Plunging into dark places while writing his new novel, John Irving confronts his childhood sexual abuse and connects with the father – and family – he never knew. *Time*, 88.

"A hypnotherapist, brings her to Beau when his sessions with her indicate that repressed memories of a murder she witnessed 40 years

ago are breaking through."

Best Sellers: Fiction. (2005, August 21). Review of "Long Time Gone." *The New York Times*.

"Repressed memories. A heartless mother. A grandmother's ghost...."

Janusonis, M. (2005, August 26). Heaping helping of suds in melodramatic "Finding Home." *Providence Journal*, D1.

"The recovery of repressed memories of the 1953 murder by a serial killer of an 11-year-old friend and neighbor..."

Girls of Tender Age: A Memoir. (2005, September 5). *Publishers Weekly*, 42.

"They're very much in love and seem not to have a care in the world, until a nightmarish memory resurfaces from Sabina's early childhood."

Young, D. (2005, September 13). Review of "Don't Tell" film. *Variety*.

"Thinnes turns for help in recovering his memory to Dr. Jack Caleb, a psychotherapist."

Review of "White Tiger" (2005, October 17). *Publishers Weekly*, 43.

"Both face up to their past and make a new beginning through the recall of repressed memories."

Stead, M. (2005 October 29). Saturday Review: Fiction: "A better connection." *The Guardian* (London), 16.

"Pietro is a young Italian man whose childhood is so traumatic that he has no memory of it."

Clark, L. (2005, November 27). Snowy saga to read in summer. *Sunday Telegraph* (Sydney, Australia), 92.

□

Repressed Memories in North Carolina

Although your last newsletter indicated a decline in cases reported of false memory issues, the problem is very much alive in North Carolina. We want to share the horrific events of our lives during the last 2-1/2 years. Two years ago, we received a letter from our daughter and son-in-law in which we were addressed by our first names. In the letter we were told not to have any contact with our grandchildren. A copy of this letter was sent to our daughter's therapist and to the principal of the school where my wife worked.

A few weeks later, we received a letter from an attorney indicating that he had been hired to begin legal action against us for crimes against our daughter and our grandsons.

These actions caught us by surprise and caused my wife to question my role in all of this. She separated from me for three months and hired her own attorney to deal with the charges when she found out that she was implicated as well. When they saw the list of over 20 allegations and found that our daughter was willing to drop all of this if we would pay them, our two attorneys came together. They responded that this was ridiculous and we would not pay one cent for false charges.

Legal papers were filed against us seeking civil damages for over \$120,000. Our attorneys viewed the action as extortion and slanderous and sought a restraining order, which a superior court judge granted. During this time, our daughter dropped all charges.

Subsequently, we moved out of town due to my wife's employment. But after a year maintaining two residences, we decided to move back to our hometown. When this happened,

our children began to discredit us and act in inappropriate ways. Two weeks after arriving, our daughter took the dropped allegations to my wife's employer, a school system. My son-in-law continued to call asking why she was still employed.

In April, our daughter contacted the neighbors on both sides of us and told them we were offenders. She shared that her therapist had helped her remember things that were done to her before she was three. Also in April, our minister and a chief executive in our church governance structure were contacted and told that we abuse children.

The school system met with my wife and her attorney and discussed the allegations. After the meeting, they forwarded the list of charges to children's services. In mid June, my wife was one of 7 employees returned to a supervisory post. Since the material was filed, we have not been contacted by the children's services agency. We view the rehiring of my wife by the school district as an act of confidence and as an outward indication that they do not believe the allegations.

During these trying years we have had the help of wonderful therapists. They too have been puzzled by the behavior of certain members of their profession. Our therapist, with over 40 years of practice, labeled the daughter's therapist's behavior as malpractice.

We are grateful for the support of the FMS Foundation—the conversation with Pam, the newsletters and the support of others who have experienced these nightmares.

It almost cost us our marriage. However, we are together and celebrated 46 years in June. Other costs include lawyer fees of over \$60,000, the cost of no family members present when a beloved aunt died two years ago, the cost of birthdays missed, and not being there for the first granddaughter's graduation. When our minister refused to participate in the legal

process of supplying an affidavit, it cost us the membership in a church that we have been a part of for 9 years and a denomination of 50 years.

We look forward to the day when all of this is behind us. In the meantime, there is a journal to remind those who live on our thoughts of this experience.

A dad



Reconciliation Services

Your newsletter indicates that FMSF is hearing from fewer new families. I understand this to mean that fewer cases are being reported. This is wonderful. I fear, however, that FMSF might feel that their work is therefore ending. I would like to see the FMSF open another door of service – initiating approaches to reconciliation between families yet estranged.

As you may know, our daughter accused me, her dad, falsely ten years ago. She and her husband now have a five-year-old son and a two-year-old daughter whom we have never seen.

If the FMSF should develop an intentional, professionally-staffed reconciliatory service, I am confident our family would be helped as would, no doubt, many other families.

Thank you for considering our observations.

A dad

Editor's response: The fundamental problem that no reconciliation services can address is the accuser who refuses to have any contact. Unless the accuser is willing to participate in mediation, meet with a neutral professional, or communicate in some way, there is little that can break the cult-like cocoon. Once an accuser is willing to talk, most well-trained professionals can guide families towards negotiation and possible reconciliation.



Apologized and Reunited

A note to inform you that we are united with our daughter! She has recanted, apologized to us and reunited

with her two brothers as well. She has divorced her husband who encouraged her to keep going to counseling. We now know our granddaughter, and though divorce brings its own problems, we face it now as a family. Our daughter knows she has a family to support her.

We could not have endured this trial of love without your help. Thank you. Thank you.

A mom



Falsely Accused—Again

I was interested to read the letter in the last newsletter about retractors who lapsed into false accusations again after years of normalcy. I thought readers might find our situation interesting.

Our younger daughter was sexually assaulted by an ex-minister of our church in the fall of 1984. She was in and out of therapy for years. In December 1993, she falsely accused me of sexual assault in a classic *Courage to Heal* ambush and stormed out of town. We had little contact with her for nearly ten years. In 2003, she came to our home and said that there was no basis for her false accusations and asked if we could forgive her. She seemed loving and normal. She even commented that she was trying to make up for her prior conduct.

About a year ago, our older daughter's child was sexually assaulted by an acquaintance. My daughter put our granddaughter into therapy. In May this older daughter falsely accused me of molesting our granddaughter and threw us out of her house. We have had hardly any contact with her since.

Our younger daughter has now gotten back into the rant and cut off contact with us. She has asked that we not contact her again. Her therapist's website says that she does EMDR.

I continue to be astonished that the major professional organizations such as the American Psychiatric Association or the American Psycho-

logical Association are seemingly impotent to do anything to stop the practices that continue to destroy families all over the world. It seems that the litigation of repressed memory cases has had little effect on "true believers." If the harmful practices continue in today's health care cost climate, perhaps the money spigot will be shut off for treatments that have not been scientifically validated as safe and effective.

Sadly, the reputation of psychotherapy has been deeply sullied by the recovered memory fiasco.

A sad dad



After 20 Years

After 20 years, my accusing daughter and I have reconciled. She has moved to England, and as a new British subject, enrolled with the National Health Service (NHS). Upon learning that there was a family history of cancer, the NHS requested a DNA sample from someone in the family who had been diagnosed with the disease. I was the only relative who was available to provide that DNA and she emailed me her request. I replied immediately that I was willing.

It took several exchanges of messages to coordinate the collection and transmittal of the DNA sample. In one of the messages I sent to her, I took the liberty to request that we start a line of communication. I stated that I could see no reason to expect "kowtowing" or apologies from either of us, in order to establish a new relationship. I suggested that we continue to dialog with each other on any subject. She did not return a direct answer to my proposition, but she did continue to send me emails after our DNA business was completed.

Six months later, we not only exchange emails every two to three days, but we speak on the phone weekly. The physical distance between us has prevented an actual face to face

meeting, but we have discussed future possibilities.

We have not broached the subject of her accusations or the complicated subject of FMS. I am fine with this.

I want to thank the FMSF and families for giving me knowledge, support, and guidance that has kept me going for the past 20 years.

A happy dad



Please Join Us

It will be three years this November since my daughter made her accusation. Although we were once so close that I was included in her daily college life, I did not see my daughter graduate with honors. I have not met her "true love" or seen her new home. I do not know what kind of work she is doing. I do not know if she is happy, sad, or sick.

My only information about her now is gleaned from her social networking pages, occasional remarks from someone with whom she may have spoken, or the unsolicited letters from her once estranged father, who is now her biggest supporter.

My daughter cut off everyone who would not support her delusion. Even though we continue to reach out to her, I'm afraid that my daughter is lost to me forever. Still I nurture some small hope that maybe someday she will return to us. Perhaps when she has her own children or experiences life's punches she will see things more clearly.

Early this year I started a cyber FMS Support Group because I could not find a local group. To date I have met three families from Canada and seven families from the United States. A few of these families, like me, are very new to the devastation of FMS.

I worry there are many families who do not have anyone to talk to about the problem. An accusation of abuse is such a delicate topic and people worry that they may be wrongly

judged by people who do not understand.

I invite these families to reach out and join us. Our members are mostly mothers, and we chat about the pain that we continue to experience with the loss of our children. But we also exchange recipes and tell jokes. Because we have a common bond, we have no fear of judgment. Some of our discussions are very emotional but they are also healing.

If you would like to contact me about joining our FMS Support Group, please email me, at: michigan-mom2006@gmail.com. Our group is very sensitive and protective of all of our member's privacy and security, so when you contact me please do not be offended by my many questions.

A Michigan mom



What Has Worked and Why?

I would like to communicate with others in the False Memory Syndrome Foundation about brainstorming ideas to break through our children's "Stone Walls of Silence."

What has worked and why? I would like to talk to retractors or anyone who has reconnected with their families. Brothers and sisters would work too as I know parents are getting older and some of them have died or given up. I think together we can find solutions and bring back our children to their families.

It would also be interesting to hear from therapists who believe in recovered memories and also those who do not. And what changed your mind? I can be reached at phloxlove@aol.com. Please help.

Janet 978-464-2830
email: phloxlove@aol.com



Wishing for More

"[D]oubts about the standard theory of memory were piling up in the world outside the neuroscience lab. In the early 1990s many people began

reporting what seemed to be long-buried memories of childhood sexual abuse. These traumatic recollections frequently surfaced with the help of recovered-memory therapy techniques like hypnosis and guided imagery, in which patients are encouraged to visualize terrible experiences. Cognitive scientists suspected that some of these memories were bogus, the unwitting product of suggestion by the therapist."

"Spurred on by the controversy over recovered memory, other cognitive scientists found that false memory is a normal phenomenon. David Rubin, who studies autobiographical memory at Duke University, observed that adult twins often disagree over who experienced something in childhood. Each might believe, for example, that he was the one to get pushed off his bike by a neighbor at age 8. Apparently, even the most basic facts about a past event (such as who experienced it) could be lost."

Excerpt from McGowan, K.
(2009, July/August).

Out of the past. *Discover*, 30(7).

I would like to comment on the recent *Discover* article "Out of the Past." Although I believe that it is a good article, my heart aches for more. For example, it seems amazing that it took actual experiments with rodents to prove to memory experts that one's memories are so malleable that they are constantly revised, re-worked, and reconstructed as we grow older.

As an FMS parent I have learned from the sad, "real-life", quasi-specific accusations and allegations and innuendos that family history is about as solid and accurate as a bowl of Jello. It all depends on who is trying to re-create it, and under what bias or duress, including confabulation and malice.

I'm glad that lab experiments have finally proved what we FMS parents have always known, but will it make any difference to proponents of repressed and recovered memories? It is profoundly discouraging that they seem undeterred by the research of sci-

entists such as McNally, Clancy, Geraerts, Garry, Loftus and the massive 15-year body of work. Will this article affect the accusing children?

How will history record the FMS disaster? The *Discover* article in two meager paragraphs states, "in early 1990s, many people began reporting what seemed to be long-buried memory of CSA..." and "Cognitive scientists suspected that some of these memories are bogus."

How more understated could the false memory phenomenon be phrased? To the families who were affected, it was a tragedy, a disaster of untold dimension, not some minor academic experience, an aberration, a miniscule blip on the radar of the memory.

I know that the article was about the research, but nevertheless I feel deeply that the writer could have written more about the seriousness of the FMS problem than just two paragraphs.

Frank Kane



Publish Family Letters in A Book

We have greatly appreciated the work of the Foundation in our personal tragedy. Only those who have gone through a similar fate can understand the pain and grief a family goes through when falsely accused by another family member. The pain just does not go away. In some ways it is worse than a death because with death family and friends gather in support to help you grieve your loss. With false accusations, you hope no one learns about it so you keep it to yourself and grieve alone.

I have a difficult time reading the FMSF newsletter because I get so angry that most of the people who perpetrated this evil have not been held accountable. The only part of the newsletter that I "flee" to are the letters that other families write who have

experienced this tragedy. I find solace and comfort in reading them, knowing they are among the few who really understand what we are going through.

Would you consider putting the family letters into a print book?

A grieving mom

Editor's response: All of the letters that have appeared in the Newsletters starting in 1992 are available on the website. You might look for the books Confabulations and True Stories of False Memories for published FMS personal stories.



The Oldest Repressed Memory Victim?

I am over 75 years of age. It might be possible that I have just become the oldest victim of the False Memory Syndrome in the country. Perhaps, in the world! Can you believe it? Of course you can if, like our family, you have an adult child who was mentally kidnaped, isolated, and brainwashed, by a therapist who practiced recovered memory techniques. But you still may be flabbergasted. I certainly was.

In the past year, I have experienced some difficulties and have had dozens of doctor and/or therapist visits. Recently I decided to change psychotherapists since my current therapist is some distance away. Relying on a recommendation, I found an alternative therapist but did not find him either knowledgeable or competent for my needs. Distrustful of him from the beginning, I left after three sessions.

While with him, however, I talked about our FMS daughter who had been very ill while lost to us for six years (that began 19 years ago). I let him know the horrors we endured. I told him how closely we had worked with the FMS Foundation, FMS families, and experts across the country. I also told him about the writing I had done, and the meetings FMS groups had held.

I described the horrors our daughter endured while with her offending

“therapist” and the hospitalizations she suffered and, on three occasions, how she nearly lost her life. (Thankfully, our daughter recovered and has been happily united with us all and is now doing well.)

I prepared to leave this therapist's office knowing I was never coming back. The therapist apparently could not tolerate the idea of my leaving him and blurted: “I know why you worked so hard to get your daughter back!” (Obviously not because we loved her and were fearful about her cruel and unethical “treatment.”) He continued: “You were sexually abused by your father when you were a little girl.” We, the therapist and I, in fact, had never spoken of my birth family, so he could not have known if my father was even alive when I was a little girl.

Stunned, I countered, “No, I wasn't!” He repeated himself and began to reach for his appointment book. (Apparently he felt he had done

enough to change my mind about coming back – felt he had hooked me.) I could not believe what was happening. It appeared he was not going to treat (or even acknowledge) my serious presenting illness. He was going to treat me for my alleged “repressed memories.”

I told him I was not coming back and left in a state of shock and sadness knowing that this damaging therapy was being perpetuated by him.

When I left, I was overwhelmed with profound grief for all the suffering and falsely accused parents, their “branded” and captive loved ones and the families who are still grieving and hoping that their adult children will someday return to them. I also continue to hope that these arrogant therapists will be exposed some day, stripped of their credentials and punished for their flagrant and unconscionable crimes.

Believe it or not, I did not find any reason to celebrate possibly being “The oldest repressed memory victim in the world.” I just shook, then shuddered, and wept.

Nana



SOME BOOKS OF INTEREST

Remembering Trauma

Richard McNally

Science and Pseudoscience in Clinical Psychology

S. O. Lilienfeld, S.J. Lynn, J.M. Lohr

Psychology Astray: Fallacies in Studies of “Repressed Memory” and Childhood Trauma

Harrison G. Pope, Jr., M.D.

Remembering Our Childhood: How Memory Betrays Us

Karl Sabbagh

Making Minds and Madness: From Hysteria to Depression

Chapter 3

“A Black Box Named *Sybil*”

Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen

Try to Remember: Psychiatry's Clash Over Meaning, Memory, and Mind

Paul McHugh, M.D.,

“These results suggest appropriate restraint in situations in which imagination is used as an aid in searching for or shoring up presumably lost memories. When the police repeatedly ask a suspect to imagine his possible role in a murder he does not remember, or when a mental health professional repeatedly encourages a client to imagine an abusive childhood event, these imagination activities may unknowingly promote a greater belief that particular episodes occurred. The search for fact may create a fiction.”

Garry, M., Manning, C., Loftus, E., & Sherman, S., (1996). Imagination inflation: Imagining a childhood event inflates confidence that it occurred. *Psychonomic Bulletin*, 3, 208-214.

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