NYT-0428: TRAVEL
My London, and Welcome to It ... By A.A. GILL
"If New York is a wise guy, Paris a coquette, Rome a gigolo and Berlin a wicked uncle, then London is an old lady who mutters and has the second sight." A Londoner reviews his town.
===== (3 pages)
IF you've saved this article for your long-planned trip to London, and you're now reading it for the third time, circling Heathrow, well, I'm sorry. You're probably still up there because the queue at passport control has become mutinous. They're snaking out onto the runways — grim, silently furious visitors, unable to use their phones, forbidden from showing anything but abject acquiescence to the blunt instrument that is the immigration officer at the distant desk.

I always feel bad about the queues at Heathrow as I walk to the coming home rather than the going abroad line. And as you stand there, for hours, looking at the two groups — the indigenous and the visitors — you'll notice something. It's a good thing. A heartwarming, little consolation thing. They look exactly the same. There is no difference between you and us, not in color, ethnicity, dress or demeanor. Those who live in London and those who visit are exactly the same.

In half my lifetime this city has become a homogenous, integrated, international place of choice rather than birth. Not without grit and friction, but amazingly polyglot and variegated. I travel a lot, and this must be the most successful mongrel casserole anywhere.

Every national team that comes to compete will find a welcoming committee from their homes. London is the sixth largest French city in the world. The Wolseley, the cafe where I often eat, and where I wrote a book about breakfast, has 24 nationalities working in it, from every continent bar the Antar

ctic. They’re also all Londoners. And that’s a goo
d thing. Although I understand that, as a visitor,
 it’s not necessarily what you want to come and se
e — this department store of imported humanity. Yo
u want stiff-lipped men in bowler hats and cheeky
cockneys with their thumbs in their waistcoats and
 fish on their heads.

I’m sorry, but they’re not here anymore. No city’s
 exported image lags so far behind its homegrown v
eracity than London’s, so let’s start with what yo
u’re not going to find. We’re all out of cheeky co
ckneys, pearly kings and their queens, and costerm
ongers. You’re not going to find ’60s psychedelia
and the Beatles in Carnaby Street. There aren’t an
y punks under 50 on the King’s Road; there are no
more tweedy, mustachioed, closeted gay writers in
Bloomsbury, no Harry Potter at King’s Cross. There
 aren’t men in white tie, smoking cigars outside P
all Mall clubs and there isn’t any fog, but you ca
n find Sherlock Holmes’s house on Baker Street.

A lot of London’s image never was. There never was
 a Dickensian London, or a Shakespearean London, o
r a swinging London. Literary London is best looke
d for in books, and in old bookshops like Sotheran
’s on Sackville Street. One of the small joys that
’s easy to miss in London is the blue plaques on b
uildings. These are put up to commemorate the famo
us on the houses they lived in. You won’t have hea
rd of a lot of them, but some come as a surprise.
There are quite a few Americans and some amusing n
eighbors. Jimi Hendrix lived next door to Handel,
in space if not in time.

London is a city of ghosts; you feel them here. No
t just of people, but eras. The ghost of empire, o
r the blitz, the plague, the smoky ghost of the Gr
eat Fire that gave us Christopher Wren’s churches
and ushered in the Georgian city. London can see t
he dead, and hugs them close. If New York is a wis
e guy, Paris a coquette, Rome a gigolo and Berlin

a wicked uncle, then London is an old lady who mut ters and has the second sight. She is slightly dea f, and doesn’t suffer fools gladly.

Trying to be a tourist at home is tricky. It’s a g ood discipline, and rather disappointing. I know a s little as you do about being a visitor in this t own where I have lived since I was a year old, hav ing been born in Edinburgh. We all look at the cro wds of tourists on the Mall and think: What is it you see? What do you get out of this? Like every L ondoner I know, I’ve never seen the changing of th e guard. It’s an inconvenient traffic snarl-up eve ry weekday morning.

With more guilt, I realize that London may be a gr eat metropolis, but it’s not very nice to people. We’re not friendly. Not that we’re rude, like the Parisians with their theatrical and frankly risibl e haughtiness; nor do we have New Yorkers’ shouty impatience. Londoners are just permanently petulan t, irritated. I think we wake up taking offense. A ll those English teacup manners, the exaggerated p lease and thank yous, are really the muzzle we put on our short tempers. There are, for instance, a dozen inflections of the word sorry. Only one of t hem means “I’m sorry.”

So what you shouldn’t expect is to get on with the natives, or for them to take you to their bosoms, or to invite you to their homes, or to buy you a drink. They may, occasionally, if backed against a wall, be rudimentarily helpful, but mostly they’l l ignore you with the huffing sighs of people in a hurry. When you get lost, you’ll stay lost.

We have, collectively, osmotically, decided that w e hate the Olympics. It’s costing too much, it’s c ausing an enormous amount of trouble and inconveni ence, it’s bound to put up prices, make it impossi ble to find a taxi, but most of all, one thing thi s city doesn’t need is more gawping, milling, inco

ntinently happy tourists.

On the bus recently a middle-aged, middle-class, middleweight woman peered out of the window at the stalled traffic and furiously bellowed; “Oh my God, is there no end to these improvements?” It was the authentic voice of London, and I thought it could be the city’s motto, uttered at any point in its history, embroidered in gold braid on the uniforms of every petty official.

I recently interviewed our mayor, Boris Johnson. He may be the ex-mayor by the time you land. We have an election coming up. We hate the imposition of that, as well, and all the possible improvements it might bring. I told him I was writing this piece, and asked what message he’d like to send, fraternally, to the people of America, should they be optimistic enough to visit. “Ah, ooh, well, this is very important,” he said with a faintly Churchillian inflection. (He was actually born in New York.) “Um, visitors should hire a bike and ride through the parks.” The vehicles are sometimes referred to as Boris bikes after him, and have been an unexpectedly wobbly and careening success — easy to get, easy to use and a really easy way to end up seeing how brilliant the National Health Service is.

The parks, though, are wonderful, with a wildness that is artifice. Like the English, they appear casual, but involve a great deal of work. Go to Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, where Peter Pan comes from. You should see his statue on the banks of the Serpentine. One of the most charming sculptures in any city, it was made by Sir George Frampton, paid for by J. M. Barrie and erected in secret overnight so that children out with their nannies would think it had arrived by magic.

London is one of the finest cities for public statuary. The great and the eternally forgotten glare down at you from horses and morality. When you get

to Trafalgar Square, as undoubtedly you will, you ’ll look up at Nelson’s Column, where Adm. Horatio Nelson peers down the Mall, either into the bedro om windows of Buckingham Palace, or to review his fleet; there are small ships on top of all the lam pposts.

You might also like to pay your respects to George Washington outside the nearby National Gallery to pay your penance to fine art. He was a gift from Virginia, and stands on imported American earth be cause he said that he’d never set foot in London a gain. And don’t miss Charles I on the west side of the square. This is the finest equestrian statue in the city. Just down the road in the Banqueting House, you can see where his head was cut off, and also the brilliant Rubens painting of the Apotheo sis of James I.

The Thames is London’s great secret, hidden in ful l view. We do very little with it, or on it, excep t complain how difficult it is to get over and und er. It is the reason London is here at all, but th e people stand aloof because we have long memories and longer noses. The Thames was so disgustingly noxious and pestilent that Parliament would abando n the Palace of Westminster when the weather got t oo hot in the summer, because the smell became dan gerous.

London was the biggest city in the world, and the river was the biggest sewer on earth. The Victoria ns finally built an underground sewerage system th at was so efficient we still use it. But they also made the Embankment, which lifts the city above t he river. Getting access isn’t easy, but if you on ly do one thing while you’re here, you should take a boat from the center of town and go either down stream to the maritime museum at Greenwich or up t oward Oxford and get off at Kew Gardens and Syon H ouse.

The river is the best way to see the city. London glides past you like human geology. It is not a particularly impressive city seen from above; not like Paris or New York, although you can go up to Primrose Hill and Hampstead Heath and look back, and it has a dreamy loveliness brought on by distance. And Wordsworth said that earth had nothing so fair to show as the view of the morning from Westminster Bridge. Two hundred years later he wouldn't recognize it, but it's still pretty impressive.

The great problem for visitors to London is size. This is a big place. It's not a walkable city; there are great walks but you can't stride from everywhere to anywhere. And it's easy to lose any sense of where you are in relation to everything else. So it's best to do what the natives do, and think of London as a loose federation of villages, states and principalities, and take them in one at a time. The oldest bits are in the east. The Tower of London and the Roman Wall mark the beginning of the city. To the east are the docks and the working classes, and what is now the trendiest and most youthful, fashionable bit of London. As the city grew rich, it grew west. Mayfair, Chelsea, Kensington, Notting Hill are mostly Victorian.

You will do all the big-ticket tourist things. I doubt there's anything I can say that will convince you that the best way to see Tower Bridge is on a postcard, and that the Tower of London is a big, dull box packed with Italian schoolchildren, or that Harrods is much the same. But while the living Londoners are to be avoided, the dead ones should be sought out. St. Paul's Cathedral is London's parish church, the single greatest building in Britain, designed by Christopher Wren. It's light, civilized, rational and humane — everything Londoners aren't. It has monuments to J. M. W. Turner, the Duke of Wellington and, of course, John Donne, who preached there. Behind the altar is a little memorial chapel and stained-glass window dedicated to A

merica and the help it gave London and the nation in World War II.

Westminster Abbey is the great church of state. It has the Grave of the Unknown Warrior, the Coronation Chair, which is surprisingly Ikea and covered in graffiti from Westminster schoolboys, and there is Poets' Corner, the marbled hall of fame of Britishness. Just down the street from St. Paul's there is another Wren church, St. Bride's, by tradition and practice the journalists' church. Dryden and Pepys were parishioners. Above the font there is a little shelf, and on it the bust of a girl. She is Virginia Dare. Her parents were married here and then emigrated to the Roanoke Colony. On Aug. 18, 1587, Virginia arrived, the first child of English parents to be born in America. No one knows what happened to her, but this is an immensely touching little memorial in the Old World to the promise of the New. Not one Londoner in 1,000 knows who Virginia was, or that she's there.

There are thousands of these odd moments in London. You will discover your own, like the alley that has the original Embassy of Texas in it. It's like opening the drawers in an old house, where so much was put away for safekeeping and then forgotten.

Of course, you should go to the pub. Like the bistros of Paris, the pubs of London are having a hard time of it. Their role as the working classes' living room can no longer compete with cable TV and supermarket beer. But still there are plenty of beautiful and elegiac pubs, and you should come upon them serendipitously. But I might commend the Mayflower on the river in the East End. This is older than the ship that shares its name, which set off from here. And the Windsor Castle in Kensington is a pretty West London pub. If the weather is fine, it has a charming garden.

I suppose I ought to recommend places to eat, as L

ondon has such a Babel of palates and lexicon of digestions. It boasts the most diverse cuisines of any city. But given that you didn’t come all this way just to eat Chinese or Moroccan, you can also get good English. It will be meaty and Victorian, long on pork and the extremities of cows, pigs and offal. Three I recommend. Anchor & Hope near the Old Vic theater on the Cut, has great food in an energetically noisy pub. Bentley’s Oyster Bar & Grill off Piccadilly, and St. John, a restaurant that has become a point of pilgrimage for visiting chefs. And you really should eat Indian here. Curry is England’s favorite dinner, and our national dish.

Plenty of people come to shop, but it’s expensive, and Bond Street and Sloane Street are pretty much what you’d find at home. It won’t have escaped your notice that the avaricious first world has become a branded and cloned airport lounge.

One thing that is singularly British, and specifically London, is men’s tailoring. This is where the suit was invented, and where it is still made better than anywhere. Savile Row is a very London experience, satisfyingly and shockingly costly, but also dangerously addictive. I’d recommend Brian Russell on Sackville Street, which is now run by Fadia Aoun, a rare female tailor.

You need to see London at night, particularly the theaters. But not just the night life. London itself looks best in the dark. It’s a pretty safe city, and you can walk in most places after sunset. It has a sedate and ghostly beauty. In the crepuscular kindness, you can see not just how she is, but how she once was, the layers of lives that have been lived here. Somebody with nothing better to do worked out that for every one of us living today, there are 15 ghosts. In most places you don’t notice them, but in London you do. The dead and the fictional ghosts of Sherlock Holmes and Falstaff, Oliver Twist, Wendy and the Lost Boys, all the kindl

y, garrulous ghosts that accompany you in the nigh t. The river runs like dark silk through the heart of the city, and the bridges dance with light. Th ere are corners of silence in the revelry of the W est End and Soho, and in the inky shadows foxes an d owls patrol Hyde Park, which is still illuminate d by gaslight.

Now the Olympics has come and dragged us all into the bright light, and a lot of attention is being given to London, and we're not used to it. We're n ot good at showing off. We're not a good time to b e had by all, we're not an easy date. London isn't a party animal by nature, it doesn't join in or h ave a favorite karaoke song. It does, though, have a wicked, dry and often cruel sense of humor. It is clever, literate and dramatic. It is private an d taciturn, a bit of a bore, and surprisingly sent imental. And it doesn't make friends quickly, is a wkward around visitors. We will be pleased when al l the fuss and nosiness has gone away.

So come, by all means, but don't expect the kindne ss of strangers unless you decide to stay, in whic h case you'll be very welcome indeed. There's alwa ys room for one more on top, which is what they us ed to say on the buses when the buses had conducto rs, which they don't anymore. And that's another b loody improvement.

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NYT-0610: MAGAZINE
Prep-School Predators ... By AMOS KAMIL
Many years later, graduates of the Horace Mann Sch
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ool, an elite private school in New York, are fina
lly able to tell their stories of sexual abuse.
===== notyet (13 pages)
From the elevated platform of the No. 1 train’s la
st stop at 242nd Street, you can just about see th
e lush 18-acre campus of the Horace Mann School. T
he walk from the station is short, but it traverse
s worlds. Leaving the cluttered din of Broadway, y
ou enter the leafy splendor of Fieldston, an encla
ve of mansions and flowering trees that feels more
 like a wealthy Westchester suburb than the Bronx.
 Head up the steep hill, turn left, then walk a bi
t farther, past the headmaster’s house. From the s
tone wall that runs along Tibbett Avenue, you can
see practically the whole school: Pforzheimer Hall
, Mullady Hall, the auditorium, the gymnasium and,
 right in the center, the manicured green expanse
of the baseball field, home of the Lions, pride of
 the school.

It was this field that drew me to Horace Mann 33 y
ears ago, pulling me out of Junior High School 141
 in the Bronx, with its gray-green walls and metal
-caged windows. At 141, my friends’ resumes read l
ike a crime blotter: Jimmy stole a pizza truck and
 dropped out after ninth grade; Eggy was done with
 141 after he smashed the principal’s glasses with
 a right hook; Ish liked to pelt the Mister Softee
 truck with rocks; Bend-Over Bob OD’d and lived; F
rankie was not so lucky. My future would have trac
ked swiftly in the same direction but for one fact
or: baseball. By 14, I had a sweet swing, with the
 arm, hands and game smarts to match.

That’s what brought me to the attention of R. Insl
ee Clark Jr., then headmaster of Horace Mann, a pr
ivate school so elite that most students at 141 ha
d never even heard of it. Inky Clark, a tireless s
cout of baseball talent, started showing up at my
games, and he was not someone you could easily mis
s. He was a big guy with a powerful handshake, bri
ght blue eyes and a booming voice. In his loud pin

k cardigans and madras pants, he always looked as if he came straight off the Kennedy compound or the bow of a yacht. He drove a bright orange Cadillac convertible, its rear bumper covered with Yankees stickers.

Clark was a legendary reformer. As dean of undergraduate admissions at Yale in the 1960s, he broke that institution's habit of simply accepting students from fancy boarding schools, whatever their academic standing; instead, he started scouring the country for the most talented, highest-achieving students from any school and any background. "You will laugh," William F. Buckley Jr. wrote in 1967, "but it is true that a Mexican-American from El Paso High with identical scores on the achievement test and identically ardent recommendations from the headmaster, has a better chance of being admitted to Yale than Jonathan Edwards the Sixteenth from Saint Paul's School." As more minorities started appearing in the freshman classes, the university's alumni and trustees did not laugh. But the rest of the Ivy League followed Clark's bold lead, forever altering the history of the American meritocracy.

He brought that same crusading spirit to Horace Mann, where he welcomed girls to what had long been a proudly all-boys school. And he used his passion for baseball, the sport he coached, as a Trojan horse to bring promising students from rough schools to a campus otherwise reserved for the city's most privileged children.

Clark could work a room like a politician, zeroing in on whomever he was speaking to, making him feel like he was the most interesting person in the world. He started calling me "the Mouse," as my friends at 141 did, and he suggested I might find a home at Horace Mann. Touched, as was everyone who met him, by his tremendous personal charisma, I took it as a thrilling compliment. My parents saw the bigger picture: the opportunities that a Horace M

ann education could bring, the ways it could chang e a kid’s life.

So in September 1979, I stood in the glassed-in br eezeway through which students entered campus, wea ring the pink Lacoste shirt my brother had somewha t optimistically insisted would help me fit in. Al l around me, the natives swarmed past — to the cla ssrooms, to the science labs, to the brilliant fut ures they had been born to assume.

I was an outsider, but I was one of Inky’s boys an d, as I quickly learned, that counted for a lot. I gathered with my new teachers and classmates in t he auditorium and proudly sang Horace Mann’s alma mater: “Great is the truth and it prevails; mighty the youth the morrow hails./Lives come and go; st ars cease to glow; but great is the truth and it p revails.”

Shortly after my arrival, a new friend walked me a round the school, pointing out teachers to avoid.

“What do you mean? Like, they’re hard graders?”

“No. Perverts. Stay away from them. Trust me.”

I heard about some teachers who supposedly had a h abit of groping female students and others who had their eyes on the boys. I heard that Mark Wright, an assistant football coach, had recently left th e school under mysterious circumstances. I was war ned to avoid Stan Kops, the burly, bearded history teacher known widely as “the Bear,” who had some unusual pedagogical methods. Even Clark came in fo r some snickering: he had no family of his own, an d he had a noticeably closer-than-average relation ship to the Bear, another confirmed bachelor.

It was juicy gossip, of course, but not all that d ifferent from what already swirls around the minds of sex-obsessed high-school students. Certainly i

t wasn’t that different from what swirled around t he hallways of typically homophobic high schools a t the time, when anyone who was a bit different wa s suspected of being gay and any teacher who was g ay was suspected of being a pedophile.

I didn’t pay much attention. I was more focused on the important teenage business of losing my Bronx accent and my virginity. Over the next few years I studied Spanish and calculus and took Clark’s cl ass, urban studies; I went to parties in my classm ates’ lavish apartments, drank their liquor and sn orted their cocaine. And I played baseball. Junior year, the Lions went 22-1.

When I was a senior, a family emergency took my mo ther abroad for several weeks, and my siblings and I were left to take care of ourselves. Clark invi ted me and my 12-year-old brother out for dinner, along with my friend Eric. On the designated night , we walked up the steps to the headmaster’s house , where Inky greeted us at the door. Photos of Hor ace Mann athletes lined the walls of the foyer, as they did the walls of his office. In the living r oom, by the fire, sat Stan Kops — the Bear — nursi ng a cocktail.

“Can I offer you boys a drink?” Inky called out fr om behind the bar. This certainly didn’t happen ev ery day, but the suggestion didn’t sound so jarrin g in 1982, when the state drinking age was just be ing changed from 18 to 19. Like any self-respectin g 17-year-olds, Eric and I said sure, as we all ki dded my little brother about being left out of the fun. Gin and tonics were poured, consumed and ref illed. Talk loosened up. Still, something about sh aring fireside cocktails with Stan Kops was making me uncomfortable. I pointedly asked when we were going to dinner.

Boys in one vehicle, teachers in another, we swerv ed to the Riverdale Steak House. As Eric climbed o

ut from behind the wheel of his blue van, he mutte red a line that we still repeat to this day: “I’m not taking any shit from the Bear.” Then we stumbl ed into the restaurant, where we consumed steaks a nd many more gin and tonics.

At the end of dinner, Eric and I uttered some prea rranged exit line, thanked our hosts, grabbed my b rother and drove off drunk into the night, leaving the two grown men to pay the bill and finish out the evening as they might.

“Do you remember Mr. Wright, the football coach?”

Ten years after graduation, four Horace Mann frien ds and I decided to go on a camping trip. We had b een close in high school but later scattered acros s the country. And we all sensed that the next 10 years — careers, marriages, families — would pull us even farther apart. So we tied our sleeping bag s to our backpacks and headed up to the Sierra Nev ada for a week of hiking and bonding.

One night after a particularly grueling hike, we s at around the campfire, eating some burned vegetar ian meal and enjoying that pleasing quiet that fal ls between exhaustion and sleep.

Then one friend cleared his throat. (Like many peo ple in this article, my friend asked me not to use his full name, because of the sensitivity of the subject matter and the fact that these events took place when he was a minor. I’ll call him by his m iddle name, Andrew.) “Guys, I have to tell you som ething that happened to me when we were at H.M. Do you remember Mr. Wright, the football coach?” Our metal utensils ceased clanking.

Speaking calmly and staring into the flames, he to ld us that when he was in eighth grade, Wright sex

ually assaulted him. “And not just me,” he added. “There were others.” First Wright befriended him, he said. Then he molested him. Then he pretended n othing happened.

No one knew what to say, at least at first. But th en slowly, the rest of us started telling stories, too. One of the guys talked about a teacher who t ook him on a field trip, and then invited him into his bed in the hotel room they were sharing. (My friend fled, walking in the rain for hours until t he coast seemed clear.) Another told a story about a teacher who got him drunk and naked; that time, no one fled. We talked about the steakhouse dinne r, which was a far cry from abuse, but an example of how easy it can be for boundaries to blur and h ow hard it can be, in the moment, for students to get their bearings. Finally, we all went to sleep.

Then we went home, and another 20 years slid by.

When the Penn State scandal came out last year, I kept getting tangled in the questions everyone els e was getting tangled in: How does an institutiona l culture arise to condone, or at least ignore, so mething that, individually, every member knows is wrong? Andrew’s story came back to me in a rush. T he questions of Penn State, I realized, are the qu estions of Horace Mann and perhaps every place tha t has been haunted by a similar history.

I called Andrew. He was thinking about Horace Mann , too — about his own experiences and those of his classmates. And about Mark Wright.

In many ways, Wright was the ultimate Horace Mann success story. People who knew him remember him as tall and extroverted, with an easy smile and a hu ge laugh. He graduated in 1972, a time when Africa n-American students like him were a rarity, then w ent to Princeton, where he majored in art and arch aeology and played right tackle for the football t

eam. A glowing article about him in The Daily Princetonian described him as “a Picasso in cleats,” and speculated on whether he could have gone pro or would get a Ph.D. “I think Mark lives life to the fullest,” the head of his department told the paper, noting that he “exudes enthusiasm and versatility.” After college, he came back to Horace Mann to teach art and to coach football.

“I first had him as an art teacher,” Andrew told me, in the steadied voice of someone who had worked through the story in therapy. “He was a great guy. Funny, gregarious, everyone loved him. He had this aura of success around him, and I was so happy that someone like him would take an interest in a skinny underclassman like me. I felt special.

“One night he called my house and asked my parents if he could take me to the museum,” Andrew continued. “My parents were so excited that a teacher would take such an interest in me.” And this being Horace Mann, he added, “it didn’t hurt that he had also gone to Princeton.” Still, Andrew didn’t feel comfortable hanging out with a teacher on the weekend, so he turned down the invitation. A little later Wright had another idea: he asked to draw a portrait of Andrew.

“It was the night of the eighth-grade dance,” he told me, “and instead of going to the gym, I went to meet him in his art studio on the fourth floor of Tillinghast. He locked the door and told me to undress.” As he got to this part of the story, Andrew’s pace slowed and his voice lowered.

“He told me to bring a bathing suit, but when I got there he said not to bother putting it on. I was really uncomfortable but did it anyway since he was across the room. I remember exactly what he said: that he needed to see the connection between my legs. The next thing I knew, he had my penis in his hand. I was so scared. He was a pretty intimida

ting guy. He began performing fellatio and masturbating," Andrew said, now breathing with effort.

"I left the room and walked to where the dance was. I saw all these kids doing normal eighth-grade things. I tried being present at that party, but I was horrified." Afterward, Andrew said, "it was really hard being at Horace Mann, knowing that if I ran into him, he would get up really close to me and say stuff like: 'What's wrong, little buddy? You're not still mad about that time, are you?' "

This was 1978, a different era in terms of public awareness about sexual predators. Today children are taught from a young age that unwelcome touches are not O.K., not their fault and should be reported immediately. But at 13, Andrew hadn't heard any of those lectures. He didn't tell his other teachers or his parents. He felt too ashamed to talk about what happened. "What I did do in the immediate aftermath," he said, "was contribute to the rumors going around that Mark Wright was a child molester, which were pretty rampant at that time. I'd join conversations about it and say that I'd heard he was into boys, etc. But these conversations were always very frustrating, because he had a lot of defenders who would say that people said this about him because they were jealous that he was such a stud."

Eventually two friends told Andrew that Wright assaulted them, too. "People just talked about it," he said. That's how he heard about the physical exams that Wright gave athletes in the gym building. When Andrew's coach told him he had to see Wright for a physical, he was wary but didn't see any way out of it. So he opened the door to a small, windowless room and walked in. "There was no pretense of medical examination when I got there," he said. "He just tried to start molesting me again, and I told him I'd tell someone if he continued, and he stopped and told me to leave."

G., another kid from my class, who asked me to use only his initial, remembered the same setting — w indowless training room, only one door. “I was 14 and recovering from a football injury,” he said, i n an almost jocular tone, “when Wright used the pu rported physical exam to try to engage me in a sex ual encounter by touching my penis. Although nothi ng further happened, I was speechless, and I never said anything to anyone. I never looked at myself as a victim, but. . . .” Suddenly his voice crack ed. “In hindsight, I just wish I had said somethin g to someone. Maybe then it wouldn’t have happened to other kids.”

We were only kids ourselves, I said, inadequately.

“I don’t think he looked me in the face when he wa s doing what he did,” he said later, “and I certai nly didn’t look him in the face either.”

Later that year, one of Wright’s examination subje cts, a football player, spoke up. “I reported that Coach Wright was performing limited but inappropr iate physicals on team players,” the former studen t told me, “and that I was concerned that he was g oing to do so on others. The contact was very limi ted, to about 30 seconds. It was a ‘private-parts inspection.’ ”

When students and faculty returned to campus after the 1978-79 winter break, some told me, Wright wa s gone. One teacher remembers being told he resign ed; others say they got no explanation, as do the students I spoke to.

Wright’s victims might have appreciated the invita tion to talk about their experiences — if not with school officials, then with counselors or psychot herapists. Students in general might have welcomed an explanation, however limited, of why a teacher that so many looked up to simply disappeared from

their lives. And the entire school might have benefited from a more open discussion of student-teacher boundaries, of the danger of abuse and the right to resist it, of how to report it and how the school would respond. But several faculty members of that era said that, to their knowledge, the school said nothing — not to the students, not to their families and not to the police.

Administrators at Horace Mann rarely speak to the press. Over the last six months, I contacted the current headmaster, Tom Kelly, on many occasions, by letter and phone, to ask about Mark Wright as well as the other teachers that I learned about in the course of my research for this article. I also wrote individually to 22 members of the board of trustees, imploring them to hear the stories that former students had told me and to speak on the school's behalf about better policies that might now be in place. I received an initial reply from Kekst and Company, a corporate public-relations firm, and later a statement from the school that said in part: "As an educational institution, we are deeply concerned if allegations of abuse of children are raised, regardless of when or where they may have occurred." It continued: "The current administration is not in a position to comment on the events involving former and, in some cases, now-deceased, faculty members that are said to have occurred years before we assumed leadership of the school. It should be noted that Horace Mann School has terminated teachers based on its determination of inappropriate conduct, including but not limited to certain of the individuals named in your article."

As for questions about Wright or the other teachers I heard about in the course of my reporting, the school issued a blanket statement, saying: "The article contains allegations dating back, in some instances, 30 years, long before the current administration took office, which makes it difficult to accurately respond to the factual allegations ther

ein. In addition, on June 13, 1984, there was a fi re in the attic of the business office that destro yed some records.”

“Mr. Kops would occasionally cancel class in favor of something called ‘frolic.’ ”

Stocky and socially awkward, Stanley Kops was a fa r cry from the popular Mark Wright. He was a bit w eird, actually. But so were lots of other teachers . Horace Mann tolerated and in some cases even pri zed eccentricity in its faculty.

Kops — like Wright, an alumnus of the school as we ll as an employee — used to walk through the aisle s of his classroom lecturing about some king or ar my, then pause at a student’s desk to drive home a point. As students noticed, and openly discussed, the objects of these in-class tutorials tended to be handsome, self-confident male athletes. Kops d idn’t just quiz them; he gave their shoulders a ma ssage. If that didn’t coax forth the answer he was looking for, he bent one of their arms behind the ir backs and pulled — gently, at first, then a lot less so. The inquiry might move on to a headlock.

“I remember this one kid misbehaved,” said Rob Boy nton, who was a year ahead of me in high school an d is now a journalist and a professor. “And his pu nishment was to take his shirt off and stand by th e window. It was freezing outside. Must have been February. All this in full view of the class.”

Another former student, who asked not to be named because his child currently attends the school, sa id: “Mr. Kops would occasionally cancel class in f avor of something called ‘frolic.’ Basically, he w ould allow kids to run amok in the classroom and k ind of joined in the action. I was new in seventh grade and remember thinking that this was a differ

ent kind of school where a teacher was physically ‘handling’ me. I can remember him being kind of red and breathless after particularly vigorous frolicking.”

Kops also coached the junior-varsity swim team; it was in that context that I came into contact with his long, creepy touches, which always accompanied pointers about stroke or form. His postpractice entry into the communal shower would clear the steamy room in a hurry. And then there was his ambiguous relationship to Clark, a subject almost perfectly engineered to capture the imagination of students.

Despite all these distractions, many of his students — boys and girls, athletes and not — were as devoted to him as he was to them. He made students feel that he cared deeply about their education and their well-being. In return, a pretty sophisticated student body chose to view his behavior as merely odd when, in many other contexts, it would have been deemed outrageous or even threatening.

That all changed in the fall of 1983 at the John Dorr Nature Laboratory, a rugged expanse of fields, streams and woods in Washington, Conn., that serves as Horace Mann’s outdoor-education center. At various points during their education, the school’s students go to Dorr for a few days to explore nature and bond with one another under the oversight of Dorr’s resident faculty and, sometimes, visiting teachers as well.

Kops accompanied one of the seventh-grade orientation trips that year and slept, as visiting faculty often did, in a cabin with the students. At some point in the night, one of the boys, whom I’ll call by his middle name, Seth, woke up.

“I was on the top bunk,” he recalled, in a matter-of-fact tone. “Middle of the night, my sleeping ba

g fell to the floor. I climbed down to get it, and as I bent over to pick it up, Kops came up from behind me and pressed up against me. It was pitch black. He then helped me to pick up the sleeping bag even though I didn’t need any help.” They were fully clothed, he said, and he didn’t feel assaulted, just uncomfortable. “I probably wouldn’t have said anything except for what happened the next morning.”

After breakfast, Seth told me, as the group assembled for activities, Kops took him aside behind a building, grabbed his own crotch and asked, “What were you doing last night?” Seth says he was in shock. “I freaked,” he said. “I started screaming: ‘You’re calling me a homo? You’re the homo. You’re the homo!’ ” Listening to Seth, I wondered if that was really what Kops was getting at — perhaps he was making a crude masturbation joke? But more to the point, I wondered if, from Kops’s peculiar perspective, that bizarre encounter with a 12-year-old looked all that different from twisting students’ arms or making them partly undress in full view of his class.

Seth said he was unsure of what happened next, but according to the story that circulated around campus, he took off running, screaming something about Kops. Seth says his father, an active parent in the Horace Mann community, demanded the school take immediate action, which it did. Kops resigned.

Michael Lacopo, who was the headmaster at the time (Clark had been promoted to president), is now retired and living in Colorado. When I reached him, he told me that he could not discuss any case by name but that he presided over only one such allegation. Speaking in clipped sentences, he gave me a very limited report. “The act was never consummated, but it was an issue of concern, and it became clear it was time for him to move on. And he didn’t deny it. And the kid’s parents were satisfied,” h

e said. “Everyone knew where I stood on the matter.”

Horace Mann says faculty members received a letter about Kops’s resignation, but Lacopo made no announcement to his students, their parents or the student body in general.

Kops called some of his favorite students at home and asked them to meet him at school the next day for an announcement. One was Kate Aurthur, who took his ancient-history course the previous year. When they assembled, she said, he told them he was leaving. “He didn’t say why he was leaving, and I didn’t know why yet,” she said. Regardless, the news came as a shock. “It was very emotional. He always had a red face and a soft voice, but he got redder than usual and choked up.”

The next time students heard anything about Stan Kops, it was at the end of the next school year, and the news was far more shocking: he had committed suicide. The rumors ran quickly through the Horace Mann student body. Some said that he shot himself in a car, with a Bible nearby. Others said he shot himself on a baseball field as some sort of coded message to Clark. The school still said nothing.

Mr. Somary “was a hero to me, but he was also a monster.”

Years before Kops’s death, before Wright’s firing, before Clark’s arrival at Horace Mann, and for many years after, too, Johannes Somary, the head of the arts-and-music department, was a legend on campus. With his wild hair and faraway gaze, a jacket and tie over his pot belly, Somary seemed almost a caricature of a brilliant maestro. The son of a famous Austrian-Swiss banker, he enjoyed a prominent international reputation, having guest-conducted numerous orchestras, including the Royal Philhar

monic of London and the Vienna Philharmonic. The w alls of Pforzheimer Hall at Horace Mann were lined with posters from his concerts.

In class, he was strict, shouting in heavily accen ted English or slamming the piano lid if a rehears al was not to his liking. Students took the glee c lub, and him, very seriously. They accompanied him as he strutted across campus, with an old-fashion ed briefcase filled with musical scores and batons . They gathered in his office, where, they say, he was more relaxed and funny, and where they could spend their free periods discussing music, doing h omework, even sitting on his lap.

“He had a formidable arsenal for impressing studen ts,” said E. B., a flushed, avuncular man who atte nded Horace Mann in the 1970s. “He was fabulously wealthy, had priceless art on his wall, drove a sh iny green Jaguar and was a world-famous conductor. ” E. B. agreed to tell me his story (though he ask ed that I identify him only by his initials) at an Italian restaurant outside Lincoln Center. As he spoke, he seemed both nervous and eager, his eyes darting around the room. “He was a hero to me,” he said. “But he was also a monster.”

Somary started out by befriending him, then allowi ng him to call him Hannes, then hiring him for lit tle jobs like baby-sitting in the Riverdale home w here he lived with his wife and three children. It was there on a fall night in 1973, when E. B. was 16, he says, that Somary sat next to him on a cou ch, unzipped the boy’s pants and started handling his penis. “I wasn’t scared, just stunned,” E. B. said. “The primary emotion was revulsion. I told h im to stop, and he did.” But a couple of weeks lat er, Somary abused him again. “I was such a good vi ctim,” he told me as the meal in front of him grew cold. “Shy, trusting, unsophisticated.” He shook his head slowly.

M., another man now in his mid-50s, had a similar experience. He was so anxious about my revealing his identity that he initially said he would speak only through an intermediary. (“M” is a letter in his middle name — the closest he would come to letting me identify him in print.) But sometime near midnight this past January, he called me directly and launched into a rapid-fire account of how Somary, “a manipulator par excellence,” groomed him for victimization. And how, one night, Somary suggested they take a drive. Somary parked in a lot near the club where the two had spent many hours playing tennis together. “He then pulled me close to his chest,” M. said. “I’m thinking: This is weird. Uncomfortable. Then he starts kissing my lips. I’m thinking, Oh, my God, this can’t be happening. I didn’t know what to do. I was just a child. I didn’t have the ego strength to say no. I was shocked, uncomfortable, but I let it persist. He unzipped my pants and started to masturbate me.”

Somary took him on glee-club trips and then on solo trips to Europe, M. said: “We stayed at the best hotels, I met with the great classical musicians of the time and ate at the finest restaurants. I was expected to have sex with him and did even though it repulsed me every time. It was all very confusing. At one point I told my parents I no longer wanted to sleep in the same room with him on the European trips.” When Somary found out, he “drove to my house and sat in my living room like a jilted lover, begging me to stay in the same room with him,” M. said. “Right in front of my father.” M.’s mother, who confirmed his story, said she and her husband didn’t understand the nature of their son’s discomfort. They thought he was just being a teenager, preferring the company of his peers. He couldn’t bring himself to tell his parents the truth.

The arrangement continued for three years — even into M.’s time at college, he said. “I don’t know why I let it go on for so long,” M. said. “I’ve bee

n asking myself that for decades.”

E. B., too, is still struggling to make sense of w
hat happened to him. He started a blog called “Joh
annes Somary, Pedophile,” which he hoped would bec
ome a gathering place for fellow victims. (E.B. sa
id one other victim reached out to him after comin
g across the blog.) At the urging of his therapist
, he wrote a letter to Somary explaining the scars
 his abuse left. He received no reply. When he als
o wrote to Somary’s wife, he said, he received a c
ease-and-desist letter from her lawyer. I wrote to
 her also, and to Somary’s children, in hopes of d
iscussing these allegations, but none of them replied.

Two decades after E. B.’s experiences with Somary,
 a student named Benjamin Balter, a member of the
class of 1994, made a similar allegation.

In the summer of 1993, as Ben was preparing for hi
s senior year at Horace Mann, he accompanied the g
lee club on a European trip. When he came back, hi
s family says, they could tell something had chang
ed. “He was always really, really smart,” Charles
Balter said of his brother. “He was a really nice
guy, but he was always a bit socially awkward. One
 of those kids who could perform at the highest le
vels of math and science but couldn’t do the basic
 things like tie his shoes.” After the trip, Charl
es said, “he was withdrawn, angry and secretive.”

The Balter family was in turmoil on a number of fr
onts at the time — Charles was recovering from a s
wimming accident (in which Ben had saved his life)
, their parents’ marriage had just ended and Ben w
as in the midst of coming out of the closet — so t
hough they noticed Ben’s unhappiness, it did not o
ccur to them that abuse could be the cause. That f
all, Ben took private music lessons from Somary at
 St. Jean Baptiste, a church in Manhattan. Ben’s m
other — who works at Horace Mann and who asked tha
t I not print her name — says she asked Somary if

she could observe a lesson. Impossible, he told her.

It was soon thereafter that Ben’s father found him hidden in a crawl space, passed out after swallowing pills. He was admitted to Nyack Hospital, where he was placed on suicide watch.

The day after he was released, Ben sent a letter to Phil Foote, then Horace Mann’s headmaster, accusing Somary of “grossly inappropriate sexual advances.” The letter said in part: “The purpose of a school such as Horace Mann is to provide a safe and comfortable learning environment. This goal is clearly made impossible by the inappropriate actions of teachers such as Mr. Somary. It is unfair to me and to other students to have such teachers in our midst, for they compromise not only the goals of the Horace Mann school but also the integrity of education in general.”

Ben’s mother says she confronted Somary, the man she knew as her son’s teacher as well as her own colleague. “Ben kissed me first,” she says he told her. When she demanded, “How dare you put your tongue down my son’s mouth!” his reply, she says, was, “That’s how we Swiss kiss.”

Foote’s tenure as headmaster lasted only three years, and since that time he suffered a stroke, but speaking recently in his home on the Upper East Side, he was able to recall both the letter and the surrounding events. “Somary came into my office with the mother and strenuously denied everything,” Foote said. “His vehemence made a lot of people put off doing anything about it.” Later, Foote said: “All the administration and trustees got together and decided they wouldn’t do anything about it. People came out of the woodwork protecting Somary.” (I have contacted 10 trustees from that era. Most declined to speak to me at all; only one, Michael Hess, agreed to speak with me on the record, but he said he had no specific recollection of the inc

ident.)

Ben’s mother says a lawyer affiliated with the school warned her that unless she had evidence of the abuse on tape, there was nothing she could do. “It was Ben’s word against Somary’s,” she says she was told.

Whatever the legal standards might have been for firing or even prosecuting Somary, nothing was stopping the school from at least talking to Ben about his experiences. But according to his mother, no school official ever did. Exhausted by a divorce process, with one son in the hospital and another only recently released, and with no evidence of the kind the lawyer mentioned, Ben’s mother dropped her protest.

As for Ben, he finished up his senior year and went to Brown. But he didn’t seem to find solace there, nor in his postcollege life, in which he muddled through a series of jobs and relationships, struggling with depression and finding it hard to commit to anything. Charles said that through it all, Ben continued to bring up the abuse he had suffered. “There was definitely a before- and after-Somary quality to his life,” Charles said. In 2009, while living on Shelter Island, off the eastern end of Long Island, he made another suicide attempt, with antidepressants and alcohol. This time he succeeded.

“I have been running from this thing most of my life.”

I spoke with nearly 100 people for this article, including 60 former students and 15 former or current faculty members. Some of them implored me not to pursue the subject, insisting that no good could come of opening old wounds. Others said that Horace Mann today is a very different place than it wa

s back then — eagerly responsive to the concerns o f students and parents. Some said they were unawar e of these rumors. Some said nothing had happened to them but that they had heard similar stories fr om classmates. Many said they were surprised it to ok this long for these stories to come out.

The former students who chose to share their stori es with me are all men, but if their classmates ar e to be believed, the situation was far more compl ex. People who haven't set foot in the school in 3 0 years still rattle off the names of male teacher s who were said to be sleeping with their female s tudents. A couple of female faculty members were s aid to be sleeping with male students. Once I star ted asking around, these stories continued to bubb le up — from friends I thought I knew well and fro m other schools, public and private, each with the ir own elaborate histories of which teachers you o ught to steer clear of, which students seemed too old for their years. In just the past couple of ye ars, among just the tiny fraternity of elite New Y ork City private schools, two allegations made the news. A male math teacher at Riverdale Country Sc hool pleaded not guilty to charges that he had ora l sex with a 16-year-old female student. And Poly Prep was named as a defendant in a lawsuit in whic h 10 former students and two day-campers say the s chool covered up for a football coach who was mole sting boys. In New York City public schools, durin g the first three months of 2012, reports of sexua l misconduct involving school employees were up 35 percent compared with the same period last year.

I have several friends who confided in me, back in high school, about their own sexual encounters wi th teachers, but who are now unwilling to talk abo ut it. I can't say I blame them. Victims rarely sp eak out, said Paul Mones, a lawyer who represents people who have been sexually abused by authority figures. "The whole goal of the grooming process i s to wrap the child close," he told me. "The affec

tion and trust is to make the kid complicit in the act. Make them feel like it was their fault, so it won't even occur to them to talk." Even if they do, New York State's statute of limitations, which says people who were victimized as minors cannot take civil action against an abuser after they turn 23, makes it unlikely that they would find justice.

Thirty or even 40 years later, many students who have talked about surviving their teachers' abuse say they still live in its shadow. "I spent decades feeling unlovable," said E. B., the creator of the anti-Somary Web site. "I drank and drugged for many years, because I just couldn't face all the anger it brought up."

Andrew, my friend from the camping trip, said: "You spend a lot of your life feeling like an outsider — it shatters you. These people who were supposed to be the good guys were actually the bad guys, and nobody would talk about it."

M., the one who says Somary abused him for years, also feels the effects. "I have had so many issues that I think I can trace back to this," he said, including drug abuse and broken marriages. "I have been running from this thing most of my life."

Stories like theirs point to why sexual abuse by teachers — or religious leaders or relatives, for that matter — is so especially damaging. As Mones said: "It's counterintuitive, but sexual abuse emotionally binds the child closer to the person who has harmed him, setting him up for a life plagued by suspicion and confusion, because he will never be sure who he can really trust. And in my experience, this is by far the worst consequence of sexual abuse." That's one reason, he said, why those few victims who ever speak out at all tend to do so only after the abuser is dead or dying: telling the truth while the other person is still strong enough to deny it, or to blame the accuser, is just to

o terrifying.

At Horace Mann, students who spoke up at the time and saw quick action from the school seem to have suffered few, if any, ill effects. “I was not traumatized by the experience in the least,” Seth, the student at the center of the John Dorr Nature Lab confrontation with Stan Kops, told me. “In fact, I was just relaying the story to a friend the other day at lunch. I think the school acted swiftly and appropriately.”

The football player who blew the whistle on Mark Wright’s “private-part inspections” also says he was not traumatized. Though the administration did not inform him of its action, Wright was gone almost immediately, and the student says he was satisfied with the outcome. “No one knew why he was gone, but as far as I am concerned, the administration wasted no time in addressing the situation,” he said. “I have the deepest respect for how it was handled. Unbelievably glad about how they handled it.”

For whatever reason, the allegations against Johannes Somary were handled quite differently. At some point after the incident with Ben, faculty members said, Somary was told he could no longer travel unchaperoned with students. But he continued to teach. Several teachers past and present say they noticed his unusually close relationships with certain students. “In the late ’60s, early ’70s, people started talking about his inappropriate behavior,” one of his former colleagues said. “One student a year was anointed,” another said. A third former teacher, who taught at Horace Mann during the last years before Somary’s retirement, said he was shocked at the time that Somary was still allowed to teach.

These teachers saw enough to make them wonder and even to worry. Yet when the school chose not to act, none of them shouted from the rooftop for help.

They came to work the next day, as they had the day before. Teachers had strong incentives not to speak: their jobs were on the line, as was the reputation of an institution in which they had invested some degree of their identities. Even today, witnesses with no current ties to the school have reasons not to speak. Those with school-age children worry about damaging their children's chances at Horace Mann or other elite New York schools. Others point to Horace Mann's influence, real or perceived, and what it could do to their careers or social standings.

Perhaps the teachers who wondered about Somary thought they didn't have enough information. Perhaps they just dearly hoped their hunches were wrong. At least one wishes now that he had acted differently.

"In some ways," said the teacher who worked at Horace Mann during Somary's last years at the school, "I guess I'm culpable."

After Horace Mann, Mark Wright lived for a while in Washington, D.C., and worked at TIAA-CREF, the financial-services organization. Then the trail grows faint. His Horace Mann classmates didn't keep up with him after college, and of the dozens of Princeton classmates contacted for this article, none had any information to share. Wright died in 2004 while living in a bay-side condo in the South Beach section of Miami Beach. The cause was never announced.

When Stan Kops left Horace Mann, he landed at Rutgers Prep, a private school in Somerset, N.J., where he taught history while taking classes at New Brunswick Theological Seminary. A former Rutgers Prep official, who was involved in Kops's hiring but who did not have permission to comment on it, said the school always checked applicants' references. "No one from Horace Mann said anything that indic

ated Stan would be anything other than a safe bet at Rutgers," that official said. "Rutgers had no idea about any potential allegations of sexual impropriety against Stan at H.M. If they had, they never would have hired him."

Kops finished the year without incident, the Rutgers Prep official said, but "he had strange teaching habits and taught in ways more in keeping with a more homogeneous school like Horace Mann." His contract was not renewed.

Shortly after the school year ended at Rutgers Prep, Kops drove across the Raritan River to Piscataway and shot himself — not standing on a baseball diamond, as the more imaginative gossip had claimed, but sitting in his car, the police told the school administrator. A close relative of Kops's, speaking on behalf of his family, said they had no comment for this article. Today his name appears on the honor roll of the Tillinghast Society, which recognizes alumni who made provisions for Horace Mann in their wills.

As for Somary, he taught at the school without interruption, until his retirement, at 67, in 2002.

Phil Foote, the former head of school, told me that he didn't know why Ben Balter's mother "gave up so easily" in her quest to see Somary fired. "I always wondered why she didn't pursue it," he told me. "Maybe she just got defeated." Sitting in his living room recently, I asked him why he himself didn't try to remove Somary, or at least to investigate the charges more thoroughly. Why didn't he go to the police? "The structure of H.M. was not easy," he said. "There were groups and groups within groups. It was a time with different values and different systems. You didn't have the access you do now. It was hubris. H.M. was sure it was above everybody else. Nobody wanted anything to change."

I asked if he knew what became of Ben. He said no, then paused to study my face. “He committed suicide?” he guessed, before I could say it. He turned away and, staring into the middle distance, said, “Oh, my Lord.”

Ben’s letter was addressed to Foote. But his mother said that she also spoke to Eileen Mullady, the head of school who immediately followed him, to make sure she knew about her son’s letter. I reached out to Mullady, as well as the former Horace Mann administrators Larry Weiss and Ellen Moceri; none responded to my questions. Neither did the board of trustees, the body responsible for those school officials. One longtime former member told me: “No one will talk to you. They are all lawyering up.”

Tom Kelly, the current headmaster, didn’t start his job until after Somary’s retirement. Three years after Ben’s suicide, after I asked the school for comment about it, Ben’s mother says Kelly showed her the letter her son wrote. It was the first time she had ever seen it. She wished she had done more for him, she told me.

Somary died in February 2011, from complications related to a stroke. “Now this wonderful, wonderful man is trying to shape up the heavenly chorus, and God bless him,” says a Class of 1957 obituary on a Yale alumni Web site. “They will sing everything his way.”

E. B. phoned Kelly to implore him not to sponsor any memorial service. Kelly told him none was planned. But shortly thereafter, the school’s director of alumni relations sent an e-mail inviting certain alumni to the Johannes Somary Memorial Concert at the Basilica of St. Patrick’s Old Cathedral. According to the school, Somary’s widow, a retired Horace Mann teacher, and his children, who were all alumni, “asked to communicate with their former students and classmates, and they were granted limit

ed access to the database of alumni.” E. B., whose e-mail address was not included in that mailing, called to demand an explanation and was told that the school did not endorse the concert.

A few days later, E. B. says he wrote a letter to Archbishop Timothy Dolan explaining the situation and asking him “as the spiritual head of the Archdiocese of New York to rescind permission that has been given by the organizers of this concert to use this sacred space.” The church did not respond, he says, but the location for the concert was changed to the Great Hall in Cooper Union.

Despite all that transpired, M., the student whose encounters with Somary stretched over several years, went to his former teacher’s funeral. “I don’t know why I went,” he said. “Still, today, after the drinking and the heroin and the therapy and the battered relationships, I just can’t bring myself to fully hate the man who gave me so much.”

“Great is the truth, and it prevails.”

I have similarly conflicted feelings about Horace Mann. It was in many ways an amazing place filled with inspiring teachers and smart, funny students, with a sense of enthusiasm and possibility. Despite all I’ve since learned about it, I still look back on my years there with affection and gratitude, as do so many former students, even some who shared their harrowing stories with me. But that gratitude is part of what makes these stories so painful. We were at such a vulnerable moment in our lives — just beginning to make the transition from childhood into early adulthood, struggling to come to terms with the responsibilities of sexuality and trying to decide what we were willing to stand up for. We needed strong and consistent role models. In many cases we got them. But in too many other

cases, we got models of how to abuse authority, how to manipulate trust, how to keep silent, how to fix your eyes forward.

The statement that the school sent me via the public-relations firm seems to suggest that the system worked as well as it could have. After all, Mark Wright's and Stan Kops's tenures at Horace Mann were brought to an end. The school provided no explanation for why the accusations in those cases were treated so differently than those against Johannes Somary. But all three of these stories have something in common: they seem like artifacts of a previous era, a time before the explosion of electronic communication and before the scandals in the Catholic Church, the Boy Scouts and Penn State. Today, if faculty members disappeared from campus under suspicious circumstances or if rumors were swirling about predatory teachers, students would be texting about it in real time. Outraged parents would be organizing into networks and distributing action plans. And schools would dispatch counselors to help everyone through their pain. According to the school's statement, "Horace Mann School today has in place clearly articulated and enforced rules, regulations, policies, procedures and expectations concerning appropriate behavior within the community — including whistle-blower protections to ensure that any member of the school community can freely report alleged violations."

Clearly Horace Mann's policies have evolved far beyond what they were in Mark Wright's day. National awareness of the issue has evolved, too, but we still have a long way to go. With its prestigious reputation and its network of influential alumni, Horace Mann could take a leadership position, educating other schools on how to talk about these dangers with their students and their faculty. But first it will have to acknowledge the kinds of experiences former students shared with me for this article.

A little while ago, I took my children to see the school. We sat eating ice cream on the same left-field wall I used to sit on 30 years earlier. The place has changed so much since I was a student; a wave of prerecession fortune left snazzy new facilities in every corner. But at the center of it all is still that same green diamond of manicured grass that a member of the Yankees grounds crew once helped maintain. The smell of spring's thawing mud reminded me that baseball season was just around the corner. A razor-thin kid shagged flies, and my thoughts drifted back to Inky.

Horace Mann has referred to Inky Clark as "a man of true valor." I remember him that way, too. Years after I graduated, I learned he even reached into his own pocket to pad out my scholarship to Horace Mann, then he did it again for my college, when Eric discreetly warned him that my family might fall short.

Inky was in so many ways a hero, a man who felt the urgent obligation of history and rose to answer its call. But he was also a man who shied away from the most urgent obligation of all. He pried open the doors of insular institutions, making an elite education — and all the benefits it confers — available to students who would never otherwise have had a shot. But then he stood at the helm of one such institution while teachers allegedly betrayed their students in the most damaging ways.

If Horace Mann's current anti-abuse policies had been enforced back in Clark's day, Mark Wright's first physical examination might have been his last. But it seems that Clark handled Wright's and Kops's cases discreetly, without offering an explanation to the Horace Mann community or initiating a schoolwide discussion about the surrounding issues. A discussion like that might have encouraged E. B. or M. to speak up, decades before Ben Balter had his own painful experiences with Somary.

Clark left Horace Mann in 1991, having led the school for two decades. He died eight years later of a heart attack while recovering from a fall. He was 64. The baseball diamond that first drew me to the school is now called Clark Field.

I saw Inky for the last time during a college vacation. He and I hadn’t been close for years, but my mother still felt grateful to him — as did I — and she invited him over to her apartment for brunch.

The years had caught up with Inky, or perhaps it was the drinks. Beneath the cheery banter and the bright outfit, he seemed weary. We caught up about my time in college, the injury that ended my years on the field, the various players and teachers we both knew.

Inky was a man who dared to reinvent august institutions and inspired decades of students. For reasons I still can’t quite fathom, he had gone to the effort of changing my life. But here we were sitting across from each other, after so many years, and we were just making small talk. It didn’t seem right.

Stan Kops had recently committed suicide. That horrible news felt like a heavy, unaddressed presence in the room. So, yearning for a deeper connection, I took a swig of my drink and found the courage to say that I was sorry to hear about the death of his friend.

Inky looked at me with his watery blue eyes and slowly wiped his mouth. “Strangest thing, Mouse,” he said, as though from far away. “I heard about Stan Kops, too.”

Amos Kamil is a screenwriter, playwright and brand

strategist. He graduated from Horace Mann in 1982
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Editor: Ariel Kaminer
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NYT-0610: MAGAZINE
How Do You Live Knowing You Might Have an Alzheimer
's Gene? ... By GINA KOLATA
One family with a genetic mutation is helping scien
tists find a cure.
===== notyet (7 pages)
It seemed as if it would be a perfectly ordinary o
ccasion, that hot August day in 1959. Three genera
tions of a large Oklahoma family gathered at a stu
dio in nearby Perryton, Tex., to have a photo take
n of the elders, 14 siblings ranging in age from 2
9 to 52. Afterward, everyone went to a nearby park
 for a picnic.

Among the group were two cousins, Doug Whitney, wh
o was 10, and Gary Reiswig, who was 19. Doug’s mot
her and Gary’s father were brother and sister. Dou
g does not remember any details of that day, but G
ary says he can never forget it. His father, and s
ome of his aunts and uncles, just did not seem rig
ht. They stared blankly. They were confused, smili
ng and nodding, even though it seemed as if they w
eren’t really following the conversation.

Seeing them like that reminded Gary of what his gr
andfather had been like years before. In 1936, at
the age of 53, his grandfather was driving with hi
s grandmother and inexplicably steered into the pa
th of a train. He survived, but his wife did not.
Over the next decade, he grew more and more confus
ed. By the time he died at 63, he was unable to sp
eak, unable to care for himself, unable to find hi
s way around his house. Now here were the first si
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gns of what looked like the same condition in several of his children.

“We were looking at the grimness face to face,” Gary says. “After that, we gradually stopped getting together.”

It was the start of a long decline for Gary’s father and his siblings. Their memories became worse, their judgment faltered, they were disoriented. Then one day in 1963, Gary, who was living in Illinois at the time, went with his mother to take his father to a doctor in Oklahoma City. The doctor had recently examined his father’s brother, and after administering some simple memory tests and hearing about the rest of the family, concluded that he probably had Alzheimer’s disease. Gary and his mother took his father in for the same exam, and the doctor confirmed Gary’s fears.

Gary’s mother wanted to keep his father’s condition a secret and asked Gary to tell no one. But his uncle’s wife, Aunt Ester May, wanted to let everyone in the extended family know. Most reacted the way Gary’s mother had — they wanted to keep the information to themselves.

When Doug first heard the news, he hoped his mother, Mildred Whitney, might escape the terrible illness, and for a few years she seemed fine. But on Thanksgiving Day 1971, Mildred, who was then 50 and never used recipes, could not remember how to make her famous pumpkin pie.

That was the beginning of her precipitous fall. Five years later, after she lost her ability to walk, or speak, or recognize her own children, she died. In the end, 10 of those 14 brothers and sisters developed Alzheimer’s, showing symptoms, on average, at around age 50. The family, once close, soon scattered, each descendant of the 14 privately finding a way to live with the possibility that he o

r she could be next.

More than five decades later, many of these relatives have come together to be part of a large international study of families who carry an Alzheimer’s gene. The study, known as DIAN (for Dominantly Inherited Alzheimer Network), involves more than 260 people in the United States, Britain and Australia and includes at least 10 members of Doug and Gary’s family. Since 2008, researchers have been monitoring the brains of subjects who have mutations in any of three genes that cause Alzheimer’s to see how the disease develops before symptoms occur. By early next year, DIAN researchers plan to begin a new phase. Subjects will receive one of three experimental drugs that the researchers hope will slow or stop the disease in people otherwise destined to get it. (A similar study is expected to start around the same time in Colombia, testing one drug in a large extended family that carries a mutation in one gene that causes Alzheimer’s.)

Though as much as 99 percent of all Alzheimer’s cases are not a result of a known genetic mutation, researchers have determined that the best place to find a treatment or cure for the disease is to study those who possess a mutation that causes it. It’s a method that has worked for other diseases. Statins, the drugs that are broadly prescribed to block the body’s cholesterol synthesis, were first found effective in studies of people who inherited a rare gene that led to severe and early heart disease.

Alzheimer’s is the sixth leading cause of death in this country, and is the only disease among the 10 deadliest that cannot be prevented, slowed or cured. But DIAN investigators say that within a decade there could be a drug that staves off brain destruction and death.

This sense of optimism has been a long time coming

. In 1901, a German psychiatrist, Alois Alzheimer, first noted the disease when he described the case of a 51-year-old woman named Auguste Deter. “She sits on the bed with a helpless expression,” Alzheimer wrote. “What is your name? Auguste. Your husband? Ah, my husband. She looks as if she didn’t understand the question.”

Five years later, when Auguste Deter died, Alzheimer examined her brain. It was the color of sandpaper and the texture of tofu, like every other brain. But there the similarities ended. Deter’s brain was shriveled and flecked with tiny particles that stuck to it like barnacles. No one had ever seen such a thing before in any brain.

Pathologists now recognize that the particles are deposits of a protein fragment, beta amyloid, that accumulates in brains with Alzheimer’s and is a hallmark of the disease. Alzheimer also noticed something else in Deter’s brain. Inside her ruined brain cells were tangles: grotesquely twisted ropes of a protein now known as tau. They are not unique to Alzheimer’s — they show up in the course of aging and in other degenerative brain diseases, including Parkinson’s and Pick’s disease, a rare form of dementia whose distinguishing symptoms include erratic and inappropriate behavior. Alzheimer speculated that the tangles in the brain cells were grim signs of the brain’s destruction. But what caused that destruction was a mystery. “All in all we have to face a peculiar disease process,” Alzheimer wrote.

There matters stood until the latter part of the 20th century. A leading Alzheimer’s researcher, Paul Aisen of the University of California, San Diego, told me that when he was in medical school in the late 1970s, his instructors never talked about Alzheimer’s. There was little to say other than that it was a degenerative brain disease with no known cause and no effective treatment. Scientists jus

t did not have the tools to figure out what was go ing wrong in the brains of these people, or why.

All anyone knew was that the disease followed a re lentless path, starting with symptoms so subtle th ey could be dismissed as normal carelessness or in attentiveness. A person would forget what was just said, or miss an appointment, or maybe become con fused driving home one day. Gradually those small memory lapses would progress until the person, now wearing a blank stare, would no longer recognize family members and would be unable to eat or use a bathroom. At autopsy, the brain would be ruined, shrunken and peppered with plaques.

Rudolph Tanzi, a professor of neurology and an Alz heimer’s researcher at Harvard University, explain ed what it was like for researchers back then to l ook at an Alzheimer’s brain and try to figure out what caused the devastation. Imagine, he says, tha t you are an alien from another planet who has nev er heard of football. You go into a stadium at 5 o ’clock, after a game has been played, and see tras h in the stands, a littered field, torn turf. How, he asks, could you figure out that it was all cau sed by a football game? “For decades, that was whe re we were in trying to figure out the cause of Al zheimer’s disease,” Tanzi says.

But as molecular biology advanced, scientists real ized that if they could study large families in wh om the disease seemed to be inherited, they might be able to hunt down a gene that caused Alzheimer’ s and understand what it did. The difficulty was f inding these families and persuading them to parti cipate in the research. A breakthrough came in the late 1980s when a woman who lived in Nottingham, England, contacted a team of Alzheimer’s researche rs at St. Mary’s Hospital in London, led by John H ardy, and asked if they wanted to study her family . Alzheimer’s had appeared in three generations, s he said, and her father was one of 10 children, 5

of whom developed the disease.

In the English family, the pattern of inheritance seemed clear — the child of someone with the disease had a fifty-fifty chance of developing Alzheimer's — which meant that it was very likely that a gene was causing the disease. By comparing the DNA sequences of family members who developed Alzheimer's to the sequences of those who did not develop the disease, the researchers discovered that the family's disease was caused by a mutated gene on chromosome 21. Everyone in the family who had Alzheimer's had that mutated gene. No one who escaped the disease had the mutation. And all who inherited the mutated gene eventually got Alzheimer's. There were no exceptions.

"Sometimes in science, you generate the information and the data gradually," Alison Goate, who was a young geneticist in the research group, told me. "This was like, boom, a eureka moment." She says she remembers thinking, "I am the first person to see a cause of Alzheimer's disease."

During those years of slow scientific progress on Alzheimer's, Gary Reiswig made a series of decisions that reflected his fears. He'd been trained as a minister in a conservative arm of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), but after his father died at 56, Gary, who was then 27, began questioning his calling. If he was going to get Alzheimer's in 10 or 20 years, was this the way he wanted to spend his remaining time?

He left the ministry, deeply upsetting his extended family. "Here was our golden boy, rejecting the faith," Gary says, referring to the way his family responded. "It was hard to go back to my hometown."

In 1970, he and his wife divorced, and in 1973 he remarried and faced another difficult decision. Hi

s new wife, Rita, wanted children. She knew when s
he married Gary that there was Alzheimer’s disease
 in his family. “But somehow, it didn’t seem exact
ly real until we started talking about having a ch
ild,” Gary says. “There is a tremendous life force
 that drives people to love, make love and have ch
ildren. You just can’t overcome it.” And because t
he risk to a hypothetical child was so far in the
future, they were able to convince themselves that
 it wasn’t truly real.

Their son was born in 1977. Meanwhile, Alzheimer’s
 continued to cut a swath through Gary’s family. H
is older sister lived on a farm in Oklahoma, and h
e and Rita visited her a couple of times a year. O
n one trip, when his sister was 43, Gary realized
she was starting to show the same unmistakable sym
ptoms of the disease he had seen in his father.

Gary was about to turn 40 in 1979 and was working
as a city planner in Pittsburgh. He knew he could
not continue in that job if he had Alzheimer’s, so
 one day he said to Rita, “Let’s get ourselves in
a position where if this disease hits me, I can be
 helpful.”

He found what he was hoping for when he saw an adv
ertisement for an inn for sale in East Hampton, N.
Y. He could be an innkeeper, Gary thought, transit
ioning to simple maintenance work if his memory be
gan to fail. So he quit his job, and he and Rita b
ought the inn and moved to Long Island in June 197
9. “I cast myself loose from dependence on bosses
in case I began to lose my mental capacities,” Gar
y told me.

Though the actual work was more complicated than G
ary had anticipated, he found he knew the basics.
He had learned to make business decisions by helpi
ng his father with the family farm, and he was goo
d at dealing with people from working as a city pl
anner. But all the while, as he managed the inn, G

ary had his eye to a future when nothing would be easy, when “my duties could be shifted from complex to simple, mental to merely manual, if the situation demanded it.”

Then, one day in 1986, he got a call from his aunt Ester May, who had made some life-changing decisions of her own. After watching her husband die, Ester May had made it a mission to find someone who might help the family. Eventually, her quest led her to Thomas Bird, who is currently a professor of neurology, medicine and medical genetics at the University of Washington in Seattle and a research neurologist at the Seattle V.A. hospital. Like Alison Goate in England, Bird was looking for large families with a hereditary form of Alzheimer’s disease to provide blood samples that could be analyzed in an attempt to isolate other genetic culprits. For Bird and others searching for Alzheimer’s genes, there were still some fundamental questions that needed to be answered: What were these genes and what did they do to cause the disease? Was there just one gene that causes Alzheimer’s in these families, or were there several? If there were several, there might be many paths to the disease. If there was one — or several that when mutated all had the same effect — the task of finding a cure might be easier.

As soon as Ester May spoke to Bird, she got to work, calling family members and cajoling them to join the study. The consent forms said all data would be kept private, and as is typical in research, even if a gene were found, the participants would not be told if they had it. By taking part in the study they would be contributing to science. They would be doing it to benefit others in the future, not themselves.

Gary agreed to participate, and he went to his internist’s office in East Hampton to have blood drawn and sent to Bird. He’s not sure how many of his

cousins also gave blood, but he estimates, from asking around, that about 30 did. Of his father's generation, 5 out of 14 gave blood — the rest were already dead from the disease.

Gary says he didn't need to persuade his brother and sister to participate. "By the time Dr. Bird's study began, my sister was already having symptoms," he says.

Then Gary put the study out of his mind while he continued on the path he had already set for himself — making use of the limited time he had to live his life before he might be overcome by the disease.

Doug approached the possibility of Alzheimer's differently, spending his life away from the family tragedies, only distantly aware of what was unfolding. At 18, Doug left home to join the Navy. He stayed in the military for 20 years, and for most of that time, he and his wife, Ione, were stationed around the world, visiting immediate family members a couple of times a year on all-too-brief road trips. When he retired from the Navy in 1988, they settled in Port Orchard, Wash., where Doug had a job with a contractor, scheduling maintenance for ships. Because he'd been out of the country for so long, he didn't participate in Bird's study.

Doug is a taciturn man, not one to spill his emotions. Ione is the talker, ebullient and friendly, speaking for Doug in interviews, answering e-mails. She told me that the most difficult time for Doug was when Roger, the oldest of Doug's seven siblings, started showing signs of the disease when he was 48. (None of the others seem to have symptoms.) In 2001, Roger was deteriorating badly in a nursing home in Grove, Okla., and Doug flew there to be with him one last time. "It had been at least six months since Roger recognized anyone," Ione says. Doug spent the afternoon and evening with him. Th

e next day, Roger died. He was 55 and left behind three children, one of whom was just a few weeks younger than Doug and Ione’s son, Brian.

In 1995, four years after Alison Goate and her colleagues found the first Alzheimer’s gene, two more genes were discovered. One was found by Bird’s team using the blood from several families, including Gary and Doug’s. Other research groups studying other families made similar discoveries. The three genes are on different chromosomes, and different families have different mutations in the genes, but in every case, the mutated gene leads to the same result: the brake that normally slows down the accumulation of beta amyloid, a toxic protein that forms plaques, no longer works. Beta amyloid piles up and sets the inexorable disease process in motion.

In the years since, researchers have theorized that when the brain makes too much beta amyloid, it creates a toxic environment — “a bad neighborhood,” as some investigators put it. The beta amyloid clumps into hard plaques that form outside cells. Once brain cells are living in that bad neighborhood, the abnormal tangled strands of tau proteins show up inside, killing the cells from within.

The researchers have tended to focus on stopping beta amyloid from accumulating rather than stopping tau. Most beta amyloid drugs either stymie the enzymes that produce it or clear away the amyloid after it’s made. But drug development is hard, and it has taken years for companies to find promising compounds and take them through the phases of preclinical testing.

Several years ago, the first large studies of these new drugs were carried out using people who already had Alzheimer’s. Most of those initial studies are still under way, but a few have been completed, with disappointing results — despite the drugs, the disease continues unabated in these Alzheimer

’s patients.

Randall J. Bateman, director of the DIAN Therapeutic Trials Unit at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, says it is far too soon to admit defeat. He notes that the history of medicine is replete with stories of drugs that were almost abandoned because they were initially studied in the wrong group or were administered in the wrong dose or at the wrong time in the course of a disease. Even penicillin was a failure at first. It was initially tested by dabbing it on skin infections, Bateman says. But the way the drug was applied to the infections and its low dose made it impossible for the drug to cure even an infection that would otherwise respond to it. Finally, when the drug was tested at the right dose in the right patients, it cured eye infections and also pneumonia in people who were certain to have died without it.

“Even something as effective as penicillin can fail unless it is administered properly,” Bateman says. He predicts that in the future it will become clear that for Alzheimer’s drugs to be effective, they would have to be given earlier.

“In Alzheimer’s, we are coming to realize that it’s more difficult to treat after there are symptoms,” Bateman says. By then “extensive neuronal death has occurred.” Tau has been destroying brain cells, and “the adult brain does not replace those lost neurons.”

Other diseases work the same way. In Parkinson’s, for example, the substantia nigra — a small, black, crescent-shape group of brain cells that control movement — starts to die. But there are no symptoms until 70 to 90 percent of the substantia nigra is gone. No one has yet found a way to restore those missing cells.

In order to address this, Bateman says that the DI

AN researchers will try to use drugs to stop the accretion of amyloid in people with the Alzheimer's gene who haven't yet shown symptoms. The study is building on others that followed middle-aged subjects for years, watching for early signs in the brains of those who eventually develop Alzheimer's.

One study in particular has been helpful. It's called ADNI (Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative), and it began in October 2004. ADNI includes 200 people whose memories are normal, 400 with mild memory problems that might be harbingers of Alzheimer's disease and 200 with Alzheimer's disease. Researchers regularly give these subjects memory tests and do brain imaging and other tests to watch for the progress of Alzheimer's. The study found that characteristic brain changes — shrinkage of the memory center, beta amyloid plaques, excessive synthesis of beta amyloid and tau — arise more than a decade before a person has symptoms.

The first phase of the DIAN study also looks at the progression of Alzheimer's in the brain, but using only subjects who are members of families with Alzheimer's genes. When these people join DIAN, Bateman and his colleagues test their memory and reasoning as well as administer spinal taps and scans to monitor changes in their brains. The researchers test the subjects every one to three years, and they have found that they can see troubling brain changes in people with the gene as many as 20 years before they would be expected to show symptoms based on their parent's age when the disease was first diagnosed. Given the results from DIAN and other studies, Bateman concluded that the ideal time to give an experimental drug is within 15 years of the suspected onset.

Before they could begin testing drugs on people with an Alzheimer's gene, though, the researchers had to solve a delicate problem. DIAN participants are aware that they have a fifty-fifty chance of po

ssessing an Alzheimer’s gene, and they know they can be tested and find out if they inherited it — but almost no one wants to know. The researchers can give the drugs only to people who have the gene, however. (You don’t want to give a drug that affects the brain to healthy people.) If the study took only people with the gene, all those who were accepted would know that they had it. In order to avoid this problem, the DIAN researchers are inviting members of families with one of the mutated genes to join, regardless of whether the individuals know they possess the gene. Subjects won’t know which group they are in, but the researchers will know, and they will assign those who don’t have an Alzheimer’s gene to the placebo group. The participants with the gene will be randomly assigned to receive one of three experimental drugs or a placebo. The researchers say that within two years, they will have an indication about whether any of the drugs are working.

Bateman explained that the next step in Alzheimer’s research would be to study people who do not have the gene. The idea would be to look at, say, 70-year-olds who seem cognitively normal but who are at an age where Alzheimer’s is increasingly likely. Those subjects would be given scans and other tests to see whether, despite the absence of symptoms, their brains showed changes consistent with the beginning of Alzheimer’s. They would then be enrolled in a drug study. If the drug were to prevent the disease in these people, researchers predict that tests for beta amalyoid plaques might become a recommended preventive medical procedure. People might be tested at age 50 and periodically afterward. Anyone getting plaques would take the drug to prevent Alzheimer’s disease.

In 1995, the same year that Bird discovered Gary’s family’s Alzheimer’s gene, Gary made a discovery of his own. That August, his younger brother and his sister-in-law were visiting, and it was clear t

hat his brother had Alzheimer’s. He would become c
onfused by the simplest things. That first morning
, he tried to open a latched door, gave up, then t
ried to open a window, thinking it was a door. Gar
y was desolate seeing his brother’s condition and
could not help thinking that he could be next.

On the day that Gary’s brother and his wife depart
ed, Gary picked up The New York Times. “There was
this headline,” he told me. “ ‘Third Gene Tied to
Early Onset Alzheimer’s.’ ” The article described
a discovery by the Seattle group, in collaboration
 with other researchers, that was being published
that day in Science magazine. Gary was pretty sure
 it was his family whose gene had been found.

He got a copy of Science and turned to the article
, which included a family tree with members who ha
d the gene represented by black diamonds. Those wh
o did not have the gene were represented by white
diamonds.

It was scary even to look. Gary knew every person
in that diagram, and he knew he was there too. Wou
ld he be a black diamond or a white one? He follow
ed his family line, from his grandfather’s generat
ion to his father’s — there were the 14 siblings —
 to his own. He saw his older sister, who had been
 given a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s and was represen
ted by a black diamond. He saw his younger brother
, a black diamond. Bracketed between them was Gary
. His diamond was white. He had prepared all his a
dult life for that gene. And by an incredible stro
ke of luck, he did not have it.

His first sensation, he told me, was “lightness, l
ike a weight, a burden, had been lifted off my sho
ulders.” For several hours he floated, elated by t
he news. Now his children did not have to worry th
at they would get it. His wife would not have to w
orry that she would be caring for Gary as he spira
led down into the chasm of the disease. He had spe

nt his life preparing for an inheritance he had es caped.

Soon though, he moved from joy to sadness. “My fee lings of happiness for myself and my children seem ed to make light of what my siblings and family fa ced,” Gary said.

A decade ago, Gary and Doug spoke briefly at a fam ily reunion in Oklahoma City. It was the first tim e they had seen each other since that fateful picn ic four decades earlier. Then in 2009, when Gary w as in Seattle, meeting with Bird for a book he was writing about his family, “The Thousand Mile Star e,” he decided to look up Doug and Ione. They talk ed, and last year Doug joined Phase 1 of the DIAN study, after learning about it from Gary. His test ing took place at Washington University in St. Lou is over three days in March.

First Doug was given a cognitive endurance course. The idea was to wear the brain out by taxing it w ith progressively harder tasks in order to see its limits. It’s like giving someone a heart stress t est, Bateman says, in which a person must run on a treadmill until exhaustion sets in. The goal is t o get a base line reading. New studies are indicat ing that one of the first symptoms of Alzheimer’s is progressively poorer performances on challengin g cognitive and memory tests.

Some tasks were simple — name as many animals as y ou can in one minute. Others were harder. One was a test for working memory, in which the subject is shown simple arithmetic problems, like 7+5 = 12. In some, the answer is correct; in others, it is n ot. The subject presses a key on a computer to ind icate whether the answer is right or wrong. As soo n as one problem is completed, another pops up. Af ter three or four problems, the subject is asked t o type, from memory, the second number of each pro blem.

Doug found it exhausting. That afternoon, the testing continued with standard memory tests and questions for Ione about whether Doug has changed in his ability to handle finances or deal with daily events in his life. (The answer was no.) Then there was a test in which Ione was asked to recall something that happened in the prior week and something that happened in the prior month, in great detail. She was sent out of the room and Doug was called in and asked to recall the same event. (He performed well.) At the end of the first day, Doug was given an M.R.I., the first he ever had, to look for shrinkage of his hippocampus, a telltale sign of Alzheimer’s.

The next morning, Bateman gave Doug a spinal tap to collect the fluid that bathes Doug’s brain and spinal cord. After 10 minutes, Bateman held up a tube filled halfway with a clear, beige-tinged liquid. In it were proteins, including beta amyloid, that can reveal if Alzheimer’s is on its way. The spinal tap was followed by more brain scans the next day, and then Doug and Ione went home.

After they returned to Port Orchard, Doug decided he wanted to know whether he carried the Alzheimer’s gene. He and Ione thought he would be safe, Ione told me. They thought the cognitive tests had gone well, and Doug was in his early 60s. Most of his family members who had Alzheimer’s got it when they were in their 50s.

Last year, on May 31, his 62nd birthday, Doug went to a lab to get his blood drawn. When the results came back in June, they were the last thing Doug and Ione expected: Doug had the mutated gene.

“The first reaction was shock,” Ione said. The couple had gone through a tense period when Doug was in his late 40s and early 50s, and they kept waiting for him to start showing symptoms of the diseas

e. Ione still remembers a couple of occasions when Doug lost his way on familiar routes.

“I thought: Oh, my gosh. This is it,” she says. “It is so easy to get sucked into that constant fear.” But as the years went by, they put the fear behind them.

Now it is back. “It’s kind of like we went through this once already,” Ione said. The fear is compounded by thoughts of their two children. Brian, their son, is 40, and is married with a 2-year-old daughter. Karen, their daughter, is 38 and unmarried. Like Doug, Karen decided she had to know and arranged to be tested. She does not have the gene.

That, Ione says, is the one bright spot in all this. Hearing the news about Karen made her realize how worried she was. “You feel like a rock was lifted from your chest. You didn’t know the rock was there but now it’s gone.”

The first thing Brian did was buy additional life insurance, just in case. Though he initially said he wanted to be tested, so far he has not gone through with it. He plans to join Bateman’s study. If he does, he will, of course, have a gene test but will not be told the result.

Doug says little about how the devastating news affects him. He’s continuing to work, planning to retire when he is 65. Then he figures he will do a lot of fishing and household repairs.

He also wants to join the drug phase of DIAN. It is his one hope of staving off the inevitable, assuming he is placed in a group that is randomly assigned to take one of the experimental drugs.

But even if a drug ultimately proves effective, it will no doubt take time for Bateman and his team to figure out when best to give it and at what dos

e. It is quite unlikely that a cure will be found in the next few years.

As for Brian, if he does have the gene, perhaps science will come up with the right drug at the right time before his symptoms set in. And if his young daughter were to have it, too, researchers imagine that there will be a cure by the time she faces her own dire future. That is what they cling to, Ione says. “I’d never even heard the word ‘Alzheimer’s’ until I was pregnant with Brian,” she said. “And there was no hope at that point. If you had the gene, that was it.” Meanwhile, she and Doug are going on with their lives. “We’re just hanging in there. Life can be cruel.”

Gina Kolata is a medical reporter for The New York Times.

Editor: Ilena Silverman
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NYT-0617: OP-ED
Moral Dystopia ... By MAUREEN DOWD
As our institutions decay, is our sense of right and wrong crumbling as well?
===== notyet
EVERYONE is good, until we’re tested.

We hope we would be Sir Thomas More in “A Man for All Seasons,” who dismisses his daughter’s pleas to compromise his ideals and save his life, saying: “When a man takes an oath, Meg, he’s holding his own self in his own hands. Like water. And if he opens his fingers then, he needn’t hope to find himself again.”

But with formerly hallowed institutions and icons sinking into a moral dystopia all around us, has our sense of right and wrong grown more malleable? What if we’re not Thomas More but Mike McQueary?
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Eight tortured young men offered searing testimony in Bellefonte, Pa., about being abused as children by Jerry Sandusky in the showers at Penn State, in the basement of his home and at hotels.

But the most haunting image in the case is that of a little boy who was never found, who was never even sought by Penn State officials.

In February 2001, McQueary was home one night watching the movie “Rudy,” about a runty football player who achieves his dream of playing at Notre Dame by the sheer force of his gutsy character. McQueary, a graduate assistant coach and former Penn State quarterback, was so inspired that he got up and went over to the locker room to get some tapes of prospective recruits.

There he ran smack into his own character test. The strapping 6-foot-4 redhead told the court he saw his revered boss and former coach reflected in the mirror: Sandusky, Joe Paterno’s right hand, was grinding against a little boy in the shower in an “extremely sexual” position, their wet bodies making “skin-on-skin slapping sounds.” He met their eyes, Sandusky’s blank, the boy’s startled.

“I’ve never been involved in anything remotely close to this,” the 37-year-old McQueary said. “You’re not sure what the heck to do, frankly.”

He was slugging back water from a paper cup, with the bristly air of a man who knows that many people wonder why he didn’t simply stop the rape and call the police instead of leaving to talk it over with his father and a family friend.

Tellingly, he compared the sickening crime to the noncomparable incident of being a college student looking for a bathroom during a party at a frat house, and inadvertently walking into a dark bedroom

where a fraternity brother is having sex with a young lady.

He said he felt too “shocked, flustered, frantic” to do anything, adding defensively: “It’s been well publicized that I didn’t stop it. I physically did not remove the young boy from the shower or punch Jerry out.”

He told Paterno the next morning and went along with the mild reining in of Sandusky, who continued his deviant ways.

Put on administrative leave, McQueary has filed a whistleblower lawsuit against the school. (He was promoted to receivers coach and recruiting coordinator three years after the incident.) “Frankly,” he said, “I don’t think I did anything wrong to lose that job.”

It’s jarring because McQueary looks like central casting for the square-jawed hero who stumbles upon a crime in progress, rescues the child thrilled to hear the footsteps of a savior, and puts an end to the serial preying on disadvantaged kids by a man disguised as the patron saint of disadvantaged kids.

Bellefonte, the town in the shadow of Beaver Stadium, also looks like a Hollywood creation: the perfect sepia slice of rural Americana reflecting old-fashioned values. There’s an Elks Lodge, a Loyal Order of Moose hall, a Rexall drugstore, the Hot Dog House with hand-dipped ice cream, and a nice senior citizen shooing you into the crosswalk. This was a big “American Graffiti” weekend in town: the annual sock hop and hot rod parade.

How could so many fine citizens of this college town ignore the obvious and protect a predator instead of protecting children going through the ultimate trauma: getting raped by a local celebrity offe

ring to be their dream father figure? A Penn State police officer warned Sandusky in 1998 to stop showering with boys; Saint Jerry ignored him.

The first witness for the prosecution, now 28, recalled that Sandusky wooed him starting when he was 12, letting him wear the jersey of the star linebacker LaVar Arrington.

In his Washington Post blog, Arrington, a retired Redskin, wrote that it was “mind-blowing” to hear about the boy’s hurt. He recalled that he had asked the kid, “Why are you always walking around all mad, like a tough guy?”

He assumed that since the boy had been involved with the Second Mile charity, he must be from a troubled home.

“I will never just assume ever again,” he said of dealing with an angry child. “I will always ask, and let them know that it’s O.K. to tell the truth about why they are upset.”

That accuser testified that at the Alamo Bowl, Dottie Sandusky, a good German, came into the hotel room while her husband was in the shower threatening to send the boy home if he would not perform oral sex. Jerry came out and she asked him, “What are you doing in there?” But she soon disappeared.

“She was kind of cold,” the young man recalled. “She wasn’t mean or hateful, nothing like that, just, they’re Jerry’s kids, like that.”

Another accuser, now 18, testified that he screamed when Sandusky raped him in the basement; though Dottie was upstairs, there was no response.

NBC’s Michael Isikoff reported on a secret file discovered in Penn State’s internal investigation, led by Louis Freeh, the former F.B.I. chief. Graham

Spanier, a former university president, and Gary Schultz, a former vice president, debated whether they had a legal obligation to report the 2001 shower incident, and in one e-mail, agreed it would be “humane” to Sandusky not to inform social service agencies.

That revoltingly echoes the testimony in the trial of Msgr. William Lynn in Philadelphia, where the late Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua ordered the shredding of a list of 35 priests believed to be child molesters. Lynn testified that he followed Bevilacqua’s orders not to tell victims if others had accused the same priest of abuse, or to inform parishes of the true reason that perverted priests were removed and recirculated.

When a seminarian told Lynn in 1992 that he was raped all through high school by the monstrous Rev. Stanley Gana, Lynn conceded he let it fall “through the cracks.” He also admitted he “forgot” to tell the police investigating a preying priest that the diocese knew of at least eight more cases.

Yet Lynn claimed he did his “best” for victims.

Inundated by instantaneous information and gossip, do we simply know more about the seamy side? Do greater opportunities and higher stakes cause more instances of unethical behavior? Have our materialism, narcissism and cynicism about the institutions knitting society — schools, sports, religion, politics, banking — dulled our sense of right and wrong?

“Most Americans continue to think of their lives in moral terms; they want to live good lives,” said James Davison Hunter, a professor of religion, culture and social theory at the University of Virginia and the author of “The Death of Character.” “But they are more uncertain about what the nature of the good is. We know more, and as a consequence,

we no longer trust the authority of traditional institutions who used to be carriers of moral ideals.

“We used to experience morality as imperatives. The consequences of not doing the right thing were not only social, but deeply emotional and psychological. We couldn’t bear to live with ourselves. Now we experience morality more as a choice that we can always change as circumstances call for it. We tend to personalize our ideals. And what you end up with is a nation of ethical free agents.

“We’ve moved from a culture of character to a culture of personality. The etymology of the word character is that it’s deeply etched, not changeable in all sorts of circumstances. We don’t want to think of ourselves as transgressive or bad, but we tend to personalize our understanding of the good.”

Lawrence Lessig, a Harvard law professor dubbed “the Elvis of cyberlaw” by Wired magazine, was seduced by his rock star choirmaster at the American Bochoir School in Princeton in the 1970s when he was 14 and turned into his supportive “wife,” as he calls it. “It made me really feel like a grown-up. Typically, sex doesn’t have to be terrible.”

In 2004, he represented another victim in a successful lawsuit against the school. He told me that “an astonishing 30 to 40 percent” of his peers there had been abused, “and everybody knew and nobody did anything.” That echoes the horror at the Horace Mann School in the Bronx in the 1970s and 1980s, where a culture of sexual abuse by teachers developed.

And as if we needed more evidence that perversity lurks everywhere, the Jehovah’s Witnesses have been ordered to pay more than $20 million to a woman who was abused for two years, starting at age 9, by a congregation member in California. She had filed a lawsuit accusing the church of instructing el

ders to keep sex-abuse accusations quiet.

“You don’t want to be the outsider who betrays the institution; whistleblowers are always the weirdos,” Lessig said. “There are so many ways to rationalize doing the easy thing. And it’s really easy for us to overlook how our inaction to step up and do even the simplest thing leads to profoundly destructive consequences in our society.”

I asked Cory Booker, the Newark mayor, why he ignored his security team and made a snap decision to run into a burning house to save his neighbor. He said his parents taught him to feel indebted to all the people who had sacrificed for his family. And he recoiled in law school at the idea that there was not always a legal obligation to help the vulnerable.

“We have to fight the dangerous streams in culture, the consumerism and narcissism and me-ism that erode the borders of our moral culture,” he said. “We can’t put shallow celebrity before core decency. We have to have a deeper faith in the human spirit. As they say, he who has the heart to help has the right to complain.”
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NYT-0618: UNLOCKED
At a Halfway House, Bedlam Reigns ... By SAM DOLNICK
The Bo Robinson center in New Jersey is as large as a prison and is intended to help inmates re-enter society. But The New York Times found that drugs, gangs and sexual abuse are rife behind its walls.
===== notyet (extremely long)
TRENTON — Most of the attacks happened inside the supply closet. Away from workers or security cameras. A dark space that Vanessa Falcone tried desperately to avoid.
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Ms. Falcone was an inmate at the Albert M. “Bo” Robinson Assessment and Treatment Center, a 900-bed halfway house here that is at the vanguard of a national movement to privatize correctional facilities.

She was assigned to the cleaning crew, under the supervision of a janitor. One night in 2009, he ordered her into the closet.

“He took his pants off and grabbed my hair and pushed me down,” Ms. Falcone, now 32, said in an interview. “That started a few weeks of basically hell.”

Finally, she told a senior guard that she was being sexually assaulted, according to internal reports written by the guard.

She was immediately transferred to another halfway house. The janitor was dismissed. And that is where it ended.

State officials and prosecutors did not conduct an inquiry into the allegations or the halfway house, which is run by Community Education Centers, a company with close ties to New Jersey politicians, including Chris Christie, who became governor in 2010.

“They shipped me off to another place like it never happened,” said Ms. Falcone, who had gone to prison for forging prescriptions.

Located next to a highway in an industrial stretch of Trenton, the Bo Robinson center is supposed to represent the new thinking in corrections. To save money, the state releases inmates early from prisons and turns them over to privately operated halfway houses.

These facilities are not the street-corner halfway houses of the past. They have hundreds of beds and are promoted as therapeutic communities with a focus on preparing inmates for society.

Yet Bo Robinson, behind its walls, often seems to embody the worst in the prisons it was intended to supplant. Imagine a sizable penitentiary, filled with inmates, some with violent records, but lacking the supervision that prevents such places from falling into bedlam.

The New York Times, during a 10-month investigation of New Jersey's system of state-regulated halfway houses, put together a portrait of life in Bo Robinson from dozens of interviews with inmates and workers and a review of hundreds of pages of internal reports, court filings and state records.

Inmates are housed in barracks-style rooms, not cells. At night, one or two low-wage workers typically oversee each unit of 170 inmates. Outnumbered and fearful, these workers sometimes refuse to patrol the corridors.

Robbery, sexual assault, menacing of the weak — in the darkness, the inmates' rooms turn into a free-for-all.

Inmates regularly ask to be returned to prison, where they feel safer, workers said.

Government agencies pay millions of dollars annually to Bo Robinson for drug counseling, yet drugs have been so rampant inside that when one group of inmates was tested, 73 percent came up positive, Mercer County records show.

The government requires that Bo Robinson provide therapy, job training and other services, but current and former workers said they had neither the skills nor the time to do so.

They said that as a result, they falsified inmate records. The workers said that when they did deliver these services, they had to do so haphazardly, knowing they were accomplishing little, if anything.

Inmates, who wear street clothes rather than prison uniforms, are herded by the dozens into large rooms. Workers read monotonously from self-help literature.

A churning of staff members deepens the problems. Managers and low-level employees regularly quit or are dismissed, according to interviews with more than 15 current and former employees.

The impact of the disorder is far-reaching. Each year, thousands of inmates from state prisons, and several hundred from county jails, pass through Bo Robinson.

Community Education charges government agencies roughly $70 a day per inmate, about half the cost of a spot in state prison. Over all, New Jersey has made Community Education an integral partner in the corrections system. Roughly 5,200 inmates and 2,500 parolees went through its halfway houses last year, the company said. The state’s prisons now hold 24,000 people.

State officials said halfway houses like Bo Robinson were susceptible to drug use and other misconduct because they had fewer restrictions than prisons and no correction officers. But the officials said the state regulated the facilities effectively.

Community Education said it would not comment on the assertions of former Bo Robinson workers quoted in this article. The company said several of the workers had been “discharged with cause,” though it would not say which ones.

In an interview last week, Robert Mackey, a senior vice president at the company, acknowledged that there had been problems at Bo Robinson. But he said the company had addressed them with new training for workers and enhanced security measures.

“There are things that have gone wrong here; there are events that have occurred,” Dr. Mackey said. “But to focus on a number of events or the report of some employees that are in my opinion not representative of the hundreds of people that are working in this state, I think, is a miscue.”

Asked about staffing at night, he said, “It has not been problematic for us.”

“I’m getting people wanting to come to work and feeling safe in the environment,” he said.

Still, several former correction officers said they were startled by conditions at Bo Robinson, where they took senior jobs. They had retired from the New Jersey prisons and said they were accustomed to orderly correctional facilities. They said they could not understand why the state tolerated Community Education’s management of Bo Robinson.

“It’s not a safe environment — not safe for inmates or for staff,” said Robert Brumbaugh, the former deputy security director at Bo Robinson, who went there after working 25 years for the Corrections Department. “It was horrendous.” Mr. Brumbaugh said he had informed Community Education’s executives about problems at Bo Robinson many times and had also told state regulators.

Such troubles are not limited to Bo Robinson, and have plagued the halfway house system for years, the Times investigation found.

Bronislaw Szulc, a former senior state official in

charge of investigating conditions at halfway houses, said he had filed reams of reports to the Corrections Department documenting drug use, violence, lax security and escapes at Bo Robinson and other facilities.

Mr. Szulc, who retired from the department in 2010, said top officials in Trenton had often ignored his reports, rarely held the halfway houses' operators responsible and demanded that he soften his critical findings. "I was told to stand down and ease up — not to go after things so hard," he said.

When the State Commission of Investigation examined gangs in New Jersey's correction system in 2009, it discovered that the facilities most plagued by gang activity were halfway houses, not prisons.

"Beyond outright threats and shakedowns, even time on a facility's pay phones was found to be controlled and sold by gang members," Lee C. Seglem, assistant director of the state commission, said in an interview.

Senior officials seem to have done little to address the problems, even when they have reached the upper echelons of state government.

For years, one of Community Education's supporters in the Corrections Department was the deputy commissioner, Lydell B. Sherrer, who supervised the halfway-house division.

In January, Mr. Sherrer pleaded guilty to federal extortion charges. In exchange for bribes, he had been promising to arrange jobs at Bo Robinson and other halfway houses.

The company said it had never hired anyone he had recommended.

Drugs and More for Sale

In August 2009, officials in Mercer County, which includes Trenton, became concerned about drug use at the Bo Robinson center and decided to conduct a surprise drug test of the inmates that the county had sent it.

Of 75 inmates, 55 tested positive for drugs, or 73 percent, according to county records.

Community Education promotes Bo Robinson as a drug-free institution, saying it seizes contraband and teaches inmates to reject drugs. But heroin, cocaine, marijuana and other drugs often seem to be available more and used more in Bo Robinson than in prisons or jails, according to workers, inmates and state records.

“Bo is like the projects,” said Matthew Leibe, who was an inmate there last year. “I’m walking down the hallway from mess and I’m getting approached by everybody selling everything. ‘I’ve got batteries, T-shirts, weed, heroin, coke.’ ”

Bo Robinson, which was opened in 1997 and was named after a former Trenton city councilman, resembles a conference center more than a jail. Inspirational posters line the corridors. It has a lecture hall, a gymnasium and a recreation area.

Some halfway houses in New Jersey allow inmates to leave on work release, but Bo Robinson is locked down. Escapes do occur, though not as frequently as at halfway houses with fewer restrictions. (There have been at least eight escapes at Bo Robinson since 2009, according to state statistics.)

Drugs slip in, however, through the usual channels — stuffed inside cigarette packs or buried in visitors’ clothing. Inmates have even developed a system that delivers drugs by air.

Bo Robinson abuts U.S. 1, and from a patch of high way shoulder, people throw balls over the fence th at have been partly sliced open. Drugs are inside.

Low-level workers, who are known as counselors, ar e supposed to inspect the yard, and sometimes they find the balls. A senior staff member recalled wo rkers' seizing one filled with 15 bags of heroin. Often, though, the drugs seem to enter undetected.

So at night, the smell of marijuana smoke drifts d own hallways known as Patience Lane and Hope Lane.

The state corrections commissioner, Gary M. Laniga n, who was appointed by Governor Christie, said in an interview that the state and the operators of halfway houses were vigilant about drugs.

"A halfway house, we talked about, is a less secur e facility, more access to the general public — mo re ability to move contraband back and forth," Mr. Lanigan said. "You're still an inmate, it's still treated as contraband, and if you're caught with any type of contraband, you will be charged."

After The Times began its investigation of New Jer sey's halfway houses last year, the Christie admin istration said it would improve monitoring of the system. The Corrections Department said this month that since last July, inspectors had conducted 49 6 "announced and unannounced site visits" at halfw ay houses.

Bo Robinson and other Community Education halfway houses hire former convicts as low-level staff mem bers. Some perform admirably, drawing upon their o wn experiences turning their lives around to inspi re inmates.

But Charles Muller, a former chief of the special investigations division of the Corrections Departm ent, said he and his team believed that some worke

rs in halfway houses were dealing drugs and other contraband.

“It’s totally counter to helping these inmates,” M r. Muller said. “You’re preying on them now, and y ou’re contributing to the fact that they may be us ing drugs.”

Asked why the state had not cracked down on drugs at Bo Robinson, Mr. Muller said senior officials h ad never wanted to devote the resources to do so.

Dana Vetrano, a former counselor at Bo Robinson, s aid the staff had many former prison inmates. She herself was one, having served time for robbery.

“They were from the streets,” Ms. Vetrano said. “T hey needed a job, they came in from the street, th ey were hired — that was it. They had no qualifica tions. Nothing.

“I used to dread going into that place, and it was because of the staff.”

After the drug tests that Mercer County conducted in August 2009, the state took no action against B o Robinson. But county officials removed the 55 me n who had tested positive from the center and retu rned them to the county jail.

“We think there were staff that were making drugs available to the population,” said Brian M. Hughes , the county executive. “Until that was resolved, it really was not possible for us to keep them the re.”

Community Education soon fired several senior staf f members at Bo Robinson, including Mr. Brumbaugh, the deputy security director and former correctio n officer, who had earned a reputation as a whistl e-blower because he had highlighted problems there.

Mercer County later returned dozens of the inmates to Bo Robinson.

In May 2011, Mr. Hughes was invited to the White House for a panel discussion, led by Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., on ways to prevent inmates from returning to crime after they are discharged. Mr. Hughes said his county was “on the cutting edge of this issue” and praised Bo Robinson, according to a news release from his office.

A month after the White House visit, Mercer County conducted another drug test at Bo Robinson.

Of 73 inmates, 27 tested positive, or 37 percent, according to county records.

Once again, the state did not penalize Bo Robinson. The county withdrew its inmates, then returned them after new assurances from Community Education.

Mr. Hughes, a Democrat, said the county lacked alternatives because Community Education, with its political connections, had cornered the market.

Mr. Christie, a Republican, has long supported the company. His close friend and political adviser William J. Palatucci is the company’s senior vice president. Community Education also has ties to well-known Democrats.

“I understand that; I’m a big boy,” Mr. Hughes said of the political connections. “I wish that there was a lot of competition to a program like Bo’s, but quite frankly, there isn’t.”

Community Education said the county’s drug tests were being misinterpreted. The company said a vast majority of the inmates who had tested positive had used drugs outside Bo Robinson before being admitted. The tests merely detected lingering amounts, the company said.

“Drug use is not known to be an issue at Bo Robinson or any C.E.C. community facility,” the company said in a statement.

Yet throughout this time, state and local officials ignored a glaring discrepancy.

Community Education says it has a rigorous drug-testing program at Bo Robinson. Even as Mercer County’s tests were pointing to widespread drug use, Community Education’s tests were showing the opposite.

Earlier in 2011, for example, the company reported stellar results to officials: Of 114 county inmates tested at Bo Robinson, the company reported, only one came up positive.

‘A Numbers Game’

Soon after Denette Pasqualini, 40, went to work as a counselor at Bo Robinson in June 2011, she realized that her years as a security supervisor at a Six Flags amusement park had not prepared her for the night shift at a Community Education halfway house.

Her supervisors regularly got drunk on whiskey concealed in soda bottles, she recalled in an interview. Several counselors were having sexual relations with inmates.

Ms. Pasqualini, who said she was paid $10.50 an hour, was the only worker on a unit of more than 100 women when one inmate stabbed another with a pen. When Ms. Pasqualini tried to intervene, other inmates held her back, she said.

“I’m like, ‘How could this be?’ ” she said. “If the Department of Corrections ever came in here and saw this unit, they would close this unit down.”

She offered an explanation for the disparity betwe
en Community Education’s drug tests and the county
’s: Fraud was pervasive at Bo Robinson.

Ms. Pasqualini said counselors regularly warned in
mates of impending drug tests or allowed them to t
ake urine cups into bathrooms without supervision.
 Most frequently, she said, counselors simply doct
ored documents to say that inmates had passed drug
 tests when they had never taken them.

“The staff is from the Trenton area and know the i
nmates from the streets,” she said. “They say: ‘I’
m not going to give her a drug test. I know her. I
’ll let it go.’ ”

Ms. Pasqualini resigned after five months because t
he job was too dangerous.

In interviews, four other former workers at Bo Rob
inson corroborated her assertions about fraud in i
ts operations.

The workers said Bo Robinson often did not have en
ough staff. But Community Education required paper
work to prove to state and county officials that B
o Robinson was rehabilitating inmates with drug tr
eatment, therapy and other services.

So the workers cheated, and no one at the company’
s management objected when case file after case fi
le had identical entries, the former employees sai
d.

“When we had to give a report for the group sessio
n,” Cynthia Taylor, a former counselor, said, “we
would look at what was said for the last group and
 cut and paste.”

Ms. Taylor, 55, previously worked in marketing and
 had no experience in drug treatment or child deve

lopment when she was hired to deliver five lectures a week on drug and alcohol abuse and parenting.

Ms. Taylor said she was dismissed in May 2009. She said she was told she had violated rules by sharing a sandwich with an inmate, but she said she believed that she had been punished for complaining about working conditions.

“We all understood that it was a numbers game,” she said. “Community Education made money not on how many people they rehabilitated. ‘How many bodies can we get in here and keep here for a certain amount of time?’ — that’s what they were interested in.”

Asked about the allegations by former workers, the company said: “C.E.C. is unaware of any instance in which any Bo Robinson employee has ever complained to senior management that they were overworked, poorly trained or had forged treatment records.”

The deficiencies in drug enforcement and counseling were especially damaging because Bo Robinson serves as an entryway to New Jersey’s system of halfway houses.

When inmates leave state prison, many of them first spend about two months receiving counseling and being evaluated at Bo Robinson or at a Community Education halfway house in Kearny. Then, based in large part upon inmates’ case files prepared by Community Education, state officials determine whether to place them in a long-term halfway house, and in which one.

But the case files were filled with dubious information about inmates’ time at Bo Robinson, workers said.

Derrick Watkins, a former deputy director of treatment, said he had needed to reprimand workers for

falsifying inmates' records. Mr. Watkins said he had once found the same counseling report copied 30 times, with identical entries but a different inmate's name written on each page.

Another time, a counselor copied a colleague's progress reports and submitted them as his own. "When I called him in and asked him, he confessed," Mr. Watkins said. "He may have done that to hundreds of people who came through."

Mr. Watkins said he was dismissed in 2009, along with much of the senior staff, after Mercer County found that 73 percent of its inmates had tested positive for drugs. He said that of his staff of roughly 15 counselors, perhaps 3 had received training in drug and alcohol treatment.

"If you don't have the skills to talk about drug treatment, you're just, for lack of a better word, baby-sitting," he said.

Using counselors with no more than high school diplomas, as Community Education did, "is not clinically sound," Mr. Watkins said.

He said Narcotics Anonymous sessions and other counseling sessions sometimes included over 100 inmates and often turned raucous, with inmates shouting, arguing and throwing things, or else sleeping.

At one point, Mr. Watkins said, he discovered that many of the younger inmates who usually scorned these meetings were eagerly attending. When he learned what was happening, he said, he was stunned.

"An older resident comes in my office; he wants to see me," Mr. Watkins recalled. "He sits down and he says, 'Mr. Watkins, I've got to tell you something, but it's got to stay between me and you.' No problem. He said, 'The Bloods are running the N.A. meetings.' I said, 'Excuse me?' "

“Instead of drug and alcohol talk, they were talkin g gang stuff.”

‘A Sexual Predator’

When Vanessa Falcone was growing up in a quiet New Jersey suburb, her world revolved around art clas ses and violin lessons — Dvorak was her favorite. Her father was a civil engineer. Her future seemed limitless.

But by her 20s, she was a single mother with a you ng son, working at a Starbucks and feeling overwhe lmed. She began abusing pills that she had been pr escribed for migraines, and later moved on to hero in. She was arrested on charges of forging prescri ptions, and she went to prison.

Eventually, she ended up at the Bo Robinson center.

Assigned to the maintenance crew, she was supervis ed by a janitor who was notorious for bringing in cigarettes and other contraband for female inmates in exchange for sex, according to inmates, worker s and the institution’s records.

The janitor began cornering her in the supply clos et and violently forcing her to perform oral sex, she said.

“Once in that closet,” she said, “he would totally have control over me.”

Ms. Falcone said she agreed to be quoted by name b ecause she was angry about conditions in Bo Robins on.

Finally, a security supervisor named Brenda Brown noticed that something was wrong and confronted Ms . Falcone, who told her that she had been assaulte

d by “a sexual predator,” Ms. Brown wrote in a rep ort.

“He was blocking my exit and holding on to my hair ,” Ms. Falcone recounted in a handwritten statemen t included in the report. “This incident scared me and makes me feel very traumatized and uncomforta ble here.”

Within hours, Ms. Falcone was transferred out of Bo Robinson.

Mr. Brumbaugh, the halfway house’s deputy security director at the time, said he had viewed security video that showed Ms. Falcone leaving the closet moments after one of the attacks. She was pale and shaken, he said. He was certain she was telling t he truth. “She just looked shocked, like something happened,” he said.

At her new halfway house, a police detective inter viewed Ms. Falcone once about the attack but did n ot follow up.

The Mercer County prosecutor’s office had no recor d of her or the janitor, who did not respond to se veral phone messages left by The Times.

Ms. Falcone was released from the correctional sys tem in 2009 and has not been arrested since. She n ow works as a florist.

Even when prosecutors have brought charges against a worker at Bo Robinson, corrections officials ha ve not scrutinized its management.

Last year, an inmate escaped from Bo Robinson, and when he was captured he told the police that he h ad fled because a male counselor there had repeate dly raped him.

The counselor, Joseph A. Chase, was later arrested

and charged with sexual assault. Prosecutors said the police also discovered drugs in Mr. Chase’s car. The case is pending.

Asked about the two cases, Dr. Mackey, the Community Education executive, said: “They obviously occurred. We responded to them.”

He added, “You are going to find these to be completely uncharacteristic.”

But violence among inmates is also common at Bo Robinson, according to interviews and the halfway house’s records.

Especially at night.

Supervisors regularly reported finding signs of overnight attacks. One memorandum to security guards, referring to a large hole in a wall, said, “It is obvious a body slamming into the wall was the cause.”

Internal reports describe the mayhem in one room in the women’s unit, No. 332, in 2009.

A gang of women was terrorizing other inmates. One gang member was brandishing “a padlock secured in a sock,” a counselor reported.

“Every night I live in fear,” an inmate said in a handwritten complaint.

The other inmates in the room were also frightened. Another inmate wrote, “I have been threatened and sexually assaulted.” A third: “These daily occurrences make my life at Bo Robinson unsafe.”

A senior counselor wrote in a report that a fourth inmate was crying “uncontrollably” because she had been sexually abused by a female inmate known as Gangster.

“I’m afraid to say anything,” the inmate was quoted as saying, “because Gangster is not going to leave me alone.”

Eventually, four women identified as ringleaders were removed from Bo Robinson and returned to prison, but no criminal inquiry was opened, according to prosecutors.

Supervision was so poor that inmates often made a plea to workers.

“They definitely told me, ‘I want to go back to prison,’ ” said Assenka Oksiloff, 50, who worked for most of last year as a G.E.D. teacher at Bo Robinson. “They would tell me that all the time.”

Several former counselors at Bo Robinson said violence was difficult to contain, given staffing levels and a lack of training.

Shannon Donalson, who previously worked as an office temp, said she was hired as a counselor in the women’s section but was frequently asked to work in the men’s.

“I didn’t do it because I didn’t feel safe,” she said. “Why would I want to go and be expected to handle 300 men by myself at night? You want me to go in a corner with all these men where you might not be able to see me? No, that’s crazy.”

Futile Appeals for Change

Robert Brumbaugh thought he had found a way to convince executives of Community Education Centers that the staffing at Bo Robinson was inadequate. He escorted them through the institution, showing the many areas without workers.

They nodded in agreement, he recalled, but nothing

was done.

“They don’t want to spend money,” he said.

Community Education has repeatedly said it handles inmates far more ably than state prisons do, at roughly half the cost to the government. Former correction officers like Mr. Brumbaugh can offer their own comparisons.

At 6 feet 1 inch and 235 pounds, Mr. Brumbaugh is an imposing figure. After three years as a Navy aircraft electrician, he joined the New Jersey Corrections Department in 1982, inspired in part by an uncle who was a police officer.

Mr. Brumbaugh retired as a corrections chief in 2007, then became deputy security director at Bo Robinson. He spent two years there and now provides security for a precious-metals refinery in Pennsylvania.

During his first week at Bo Robinson, he was patrolling the yard with one or two other workers and more than 400 inmates — a ratio far higher than what a prison would allow.

“It was a rude awakening,” Mr. Brumbaugh said. “How can you see if they’re moving contraband or recovering contraband tossed over the fence?”

As Bo Robinson expanded, to 900 beds in 2008 from an original 320 beds in 1997, it was accepting more inmates with histories of violence, Mr. Brumbaugh said.

“The standards got very loose,” he said. “Are there inmates who shouldn’t be there? Absolutely.”

Mr. Brumbaugh said he regularly received calls at home late at night about disturbances, something that rarely happened in the prison system.

He said counselors at Bo Robinson were given about eight days of training, with little time dedicated to security. New Jersey correction officers receive about 15 weeks of training. Of the counselors, he said, “at least half of them were scared to death.”

He so distrusted his own staff, Mr. Brumbaugh said, that he relied upon inmates to inform on workers who were dealing drugs or engaging in other misconduct.

Executives of Community Education knew about many of these problems, he said, but when they gave tours of Bo Robinson to officials or potential investors, everything was staged.

Hallways were scrubbed and painted. Visitors were kept far from the men’s units, the rowdiest areas.

“You couldn’t possibly get a good picture of what’s going on unless you went in there on a normal day,” Mr. Brumbaugh said.

One of his top aides was Ms. Brown, a retired corrections captain.

Ms. Brown has a military bearing after a career spent in uniform. She keeps her hair short and her Nissan as clean as it was when she drove it off the lot. In an interview, she said she took the job as a security supervisor at Bo Robinson because she believed that inmates deserved the second chance Community Education promised.

When counselors first told her that they were afraid to walk Bo Robinson’s hallways at night, she scoffed. But she said that she, too, soon felt that fear.

“Once you got caught, there was really nowhere to

go,” she said. “There was no real security.”

Ms. Brown said she had to accept that she could do little to prevent inmates from selling drugs, skipping treatment lectures and having sex in the showers. (Whether the sexual activity was consensual or not, she said, she rarely knew.)

One weekend night in November 2009, Ms. Brown recalled, she was again scrambling to do the work of three people when she received a report that a visitor had smuggled in a roll of $20 bills in her shoe.

While investigating, Ms. Brown said, she heard that several inmates were injecting heroin in the bathroom.

She found one of them.

“I could tell that he was so high that I went to the nurse’s door and I started banging,” she said. “He needed medical attention.”

She could not bear it any longer.

“It felt out of control,” she said. “I didn’t want someone dying on my watch.”

She resigned and never went back.

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Sheelagh McNeill and Jack Styczynski contributed reporting.