

Farin said Fischer was extremely popular.

"He was always lecturing kids on what they should do right, that they should behave themselves," Farm said. "He was saying the right things."

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About the same time Fischer applied for a job at College Prep, Glover's father filled out an application for his son to attend the same school, Glover says when he found out that he would be in the same building with his old teacher, his heart sank. He says he tried to avoid Fischer, but it was a small school and it was tough to avoid anyone.

Soon, he was back at Fischer's house.

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After two years, Fischer left College Prep for East Cooper School, a private school in Mount Pleasant run by a former Porter-Gaud teacher, Willard Hane. That school ran into financial trouble and closed in the mid-1980s, and in 1986, Fischer applied for a job at James Island High.

That's when Alexander filled out a reference form for the Charleston County School District. He checked that Fischer had an "above average" character, personality, intelligence and social qualities.

The form asked about any "physical defects" or "mental peculiarities."

Alexander wrote "none known."

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The secret.

Looking back, Glover said it felt as if a blowtorch was in his stomach. Since seventh grade, he had tried to douse it with alcohol, smother it with drugs. Nothing worked.

Then, a few months before turning 20, he started attending Alcoholics Anonymous and stopped drinking.

Sober, he felt he had to do something, anything.

So one day in the mid-1980s, he decided to return to his old school, Porter-Gaud. He planned to tell Alexander that he wasn't just some worthless discipline problem that he had been molested by one of his teachers, Eddie Fischer. His hope, he said, was that Porter-Gaud could help force Fischer into treatment.

Glover recalls that his stomach tightened when he walked into Alexander's office. He had been out of school for years, but suddenly he was the same small, confused boy he had been in school.

I told him about Mr. Fischer, that he had molested me, and that I knew why they had kicked him out."

He remembers Alexander saying something like, "Guerry, there was a time when no one talked about this stuff."

Then, he said, Alexander suggested that he not discuss this with his parents, that if they found out, they would be devastated.

He left disappointed. But he said he took Alexander's advice and buried his secret once again.

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Fischer, meanwhile, was teaching at James Island High School.

Shaw Simpson was a student at the school. A shy and intelligent boy, Simpson had straight black hair and fine features that made him look younger than his age.

He was passionate about religion and politics.

"You're smarter than any of the kids I talk to here," Simpson recalls Fischer told him one day in 1989.

During Simpson's senior year, Fischer invited him to his house with a vague explanation about how he could help him.

Later, Simpson would spell out under oath what happened next:

He remembers how he went to Fischer's town house on a Thursday night and listened to him brag about his degrees. . Fischer said he was friendly with politicians and judges, that if Shaw ever had a problem in the city of Charleston, he could fix it.



Fischer said he had emphysema and wasn't expected to live.

He also urged the boy to lift weights saying that bulking up would build his self-esteem. He asked him to take -off his shirt. Then he took a Polaroid. It would be the "before" picture. He talked nonstop, building his credentials as an authority figure, building sympathy, slowly drawing Simpson in.

Over and over, Simpson recalls, Fischer said, "Trust me, trust me, I'm your friend." They had dinner. Simpson remembers Fischer asking, "Shaw, do you know what our most powerful emotion is? Our sex drive." Nothing physical happened that night, but Fischer invited the boy over the following Thursday.

Sure, Simpson said. "I thought Mr. Fischer was cool."

During the next visit, Simpson said, Fischer showed him his stash of Playboy and Penthouse magazines. Later, Simpson mentioned that his shoulder hurt from playing tennis in the rain.

Fischer said he could help. He got a vibrator and plugged it into the wall.

He told the teenager to get on the bed. He kept talking, saying that he had done this to other people, that this was no big deal.

"I need to take your underwear off," Simpson remembers him saying. And he remembers reciting prayers. If he prayed, he thought, everything would be OK. When it was over, Simpson recalls, Fischer said: "This is going to make you a better husband when you're married. You've got to trust me. I'm your friend." Simpson says he went home and took a shower, crying, still praying.

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Simpson is an articulate person, but even now, after eight years, he has trouble explaining why he went back to Fischer's house.

"I was terrified of him. I felt like there was nothing I could do about it. I had always been so respectful of authority, and this person is telling you one thing - that he's not doing anything to hurt you - trying to make it as insignificant and non-threatening as possible. Then you have your own concept of morality."

"Before, I really felt like a good kid. Then came the shame and guilt. You can see something like this on TV or watch it in the movies. But until something like this happens, you don't know how you're going to react. It was just such a shock. That's one reason I remained silent. I was worried that people might think it was my fault."

At school, he says he tried to avoid Fischer. But he remembers Fischer phoning him at a bank where he had a summer job, pleading, "I'm so sorry. It won't happen again. Trust me."

And Simpson - he doesn't know why went over to the house again.

By the time he graduated, Simpson felt as if he had lost his identity. One week he was wearing conservative clothes and touting Jesse Helms, the next he was in tie-dye rags, following the Grateful Dead tour, popping pills and smoking pot. His faith in God was shaken. He didn't know whether he was heterosexual or homosexual.

"I didn't know who I was."

As he grew older, he told his secret to his best friend from high school and one other person. He wanted to tell more people, but he was afraid they wouldn't believe him or understand the depth of his pain. He says he began to have suicidal thoughts.

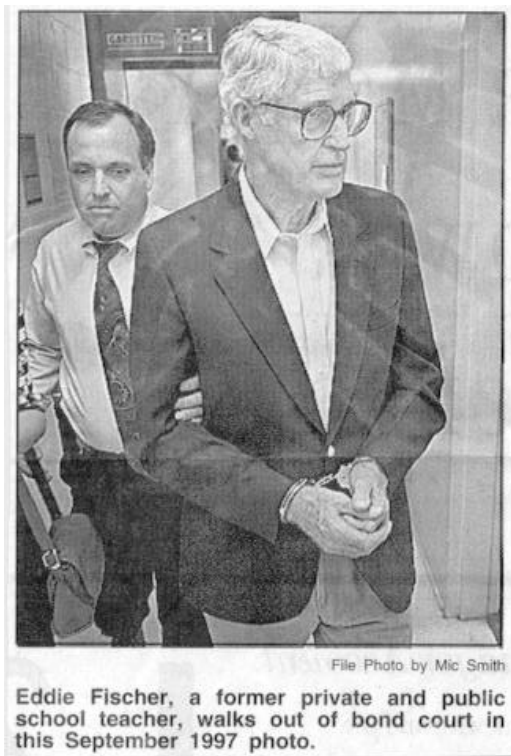
Then one day last year, a high school friend from Charleston called.

"Shaw, Guess what? Mr. Fischer has been arrested."

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Over the years, Glover says now, he felt the weight of his secret pressing on him like extra gravity.

In 1994, Glover went to Porter-Gaud again. But this time he went to the headmaster, Gordon Bondurant, who had been hired in 1988 -six years after Fischer resigned.



Glover hoped Bondurant would care enough to do something - maybe set up a counseling fund for victims, maybe create some guidelines and safeguards to protect future students.

He found Bondurant cordial. He told Glover that he was welcome on the campus any time. After he listened to Glover's story, he said he would check into it all and call back. A week later, Glover said Bondurant phoned and told him that if he wanted to stop Fischer, he would have to do it himself.

Glover, a recovering alcoholic in therapy, said he wasn't ready to take that step.

Bondurant would say later in a deposition that he asked Glover about his willingness to go to law enforcement and Glover declined. "He had not told his parents about this, and he said it would be devastating to his parents."

Asked during a deposition if Glover should have had the sole burden of going to police, Bondurant replied: "Let's put it this way, I felt the need for his support and willingness and conviction about it to go to law enforcement."

In 1997, Glover returned to Bondurant's office. Something has to be done, he demanded. He remembers Bondurant saying he was too busy to talk. Glover said he walked over to Bondurant's calendar, pointed to a day with no appointments and said, "Let's set up a meeting," Bondurant agreed. Later,

Glover received a note from the headmaster: "I honestly have nothing else to add to what I have said before."

But Bondurant then wrote a second note suggesting they meet together along with "a friend." The two later spoke by phone. Bondurant confirmed the friend was also a lawyer and said he told Glover he could bring a lawyer too. Glover said he would get back to him.

"I didn't hear from him," Bondurant recalled. "So I called him again a couple more times, left messages for him to call me, but he did not call."

Reflecting on that time, Glover said he had lost faith in Porter-Gaud to help him stop Fischer. On May 21, 1997, Glover and lawyer Gregg Meyers, also a member of the Charleston County School Board, wrote a long letter about his allegations to Charleston County School Superintendent Chip Zullinger. Fischer resigned 19 days later.

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Prosecutor Debbie Herring-Lash, who handles sex crimes for the 9th Circuit Solicitor's office, lives in a world of dark stories - of fathers raping daughters, priests molesting alter boys, tales of manipulation and innocence lost.

On Oct. 1, 1997, she sat down with Glover, then 32 years old, and listened to his story.

Glover's accusations didn't surprise her.

In recent years, Herring-Lash had prosecuted several teachers and priests, While researching her pedophile cases, Herring-Lash learned that for every victim who comes forward, dozens stay silent. Some researchers, in fact, have estimated that an average pedophile molests 150 children or more.

After listening to Glover's story, she knew her job wouldn't be easy. Sex abuse cases are among the most difficult to investigate and prosecute.

"Usually you have no crime scene. You have no witnesses. You have no physical evidence," she said. "It's difficult to prosecute a sexual assault when it's a day late." Try doing it when the assaults took place 20 years ago.

On Oct. 2, 1997, police took out a warrant for Fischer's arrest and searched his town house.

Among the items seized were: condoms, lubricants, a vibrator, two sexually explicit 8mm films, including one of porn star Linda Lovelace having sex with a dog, a bar and resource guide called The Gay Insider, a children's guide to the Internet, a Polaroid camera, and a sex gag magazine called Sex to Sixty.

After the search, a reporter stopped by Fischer's house.

"I've had a rough time," he said in a polite and tired tone. "I'm really hurt by the allegations. There will be a time when I can talk, but my attorney has told me not to answer any questions. People who know me, I have no problem with. But it's the people who don't know me where the problem comes from. It's very embarrassing, you just don't have any idea. I am very hurt. You never know - life's going along good, and barn..." It was the last time he spoke to a reporter.

On Oct. 7, Fischer was arrested and taken before a magistrate, He pleaded not guilty, put his house up for bail and was released that day.

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When Simpson heard about Fischer's arrest, he says he broke into tears. But then he thought: "If just one guy comes forward, he'll get off."

On Oct. 13, 1997 - six days after Fischer's arrest - he drove from his home in Columbia to Herring-Lash's office in North Charleston. He handed her a sworn statement and told his story. So did lots of other people.

A 50-year-old man alleged that he had been abused by Fischer in the early 1960s when he was a seventh-grader at Sacred Heart, a Catholic school in downtown Charleston.

The man said his parents had just divorced. Fischer invited him to lift weights at his house. He remembers Fischer rubbing his back with a record playing in the background and performing oral sex on him. He said the abuse continued for several years.

He threw up blood one morning. Doctors said the boy had an ulcer. He started drinking and taking Valium. "I wouldn't tell a priest in confession because Fischer and the priest were friends," he said. He became an alcoholic, and only when he gave up drinking five years ago by attending Alcoholics Anonymous did he come to grips with the damage that had been done.

"All this happened when you should be building a boy's self-esteem and confidence, and he stripped me of it," the man said. "I feel like I was robbed of my life."

Another former James Island High student alleged that he was molested during a trip with Fischer to North Carolina in 1988 when he was 14.

A former Porter-Gaud student submitted a sworn affidavit saying that Fischer befriended him when he was a ninth-grader, giving him vouchers to get milk and meals. Fischer invited him to his house, saying he would help him gain experience for rich Charleston women who wanted to have sex with teen-age boys.

On Dec. 1, 1997, a grand jury indicted Fischer on charges ranging from buggery to sodomy.

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After the news broke, Porter-Gaud officials sent a letter to parents.

Drafted by Bondurant and the school's attorney, the letter said allegations had been made against a former teacher and that the school was cooperating with prosecutors.

The reaction from parents was muted. Bondurant, in a deposition, said that three or four parents commented that it was a good letter.

Glover's lawyer, David Flowers, asked, "Did anybody inquire as to what this was all about?" "No," Bondurant said.

The school also issued a statement to the press, drafted by the school's attorneys, saying that "at all times Porter-Gaud has taken both legally and morally appropriate action with the information it has had available and will continue to do so."

Glover and Simpson were furious. Glover's father and Simpson were among those who decided to sue Porter-Gaud, alleging the school knew about the abuse - or should have known -but did nothing to stop it.

James Bishop Alexander was at the center of their lawsuits.

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Alexander was deeply troubled by the lawsuits, his friends said.

Alexander had befriended troubled young boys and men.

How would that look?

"He was afraid of the embarrassment," said Gary Webb, a longtime friend who runs a window cleaning company near Houston and graduated from Porter-Gaud in 1974.

"He couldn't handle that. His whole life had been devoted to helping people. But he didn't know what was going to come out in the court case. Every time an attorney called him, or a newspaper reporter or a TV person contacted him, he got more and more upset."

These men, unlike Fischer's alleged victims, speak of Alexander with affection and gratitude. They even call themselves "Maj's boys."

Rick Sexton, an American History Teacher near Chicago, said he lived with Alexander for a year. "He became my mentor and my friend. He took me into his life, brought me over to his family, got me invited to deb parties. There was nothing sexual about it."

Roger Cook, an army colonel in Texas, said he grew up in an abusive family situation. After attending The Citadel, he landed a job at Porter-Gaud as a wrestling coach. Alexander became his mentor. Nothing sexual ever happened between the two, he said. "Alexander was the closest living breathing thing that comes to unconditional love."



Guerry Glover and his father, Harold Glover, talk about the case in their John's Island tomato fields. Staff Photo by Wade Spence

"Everyone at school knew he was taking care of these people," said Ted Richardson, the former Porter-Gaud principal who worked with Alexander. "He was a daddy to a lot of boys."

Before he shot himself on April 30, Alexander wrote several suicide notes, saying the lengthy legal process was too much to bear.

"I am James Alexander and have ended my life due to personal problems that could go on for years without a finite ending," said one note found with his body.

I think his suicide was an attempt to avoid pain," Cook said. "He was the kind of person who would dwell on giving someone a second chance. I think he tried to give (Fischer) a second chance."

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In the lawsuits, Porter-Gaud has denied doing anything wrong. During a deposition, Bondurant was asked whether he agreed with one of Porter-Gaud's legal defenses blaming the victims for their injuries. Bondurant replied: "Let me put it this way: I would rather it not have been in there."

Three months ago, Porter-Gaud's attorneys asked a judge to change the school's name on the lawsuit, from Porter-Gaud School to "Doe Corp."

Simpson said he was so upset by the legal machinations that he posted documents and depositions on his own web site, <http://www.JohnDoe-vs-PorterGaud.com>.

The legal battles have since spread to the Charleston County School District. Two lawsuits were filed against the district and former James Island High principal Floyd Hiott, alleging that school officials knew about Fischer's past.

Before the suits were filed, Hiott said in an interview that he had never heard any complaints about Fischer's behavior. He died of a heart attack last July.

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How do you tell your parents that you were molested?

Glover remembers riding in his father's blue pickup one day last year and dropping the bomb.

"I could have fallen off the truck," his father, Harold, recalled one hot, windy afternoon. "If I had known back in the '80s what he (Fischer) was doing, we wouldn't have the first trial. I would have worked on him with a bat," he says in a quiet voice.

"It's a shock, hard to take in. All those years, you wonder why Guerry didn't tell me. But I don't blame him. Maybe when a woman is raped she doesn't come forth. I guess it's the same reaction. Maybe he didn't want to hurt me, or that he had a certain amount of pride. I felt he had a just reason. It happened and there isn't anything I can do about it now."

Glover, now 75, never expected to be battling the school he once loved and respected.

"I'm not a bard person, in fact, people tell me that I'm too easy. I'd rather walk off. But it's all just such a hurtful thing, and it gets down in the stomach. I just want people to be held accountable."

He looks at his son.

"I was solid with him from the very first minute."

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According to the conditions of his release, Fischer is prohibited from having any contact with the victims or any male under 17 without supervision. He is allowed to venture from his house only to see his lawyers, receive counseling and go to church.

He goes to St. Mary's Catholic Church in downtown Charleston, usually to morning mass.

One day recently at the 8 a.m. mass, he sat in the front, right pew, wearing khakis and a short-sleeve blue shirt and holding what appeared to be a Bible.

The priest's sermon was about disguises.

"Evil doers described as monsters in the newspapers can look normal," the priest said.

And those who appear to be evil may, in fact, be normal.

In the end, the priest continued, "those found guilty will pay the ultimate price, just as the upright will see their full reward."