

ALBERT BOULANGER

I. INTRODUCTION

Albert L. Boulanger was ordained as a priest for the Diocese in 1962. (B983). He retired in August 2000, but his faculties to function as a priest were not revoked until February 15, 2002. (B893). He died on June 30, 2002, at the age of 71.

In the mid-1960s, the Diocese first learned that Boulanger was engaged in sexual misconduct with minors. (B197). At that time he was referred to a therapist and returned to ministry. (B197-98). In April 1971, the Diocese again learned that Boulanger had engaged in sexual misconduct with an eleven-year-old child. (B223). The Diocese immediately removed Boulanger from ministry and referred him to psychological treatment. (B222; B184). Following psychological treatment, Boulanger returned to ministry in November 1971. (B983). In April 1987, Boulanger admitted in psychological reports that he had subsequently engaged in sexual misconduct with minors as late as the early-1980s. (B197). However, just days after the Diocese disclosed unredacted documents to the State that revealed the subsequent abuse of minors, Boulanger died. Boulanger's death and the fact that no subsequent victims came forward prevented a complete investigation of the facts surrounding the Diocesan response to Boulanger's sexual misconduct with minors. Nonetheless, Diocesan files and independent investigation by the Task Force revealed the following facts.

II. ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS AGAINST BOULANGER

A. Sexual Misconduct in Claremont

On February 20, 2002, John Doe LXXVI reported to the Attorney General's Office that he was sexual abused by Albert Boulanger in 1963 while Boulanger was assigned to St. Mary's parish in Claremont. (B987). Boulanger was assigned to St. Mary's parish in June 1962, where he served until February 1964. (B983). Doe LXXVI and his family, who were very religious, attended St. Mary's parish. (B993). In the summer of 1963, Doe LXXVI was 12 years and an altar boy. Id. As an altar boy, Doe LXXVI would have frequent contact with Boulanger. Id. Boulanger would often come into the changing room where Doe LXXVI got dressed for his duties as an altar boy. Id. During this time, Boulanger began hugging, kissing, and rubbing his groin against Doe LXXVI. Id. At one point during the summer of 1963, Boulanger took Doe LXXVI on a trip to Mascoma Lake in Enfield. Id. While swimming, Doe LXXVI developed a leg cramp. As Boulanger massaged Doe LXXVI's leg, he also rubbed Doe LXXVI's genitals. Id.

Later that summer, Boulanger took Doe LXXVI on a camping trip to Pittsburgh, New Hampshire. When they were getting ready for bed, Boulanger asked Doe LXXVI to join him in the sleeping bag. When Doe LXXVI got into Boulanger's sleeping bag, he discovered that Boulanger was naked. Id. Boulanger then began to rub Doe LXXVI's genitals while he masturbated himself. Id. After Boulanger ejaculated, Doe LXXVI got out of the sleeping

bag and got into his own bag. Id. The next morning Boulanger asked Doe LXXVI not to tell anyone about the incident. Id. Doe LXXVI did not report the abuse to anyone until many years later when he told his wife and a friend. Id. There is no evidence that the Diocese was aware of Boulanger's abuse while he was stationed in Claremont. The Diocese reassigned Boulanger in February 1964. (B996).

B. Sexual Misconduct in Berlin

Apparently, the Diocese first became aware of Boulanger's sexual misconduct in the mid-1960s when Boulanger was assigned to St. Joseph's parish in Berlin. (B197; B996). There are no contemporaneous records of this misconduct in the Diocesan files. However, as discussed in further detail below, in 1987, Boulanger was sent for residential alcohol treatment. In the course of his evaluation, the therapist noted that during Boulanger's assignment in Berlin, he was active in starting hockey teams and coaching. (B197). The therapist writes: "It was in this situation where he first became involved in inappropriate behavior with young boys in the mid-adolescent age range. One of the parents of the children complained to the Pastor and Father Boulanger was asked to see a psychiatrist." (B197). The psychological evaluation does not disclose further details about this event or the Diocesan response.

C. Sexual Misconduct in Nashua

Boulanger had several assignments at different parishes around the State following his assignments in Claremont and Berlin. (B996). On June 3, 1970, he was assigned to St. Joseph's parish in Nashua. Id. At that time, he was also assigned as assistant director of Diocesan camps for the summer. Id. Boulanger assaulted at least three boys during his assignment in Nashua.

On February 28, 2002, John Doe LXXVII reported that Boulanger had sexually assaulted him and his brother when Doe LXXVII was 14 years old and his brother was 12 years old. (B981). Doe LXXVII reported that Boulanger first touched his genitals on a camping trip to Wentworth Location with the boy scouts. (B982). On a second occasion, Boulanger took Doe LXXVII and his brother ice fishing on Lake Winnipsaukee. (B981). While they were in the ice house, Boulanger reached into both Doe LXXVII and his brother's pants and fondled them until they were erect. (B981). The assaults ended when Doe LXXVII and his brother ran out of the ice house. Id. The Diocese did not learn about these assaults until 1995 when Doe LXXVII's mother first learned that Boulanger had assaulted Doe LXXVII's younger brother. (B980). At that time, she reported the incident anonymously to Msgr. Francis Christian. Id. There is no indication in the Diocesan files about this report.

On April 21, 1971, the parents of John Doe LXXVIII reported to Msgr. Achille Lettre, the pastor of St. Joseph, that their son had been sexually assaulted by Boulanger.

(B226).¹ Msgr. Lettre reported the matter, in turn, to Msgr. Raymond Blair, the Assistant Chancellor, that same day. (B226). Doe LXXVIII's parents gave Msgr. Blair a statement on April 21, stating that Boulanger

has on several occasions sexually involved himself with our son, [Doe LXXVIII]. These actions have taken place over a period of time in the sacristy after Mass, in Father's car, his bedroom at the rectory and at Father's cottage. On Monday April 19, 1971 we were also informed that two of our older sons have been approached by Father Boulanger but nothing happened. Father Boulanger was trusted by us and had become rather friendly with the family. We have no reason at all to doubt this story of our son as we have noticed a definite change come over him. When we questioned him some time ago he denied that anything was going on. Later we learned that Father Boulanger had told [Doe LXXVIII] to do these acts and that nothing was wrong in doing them. . . .

(B228).

Bishop Primeau met with Doe LXXVIII's parents on April 21, and suspended Boulanger immediately that same day. (B222-23). Doe LXXVIII's parents spoke further to their son that night and became concerned that Doe LXXVIII might have contracted a venereal disease from his contact with Boulanger. (B229). They insisted that Boulanger be examined by a physician and that they be provided a certificate that he was free of disease. Id. Msgr. Blair was concerned that the family might take legal action if the Diocese could not comply with their request. Id.

On April 23, 1971, Bishop Primeau met with Boulanger in his office. (B232). Boulanger admitted the allegations. Id. He asked to be allowed to apologize to the family but the Bishop instructed him to stay away from Doe LXXVIII's family. Id. The Bishop also instructed Boulanger to leave the Nashua-Hudson area altogether. Id. Boulanger agreed to go to Colebrook for a "retreat." Id. "Father Boulanger admitted that he was a sick man. He has tried to overcome his homosexual desires on his own but he realizes that he needs help from a professional." Id. Boulanger also agreed to see a physician to assure the family that he did not have a venereal disease. Id. The Bishop took away Boulanger's faculties to be a priest and "informed him that he might never be able to give him an assignment in the Diocese of Manchester." (B232). That same day, Bishop Primeau informed Msgr. Lettre that Boulanger "no longer has the faculties of the Diocese of Manchester." (B230). He also instructed Lettre that Boulanger was not allowed to live in the Nashua deanery any longer. Id.

¹ Task Force investigators did not interview Doe LXXVIII or his parents so the exact nature of the sexual misconduct is unknown. However, as described in more detail below, it is clear from the Diocese's own files that the incident involved some sort of sexual assault.

Boulanger saw Dr. Philip Sullivan on May 21 and May 28, 1971, for psychiatric evaluation. Dr. Sullivan's conclusion was that Boulanger's "condition is consistent with a long standing personality disturbance, a type of condition which is not easily amendable to change and which, in any case, would be expected to change only gradually over an extended period of time with psychotherapy. This does not necessarily mean that there would be recurrences of the overt behavior which occurred recently and four years ago because sometimes the motivation provided by the reality threats of civil and ecclesiastical sanctions can be sufficient to cause inhibition of the overt occurrence of such behavior even though the underlying tendency is unchanged." Dr. Sullivan noted that the other therapist recommended that Boulanger be allowed to return to temporary weekend assignments. Id. Dr. Sullivan did not express an opinion about this but recommended that Boulanger undertake "extended psychotherapy." Id.

There is absolutely no indication in the Diocesan files what the "overt behavior" was that had occurred four years earlier to which Dr. Sullivan was referring in his letter to Bishop Primeau. It appears from the context of the letter that Dr. Sullivan and the Diocese were aware of a prior incident of sexual misconduct by Boulanger. It is likely that this "overt behavior" is the incident during Boulanger's assignment in Berlin in the mid-1960s that is referenced in Boulanger's 1987 psychiatric evaluation.

On July 1, 1971 – just 9 weeks after the Diocese revoked Boulanger's faculties to perform as a priest – Bishop Primeau responded to Dr. Sullivan's letter. (B 238). He informed Dr. Sullivan that the "Personnel Board and the Vicar General have been trying to contact various parishes in the Diocese that could need weekend assistance and to which we could assign the Reverend Albert Boulanger." Id. The Diocese was unable to find any parishes in need of weekend assistance. Since the Diocese was unable to place Boulanger in weekend ministry, the Bishop approved Dr. Sullivan's recommendation that Boulanger enter extended group psychotherapy. Id.

On September 14, 1971, Bishop Primeau inquired of Dr. Sullivan regarding Boulanger's progress in therapy because "it is necessary for us to determine the availability of priest-personnel for assignments in the diocese." (B187). Primeau sought Dr. Sullivan's opinion about Boulanger's suitability for such an assignment. Id. Dr. Sullivan refused to provide Bishop Primeau a recommendation about Boulanger's suitability to return to full-time ministry because "[i]f a patient knows that his future work will depend on a report from his therapist, it would be impossible for the patient to be completely free and candid as is necessary in psychotherapy even if the patient consciously tried his best." (B188). Based on this, Dr. Sullivan recommended that the Bishop obtain an evaluation of Boulanger from another therapist. Id.

Boulanger was apparently referred to Dr. John Brennan by Dr. Sullivan in order to provide the Diocese a recommendation for Boulanger's ability to engage in ministry. (B189). On May 1, 1972, Dr. Brennan saw Boulanger for the second time after a six-month interval. Id. At the time of this visit with Dr. Brennan, Boulanger was still engaged in group psychotherapy with Dr. Sullivan but was also working on a part-time basis at a parish in

North Conway. Id. Dr. Brennan opined that Boulanger had made “some progress” in his therapy and had “some” understanding of his problem. Id. He observed that these factors “may” help him control his behavior. Id. Dr. Brennan felt “more comfortable” with Boulanger’s return to full-time ministry, but recommended several conditions to minimize the risk. Id. Dr. Brennan observed: “Whatever his assignment his contacts with children in the parish, especially adolescents should be minimized.” Dr. Brennan recommended that if there was a reoccurrence, Boulanger should report it promptly to his superior and Dr. Sullivan. Id.

Boulanger returned to full-time ministry in North Conway on June 1, 1972. (B983). There is no indication in the Diocesan files whether any of the conditions recommended by Dr. Brennan were imposed on Boulanger or whether the Diocese took any steps to monitor his behavior. There are also no subsequent progress reports on Boulanger’s treatment for sexual misconduct from either Dr. Sullivan or Dr. Brennan in the Diocesan files.

III. BOULANGER’S SUBSEQUENT PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS

In 1982, the Diocese referred Boulanger to the Guest House for alcohol treatment because he suffered from a bleeding ulcer and parishioners were upset that Boulanger was frequently intoxicated. (B209-10). In referring Boulanger to the treatment center, Fr. Francis Christian noted that Boulanger had seen a psychologist in Boston for a period of time regarding “sexual problems with adolescent boys.” (B209). While there is no direct indication in the psychological reports from the Guest House that his sexual problem with boys was addressed, there is a cryptic note in a progress report from the Guest House January 10, 1983, to Bishop Gendron, which states: “We did recommend that Father enter into further psychotherapy following Guest House to assist with problem areas he experienced previously. We do not know what his final determination was regarding that recommendation.” (B193).

In 1987, Boulanger was sent to St. Bernardine Clinic for alcohol abuse. (B196). This was prompted by complaints from parishioners about his behavior. (B4770; B4772-73). At the time, Boulanger was pastor at St. Matthew’s parish in Whitefield. (B4770). He had an eighteen-year-old boy living with him at the rectory. Id. Boulanger had met the boy while he was still a minor through his previous assignment in Ashland. Boulanger must have met the boy when he was 15 years old or younger because Boulanger’s assignment in Ashland ended in 1984 when he was assigned to Whitefield. (B996; B4773). In 1987, the boy was living with Boulanger because the boy reportedly had substance abuse problems. (B4773). There is no indication about whether Boulanger had engaged in any sexual misconduct with the boy.

However, during Boulanger’s treatment at St. Bernardine Clinic in April 1987, Boulanger disclosed further information about his sexual misconduct with minors. In particular, Boulanger admitted to the sexual abuse of a boy in his mid-adolescent years in Berlin, described above. (B197). Despite the formal complaint in Nashua, the therapist

noted that he was not aware of any other formal complaints than the one from Berlin. (B198). The therapist makes the following observations:

Father Boulanger was quite courageous in acknowledging that such behavior was a problem for him for several years. The total number of children and/or incidents is not known, but in response to rather focused questioning, Father Boulanger was able to give a few significant details. The youngest child he has had sexual interaction with has been perhaps 13 or 14. He has had sexual activity as recently as four or five years ago. This latter statement is important because it would place the behavior in time after his treatment at Guest House. Father Boulanger states that in the last four or so years he has not had such sexual activity and has achieved what he calls “white knuckle sobriety.” By this I mean he has controlled his behavior by a rather rigid avoidance of youth and a lifestyle of increasing isolation.

(B198).² The therapist further noted that Boulanger exhibited “[a] marked degree of sexual preoccupation Although he seemed rather matter of fact about this, there was some indication that his sexual impulses are in marginal control at best.” (B200). Boulanger was diagnosed with “Ephhebophilia (sexual attraction to adolescents).” (B201).

On April 16, 1987, Bishop Gendron acknowledged receiving the evaluation from St. Bernardine Clinic and noted that “[o]bviously, Father Boulanger’s problems are severe.” (B202). On June 18, 1987, Boulanger entered residential treatment at St. Luke’s Institute in Maryland. (B203). On August 25, 1987, the therapists at St. Luke’s informed Bishop Gendron that Boulanger was dealing with both his alcoholism and “sexual issues.” (B204). In October 1987, St. Luke’s noted that “Father Boulanger is continuing to struggle with issues of intimacy/sexuality. This has been a more difficult area to approach and his progress in this area is slower than his work with alcoholism. At the same time progress has been occurring with regard to sexuality and relationships.” (B212). In December 1987, St. Luke’s noted that Boulanger was close to being discharged. The clinic recommended that he continue to attend “SA/SLAA” – sexual addicts therapy group. (B214). As a condition of his discharge, Boulanger agreed to “avoid contact with minors; e.g. I will not engage as educator in the Sunday school program nor direct the altar boys society, boys choir or be chaplain for the Boy Scouts.” (B216). St. Luke’s Aftercare Contract also spelled out Boulanger’s specific pastoral responsibilities upon discharge:

- a. I will be in residence at Holy Rosary Church as assigned to me by the diocese.
- b. Because of my disease I will follow criteria of helping in parishes as assigned by the diocese but not becoming attached to any persons which would endanger my sobriety.

² Boulanger’s statement that his youngest victim was only 13 or 14 years old is untrue. As noted above, John Doe LXXVIII was 11 years old at the time Boulanger abused him.

- c. For the present my formal workload is limited to 25 hours per week. My normal official parish responsibilities are: 1) visiting a regional hospital twice a week, 2) celebrating Mass and anointing of the sick at two homes for the aging every two weeks, 3) Communion calls, visits and errands for “shut-ins” for approximately five hours per week, 4) daily Mass, Divine Office and meditation and parish rectory functions approximately ten hours per week, 5) community projects and meetings, committees, chaplaincy at County jails to not include youth group – average time three hours per week.

(B217).

According to an internal memo from Bishop Gendron, Msgr. Christian met with Msgr. Gilles Simard, pastor at Holy Rosary Parish in Rochester and explained the contract to him at length. (B219).

Sometime around September 1989, it appears that Boulanger was again removed from parish ministry. (B241). Msgr. Christian informed him that “[t]he Diocese is most anxious to make use of your priestly dedication and ministry. . . . However, the Bishop does not feel that it is responsible for him to give you another assignment until such time as we have assurances that you are successfully coping with your alcoholism and other problems which the alcoholism occasions.” (B241). Msgr. Christian directed Boulanger to attend AA and SLAA meetings on a regular basis before the Diocese would consider the possibility of reassignment. Id. Boulanger began attending AA and SLAA meeting again in November 1989. (B4762). Boulanger was reassigned in 1991 to a nursing home chaplaincy until his retirement in 2000. (B996).

IV. CONCLUSION

Although the Task Force was unable to conduct a complete investigation of the Diocese’s conduct relating to Boulanger, there is compelling evidence the Diocese was aware on three separate occasions that Boulanger had engaged in sexual contact with minors. This conduct would likely constitute endangering the welfare of a child. However, because Boulanger died before the State could complete its investigation and several victims were not identified by name, the State was not able to conduct a thorough investigation of these events. Accordingly, the State would not have presented charges against the Diocese based on these facts.