

January 3, 19~~88~~⁸⁹

Mr. Michael Kiernan
Scout Executive
Old Colony Council, No. 249

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT: Richard E. Gardner

Dear Mike:

Thank you for the detailed information sent concerning the above Scouter. This case has been reviewed with our attorney and is now on our permanent Confidential File.

Sincerely,

Paul Ernst, Director
Registration Service

eko

cc: Northeast Region

READY TO FILE
JAN 03 1989
ERIN O'RILEY

CONF021543

August 10, 1988

Mr. Myron H. Rust
Field Director
Old Colony Council, No. 249

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT: RICHARD E GARDNER

Dear Myron:

This is in response to your letter of August 1, as well as our phone conversation of August 9, concerning the above named individual. We certainly think we have adequate information for placing him on the Confidential File and refusing registration at any time in the future.

I am enclosing a Confidential Record Sheet, which I would like to have completed. This will give us all the personal information necessary for identification in the future. A copy of a paper or application with his signature would also aid in the identification process.

Please give us the final outcome of the present legal action if you are able to secure this. This would then close our file and give us the complete information.

Sincerely,

Paul Ernst, Director
Registration Service

pam

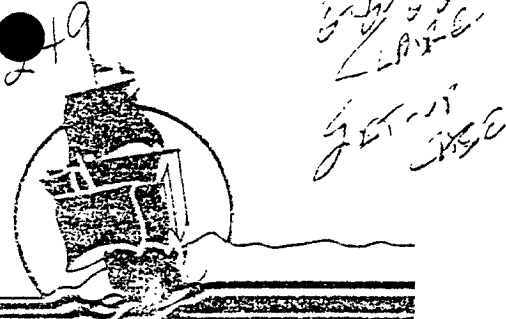
Enclosure

cc: Mr. Michael Kierman, Scout Executive, Council No. 249
Northeast Region

CONF021544

CONFIDENTIAL

Old Colony
Council
Boy Scouts of America



Boy Scouts of America
Registration & Subscription Service
Attn: Mr. Paul Ernst

[REDACTED]
Irving, Texas 75015-2079

August 1, 1988

Dear Paul,

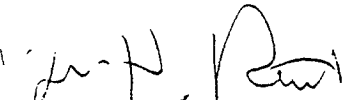
The attached photocopies of the BOSTON HERALD dated August 1, 1988 identify Richard E. Gardner of [REDACTED], Weymouth MA. as a child kidnapper and rape suspect.

The HERALD story refers to Richard Gardner's association with Scouting in the past. Our records here indicate that Gardner was a Cub Scout prior to June of 1978 when he crossed over to Boy Scout Troop # 2 in Weymouth. He remained active in this troop along with a brother, [REDACTED] until the unit rechartered in January of 1985. Richard is listed on the Troop Charter as having received his Eagle Scout Award and records also show that he earned the God and Country Award. His date of birth is October, 1966. No further information is on file about this man.

Our records indicate that he is not registered at this time as a Scouter in the council. He was not registered as an adult Scouter in Troop 2 Weymouth at any time. I believe that he has not been registered in any adult capacity ever.

As he is not now involved in Scouting, there is no need for us to take action regarding his status. I believe that this information should be kept on file for future use.

Sincerely,


Myron H. Rust
Field Director

cc: Michael Kiernan, Scout Executive

*Added to cf file
8/9/88
com*

Boston Herald

What's The Deal?

TODAY: First night of the Boston Marathon.
TOMORROW: Boston Marathon.
Details on Page 7A.

TODAY'S TV: Page 4F

Telephone

★★

25 Cents

35¢ BEYOND
30 MILE ZONE

Monday, August 1, 1966

S. Shore man, free on bail for child rape, confesses abductions

By GARY WITHERSPOON
A WIFYMOUTH man awaiting sentencing in a rape case confessed yesterday to the abduction Friday of two Warwick, R.I., boys and the attempted kidnapping of a

Bellingham girl about a week ago.
Richard Gardner, 21, of 3 Chandler St., a lifelong Weymouth resident, also was being questioned by police from several Rhode Island communi-

ties yesterday to determine whether he was involved in other kidnappings in their communities.
Gardner is charged with kidnapping 6-year-old Adam Gil of War-

wick, the earlier abduction and molestation of a 10-year-old Warwick boy, and the attempted abduction of a 12-year-old Bellingham girl.
Warwick Police Det. David Horvath said offi-

cers are trying to determine whether Gardner was involved in the slaying last May of Michelle Norris, 7, of Central Falls, and the Jan. 6 disappearance of Charles Cole, 16, of Paw-

ucket Hornoff, however, said that police had physical evidence to connect Gardner to those cases. "I was made body of little

The Boston Herald Monday, August 1, 1988

Suspect admitted '87 rape

By GARY WITHERSPOON
THE WEYMOUTH man accused of abducting three children was a longstanding Boy Scout who is awaiting sentencing for the kidnapping and rape of a child last November.

Richard E. Gardner, 21, who has admitted he abducted two Warwick, R.I. boys, and attempted to kidnap a Bellingham, Mass. girl about a week ago, has spent most of his life in a small home on Chandler Street.

The third of four chil-

dren born to Richard and Sylvia, Gardner attended Weymouth's Adams Elementary School, Central Junior High School, and was graduated in 1985 from Weymouth North High School.

Susan Willmer, 20, a lifelong schoolmate, described him as quiet and a loner, whom she never saw spend time with girls, only younger boys.

Willmer and other neighbors said they saw Gardner wear a Boy Scout's uniform late, his midteens. Even after high

school, when he held a job briefly at the 7-11 convenience store on Water Street in Quincy, he was known to pick up younger male friends and drive them around in his red primer-painted car, neighbors said.

But his association with younger boys ended abruptly last November when Gardner was accused of abducting, tying to a tree, and raping a 12-year-old boy in Hingham's Wompatuck State Park.

According to Hingham Police Detective Edmond Burgess, Gardner threat-

ened the young victim he would harm his family if he ever revealed what he had done. Because Gardner took the young boy's address, police kept the abduction and rape secret, hoping the assailant would visit his victim.

Gardner came to the church at which the boy's father was a minister. When he peered through a church window, the boy told his parents, who notified police.

Following Gardner's arrest, he was scheduled for a 30-day evaluation at Bridgewater state hospital,

but Burgess, who investigated the case, did not know last night if the evaluation was carried out. Gardner was released on \$3,000 bail. After numerous pretrial hearings, he pleaded guilty on June 2 in Brockton District Court to kidnapping and rape.

Jean Holmes, the Plymouth County Assistant District Attorney prosecuting the case, asked the court to sentence him to five to 10 years at Cedar Junction House of Correction.

Gardner was on bail awaiting sentencing when the latest crimes occurred.

TOMORROW
IN THE
HERALD

SHOW
I DREAM
OF JEAN



Jean Stapleton, back in Boston to star in "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," talks to The Herald about her role in this Victorian whoofunnit

A string of young victims



Weymouth man admits kidnaps

From Page 1

from his home by a man who ran up from behind and threw him into his

Michelle Norris was found in a wooded area of

Weymouth man admits kidnaps

From Page 1

Michelle Norris was found in a wooded area of Central Falls on May 30, two days after her disappearance from a schoolyard. The body of Christine Cole washed ashore in Warwick 53 days after she disappeared.

The latest abductions occurred while Gardner was out on \$3,000 bail awaiting sentencing for the November, 1987 kidnap and rape of a 12-year-old boy in Hingham's Wompatuck State Park.

Hingham Police Det. Edmund Burgess told The Herald that Gardner pleaded guilty to both charges on June 2 in Brockton District Court.

Burgess said that in the Hingham case, Gardner admitted his victim as the boy and his parents searched for his mother's missing pocketbook which had been stolen from the family's car.

"During a search for the stolen item which they believed might have been discarded, they lost sight of the child, and Gardner grabbed him," Burgess said. "He was tied to a tree, and he was sexually assaulted."

A grand jury indicted Gardner, and, after several hearings, he entered a guilty plea. Gardner was due to be sentenced in August.

In the Gil kidnapping, investigators said the youngster was snatched in broad daylight outside a library about 400 yards

from his home by a man who ran up from behind and threw him into his car.

The boy was set free 24 hours later and Gardner was captured after a wild, high-speed car chase through the streets of Warwick and nearby Cranston.

The chase ended when a police cruiser rammed Gardner's Camaro, stolen about a month ago from a Braintree car dealer.

Earlier Friday, police say Gardner entered an open bedroom window and abducted a sleeping 10-year-old Warwick boy from his home. He allegedly drove the youth around for two hours, then released him.

A week earlier, Gardner allegedly grabbed a Bellingham girl outside a drug store. She managed to break free from her assailant, police said.

In each case, police said none of the children were seriously hurt, though a charge of second-degree child molestation will be lodged against Gardner in connection with the 10-year-old boy's abduction. Gardner was expected to be arraigned in District Court today.

Meanwhile, in Weymouth, neighbors were upset that Gardner was allowed to remain free on a low bail after his conviction in the Hingham rape.

"There's just no reason for it to be happening again," said Steve Hudson, 17, a neighbor for



KIDNAPPING SUSPECT: Richard Gardner of Weymouth, shown in a high school yearbook picture, who has confessed to kidnapping two Warwick, R.I., boys,

and he was out. I was shocked. If I had little kids, I would be scared.

"We all knew (about the state park incident)" she continued. "He was always with young kids, always. He used to always have a lot of young kids in his car, flocks of them. After that incident (at the state park), I didn't see him driving around with kids anymore."

Sandy Willmer, 43, a neighbor of the Gardner family for about 20 years, said she was shocked to see Gardner free after his conviction.

"I saw him over there, and he was out. I was shocked. If I had little kids, I would be scared.

"You shouldn't be bailed for something like that," he said.

"I saw him over there, and he was out. I was shocked. If I had little kids, I would be scared.

A string of young victims

THE ARREST of a Weymouth man for the abduction of a Warwick, R.I., boy marks the latest in a series of child murders and disappearances that have rocked the Providence area.

In late October, the wave of terror begins with the disappearance of 10-year-old Frankie Barnes of Providence. Two months later, Barnes' body is found in a pond.

On Dec. 21, police find the body of 6-year-old Jason Wolf near Mashpaug Pond. Wolf, who had been missing for a week, was beaten to death.

On Jan. 6, 10-year-old Christine Cole of Pawtucket is reported missing. Seven weeks later, her body is recovered from the Providence River.

On April 2, police find the body of 9-year-old Justin Eillinwood of Warwick in a brook. A man is later arrested.

On May 30, the nude body of Michelle Norris, 7, is recovered from the woods in Central Falls.

On July 22, 10-year-old Michael Sykes is abducted from the bed of his Warwick home. He is released unharmed several hours later.

Last Friday, hours before the abduction of 6-year-old Adam Gil, a man attempts to kidnap a 12-year-old Bellingham, Mass., girl. She is able to free herself.

Jean Stapleton, in Boston, told "The Mystery of Win Drood," taken from The Herald about the role in this Vermont whodunit.

A QUESTION OF AUTHORITY



Cecil Adams is a doper. He answers questions such as "Why do fingers wrinkle in bathtub?" for a syndicated Herald writer. Susan Brink talks to Adams about his new book, "More of the Straight Dope."

SPORTS

BASEBALL: BUBBLES TEAM PLAYERS

Baseball commissioner Peter Ueberroth talks to Herald TV sports specialist Jim Baker about the future of baseball and cable TV.

PHOTOS

TUESDAY
Read Beverly Beckham, Celebrity, Alan Der Showitz

Capital punishment figures highest since 1976

WATS CALL FORM

CALL BACK REQUESTED _____

COUNCIL # 249

PHONE NO:

CALLER: MYRON RUST

POSITION:

TYPE OF PROBLEM

REGISTRATION _____ VETERANS _____ EXPLORING _____
SCOUTING _____ BOYS' LIFE _____

UNIT # DIST. # EXP. DATE TRANSMITTAL # FILM #

6-86

~~RICHARD GARDNER~~ AGE 21
MOLESTED BOY IN MASS.
ADMITTED - on PROBATION THEN
MOLESTED TEEN IN R.I.

OK THESE -

JOSEPH C. BRADLEY AGE 45

NOT ON S.F.

JOHN TRIBOU NOT ON S.F.

NAME PC

DATE 8-9-88

TIME _____



NARRAGANSETT COUNCIL
546
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

August 9, 1988

Mr. Paul I. Ernst, Registration
National Office, BSA

[REDACTED]
Irving, TX 75015-2079

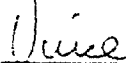
Dear Paul:

Attached to my letter is a copy of a front-page article from the Sunday Providence Journal dated August 7th, 1988.

The article is a complete article regarding life and times of Richard Gardner from Weymouth, Massachusetts. While Weymouth, Massachusetts, is not in Narragansett Council nor was Richard a Scout here, the newspaper article prompts me to send you a copy for your files.

If there is any additional information that I can give you, please let me know.

Very truly yours,



VINCENT N. BORRELLI
Scout Executive

cc: Rudy Flythe

The Providence Sunday J

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PROVIDENCE, R.I.

From Eagle Scout to suspected molester

Richard Gardner
seen as outcast
whose problems
'just boiled over'

By ELIZABETH RAU
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

WEYMOUTH, Mass. — Richard E. Gardner was an Eagle Scout who marched in a life and drum corps, earned good grades in high school and painted his Congregational Church as a Scout project.

But he also was a neighborhood outcast, taunted by his peers, who spat on him and called him "Gizzard" and "The Ditch."

As a teenager with few friends his age, Gardner began reaching out to young boys for companionship, often disturbing their parents.

Ultimately, his world collapsed. Last November, he pleaded guilty to kidnapping and sexually molesting a 12-year-old boy in Hingham, Mass. Gardner's mother, Sylvia, says Gardner later tried to commit suicide, but then sought counseling to overcome his problems.

She thought he had straightened himself out.

But, according to police, Gardner's problems didn't go away. They deepened.

On July 30, Gardner, 21, was charged with kidnapping two young Warwick boys and molesting one of them. Within a few days, he was charged with an earlier kidnapping in Providence and an attempted kidnapping in Bellingham, Mass., and ordered held without bail at the Adult Correctional Institutions in Cranston. And police throughout New England began calling Warwick detectives, asking about unsolved abductions in their own communities.

"It caught me off guard," said his mother. "It caught the counselors off guard. No one expected it."

Turn to GARDNER, Page A-10



— Journal-Bulletin Photos by RACHEL RITCHIE

RICHARD GARDNER, third from right, ran track for Weymouth North High School, but he was reclusive and never joined peers in games in the Idlewood neighborhood where he lived in this house, below.



'(Richard Gardner) never gave me a hard time. He was a loner. He's one of the kids you'd look through your yearbook and say, "Who's that?"'

JOHN LOTTI
Juvenile officer.

Unknown traits help some men avoid victim-offender cycle

By TONY DEPAUL
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

Stuart was 3 years old when his mother became ill. The state placed him in a foster home, where he was molested by the man in the house. He was molested again by his mother's boyfriend when he was reunited with her at age 5.

He was 40 before he had any conscious memory

of what had happened. His subconscious memory came to the surface one night as he and his wife watched a television movie about child abuse.

On the screen, a little girl was standing at the top of a flight of stairs. Stuart was jarred by a mental picture of another set of stairs, familiar to him many years before. But instead of a little girl, it was a little boy standing at the top.

"I freaked out," he said. "My wife is sitting there as I'm crying, and I said, 'I know! I know what's going to happen, God damn it!' And in the next scene, the family friend followed the girl upstairs and assaulted her."

What his mother's boyfriend had done to him suddenly became clear.

Turn to GROUP, Page A-10

Some lie deliberately, others out of habit, and still others, Nurcombe said, without even knowing it.

A different toll on boys, girls

Nurcombe, a native of Brisbane, Australia, is at work on a book about forensic child psychiatry, dealing, in part, with sexual abuse. Carol DiConzo and Dr. James McGuire at the Rhode Island Training School are collaborating in the research.

Nurcombe said one of the few

Group

Continued from Page One

"I was stunned," he said. "It was as if his fist came right through the screen."

What Stuart learned about his childhood led to explain much about his adult life. A professional man, colleagues knew him as someone who seemed miserably depressed and passive for weeks at a time, then for a day or so he would come to work in command of deep, intimidating anger.

"I measured my words, I measured my movements, everything. There was a sense of control that I exercised," he said. "Who would think that a 46-year-old man could be afraid because someone inside inside a 5-year-old boy saying, 'Be careful. Don't trust this person.'"

In many cases of molestation, the victim in childhood becomes the molester in adulthood.

The man named Stuart for this article was an exception and, like others who never retracted the crimes that were committed against them, never came into contact with the law and the possibility of getting help.

Psychiatrist Raymond A. Brigidi and William A. Votto, who had experience in the treatment of sex offenders at the Adult Correctional Institutions and at the Rhode Island Training School, where Votto is a full-time therapist, thought something should be done for people like Stuart.

They mailed flyers to mental health centers around Rhode Island,

"Like the boys, interesting men understood differences between men and women in the importance of sexual fantasy in adolescence," Nurcombe said.

"It looks as though all men have very vivid, visual, complex sexual fantasies during adolescence, and it seems to be fairly easy for this sort of fantasy to be derailed and to develop a deviant or abnormal kind of coloring or aspect to it.

"The importance of sexual fantasy may be the significant difference between why it is that, from a clinical

announcing what they called the first group therapy in the state for the victims of sexual assault as children or teenagers but never passed on the tragedy to a new generation of children.

They were looking for five, and felt lucky to find three. Stuart among them.

"It's very difficult for a man to come forward," Brigidi said. "We live in a homophobic society, and the male is questioned. Society says he might be gay. His friends, his family, say he might be gay. But that has nothing to do with being a victim of sexual abuse."

"We were looking," Brigidi said, "for victims who wanted to become survivors."

Combinations of traits set two months ago the three men sat in chairs in a tiny office on Smith Street in Providence and talked openly, for the first time, about the degradation of homosexual rape.

They looked straight ahead, and in the tension of an awkward silence they said they hardly knew where, or how, to begin.

Besides Stuart, the other men in the group, who will be called Ben and Roger in this article, had some unknown trait or combination of traits that prevented them from becoming sex offenders.

The best explanation that Brigidi could give was, "They had the ego strength. They knew the boundaries."

The group has been meeting weekly for two months now at Elmhurst Counseling, a private practice in Providence.

Once the members were able to

fantasies go."

Abuse just part of problem

Doctors believe that 50 to 90 percent of all sex offenders were sexually abused as children, and that the abuse is a central — but not the only — cause of their fantasies about sexual acts with children.

Sex offenders seem to be victims of "many of the other disordering and disintegrative aspects of a terrible family life," Nurcombe said.

"The sex abuse is just one aspect of

talk about what had happened to them when they were young, they found they had much in common. It was their parents, in all three cases, who unwittingly put them in the situations where they would be raped or molested. All three men decided not to tell their parents, even decades later, that the people they trusted to care for their souls instead committed humiliating sexual crimes against them.

All three men say the assaults caused them to worry, many times in their lives, that they might be homosexual.

The two married men in the group say their sexual relations with their wives were affected. One a voided sex with his wife until two weeks after the marriage, believing it would ruin his ideal image of her.

And all three have experienced deep depressions that flare into episodes of anger and rage before slipping away again.

Ben's story:

"What would they think?" Fifteen years ago, when Ben turned 13, his parents sent him to a summer camp here in Rhode Island. They had no way of knowing, but, in this camp, several counselors would single out a different boy, on different days, and take him into the woods, where he would be molested, humiliated, taunted and burned with cigarettes.

Like the other boys, Ben was threatened to keep silent. He decided not to tell anyone, least of all his parents.

"What would they think of me? I'd be embarrassed for myself if they knew. They're wonderful!

It's very difficult for a man to come forward. We live in a homophobic society, and the male is questioned. Society says he might be gay. His friends, his family, say he might be gay. But that has nothing to do with being a victim of sexual abuse. We were looking for victims who wanted to become survivors."

from stable families. Recovery is possible "if the family doesn't get hooked by it, and if the family can allow the child to talk it through and not make it a terrible secret."

"There's good evidence that kids can cope with isolated, frightening incidents very well if the family copes well. It's much more difficult if the abuser is somebody in the family, but if it's a stranger, and a single incident, usually the child can cope well if the family can cope, and if the child is given time to heal."

people, but I still don't know if they would understand."

"Ben went back to school, where he was a good student, but his anger at teachers, or anyone else in authority, caused difficulty along the way."

As he matured, and neared graduation, he tried to block the attack out of his mind.

"I was occupied with being popular, with looking right — all the teenage things. I turned 18, graduated from high school and was ready to take on the world. I just thought, well, this happened to me," he shrugged. "Things happen."

But he was unable to sustain that brave face. He soon was in counseling for depression. His anger was going bad. And he could not form an emotional and physical attachment to the same woman. He had platonic friendships with women he cared about emotionally and strictly sexual relationships with women for whom he had little or no affection.

The youngest man in the group, Roger, was getting angry about the most difficult problems to overcome.

Roger's story:

"I feel different. I feel free." When Roger was 15, his parents talked to a family friend about hiring him for a summer job here in Rhode Island. They never dreamed that the family friend, Roger's boss, would rape him that summer, more than once.

He kept the secret from his parents for 10 years, until he married, then kept it for another 20 years from his wife. When he told

things? Almost certainly, difference is, is unknown."

DR. BARRY NURCOMBE Child psychiatrist Bradley Hospital

her last month, she was upset and hurt. Hurt for him, but also for herself. She had married a man, and had three children with him, and then learned there was a terrible secret between them.

When Roger went back to school that fall, he was a changed teenager. He was quiet. He rejected contact with friends and family. He never dated.

The pain seemed to feed his religious impulse, and he soon became active in a fundamentalist sect. He became a youth leader, administering children to adopt a strict moral code. "I got so I saw everything in black and white, there was no gray, which is the opposite of what really happens," he said.

When his past troubled him most, he would escape into the woods and spend hours alone in prayer. He did that often through his adult life, dropping out of sight during family holidays, during work hours, and returning half a day later with no explanation.

Roger rejected financial help from his parents and worked his way through a conservative religious college, into his 30s and 40s, he remained angry about the assaults, angry that his parents had gotten him that summer job, and angry that he was too ashamed and humiliated to tell them what happened.

Now, after eight weeks of talking about how the abuse affected his life, Roger said, "I feel different. I feel free. I feel as if a great weight has been lifted from my shoulders."

"Before, I felt like a divided personality, a divided being. I felt that something was taken a way from me, my innocence, and because of that, I feel like less of a person, less of a man, and I didn't know what to do about it."

"I felt that if I had had the support of my parents and the support of society, I would have told someone and had something done about the person who victimized me."

"Now I want to see that young people today have that support."

Classmates teach a exclusive boy who rarely smiled and never joined

A strict family

in neighborhood games. He had unusually large ears and full lips. His voice was soft and he spoke with a lisp.

His classmates teased him at the corner bus stop, calling him "Gizzard" and "The Ditch." They spat on him, poked his ribs, took his lunch money and stole his books.

"He was the person to pick on and he just took it," said Tasha Tanner, 18, a neighbor and former schoolmate. "He wouldn't lash back. He'd just sit there."

She recalled how students at Abigail Adams Elementary School would run to the playground fence every day to watch trains rush by, while Gardner would sit on the outside steps by himself, brooding.

"His head always seemed to be to the ground," said Steve Hudson, 17, a neighbor. "He used to say 'Hi' and that was the extent of it."

At Weymouth North High School, "kids wouldn't sit too close to him," Tanner said. "Once in while they would dump his (lunch) tray, but he wouldn't do anything."

Gardner came from a home where his mother, a sturdy woman with straight short hair and bangs, ran a tight ship.

All the children had chores — Richard took out the trash and mowed the lawn. Mrs. Gardner said she taught her son "never to talk back to his elders... never to strike a woman." She forbade her children to wear jeans. Neighbors say Gardner always wore dress shirts and corduroys, even in sweltering heat.

This is a decent-living family that was brought up morally and ethically," said Mrs. Gardner, who encouraged the family to gather around the television at night to watch "family shows."

Gardner was in the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts from 1975 to 1985, earning 21 merit badges in his mid-teens to get the Eagle badge. He earned Scouting's "God and Country" award by painting the outside of the Union Congregational Church he attended every Sunday.

"Scouting was his life," his mother said.

He played farm-club baseball and ran on the high school's cross-country track team during his freshman and sophomore years. He waterskied, canoed and camped.

His mother said he knew how to survive in the forest.

"He was pretty much, to me, what a normal 14-year-old would be," said his coach, David Laprise.

Turn to GARDNER, next page +

Gardner

Continued from previous page
 He was relatively quiet. He wasn't effervescent.

Gardner was an average student in high school who never got below a C in a course and never had any disciplinary problems, said James Egan, assistant principal of Weymouth North High School.

His only problem came late in his senior year, when he was absent at least 19 days and had to make up a semester in the fall, finally graduating in 1986, Egan said.

At about this time, Mrs. Gardner noticed that her son, now in his late teens, was hanging around younger boys. He had no dates. No girlfriends. She said she never confronted him about it.

"What do you tell an 18-year-old?" she said.

Neighbors noticed a change, too. They said he started buying cheap old cars and fixing them up in his driveway — with young boys helping out. (His latest car is a red Datsun, still parked in the driveway of his parents' house.) Eventually, he started picking boys up after they got out of school, buying them hamburgers at Burger King.

At some point, parents complained to the city's juvenile officer, John Lotti, who asked Gardner why he socialized with younger boys. Gardner said, "I'm their friend... like a big brother," Lotti recalled.

"He never gave me a hard time," Lotti said. "He was a loner. He's one of the kids you'd look through your yearbook and say, 'Who's that?'"

A hidden, compulsive side

But those who knew Gardner say there was another side to him that surfaced in his late teens, a side marked by compulsive behavior and violent outbursts. Robby Webber, 15, who lives in nearby Rockland, said Gardner used to pick him up after school for months until they had a falling out last year.

Robby, who was 14 at the time, said he and another friend were at

WINGBUCK STATE PARK, 111 Hingham. June 2 he pleaded guilty to the charge.

Police say Gardner accosted a 12-year-old boy who was helping his mother look for her lost purse. They say Gardner took the boy's shirt off and used it to blindfold him. He then assaulted him, told him to count to 100 and fled.

Four days later, the boy, whose father is a minister, spotted Gardner sitting in the back of his father's church and alerted his parents, according to an affidavit on file at Hingham District Court.

The minister's wife invited Gardner into the church study, where he admitted that he had molested her son. Gardner told police later that "he saw the young boy in the park and instantly had an overpowering fantasy of engaging in sexual relations with the boy," the affidavit said.

The following day, Gardner was arraigned and released on \$3,000 cash bail posted by his mother.

During the next several days, Gardner's behavior became so disturbing that the district attorney's office obtained a court order committing Gardner to Bridgewater State Hospital. The affidavit describes the behavior:

On Nov. 7, two days after Gardner's arraignment, the father of the victim found a newspaper clipping about the incident tacked to the front door of his house.

On Nov. 9, the victim's family saw Gardner driving near their home and alerted police. At 9 that night, a driver reported to police that a "pedestrian dashed out of the bushes (in front of the minister's church) and ran in front of (his) car."

At 9:20 p.m., police found Gardner hiding in the bushes and took him into custody. Ten minutes later, Gardner's brother, James, called the minister looking for Gardner, saying Richard was "suicidal." He said Gardner had the minister's son's name "written on the wall in his room, near the telephone."

Later, Mrs. Gardner came to the police station looking for her son. In the interview with the Journal-Bulletin last week, Mrs. Gardner said she was convinced at the time



Journal-Bulletin Photo by RACHEL RITCHIE
 Molester Richard Gardner was a reclusive youth who had problems from the beginning, problems that his neighbors Steve Husson, 17, left, and Mike Wilmer, 16, right.

Police said the boy's abductor forced him to wear a ski mask and drove him around for two hours. The boy was released unharmed, and his abductor gave him \$2 to pay for the milk, which had spilled in the car.

Gardner wasn't charged in that case until last week, following his arrest in the Warwick kidnappings.

After counseling session

The Warwick cases began on Friday, July 29, the day after Gardner went to a counseling session, Rhode Island and Massachusetts authorities say Gardner attacked three youngsters in a 24-hour period.

First, Warwick police say Gardner, carrying a knife and flashlight, carried into the first-aid room, where he attacked Michael

SOCIAL OUTCAST: Suspect seemed to worsen in recent years, say neighbors

Quincy Mental Health Center, where he stayed from Dec. 18 to Jan. 28, Mrs. Gardner said. After counseling on an outpatient basis at a local counseling center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., then worked at Bradlees until 10 p.m., she said.

Mrs. Gardner said her son seemed to be making progress, his personality was upbeat. He was working hard, saving money, coming home early and lifting weights.

On June 2, he pleaded guilty to rape and kidnapping in the Hingham case. Despite a request for high bail from the district attorney, Gardner was allowed to remain free on \$3,000 bail while awaiting his Aug. 31 sentencing date. At that point, he was seeing a

trial. He spent nearly 40 days at the car (at the church) to kill himself. It was after his arrest that Mrs. Gardner first learned — from Hingham police investigators — of her son's childhood rape.

She says she knows who did it — not a family member — and that it might have happened more than once, though she and her son have never talked about it.

"It degraded him, made him less than a man in his own eyes," she said last week. "He never thought he was good enough for society; that's why he's lashing out."

On Nov. 10, Hingham District Court ordered Gardner sent to Bridgewater State Hospital, where he was evaluated by psychiatrists who found him competent to stand trial.

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FROM EAGLE SCOUT TO SUSPECTED MOLESTER

Doctors say effects of abuse vary with victim

Richard E. Gardner, 21, charged with the kidnapping and attempted kidnapping of several area children, also has pleaded guilty to the 1987 kidnapping and rape of a 12-year-old boy in Hingham, Mass. Sylvia Gardner, his mother, said Richard, too, was a victim of sexual assault as a boy.

By TONY DEPAUL
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

EAST PROVIDENCE — Psychologists and psychiatrists are just beginning to investigate why one boy who is raped becomes a child molester, and why another is able to build a normal life, with a wife, a family and a successful career.

"Some kids are very solid and can cope with a lot of stress," said Dr. Barry Nurcombe, a child psychiatrist at Bradley Hospital in East Providence. "Others are very fragile and vulnerable. And on top of that, the incident can vary from being relatively minor to being life-threatening and terrifying."

"If you see a number of sex abusers or child molesters, there do seem to be an inordinate number who have been abused themselves."

"Are there boys who could cope with this and go on and become perfectly normal human beings? Almost certainly, there are," Nurcombe said.

"What the difference is, is unknown."

Nurcombe, director of forensic services at Bradley Hospital, said doctors are just discovering that the sexual abuse of children, and of boys in particular, is far more common than they believed even five years ago.

And while they have theories about the role of sexual abuse in causing some boys to become child molesters, they have difficulty testing them.

Their only source of information are the rapists — molesters themselves, and that are intricate,



—Journal-Bulletin Photo by LAWRENCE S. MILLARD

much more complicated deprivation, or rejection and abandonment."

"Men who serve time for sex offenses against children almost always commit similar offenses when they are let out, Nurcombe said.

"This is one of the most compulsive and repetitive offenses, and in some ways, like an addiction."

"Jail is worthless in treating this. It may be morally necessary and so forth, but it will have no deterrent effect whatsoever."

Nurcombe believes that the boys who are most likely to lead normal

"Some kids are very solid and can cope with a lot of stress. Others are very fragile and vulnerable. . . . If you see a number of sex abusers or child molesters, there do seem to be an inordinate number who have been abused themselves. . . . Are there boys who could cope with this and go on and become

and become perfectly normal human beings? Almost certainly, there are," Nurcombe said.

Gardner

Continued from Page One

But those who knew Gardner as a child said he had problems from the beginning, problems that seemed to worsen in recent years. "It's like something was boiling in his head and it just finally boiled over," said Mike Wilmer, 16, a neighbor.

The Gardner house at 3 Chandler St. in this South Shore city, about 30 miles south of Boston, is neat and tidy. There is a barbecue pit and picnic bench in the backyard. The hedges are trimmed. A pot of pink geraniums hangs outside. A hand-painted sign on the front door says, "Welcome."

Inside, from behind a screen door, Gardner's mother talked for an hour last week about her son. She said she's angry at how the media has portrayed her son as a social outcast and sexual deviant. And she blamed his problems on his being molested when he was 12 years old. She said she didn't know about the molestation until Gardner told police about it when he was arrested in Hingham last year. Police then told Mrs. Gardner.

Taunted by Kids

Gardner, 145 pounds and 5 feet 9 inches tall, grew up in the white box-shaped house with a sloping roof and brown shutters that his mother and his father, Richard, both 46, bought in 1963, three years after they were married.

The house is in the city's Idlewood section, a neighborhood of well-kept Cape Cod style homes, where children play Wiffle ball on the streets and build tree houses together and residents hang flags on their flagpoles year-round.

Gardner is the third of four children. He has two older sisters, 24 and 25, and a younger brother, 18. His father is a mechanic; his mother is a housewife. At the time of his arrest in Warwick, he was working as an accounts payable clerk at a Braintree department store in Braintree. He also has worked as an assistant manager of a convenience store and delivered papers for The Boston Globe.

Gardner was born at Weymouth's South Shore Hospital, a healthy 8-pound baby with blue eyes and thick curly brown hair. Mrs. Gardner said her son was a shy child who never missed problems and kept himself. His nickname was "Rich" or "Richie."