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DECEMBER 2002

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photography by mcarthurphotography.com  
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## CONTRIBUTORS



▲ Bill Clements, with his mother

In more than two decades of covering Chicago theatre for the *Daily Herald*, **Tom Valeo** ("The Play's the Thing," in *Arts Beat*) has witnessed the birth of many acting ensembles flush with ambition and energy but lacking experience. Remy Bumppo, on the other hand, seemed to spring full-blown onto the scene in 1996, with veteran actors hired to help director James Bohnen explore the complexities of Tom Stoppard's *Night and Day*. "Clearly," Valeo recalls, "this was going to be a theatre for grownups."

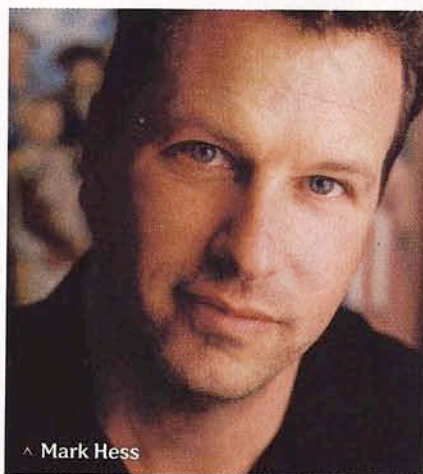
**Joel Reese** (*Sports*) met Bill Straus, the 17-year-old climber he writes about this month, at the Devil's Lake campsite the night before Straus died. "I only talked to Bill for a few moments, but I remember him having a peculiar, almost endearing manner. I could tell there was something different about him. And when I talked to people who knew him, I realized what a profound effect he'd had on people." A feature writer at the *Daily Herald*—and a novice climber himself—for our September issue Reese wrote about the 30-year history of the radio station WXRT.

Freelance writer **Bill Clements** (*Uncovering the Cardinal*) was 19 years old in 1981 when his dad, a *Chicago Sun-Times* reporter, helped break a series of stories detailing Cardinal John Cody's questionable personal and financial dealings. The articles rocked Chicago's Catholic Church but also placed enormous stress on Clements's father, Bill Sr., who died just two years later, at age 50. "When he died, I was just starting to get to know him as a man and

a journalist, not just as my dad," says Clements. "Over the past five months, though, I've had the extraordinary opportunity to join my dad, at least a little, in hot pursuit of the biggest and most difficult newspaper story of his life. It's been good seeing him again."

In chronicling the ascent of a new generation of leadership in Chicago's secretive billionaire Pritzker family (*Tremors in the Empire*), managing editor **Shane Tritsch** came to realize that the rich are like you and me, at least in some ways. "Subtract the \$15 billion in net worth, and they're kind of like any other family," Tritsch says. "In many ways they are extraordinarily close, but they don't always get along with each other."

Freelance writer **Cara Jepsen** (*Material Girl*) first saw Cat Chow's work at Quimby's bookstore in Wicker Park. "Even though her dresses were made out of unusual materials, they were still very elegant," Jepsen recalls. "She unzipped one of her zipper dresses to show us how it worked—and even let us touch it."



▲ Mark Hess

This month, senior editor **Steve Rhodes** outlines ten reasons why Richard M. Daley ought to be challenged in the upcoming city elections (*The Case Against Daley*). The illustration for the feature was created by **Mark Hess**. "This piece was based on a classic Holbein painting of Henry VIII," Hess says. "And without even reading the article you can get some of the story. We don't want to bash him or make him look sinister—he's just very powerful." Hess's work has appeared in *Esquire*, *Fortune*, *Newsweek*, *Rolling Stone*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Time*, among other publications.

PHOTOGRAPHY: LEFT MATTHEW GILSON, RIGHT COURTESY OF MARK HESS



**Holy rites:** John P. Cody in 1965, as he is about to be enthroned as Chicago's new archbishop. Opposite: At Cody's 1982 funeral, Helen Wilson (in dark glasses), a frequent companion of the cardinal's, mourns alongside her daughter, Rita, and son, David.



PHOTOGRAPHY: THIS PAGE TOP: CHICAGO TRIBUNE; OPPOSITE: PHIL GREER/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Latest markets **Sun-Times** Friday's Road Street  
Chicago, Illinois, September 11, 1987

# U.S. attorney confirms investigation of Cody

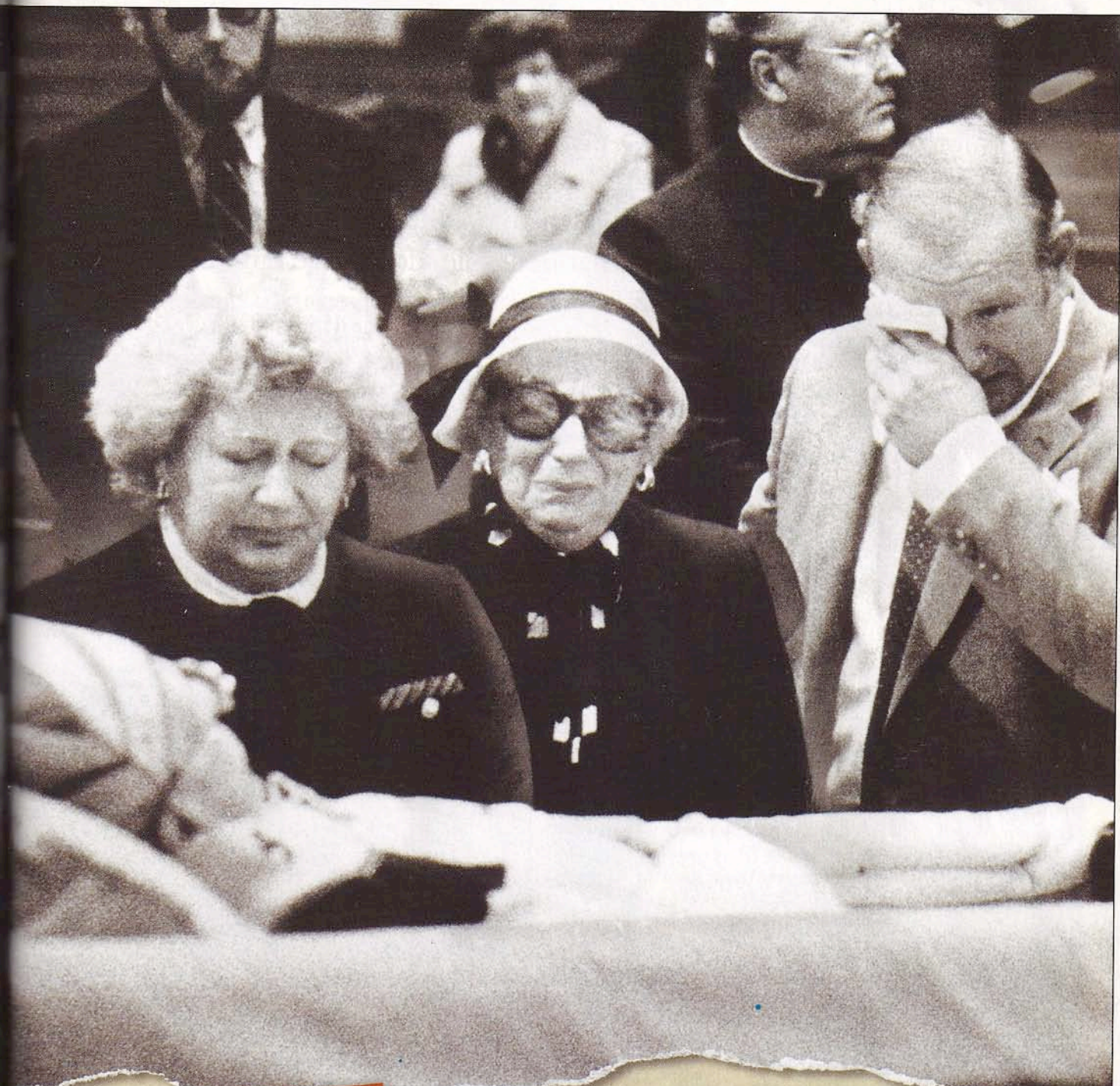


## Cardinal's records are subpoenaed

**By William Bradford Huie, Staff Writer**  
The U.S. attorney in Chicago today confirmed that he is investigating the activities of Cardinal John P. Cody and his associates. The investigation is part of a larger probe into the activities of the Chicago Archdiocese and its financial dealings. The attorney said that he has subpoenaed records from the archdiocese and is reviewing them. He also said that he has interviewed several people who have been involved in the investigation. The investigation is expected to continue for some time.

- INSIDE:**
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UNCOVERING

# the Cardinal

In 1981, the *Sun-Times* published a series of articles detailing some questionable financial and personal dealings of Cardinal John Cody, Chicago's powerful archbishop. The explosive series sparked a federal investigation and eventually led to reforms within the Chicago archdiocese. Now the son of one of the reporters looks back at the toll the story took on his family and his late father—and at the unheeded lessons that might have served the Catholic Church in its more recent scandals



**St. Luke Church sits like a sentinel** at the corner of Lathrop Avenue and Lake Street in near west suburban River Forest, a Tudor Gothic fortress built in 1936 for \$240,000. It's a gorgeous church, a somber, awe-inspiring place with high ceilings and massive stained-glass windows cast with blood-red and deep-purple hues. My dad once told me that sitting in St. Luke, amid all that holy splendor, made him feel he was in the presence of God. ☉ By 1981, my family had lived in St. Luke parish

#### Cody use of church money probed



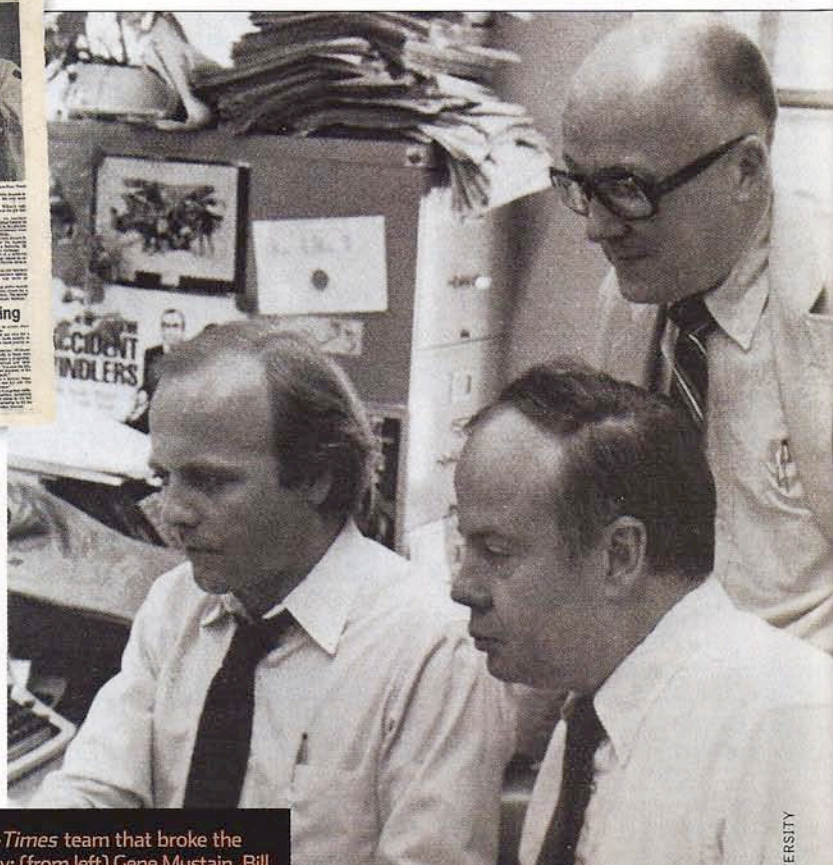
#### Fireman's son to a cardinal



#### Cody helped get job for Mrs. Wilson



#### O'Connor comes out against school busing



The *Sun-Times* team that broke the Cody story: (from left) Gene Mustain, Bill Clements, and Roy Larson. "We began to realize we might be on the biggest story of our careers," Mustain recalls.

and gone to the church for more than 15 years; for a decade, my mom had been a well-loved fourth grade teacher at the Catholic school there. All four of us kids (me, two older sisters, Julie and Katie, and my younger brother, Mike) had graduated from St. Luke School. The pastor, Msgr. John J. Fahey, a slight Chicago Irishman with blue eyes and white hair and, at 70, a reputation as one of the best speakers in the archdiocese, was a close family friend.

But on Sunday, September 13, 1981, as my dad, Bill Clements (like me), my mom, and Mike sat for the 11 a.m. mass (the girls and I were away at college), Father Fahey stood in the pulpit and railed about a series of stories running on the front pages of the Chicago *Sun-Times*. Eighteen months in the making, the stories detailed allegations that 73-year-old Cardinal John Patrick Cody, archbishop of Chicago, was under federal investigation for allegedly diverting more than \$1 million from the archdiocese to a longtime female friend. Father Fahey, like priests all across Chicago that Sunday, charged that the *Sun-Times* stories were unethical, anti-Catholic, and filled with lies. As Father Fahey knew, my father was one of three authors of the series.

For an agonizing 20 minutes, Mom, Dad, and Mike sat through the sermon and the Eucharistic Prayer, then received Holy Communion, and finally made their way out of the church. The next week, they started attending mass at St. Bernardine in Forest Park, "where no one knows who we are," Dad said.

It's been more than 20 years since one of the most explosive stories in Chicago newspaper history started rolling off the presses. The Chicago archdiocese has changed substantially since then,

many of the reforms instigated by Cody's enlightened successor, Joseph Bernardin. But the eruption this year of the scandals involving sexual abuse by priests suggests that—in certain areas of the country—the church hierarchy failed to learn one of the chief lessons of the Cody case: The church itself isn't above scrutiny.

"Even the most conservative Catholics now see the need for the church to adopt transparent and accountable procedures," says Scott Appleby, a history professor at the University of Notre Dame. "I think these changes are absolutely necessary, because the church is losing credibility. The church can no longer afford to have two sets of books—one for itself and one for the public."

When the Cody scandal first percolated two decades ago, the archdiocese of Chicago reacted with a defensiveness that seems stunning today. Long before the *Sun-Times* had published a word of the story, the church publicly berated the paper and the re-

PHOTOGRAPH: SHARI CASSON, BYLINE/COURTESY OF NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY



## MEDIA

porters working on the investigation. Later, lawyers for Cody—led by powerhouse Don H. Reuben—were able to stall the U.S. attorney's office in Chicago for 18 months, allowing Cody to dodge subpoenas aimed at getting at the root of the financial questions. Today, Reuben enjoys describing how he befuddled the Justice Department. Cody died in 1982—still cruelly disparaging the reporters, but leaving many provocative strands dangling and unresolved. Above all, it remains unclear whether Cardinal Cody misappropriated \$1.125 million (the equivalent of more than \$5 million today) in church money for personal use, primarily to enrich his step-cousin, Helen Dolan Wilson.

The Cody matter got to Dad in a personal way more than any story he had ever worked on—and he had been involved in a lot of

Rome (befriending two future popes, Paul VI and John Paul II), St. Louis and St. Joseph, Missouri, and New Orleans, where he became archbishop in 1964. The next year, Cody corralled the plum assignment of archbishop of the archdiocese of Chicago—at 2.4 million members, then the largest and perhaps most powerful archdiocese in the country. Archbishop John P. Cody became Cardinal John P. Cody in 1967.

Almost from the day he arrived in Chicago in June 1965, Cody stirred controversy. He “inherited a lot of problems that had nothing to do with him personally,” says Timothy J. Lyne, pastor of Holy Name Cathedral from 1965 to 1995 and auxiliary bishop emeritus of Chicago today. It was a time of tremendous change in the Catholic Church, as the historic Second Vatican Council began implementing

widespread reforms, principally by decentralizing the authoritarian powers of church hierarchy.

Arriving with a reputation as a liberal, Cody pushed hard for the racial integration of Catholic schools. He implemented new rules requiring elderly priests to retire (many did not go quietly). And Cody ended up closing a significant number of poor, inner-city Catholic schools. All of these moves drew opposition; add to that his autocratic (pre-Vatican II) style of administration, and Cody made enemies inside and outside the church.

Cody also tended to keep mostly to himself, with only a few close friends from St. Louis. “Judges will tell you that you can’t make friends once you become a judge,” Don Reuben says, “and that was true for someone like Cardinal Cody as well.” And yet, Bishop Lyne says, Cody was not unapproachable. “I used to fight with him all the time,” Lyne says. “You could do that with Cardinal Cody, as long as you didn’t go public with it.”

FOR YEARS, *SUN-TIMES* RELIGION editor Roy Larson, a former Methodist minister, had been hearing ru-

mors about another side to Cody, one involving questionable financial and personal behavior. For the most part, Larson ignored them. But when he heard in early 1980 that Gannett News Service was planning to investigate the Cody rumors, Larson, then 50, decided it was time to move. So in March that year he presented his editors with a memo based mainly on gossip and rumor about the shadow side of the 72-year-old cardinal.

*Sun-Times* editors assigned my dad, then 47, and Gene Mustain, 32, to work with Larson. Dad was one of the top investigative reporters at the paper; Mustain was a rising star. Using Larson’s contacts and knowledge of church issues, Dad and Mustain would do the hard digging. James Hoge, a former *Sun-Times* editor who had recently become publisher of the paper, remembers 22 years later saying to his reporters at the start, “We’re going to



A cleaning woman spruces up Holy Name Cathedral shortly before the funeral mass for Cardinal Cody.

## Between 1967 and 1973, a total of \$1.125 million passed through two secret, unaudited accounts under Cody's exclusive control.

difficult, controversial stories. He died in August 1983 of an apparent heart attack at age 50, and my family believes working on the Cody investigation hastened Dad's death. That's not to blame the archdiocese. Dad remained a practicing Roman Catholic through his last years, and he had faith in the church, just as he had faith in the tenets of sound investigative reporting. When the two faiths came in conflict, he sided with openness.

**BORN ON CHRISTMAS EVE 1907, THE SON OF A ST. LOUIS** fireman and a housewife, John Patrick Cody always wanted to be a priest. His record at the seminary caught the attention of superiors, and they sent him to the North American College in Rome, a finishing school for future bishops. Ordained a priest in Rome a few weeks shy of his 24th birthday, Cody worked in





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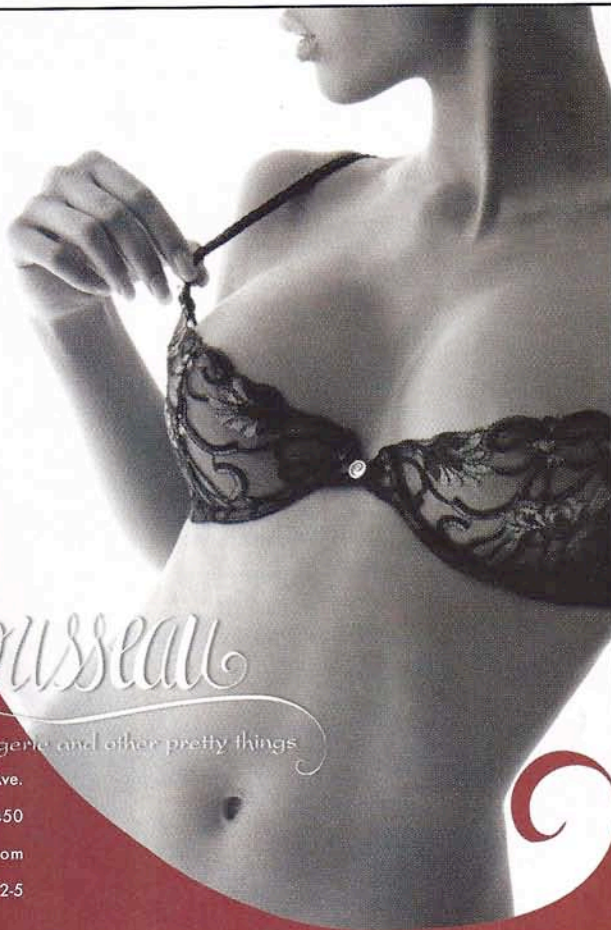




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## MEDIA

have to do as careful and in-depth reporting as anyone's ever done, because this is dynamite." Extreme caution was the strategy from the get-go.

At first, Mom was against Dad's working on this story. "I considered the rumors that they were hearing about Cody more as gossip," Sheila Clements Murray says today. "And I was afraid the story would hurt the faith of too many Catholics. I grew up believing that priests were chosen specially by God to do his work here on earth." Dad had never felt this friction from Mom before; while it gave him pause, he thought that if Cardinal Cody was spending money that belonged to the church, he should be treated like any other powerful figure caught with his hand in the cookie jar.

The first rumor the reporters tracked down was a case of apparent favoritism: When Cody got to Chicago, he insisted that various archdiocesan insurance contracts be handled by an insurance man in St. Louis named David D. Wilson, the son of Helen D. Wilson, a frequent companion of Cody's whom he identified as his cousin. Mrs. Wilson had been divorced since 1939. Over the years, the various Chicago insurance contracts earned David Wilson about \$150,000 in commissions as broker and agent.

The reporters put the story in their files and kept digging, without publishing anything. Indeed, nothing from their investigation would appear in the paper for almost 18 months. Early on, they decided to save their accumulating stories until they could put together the most potent package possible. "We began to realize we might be on the biggest story of our careers," Mustain says.

Then something unusual happened: Cardinal Cody, having heard what the *Sun-Times* was up to, made the curious decision to go on the attack. On July 11, 1980, *The Chicago Catholic*—the official church paper that at the time went to 170,000 Catholic homes—began a series of increasingly hysterical stories and editorials ripping into the *Sun-Times* and the reporters involved. "We're told the Chicago *Sun-Times* has initiated a journalistic inquisition," *The Chicago Catholic* wrote in one editorial. "This sort of inquisition is damaging in itself, just as questions raised by the late Senator Joseph McCarthy were often damaging in themselves."

An August 22nd editorial headlined



## MEDIA

"Sun-Times vs. Catholics" stated, "The Chicago *Sun-Times* is engaged in a program of clandestine character assassination that perhaps would win the endorsement of the Ku Klux Klan." The editorial concluded: "By its own choice, the *Sun-Times* is a major opponent of the Catholic Church and of individual Catholics who wish to practice their faith prayerfully and without hindrance from government or press."

Of course, Cody's vituperation helped convince the reporters and their editors that they were on to something big. And the attacks swung Mom. "Once the cardinal tipped his hand by showing how upset he was with those stories, that turned me around completely," she says. "I knew something was seriously wrong, and I got fully behind what Dad was doing." The comparisons to the Ku Klux Klan were particularly galling, since Dad's stories for the *Dayton (Ohio) Daily News* in 1962 about a racist local plumbing union had incited hate-filled calls to our small house. In those days, newspapers didn't often write about racism, and the series attracted significant atten-

tion—and opened Dayton's plumbing industry to all races. Later, at the *Chicago Daily News* and then the *Sun-Times*, he had worked on numerous high-profile investigations, including stories that helped put former governor Otto Kerner and former alderman Thomas Keane behind bars.

But the Cody investigation troubled Dad deeply. At work, he put on his usual cigar-chomping face. "He never wilted under any of the many pressures we faced in doing this story—and we faced a lot," Mustain recalls. At home, though, "Dad held back," Mom says. "He wouldn't tell me about all the things he was finding out, like he always did with other stories. He was really quiet. And he was gone a lot more than usual, worked a lot more nights; he agonized over every little thing."

**ROY LARSON SCORED THE TEAM'S** first huge break during the summer of 1980. At dinner one night with a source deep inside the church—after months of conversations and gentle coaxing—the source suddenly slid across the table an

envelope containing confidential church financial documents. The materials revealed the existence of two special accounts, secret and unaudited (contrary to normal church practice) and under Cody's exclusive control. Between 1967 and 1973, a total of \$1.125 million had passed through these accounts. "It was an unbelievable moment," Larson says 22 years later, "because here was the proof, in black and white."

One day that summer Dad and Mustain showed up on the front doorstep of Geraldine Cody, who had been married for 43 years to the cardinal's only brother. They told Mrs. Cody that they were writing a story about the cardinal and were interested in his days in St. Louis. Mrs. Cody invited the two reporters into her small home and for almost three hours regaled them with details about the Cody family. "Your dad and I kept exchanging discreet, incredulous looks as this woman poured out memories, notes, books, and pictures," Mustain recalls. In particular, Mrs. Cody revealed that the cardinal and Mrs. Wilson were not related by blood

## Taköhl

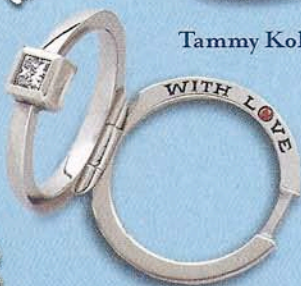
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Ellie Thompson





(her widowed father had married Cardinal Cody's aunt)—as the cardinal had been claiming for years.

At the same time, my dad and Mustain were learning more about the close financial ties between Cody and Mrs. Wilson, specifically that Cody had apparently given her nearly \$100,000 in cash to buy and outfit a lavish home in an exclusive neighborhood in Boca Raton, Florida, in 1969.

As the Cody reporters widened the scope of their inquiries, *The Chicago Catholic* stepped up its diatribes. The unusual tactic garnered national attention. On October 12, 1980, the *Washington Post* printed a story detailing the paper's attacks and concluded, somewhat curiously, that the *Sun-Times* was discovering there were such things as "sacred cows."

The editor of *The Chicago Catholic* then was Ed Wall, who has since died. "I think he was a very confused guy," Larson says. In a 1987 interview with the *Reader*, Wall tried to explain himself. "I was pretty close to being a religious fanatic," he said. "I never stopped to analyze it, and would have been horrified if I had, but I realize looking back that my attitude was that the Roman Catholic church was always right, and that cardinals were God's representatives. . . . It was a long, painful process to discover that cardinals are men wearing red clothes."

**EARLY IN THE FALL OF 1980, DAD AND** Mustain discussed with several trusted law enforcement agents strategies to uncover additional financial information—a difficult task, since church financial records are not public. During lunch at the old Dill Pickle, on the corner of Dearborn and Jackson, Dad and Mustain outlined for an Internal Revenue Service agent the information they had uncovered about Cody and what looked like his diversion of tax-exempt church funds to a person not connected to the church, a practice that is potentially illegal on both church and civil legal grounds. This agent, a veteran of many successful investigations into prominent Chicago politicians, was impressed enough to take the evidence to the U.S. attorney's office. (Though reporters' sharing information with government investigators may raise eyebrows today, back in 1980 the practice was commonplace; in fact, the IRS agent involved in this case—who is now retired and asked that his name not be used—told me that informa-

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**MEDIA**

tion from reporters sparked many of his successful investigations.)

A few weeks later, the U.S. attorney, Thomas Sullivan, approved an investigation into the personal finances of Mrs. Wilson. She had spent her career as a low-paid clerical worker (at a salary that rose from \$3,500 to \$8,000) for the St. Louis archdiocese, but lived a relatively wealthy lifestyle. In addition to owning that ritzy Boca Raton winter home, for example, she belonged to an exclusive country club and traveled frequently. A grand jury impaneled in Chicago approved the first subpoenas in mid-October to a St. Louis investment banking firm seeking Mrs. Wilson's stock account records.

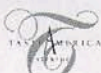
With the federal investigation into Mrs. Wilson, Cardinal Cody escalated his public attacks against the *Sun-Times*. On Friday, October 31st, the cardinal gave a statement to the *Chicago Tribune* that the paper printed in a page-one story the next Sunday headlined "Sun-Times Anti-Catholic, Cardinal Cody Charges." The statement said in part, "The cardinal and the church have enunciated a lifestyle opposed to that of the *Sun-Times*, so the *Sun-Times* is bringing the matter down to a personal level. . . . Our stands on issues such as abortion, aid to non-public schools, divorce, and the strengthening of family life are areas in which the *Sun-Times* has other positions." (The *Tribune* went to the *Sun-Times*'s editor, Ralph Otwell, for comment. "None of the inquiries we have made have anything to do with church doctrine, religious practices or the cardinal's 'philosophy,'" Otwell was quoted as saying.)

In December, the *Sun-Times* team discovered that when Mrs. Wilson retired in 1969 from her clerical job at the St. Louis archdiocese, with an annual pension of about \$1,500, she had started living six months a year in Boca Raton and six months in Chicago in a leased apartment at Lake Point Tower, one of Chicago's most expensive buildings. Rent for the two-bedroom unit started at \$450 a month (equivalent to \$2,200 today); when she broke the lease with Cardinal Cody's help in 1975 she was paying \$635 a month. From 1969 through 1975, Mrs. Wilson held a no-show, supposedly clerical job at the cardinal's mansion, for which she received directly from Cardinal Cody (not from the chancery's general funds) a salary ranging from \$7,200 in

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## MEDIA

1969 to \$11,500 in 1975—higher than that of almost all church employees, including the cardinal himself. During this same period the \$1.125 million passed through Cody's two secret accounts.

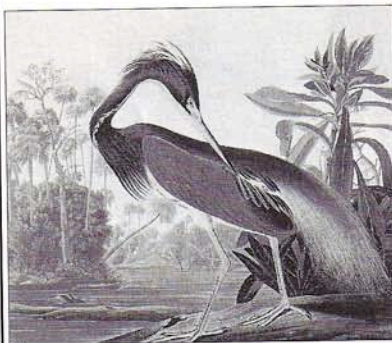
A few months later, the reporters discovered that Thomas Sullivan had widened the federal investigation to include the cardinal himself. The feds had issued two subpoenas, one against Cody personally and the other against the church; both demanded financial records of money directly under Cody's control dating back to the start of his Chicago tenure in 1965.

What had been a highly unusual public conflict between the press and church now became a high-stakes, behind-the-scenes confrontation between the church and the state. Don Reuben, lawyer for both Cody and the archdiocese, retained the clout-heavy New Yorker Harold R. Tyler (a former federal judge and deputy U.S. attorney general) to assist in the cardinal's defense. In resisting the subpoenas, Reuben and Tyler raised the constitutional argument that the government had no right to investigate the financial administration of the Chicago archdiocese—that such an investigation would entangle the government in church affairs in violation of the First Amendment.

Reuben and Tyler also went over Tom Sullivan's head to his bosses at the Justice Department. Reuben, who is a partner at Altheimer & Gray in Chicago but now spends most of his time in Rancho Mirage, California, says his legal strategy was to tie the bureaucracy of the Justice Department into knots by accusing it of breaking its own rules. Reuben charged that the U.S. attorney's office here had issued subpoenas without talking to Reuben or reporting its actions to the deputy Attorney General of the United States. And, though this was a tax investigation, the head of the Justice Department's tax area didn't know about it. "Then you get people at the Justice Department talking to each other and wringing their hands and covering their asses," Reuben says. "If you take a respectable but unorthodox defense to a bureaucracy, it's like hitting a cow with a sledgehammer: They are stunned and don't know what to do."

For both the government and the investigative reporters, the pivotal question was (and continues to be) whether the money that went to enrich Mrs. Wilson

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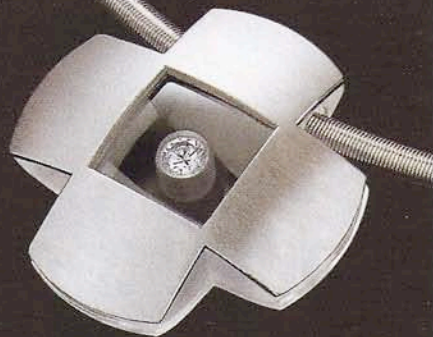
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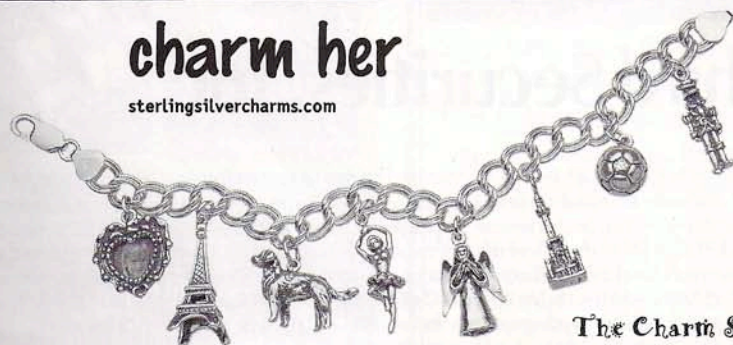
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## MEDIA

came from church funds or from Cody's personal accounts—since he could do what he wanted with his own money.

Today, Don Reuben insists that Cardinal Cody was “innocent of what he was being accused of”—that is, he didn't steal money from the church. The lawyer admits that Cody gave financial assistance to Helen and David Wilson, whom Cody considered family (Mrs. Wilson also had a daughter, Rita, a few years older than David). But Reuben says that assistance came from Cody's own funds that had accumulated over the years through personal gifts to him. “I don't condone the practice, and I didn't advise the practice, but I didn't think the government would ever have the guts to go after [Cody] for that practice,” Reuben says.

Of course, the records that would answer whether the money was the cardinal's were exactly the ones Cody was refusing to turn over. For the next four months, before he stepped down at the end of April, Sullivan battled fruitlessly in Chicago and Washington to get Cody's lawyers to comply with the subpoenas. (Sullivan, a partner at Jenner & Block, would not talk about the Cody case today, citing grand jury privacy rules.) Charles Renfrew, then deputy U.S. Attorney General, remembers listening to Tyler's church-state argument and then calling Sullivan. Renfrew, a retired federal judge in San Francisco, says he told Sullivan to limit the investigation until they could discover the source of the funds. “If the money was intended for general church funds,” Renfrew says, “then the question is whether the federal government or ecclesiastical authorities were the proper authority to determine if this was an improper use of church funds.”

In the summer of 1981—after 15 months on the story—the reporters discovered that the grand jury had learned that in 1954 the cardinal had taken out a \$100,000 insurance policy on his life (which would be \$670,000 today), and made Mrs. Wilson the beneficiary (the policy paid off when Cody died). At the time, Mrs. Wilson's salary as a church secretary was about the same as the policy's annual premium of \$3,528. For the majority of the time the policy was in effect, the annual premiums exceeded the annual salaries of both Cody and Mrs. Wilson, who in 1980 took out a \$57,000 loan against the cash value of the policy. If the



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## MEDIA

church was paying the premiums, then Mrs. Wilson's loan represented a diversion of church funds for personal use—a possible criminal offense.

In August, Dan K. Webb was named Sullivan's successor as U.S. attorney in Chicago. Meanwhile, Dad and Mustain headed back to St. Louis to try to discover other possible explanations for Mrs. Wilson's wealth. While there, they visited Mrs. Wilson's brokerage house. The firm's director casually confirmed, on the record, that he had received (and answered) a subpoena the previous October for Mrs. Wilson's stock records. Dad and Mustain were thrilled, because that meant they didn't have to rely on unnamed sources to say a federal investigation of Cardinal Cody was under way. They returned to Chicago confident they could now publish their stories—no matter what.

THE FIRST OF 15 STORIES OVER FIVE days broke in the *Sun-Times* on Thursday, September 10, 1981. Mustain says now, "It's the only story in my 30-year career in journalism that I can truly describe as 'explosive.'" Mustain, who spent more than ten years at the *New York Daily News* after leaving the *Sun-Times* in 1984, now teaches in the journalism department at the University of Hong Kong.

The package led off with the headline "Federal Grand Jury Probes Cardinal Cody Use of Church Funds—Investigation Centers on Gifts to a Friend." The fusillade of stories contained details about Cardinal Cody's apparent favors to Mrs. Wilson, including his help in getting her homes and jobs. The paper quoted Don Reuben denying the charges; the lawyer added that Cody was "answerable to Rome and to God, not to the *Sun-Times*."

Several stories provided accounts of Cody's close relationship with Mrs. Wilson, but never answered everyone's question: whether they were intimate. But the stories did detail Cody's frequent visits for dinner to Mrs. Wilson's Lake Point Tower apartment; his "secret" trips to Boca Raton during the six winter months she lived there; and Mrs. Wilson's frequent visits to the cardinal's mansion for dinner and other occasions. One story reported that a doorman at Mrs. Wilson's Florida condominium said she left as her summer address in Chicago the address of the cardinal's mansion.

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## MEDIA

On the Sunday after the series started, Cardinal Cody told an overflow crowd of 700 at Divine Providence Church in Westchester, "I never thought this type of persecution would continue in this enlightened age. . . . Be one with me as we suffer together in Christ and in his Church." He received a standing ovation. (Several times over the next week, Cody said he would respond to the allegations fully when the *Sun-Times* had finished printing its series. He never did.)

Jane Byrne, who was mayor of Chicago when the Cody story hit (and whose uncle had been chancellor of the archdiocese), recalls the "severe backlash" in churches across the city. "It caused real anger on many fronts, but particularly in the churches," Byrne says. "Collections were down; there was less respect for the church. It was a difficult time."

Dad expected angry reactions to the stories, and his biggest concern was for Mom and for Mike, who was just starting his junior year at Fenwick, the Dominican-run Catholic high school in Oak Park. A week before the stories hit, Dad took Mike aside and warned him that he might run into trouble at school. "Be careful, because people are gonna be mad and say things; just ignore them," he told Mike. The next week, with Mike sitting in the second row of the classroom, a lay teacher ripped into the *Sun-Times* stories, going so far as to say the reporters responsible would go to hell. Mike, a popular student (he would be elected student council president at the end of that year), was stunned but, remembering Dad's words, said nothing.

The steady trickle of letters to the paper on the Cody matter (pro and con) became a torrent in the weeks after the stories hit. Several stand out, like the one dated September 25th to the editor, Ralph Otwell, signed by a priest from a South Side church: "Just a line to tell you that your scurrilous attack on our Cardinal resulted in a tremendous increase in our Sunday collections, as well as those of every other pastor with whom I consulted. Keep it up, but get your affairs in order. We pray for your sudden and unprovided death every day. With revulsion . . ."

The *Tribune* responded to the series with two days of front page stories from a tearful interview with Mrs. Wilson, a get-together orchestrated by Don Reuben, also the *Tribune's* lawyer. Mrs. Wilson ad-

mitted a good deal of what Dad, Mustain, and Larson had reported, characterizing her relationship with Cody as a cousinly one—but claiming any money from Cody was a gift from his personal funds. Michael Sneed, now with the *Sun-Times*, wrote the stories. "After asking all these financial questions, I knew I had to ask *the* question," she recalls. "So I said, 'Were you ever, uh, uh, intimate with the cardinal?' And immediately the rosary came out and the tears fell. 'Oh, no, no, never,' she said. It was like a photo op, everything right on cue. I've always felt that meeting was staged, like the only reason they wanted me there was to ask that question."

Newspapers and other media across the country avidly followed the news. In editorials, many called for Cody and the church to resolve the charges by answering the subpoenas. One of the most pointed comments came from a Jesuit magazine, *America*: "The need at the moment is for disclosure and accountability, not pieties, however sincere and well intentioned."

Some media critics challenged the *Sun-Times* articles: The allegations were too circumstantial; the series concentrated too heavily on Cody's financial and personal relationship with Mrs. Wilson; in protecting sources, the *Sun-Times* had not adequately spelled out key internal church documents.

Both Mustain and Larson remain fiercely proud of their work—and point out its key tenets have never been challenged. "Our stories have stood the test of time," Mustain says. And they are proud they were the first to challenge the hierarchy of the church. "Many who've done similar stories since our story would never have initiated the story, pursued it, stayed with it," says Larson, who recently retired as head of the Garrett-Medill Center for Religion and the News Media at Northwestern University.

IN DECEMBER 1981, WEBB ISSUED NEW subpoenas and sought an order from Frank McGarr, the new chief judge of the U.S. District Court in Chicago, to force Cody and his lawyers to comply with the original, now year-old subpoenas. McGarr did not seem inclined to speed the case along. "Judge McGarr was very troubled by this case," Reuben says. "He knew that there was a lot more here than appeared on the surface. He was faced with a situation few jurists have ever been faced

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**WHAT IS IMITREX?**

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**HOW DOES IMITREX WORK?**

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**IMPORTANT SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

Although the vast majority of patients who have taken IMITREX have not experienced any significant side effects, some patients have experienced serious heart problems and, rarely, considering the extensiveness of IMITREX use worldwide, deaths have been reported. In all but a few instances, however, serious problems occurred in patients with known heart disease, and it was not clear whether IMITREX was a contributing factor in these deaths.

Serious events relating to the blood vessels in the head (e.g. brain hemorrhage, stroke) have been reported in patients who were taking IMITREX. Some of these have resulted in death; however, the relationship of IMITREX to these events is uncertain. In a number of these cases it appears possible that patients were not experiencing a migraine but rather an event due to blood vessel disease in the head. IMITREX was given in the incorrect belief that the person may have been suffering a migraine. Therefore, you should not take IMITREX if the headache you are experiencing is different from your usual migraine attacks. People who suffer from migraines may be at increased risk of certain blood vessel events in the brain (e.g., hemorrhage, stroke, or transient ischemic attack).

Ask your doctor about these and additional safety considerations.

**WHO SHOULD NOT TAKE IMITREX?**

Some types of migraine headaches should not be treated with IMITREX, and some patients should not take IMITREX because of an increased risk of serious side effects.

■ If you have had a heart attack, stroke, transient ischemic attacks, peripheral vascular disease (including ischemic bowel disease or Raynaud syndrome), or any sort of heart disease or symptoms that are associated with constriction of blood vessels, such as heart disease, angina, or coronary artery vasospasm, you should not use IMITREX.

■ If you have uncontrolled high blood pressure, you should not use IMITREX.

■ If you are taking certain drugs for depression, talk with your doctor. IMITREX should not be used if you take or have taken within the last 2 weeks monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs).

■ Your doctor will discuss with you the type of migraine headaches you have. If you have hemiplegic or basilar migraine, you should not take IMITREX. IMITREX should be used only in patients who have been diagnosed by a physician as having migraine with or without aura.

■ Tell your doctor about any medications you are taking. If you are currently taking any migraine medications that include ergot alkaloids, such as methysergide or dihydroergotamine, or other 5-HT<sub>1</sub> agonists, do not take IMITREX within 24 hours of taking these medications.

■ Do not take IMITREX if you are allergic to sumatriptan or any of the ingredients in IMITREX.

■ If you have severe liver disease, you should not use IMITREX.

**WHAT MEDICAL PROBLEMS OR CONDITIONS SHOULD I DISCUSS WITH MY DOCTOR?**

■ If you have risk factors for heart problems, you should tell your doctor. Your doctor should examine you for heart disease to see whether IMITREX is appropriate for you. Risk factors include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, diabetes, smoking. Other risk factors with risk factors for heart disease are women who are past menopause (whether natural menopause or menopause resulting from surgery), men over 40 years old, or patients with a family history of heart disease. If you have risk factors and your evaluation for heart disease is satisfactory, your doctor may ask you to take the first dose of IMITREX in the doctor's office.

■ Tell your doctor if you have chest pains, shortness of breath, or irregular heart beats.

■ Tell your doctor if you are taking selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs).

■ Tell your doctor if you have a history of epilepsy or seizures.

■ Tell your doctor if you have liver or kidney problems.

■ Tell your doctor if you have ever had to stop taking any medication because of an allergy or other problems.

**USE OF IMITREX DURING PREGNANCY AND BREAST-FEEDING**

Do not take IMITREX if you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant, are trying to become pregnant, or are not using adequate birth control methods, or are breast-feeding, unless you have discussed this with your doctor.

**HOW TO USE IMITREX TABLETS**

For adults, the usual dose is a single tablet taken whole with fluids. A second tablet may be taken if your symptoms of migraine come back or if you have partial response to the first dose, but no sooner than 2 hours after taking the first tablet. For a given attack, if you have no response to the first tablet, do not take a second tablet without first consulting with your doctor. Do not take more than a total of 200 mg of IMITREX Tablets in any 24-hour period.

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**WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF USING IMITREX?**

Do not rely on this summary alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss with you a more complete list of side effects that may be relevant to you. The most frequently seen side effects are tingling and warm/cool sensations with IMITREX Tablets.

■ Some patients feel pain or tightness in the chest or throat when using IMITREX. If this happens to you, discuss it with your doctor before using any more IMITREX. If the pain is severe or does not go away, call your doctor immediately.

■ If you have sudden or severe abdominal pain after taking IMITREX, call your doctor immediately.

■ Shortness of breath; wheeziness; heart throbbing; swelling of the eyelids, face, or lips; or a skin rash, skin lumps, or hives happen rarely, but if they happen to you, tell your doctor immediately. Do not take any more IMITREX unless your doctor tells you to.

■ Some patients have feelings of tingling, heat, flushing (redness of the face lasting a short time), heaviness, or a feeling of pressure after taking IMITREX. A few patients may feel drowsy, dizzy, tired, sick. Tell your doctor about these effects at your next visit.

■ If you feel unwell in any other way or have any problem that you do not understand after taking IMITREX, tell your doctor immediately.

**WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I TAKE AN OVERDOSE?**

If you have taken more medication than you have been told, contact either your doctor, a hospital emergency department, or the nearest poison control center immediately.

**HOW SHOULD I STORE IMITREX?**

Be sure to keep your medicine in an area that cannot be reached by children. It may be harmful. IMITREX Tablets should be stored at room temperature and do not require refrigeration. Do not store above 86° F (30° C) or below 36° F (2° C). Store away from heat and light. If your medication has expired (the expiration date is printed on the label) throw it away as instructed. If your doctor decides to stop your treatment with IMITREX, do not save any leftover medication unless your doctor tells you to do so. Throw it away as instructed.

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## MEDIA

with. He figured maybe time would cure it, and he proceeded very cautiously." During this time, Cody was in and out of the hospital for heart problems.

In mid-February, a tipster suggested the reporters take a look at the church's employee pension program. Dad and Mustain discovered that even though Mrs. Wilson never was on the official payroll of the Chicago archdiocese, she was receiving a pension from the Chicago church. And not just a token amount: Mrs. Wilson was getting the highest pension among all retired employees of the archdiocese (even as she received two pensions from the St. Louis archdiocese for her 25 years of work there). To qualify Mrs. Wilson for the Chicago pension, the archdiocese had submitted phony work and salary information to the insurance company in 1969. Both Cody and Mrs. Wilson had signed the phony records. The *Sum-Times* ran the pension story in March.

Six weeks later, on April 25, 1982, Cardinal Cody's failing heart failed for good as he lay alone in his bedroom at the mansion. The next day, Cody's spokesman, Msgr. Francis Brackin, read at a press conference what became known as Cody's "deathbed" letter. Dictated by the cardinal during an early January stay at Northwestern Memorial Hospital—and signed in a shaky hand—the letter begins, "I wish to let everyone know that I have forgiven my enemies." It continues, in part, "I can turn aside from the personal abuse, the plotting, the media maneuvering and even the incomplete untruths. I can look elsewhere and I do. Let them go on. I can turn away because I am a Christian, a bishop, a person; I do so. But God will not so forgive. God's is another way—He stands before my former enemies insisting forever with good will that they change."

Helen Wilson was even harsher. In a statement issued through her lawyer, Leonard Ring, Mrs. Wilson charged that the *Sum-Times* had killed the cardinal—and pleaded with the paper's editors to stay away from Cody's funeral "if they have any conscience, any compassion, any remorse."

On Thursday, April 29th, an overflow crowd of 1,500 mourners filled Holy Name Cathedral for the funeral. Nine cardinals and every prominent Chicago politician attended. Father Fahey, my family's former pastor from St. Luke's, gave the homily. In it, he talked about

Cardinal Cody's "great heart" and deep faith: "When in his human frailty he failed as we all fail, he picked himself up and he started over again." Cody was interred in the Bishops' Chapel at Mount Carmel Cemetery in Hillside. The *Sum-Times* did indeed cover the funeral.

Though Ring later announced that Mrs. Wilson would file a libel suit against the *Sum-Times*, no suit was ever filed. Mrs. Wilson eventually moved back full-time to St. Louis, where she died "very peacefully" two years ago at the age of 93, according to her son, David.

To this day, Mustain and Larson are uncertain of the nature of Cody's relationship to Mrs. Wilson. Reuben recalls that he once asked Cody whether David was his son. "The cardinal said it was absurd, and I believed him," Reuben says.

David Wilson, 68, is still involved in the insurance agency, now called Wilson & Associates and run by his son Cody, in St. Louis. He would not comment on specific questions for this story, though he did say he and his family had always considered the Cody stories "a vicious smear campaign" orchestrated by priests with an ax to grind against Cody. "It was very painful for all of us," Wilson says.

**THE U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE KEPT** the investigation going for a few months after Cody's death, a source told Dad, largely in the hope that McGarr would finally rule on the compliance order and help settle the issue of the government's right to seek church records. But the judge never did rule, and the investigation closed in July 1982, with all documents and records relating to the investigation permanently sealed.

Today, Charles Renfrew says, "I'd expect the response [to a compliance order request] to be put in the form of an official objection, that the government would answer and then the judge make a ruling—so people would at least feel we complied with the process established to handle such matters."

Patrick Schiltz, associate dean of the University of St. Thomas School of Law in Minneapolis, is a canon lawyer who has represented the Catholic Church in dozens of sex abuse cases. Schiltz says the Cody case would have a different outcome now. "Today most judges would consider the cardinal and the archdiocese to be under an obligation to provide the



evidence sought in the subpoenas," he says.

McGarr, who has retired from the bench but is still active (he was cochair of Governor George Ryan's commission on the death penalty), says he has only "a vague memory" of the Cody case and the compliance order. "I'm sure I had good reasons, but I can't recall why I didn't rule," he says.

The IRS agent involved in the Cody investigation is still annoyed 20 years later that, as he says, Cody and his lawyers successfully held the cardinal above the law. "I believed then and believe now that he was guilty," the retired agent says.

**IN THE LATE SUMMER OF 1982, MY** parents took Father Fahey out for a reconciliation dinner at Horwath's Restaurant on North Harlem Avenue. While neither man apologized, Mom recalls, each explained his position—Father Fahey laying out some of the good works Cody had done as cardinal and Dad detailing the depth of Cody's financial and other misdeeds. It worked: Both men were happy. Father Fahey asked Mom and Dad to return to St. Luke Church, which they did.

Joseph Bernardin succeeded Cody as head of the Chicago archdiocese, and, with the help of a church panel and a non-church auditing team, investigated Cody's handling of church finances. In December 1982, Bernardin announced that the group had found no evidence of wrongdoing—that there wasn't enough evidence to say whether Cody had diverted church funds for personal use. The review found that Cody's average annual personal income (in salary and gifts) was \$38,000; Bernardin also said that the financial records were "a mess," with up to 25 percent of them missing. "We did an honest study of the situation and just couldn't make any conclusions," recalls Bishop Lyne, who was involved in the review. The investigators couldn't even tell if the missing records were those the government had sought.

In June 1983, Bernardin named John Philbin head of the finance department. Philbin says now that by the time he took over the finances, the Cody years "had been swept away, behind a closed door, never to be opened again." He immediately began working with Bernardin on changing the way the archdiocese handled its finances—changes prompted by

the *Sun-Times's* reporting. The changes included tighter controls on how money was recorded and spent; a financial oversight council "that actually had some teeth"; and rules ensuring that a more accurate and understandable financial statement would be published each year in the church newspaper.

Philbin also recalls that after he took over the finances, parish pastors would occasionally show up in the chancery office with cash that they wanted Philbin to put into the account for the pastors' parish. "There was no way these guys were going to give their parish money to Cody," Philbin says. "They just didn't trust him." One pastor came to his office with a briefcase filled with \$70,000 in cash. It was "like in a scene out of *The Godfather*," Philbin says.

Whether or not he was inspired by the troubling secrecy of the Cody era, Cardinal Bernardin—who died in 1996—introduced another sound reform to the archdiocese: a strict set of procedures for dealing with allegations of sexual abuse of young people by priests. Chicago's methods have been used as a model, and the archdiocese here has faced fewer of the charges of cover-up than the churches in other cities. "Transparency" is a much-used word now," says Bishop Lyne, "but I think we have made a good effort at becoming more transparent, and I hope people will see that."

**ON AUGUST 7, 1983, MY DAD DROPPED** dead of a heart attack while wading off the beach in Beaver Island, Michigan, my family's vacation spot. From the beginning, all of us have believed in our hearts that the Cody series cut short Dad's life. "I definitely believe Dad would have lived longer if he hadn't worked on the story," Mom says. "He was under a great deal of stress. He took it more personally than any story he ever worked on."

Father Fahey—who himself died in 1995 at 84—gave the sermon at Dad's funeral, just as he had done at Cardinal Cody's funeral 16 months before. Speaking from the intricate wrought-iron pulpit at St. Luke Church, the pastor said, looking at my mom and me in the front-row pew, "Everyone knows Bill and I had our differences. What's done is done. But I want you to know I had great respect for Bill. He did what he thought was right, and that's all you can ask of a man." ■



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