



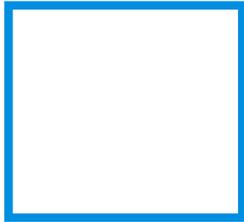
Sister: Brother had sexual relationship with Hastert

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Montana woman says the FBI interviewed her last month about her allegations that her brother was sexually abused while in high school by Dennis Hastert, the wrestling coach who would become speaker of the House.

Hastert was charged last week in a federal indictment that alleges he agreed to pay \$3.5 million to someone from Yorkville, the Illinois town where he taught and coached high school wrestling, so the person would stay quiet about "prior misconduct."

Jolene Burdge of Billings, Montana, told The Associated Press on Thursday that the FBI interviewed her in mid-May about Hastert. She said her brother told her before he died in 1995 that his first homosexual contact was with Hastert and that the relationship lasted through all of his high school years.

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Burdge would not disclose her brother's name to AP but said he graduated from Yorkville High School in 1971 and that Hastert was his teacher and wrestling coach. Hastert was a teacher and coach in Yorkville from 1965 to 1981, according to the indictment.

In an interview aired Friday on ABC's "Good Morning America," Burdge identified her brother as Stephen Reinboldt, and said Hastert had been a father figure to him at high school. But she also said she believed that relationship had caused irreparable harm.

"He damaged Steve, I think, more than any of us will ever know," she told the morning show.

The AP could not independently verify her allegations.

A person familiar with the allegations in the indictment has told the AP that the payments mentioned in the indictment were intended to conceal claims that the Illinois Republican sexually molested someone decades ago. The person spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity because the investigation is ongoing.

Hastert has not been charged with sexual abuse. But Burdge's story indicates there could be more victims beyond the "Individual A" named in the indictment.

Hastert did not respond to a message left on his cellphone early Friday. Emails and phone messages sent to his son, Ethan Hastert, were also not answered.

The FBI did not respond to a request for comment on Burdge's allegations.

Reinboldt died in Los Angeles in 1995 at the age of 42. Burdge told ABC that he died of

AIDS.

An obituary published in The (Aurora) Beacon News said Reinboldt had "a unique and fascinating mind" and was drawn to the arts, especially film, drama and music.

He was a manager of the wrestling team that Hastert coached, the AP found. He was also manager of the football team, student council president and a member of the pep club, letterman's club, the French club and the yearbook staff.

He graduated in 1971 and later moved to the Los Angeles area, where he worked for Columbia Pictures in sales and distribution. He also worked for several software companies.

"He wanted to be in TV and film and all that," his brother, Daniel Reinboldt, told the AP on Thursday. "He went to New York and L.A., back and forth trying to get into the movie business."

On Thursday, Daniel Reinboldt, who still lives in Yorkville, refused to talk to the AP about whether his brother was abused by Hastert. Another sister, Carol Reinboldt, of Lakewood, Colorado, did not respond to messages from the AP.

Burdge said her brother told her about his past with Hastert in 1979, after she graduated high school, but never brought his story out into the open because he feared "nobody would believe him."

The relationship with Hastert affected him "in a big way," Burdge said.

"He never had a life," she said. "He spent his life trying to run away from it and trying to dull the pain."

The federal indictment, announced May 28, accuses Hastert of evading bank regulations in withdrawing hundreds of thousands of dollars and lying to the FBI about the reason for the withdrawals. The document says Hastert agreed to pay a total of \$3.5 million to someone identified only as "Individual A" to "compensate for and conceal (Hastert's) prior misconduct" against that person. But it does not go into any detail about the alleged misconduct.

The former congressman, who has a home in the Chicago suburb of Plano, hasn't been seen in public since the indictment was announced. He resigned from the Washington lobbying firm where he worked.

Burdge considered telling her brother's story in 2006, as a scandal involving Rep. Mark

Foley unfolded. Foley, a Florida Republican, was discovered sending inappropriate emails and sexually explicit instant messages to former House pages while Hastert was speaker. Burdge spoke briefly with news outlets, including the AP, but she ultimately decided against coming forward with a statement at that time. Hastert stepped down in 2007.

She said in the last six months, she had started to put her brother's story "on the shelf" trying to move past it. Then the FBI visited her home.

Today, she says she is hopeful that any other victims come forward.

"We can help each other," Burdge said.

Associated Press writers Michael Kunzelman and Kerry Lester in Yorkville, Illinois; and Eric Tucker in Washington, D.C., contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to spell the alleged victim's name as Reinboldt, not Reinbolt.

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