



# Woman Says Dennis Hastert Abused Her Brother in High School

By JULIE BOSMAN and DAVE PHILIPPS

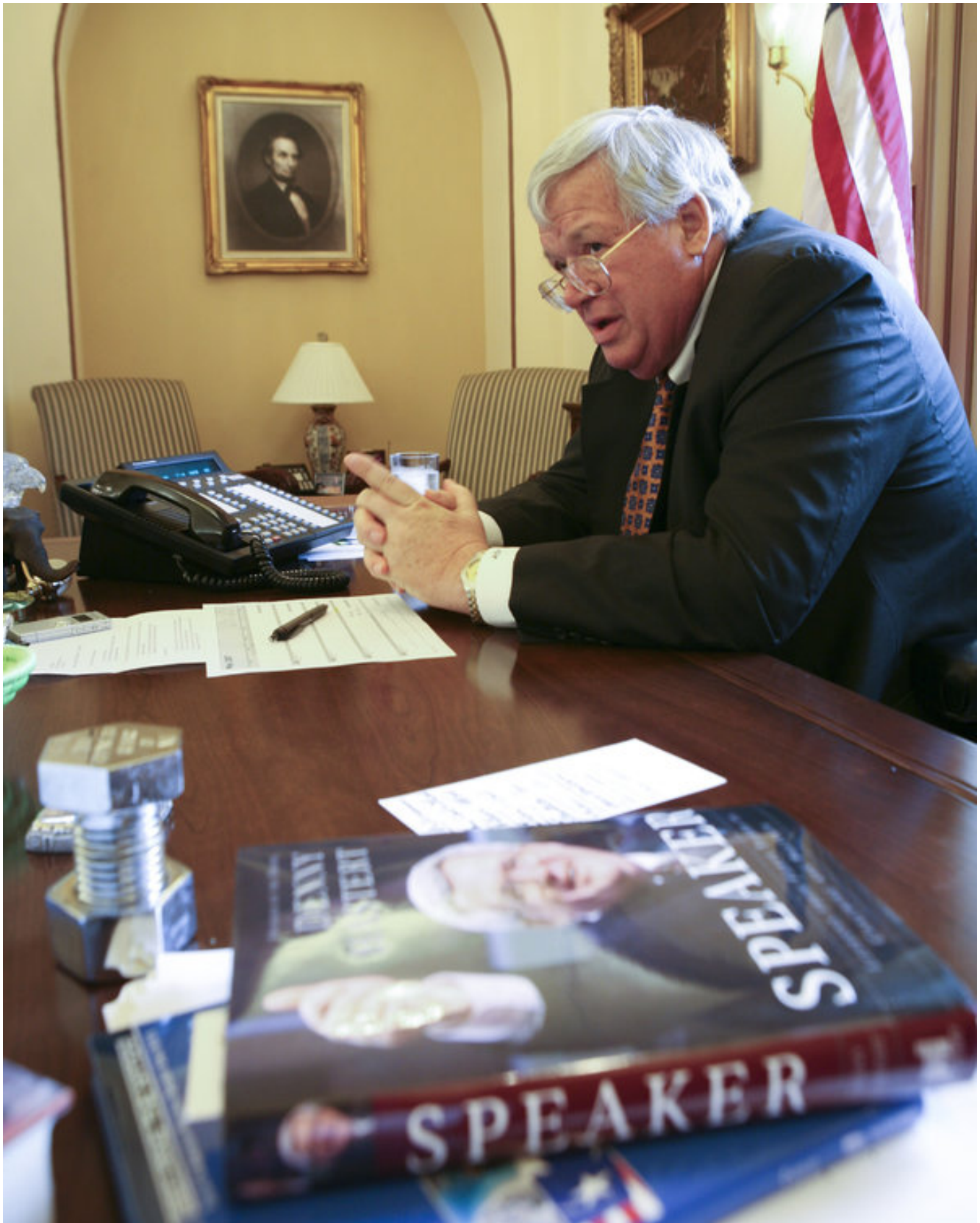
JUNE 5, 2015

YORKVILLE, Ill. — As an enthusiastic young teacher and wrestling coach at the high school here, former House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert reliably had one student at his side, former classmates say. Stephen Reinboldt, a smart, slender, likable student who rose to become class president, was the wrestling team's equipment manager. For four years, he arrived at practice early and stayed late, traveled with Mr. Hastert to overnight tournaments, even when only one wrestler was competing, and went for long rides in the coach's sports car, sometimes driving it.

On Friday, Mr. Reinboldt's younger sister, Jolene Burdge, said her brother, who died in 1995, was also sexually abused by Mr. Hastert, but hid the fact for years because he thought no one would believe him.

“Mr. Hastert had plenty of opportunities to be alone with Steve because he was there before the meets,” Ms. Burdge said on ABC's [“Good Morning America.”](#) “He was there after everything because he did the laundry, the uniforms.”

The allegation comes a week after Mr. Hastert, who served for eight years as House speaker, [was indicted](#) on charges of making cash withdrawals, totaling \$1.7 million, to evade detection by the authorities and lying to investigators.



J. Dennis Hastert, then the House speaker, in his Capitol Hill office in 2007.  
DOUG MILLS / THE NEW YORK TIMES

Two people briefed on the F.B.I. investigation told The New York Times that [Mr. Hastert was using the money to pay a former](#) student hundreds of thousands of dollars to hide the fact that Mr. Hastert sexually abused him decades ago.

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The former student is identified in the indictment only as “Individual A.” Ms. Burdge’s comments marked the first time that a possible victim of Mr. Hastert has been publicly identified. ABC reported that Ms. Burdge said she did not ask Mr. Hastert for money and did not know the identity of Individual A.

At Ms. Burdge’s home in Montana on Friday, a man who answered the door said she was not available. But the man, who did not identify himself, said her statements were accurately reported by ABC.

Mr. Hastert is scheduled to appear in court next week in Chicago. His lawyer did not return calls on Friday.



Stephen Reinboldt in 1971.

In the interview on ABC, Ms. Burdge called Mr. Hastert, who taught and coached at

Yorkville high school from 1966 until 1981, a father figure to her brother. She said she learned of the years of abuse when her brother revealed to her that he was gay eight years after he left high school.

“I asked him, ‘When was your first same-sex experience?’ ” she said. “He looked at me and said, ‘It was with Dennis Hastert.’ I was stunned.”

She continued, “And he just turned around and kind of looked at me and said, ‘Who is ever going to believe me?’ ”

Ms. Burdge said she believed the abuse ended when her brother moved away after his high school graduation in 1971. Mr. Reinboldt died of AIDS at age 42.



**Document | Indictment of John Dennis Hastert** Federal authorities accused the former House speaker of structuring withdrawals from various accounts in order to avoid bank reporting requirements.

She also said she confronted Mr. Hastert when he unexpectedly came to her brother’s funeral, telling him, “I want you to know that your secret didn’t die here with my brother.”

Ms. Burdge said she tried for years to get news organizations, including ABC News, and advocacy groups to pursue the story. She began in 2006 after it was revealed that Mr. Hastert had covered up claims that Representative Mark Foley, a Florida Republican, had [sent sexually explicit emails](#) to congressional pages.

She said she had given up on exposing Mr. Hastert. Then, two weeks ago, just before Mr. Hastert was indicted, she was contacted by the F.B.I.

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“That’s when I just kind of lost it and said, ‘Oh my God, I can’t believe — I never thought I was going to get this phone call,’ ” she said.

In interviews, former students say Mr. Hastert was popular, partly because his classes often consisted of little more than watching movies, and because his teams kept winning. He also seemed to have a new Porsche almost every year, each a different color, and would let certain boys drive it — not just around the parking lot, but on long rides.

“Some guys got to drive the Porsche and some didn’t,” said Jeff Nix, who was a student at the time. “We always wondered what you had to do to get to drive the Porche. Steve got to drive the Porsche.”

Yearbooks show that Mr. Reinboldt was a class officer every year, a member of the French and Letterman’s Clubs, and was student council president in his senior year.

“He was a smart kid. Kind of shy, but the best manager we ever had,” said Mr. Nix, who helped manage the wrestling team with Mr. Reinboldt. “He always had everything ready.”

Bob Dhuse, 63, who was a star wrestler during the period when Mr. Reinboldt was the manager, said he never saw any sort of abuse or hint of inappropriate behavior involving the coach.

In an interview before Mr. Reinboldt’s sister came forward, Mr. Dhuse recalled going to the state tournament in Bloomington, Ill., with Mr. Reinboldt and Mr. Hastert in 1970, when Mr. Dhuse was co-captain. Mr. Hastert drove the two students in his blue Porsche. He had his own hotel room, Mr. Dhuse said, while the two teenagers shared a room.

“He was a single guy at the time, and that’s what he drove,” said Mr. Dhuse, now a corn and soybean farmer in the Yorkville area, said of the coach’s flashy car.

Another member of the team around that time, Gary Matlock, said he went on a Boy Scout trip with Mr. Reinboldt led by Mr. Hastert to the Bahamas. He said Mr. Reinboldt wanted to be part of the wrestling team but did not quite have the athletic ability, “so he became a jack of all trades who assisted the coach.”

“I saw nothing except a shining example and mentor,” he said of Mr. Hastert.

Like many who went to Yorkville High School, Mr. Matlock remained in the small farming town. Over the decades, he said, there had been no rumors about Mr. Hastert.

“This town used to be so small,” he said. “Forget 24 hours — you knew all the gossip in 24 minutes.”

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Matlock’s high school friends have called to mull over the allegations. “It’s just been a big hush,” he said. “The community is in shock.”

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But some residents who were still absorbing the news of Mr. Hastert’s indictment said they were even more disturbed by Friday’s revelations.

“I just wonder how many more of them are going to come out of the woodwork,” said John Toschak, an electrician, adding that many Yorkville residents seemed to still support Mr. Hastert.

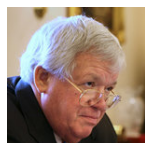
“They love him here. You can’t find anybody who would say anything bad about Denny.”

Julie Bosman reported from Yorkville, and Dave Philipps from New York. Kim Barker contributed reporting from New York, and David Crisp from Billings, Mont. Jack Begg contributed research.

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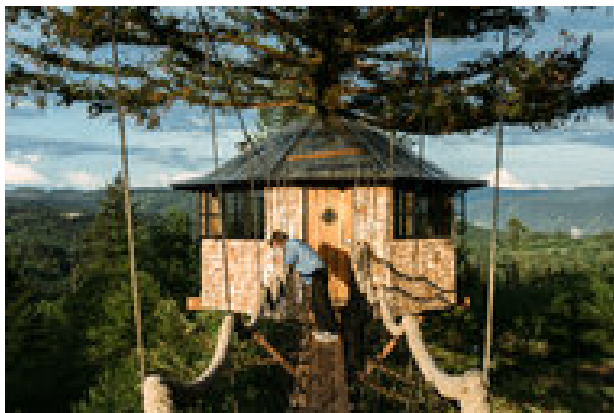
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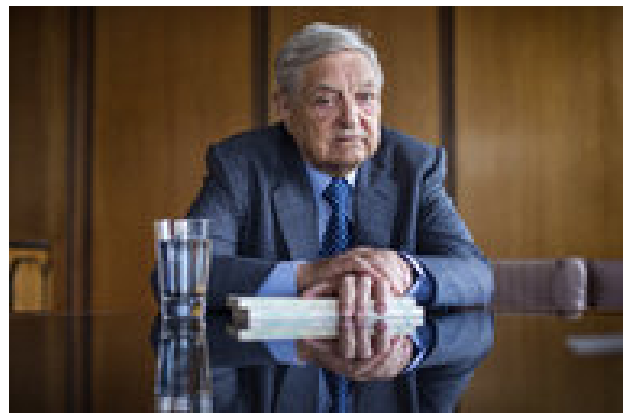
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