

Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Sex Abuse Victim

In his Confessions Rousseau recounts an incident that he experienced while in a Roman Catholic institution undergoing conversion. Still being at loose ends even in the afterlife, and learning that many have collected from sinning priests decades after alleged abuse, Rousseau felt it was worth a chance. Sure it was long ago, but if the authorities can convict a person after 50 years, and just based on the testimony of the accuser, why not 300 years on written evidence published after his death? What follows is an account of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's quest for justice and monetary damages for his centuries of recollected suffering.

NARRATOR: It's 1727, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, age 15, has left Geneva. Soon he was in Italy; destitute and in dire need of assistance. He learned that the church paid and found positions for those that converted to Catholicism. The thought of converting from his beloved Protestantism to the despised Catholic version of Christianity sickened him, but he knew, as did many desperate Jews in the Lower East Side, that he would come out of the conversion process remaining as much Protestant as they did Jewish.

Thus, we see poor Jean-Jacques, enter the hospice for converts in Turin, and share his foreboding as the great iron-barred door is double-locked behind him.

As he must commit himself to the lessons of the "true religion," he must also live with the persons undergoing the same instruction. One of his fellow pupils takes a particular liking to him – gazing at young Jean-Jacques with that come hither look, insisting that he accept the best specimens of his food, and frequently finding a reason to administer a big, wet smack on his cheek. Poor Jean-Jacques is completely clueless as to what is developing – even when the lad asks to sleep with him – Jean-Jacques tells him that the bed is too narrow. And then his new unwanted friend goes further and begins to caress him at every opportunity.

But wait – I think it best if we allow the story to be told from the transcript of Jean-Jacques' lawsuit against the Roman Catholic church because it shows how little has changed, and in some areas even worsened, over the centuries. In ancient Greece the statute of limitations was five year for all crimes except homicide. In the United States the Uniform Code of Military Justice also has a five year limit for offenses except those of a capital nature. For many years most states had statutes that ran up to five years because it was understood that genuine victims of crimes would make them known to the authorities shortly after they occurred. For sexual offenses that certainly would be no more than a few days unless the victim was in a coma. Any delay, certainly one that went beyond a year, is an acknowledgment of consent. Issues involving shame, etc. are matters to be solved by society through the establishment of protocols making it easier for victims to immediately report the offense, for example, a medical establishment rather than a police station. Thus the lengthening or removal of statute of limitations laws for sex offenses is as serious a violation of personal rights at those enacted after 9/11. It's also a perfect fit for a witch hunt because if you don't join the accusers, you may soon join the accused.

But once again I digress – We are in Torino rather than Salem. Here is Jean-Jacques statement before the court:

ROUSSEAU: After repeatedly resisting his caresses and entreaties that we sleep together, in the morning I found him alone in the assembly room. (*quoted words from Confessions*) "He resumed his caresses, but with such violence that I was frightened. Finally he tried to work up to the most revolting liberties and, by guiding my hand, to make me take the same liberties with him". I broke from him – I was not angry "for I had not the slightest idea what it was all about...as he gave up the struggle I saw something whitish and sticky shoot toward the fireplace...My stomach turned over."

I could think of nothing better to do than inform the authorities of what surely must be something sinful. The administrator accused me of impugning the honor of his sacred establishment for what was merely signs of affection, and that there was no reason to be upset just because someone found me attractive. He said that as a youth he had a similar experience – he did not resist and "found nothing brutal about it at all". He assured me it was not painful, and that I must remember that God made sex pleasurable so that his beloved children may frequently engage in the enjoyable experience.

I immediately fled this horrid institution and went on with my life. Despite all my efforts to suppress the trauma of my experience, it kept penetrating, and at times dominating, my consciousness, causing prolonged bouts of depression. That is why I now come before this court, even though almost 300 years after the offense, to seek redress for the damage it has done to my life and afterlife.

(Then the accused administrator of the sacred establishment, a Monsieur S., had his opportunity to respond)

MONSIEUR S.: M. Rousseau, you have written of your experiences prior to your residence in our institution. In one you tell of a Mlle Lambercier being forced to have her brother whip you after she observed something in your behavior when she performed the punishment. What was it that she noticed?

ROUSSEAU: Well...I guess she seemed to think that I enjoyed the beating.

MONSIEUR S.: Were you laughing while being punished – or smiling, or demonstrating pleasure in any typical way?

ROUSSEAU: No – She noticed something in my physical appearance – my body – a slight swelling –

MONSIEUR S.: To come to the point, M. Rousseau, Mlle Lambercier observed that her punishment produced in you an erection, with a wet spot next to it –

ROUSSEAU: That's not true! – The spot was from a few drops of pee that I could not shake out.

MONSIEUR S.: I submit to the court that M. Rousseau was not the innocent that he professed to be when the alleged incident at my institution occurred. If it did happen, he knew what and why it was happening, and by his own admission his decisive rejection of the advances ended the affair, therefore, there is no basis to the claim of psychological damage, at least to anything that occurred at my establishment.

COURT: M. Rousseau, do you have more testimony?

ROUSSEAU: Yes, your honor, the central element that Monsieur S. failed to note in his defense is that this attack was by an assertive male attempting to seduce *me*, another male. In my naivete I thought such things only happened between men and women.

MONSIEUR S.: Ah, but M. Rousseau, did you not relate to me at the time of your complaint that your admirer had "a terrifying face on fire with the most brutal lust". And then you went on to say "if we appear that way to women, they must indeed be fascinated not to find us repulsive."

ROUSSEAU: Yes – and that's just it – the whole experience when it's between two of the male sex.

MONSIEUR S.: But by your own words, it is not. You used the term "fascinated" – That women must be *fascinated* by the expression of male lust, and since many are indeed attracted to it, that element must be part of the mysterious fascination. Mlle Lambercier was not fascinated by your display of lust and sent you to her brother; you were not fascinated by your suitor's lust, so you rejected him. Both are everyday experiences of life – indeed, in *your* life.

ROUSSEAU: But I submit to you, Monsieur S., that I was only 15 years old, and that the shock of that *abnormal* experience cast a damaging shadow on my life.

MONSIEUR S.: M. Rousseau, did you not live immediately before traveling to Turin with a Mme. de Warens – a woman whom you called your "Mamma?"

ROUSSEAU: Yes, but she was not my mother. My mother died soon after my birth.

MONSIEUR S.: But Mme. de Warens was about the age your mother would have been, and in speech and writing you always referred to her as "Mamma" – And did you not sleep with her?

ROUSSEAU: – Yes – but –

MONSIEUR S.: I submit to the court that this behavior would not typically be regarded as normal, especially when one includes the many intimacies M. Rousseau experienced with his *Mamma*. At dinner did you not sometimes startle her just as she took a mouthful of food – Shouting that there was a hair, an insect, or some other distasteful object on the

food she was about to consume so that she would immediately spit it out – Then you would quickly gobble up what she just spat out –?

COURT: Monsieur S., you are aware that what you just described is a common practice in many bird species?

MONSIEUR S.: Yes, your honor, but that is because the baby birds cannot chew the food. M. Rousseau was well able to consume food. What he was doing was experiencing the warmth of his *Mamma* lover. And please note that by spitting out the food Mme. de Warens was unwittingly playing the male role by ejaculating her warmth on to the plate, and M. Rousseau adopting the female role by taking it within himself. As I believe that I have proven that the alleged incident could not possibly cause damage of any sort given the exotic eroticism of M. Rousseau's sexual experiences prior to his attendance at my establishment, I therefore humbly submit to the court that the charge be dismissed.

(pause)

COURT: I grant judgment to the defendant. M. Rousseau, you will be fined court costs, and the Court advises you to make amends with Monsieur S. so that you may avoid any legal action against you by him or his institution. And further, the Court admonishes you for insult to those who have really suffered rape and other brutal sexual offenses. De facto acceptance does not belong before a court, nor do advances which are cast off when the party making them is made known of their rejection. This Court session is now closed.

NARRATOR: And so, Jean-Jacques accepted the verdict with good grace, after all he had been dead for centuries. He simply saw it all as part of the nefarious machinations of Voltaire and Diderot, and went on with his after life.

End.

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