

A Reading on The Hyde School

By Megan Elizabeth (Toohey) Price, Guest Sermonizer for June 9th, 2021 (and beyond)

Being sent to Hyde School was the catalyst for a series of events that would destroy my life and self worth for many years and still a daily struggle currently to this day at 34 years old.

I am one of the girls interviewed in the 48 hours episode about former Hyde School student Alix Tichelman regarding her involvement with the Google executive. (clip found here with me and my hyde yearbook photo:

<https://youtu.be/509PFnXeWsQ>) She was my best friend at Hyde in 2002-2003 when I attended in Bath for a few months, and during the prior summer challenge.

I went to Hyde my first year as a junior in 2002-2003. I was sent to Hyde because my adoptive parents couldn't handle me, so they paid 40k to have me imprisoned at this character cult. My mother used to beat me regularly and my father always travelled. My father was having an affair which didn't come out until after I turned 18 and divorced my mother to be with this women. He never disclosed in any family "session" at Hyde. I revealed in these sessions my cousins had molested me for years in a family seminar at Hyde, and nothing was done to help me work through this. No counseling. No mental health help (not that they actually employed any mental health professionals). No family "therapy" beyond that visit (which was pseudo-therapy, really, as it was run by amateurs who all lacked proper credentials). After my mother left, she told me on the phone, "We can't let the rest of the family find out [about the molestation] because it would ruin them, and you're the black sheep anyway."

I spent my whole life at Hyde on 2-4, which was the 24/7 punishment labor crew, where I was treated like a slave with no dignity. I built a gravel road along the track while on work crew and received zero education, classroom or otherwise. The reason I was put on 2-4 so often was because I acted like a bitch to everyone who bullied me and made fun of me. I challenged the teachers to make sense and the faculty and medical providers (which was really just a nurse or a quack referral doctor in town) to truly help my declining mental state. While I basically lived on 2-4, I grew very close to Liz Steinberg (who I ran away with) and Alix Tichelman. I eventually started dating a boy who lived in town named Dennis. I'd always sneak over to his place. He was one of the only men other than Ross Forsbergh (who I am still friends with to date) on that whole campus of adults and peers, or in the town of Bath, that treated me with any dignity.

I was heavier at that time; around 200 lbs. I developed an eating disorder at Hyde due to social pressure from students and faculty to change my body. I began cutting again there. I begged faculty for help with my depression and they referred me to a joke of a doctor in town who truly did nothing but treat me like wanting my adhd meds made me an addict.

In October, I'd finally had enough of 2-4 and being treated like shit, and having adults do nothing but criticize me while not helping me; while claiming to be "developing my character", that I ran away. The constant abuse from staff and peers had simply become

too much, and my repeated attempts to get any kind of adequate mental health treatment proved futile.. After I ran away from campus, I was raped by a man who I had thought would help me find safety. I went to the local hospital to report the rape, and they did a rape kit, and I filed a report with the police. Then I was brought back to the Hyde campus from the hospital. This was a few days before Thanksgiving break.

I remember being driven from the hospital to campus in a dingy one color two piece sweatsuit (think champion grey) and led to Hyde's nurse. I was then forced to walk in this sweatsuit (because my clothes were taken with the rape kit) back to my dorm at the far end of the populated campus, while the students and faculty stared at me and talked under their breath. I felt like I was wearing a Scarlett letter and I was told by the faculty that this was the first step in taking accountability for my actions because I had caused my rape, because I had run away.

Meanwhile, I was inappropriately touched by guys who were on the lacrosse team, and because they were considered to be gods on campus, no one believed me. I had it at that point. Disgustingly, a few of these guys even reached out to me recently via social media to tell me I look great now as an adult. The Gaulds and my faculty "team" decided that I would be best suited to stay on Inpost during Thanksgiving Break as an accountability for running away, after I had just been raped, exploited and given no mental health care. This meant I couldn't go home like all the other students.

Inpost was supposed "to help build my character". I was to shadow an older buddy at all times. However they, like everyone else, didn't actually care to assess my well being, and so during some unattended time I swallowed a LOT of pills in my dorm room, trying to overdose.

I was found unconscious and was rushed to the hospital. They pumped my stomach, and when I was revived, I was extremely upset that I was still alive. I was held on a "Temporary Restraining Order" in a psych ward for 3 days, then for a few more days, and they only released me when I lied my way out by saying I had taken so many pills by mistake. Then they finally transferred me home. I never went back to that hell hole of torture called Hyde.

After returning home, I eventually went to a residential program for a year and a half called Graydon, and later graduated from a mainstream high school in 2004 with honors. My eating disorder that had began at Hyde now had me weighing in at 86 lbs, like the Olsen twins at the height of their ED's. I had severe depression, constant paranoia, couldn't trust adults, had no friends, experienced night terrors, and I continued to hurt myself and hide it.

The Gauld family (who founded and run Hyde) made it clear to 16 year old me that my actions were the reason I raped, and said I needed to "own" that. They provided no follow-up counseling or mental health care after this occurred. I was diagnosed later in life with CPTSD that stemmed from these Hyde experiences and from the molestation I

endured during my early adolescent years. These events shaped a self destructive pattern for my adulthood.

After Hyde finally said they “couldn’t handle me” and sent me home post-suicide-attempt and mental hospital, and after I had endured even more abuse at Graydon, I began using drugs heavily and acting in a hypersexual manner to numb the pain. I ended up dating a guy who was 21 while I was a senior in high school and he was physically abusive and used to beat the living shit out me. Mind you, I was totally conditioned to think I was the problem; I thought this is what I deserved.

We got engaged and I finally started getting treatment. I was scared of every adult and doctor and so I regressed again and began committing crimes; stupid, petty offenses, but kept getting locked up. I’ve turned my life around and I’m doing well but the nightmares, the trauma, the urges to hurt myself to control my pain and numb it still exist, and worst of all, every human I’ve trusted as an adult has used this past to hurt me in one way or another. They used this trauma as some type of evidence to show why I don’t deserve to be loved, treated fairly, or otherwise. I still struggle with self worth and have been in a number of abusive relationships.

Now, luckily, I have no criminal record on paper. I’ve been in counseling for years. REAL counseling, with LICENSED therapists, not the unqualified faculty who oversaw our “group seminars” at Hyde, who used non-evidence-based methods to “help” kids who needed help. I am about to graduate college for criminal justice with a 4.0. I volunteer, and run an animal rescue on a farm. However, nothing will ever make the negligence and abuse I suffered at the hands of Hyde that they categorized as “character building” and their lack of accountability, and how it shaped my life, okay.

Why do I think Hyde School needs to be on the watchlist? Hyde stole my sense of self worth, my value, my ambitions, my innocence, it taught me to believe that my rape, my painful emotions, etc. were all my fault and that I deserved them. They began (what I consider) grooming me to believe I deserved to be treated like garbage my whole life by family, friends, and partners. They taught me that I was a mistake and I didn’t deserve love. What Hyde used was simply abusive, manipulative, brainwashing, punishing behavior modification techniques, and coercive thought reform, but offered no effective help for underlying conditions and trauma. They have been doing this for decades, and they are still open!

Graydon was awful, too. They made me not trust people, and fear that every human would only hurt or abuse me. Graydon made me realize that if I didn’t put on the expected act and embody the picture of a perfect, well adjusted person, I would never have any bit of a normal life. Graydon nurtured the seed that Hyde planted; the seed that conditioned me to believe I was broken, that everything bad that happened to me was my fault, and that I could never be truly loved.

Regarding reports to law enforcement: I did not file a police report for being forced to do endless unpaid child labor (and being removed from school for it), nor for Hyde using

pseudo-therapeutic tactics overseen by faculty with little to no education in counseling/mental health/psychology/family therapy. I didn't know that I could file a report for that, or if they would even care. I don't know what exactly the laws are in Maine (though I think the child labor is not legal). Hyde uses careful wording to get around the legal issues of doing therapy-type-exercises but without actual therapists. I didn't report the psychological neglect to the police, and I'm not sure they would have cared if I did. In my experience, Hyde recruits a lot of teens who do need some serious psychological counseling, but then doesn't provide them any, and blames of the teen's problems on the teen. This seems like medical neglect (and they also medically neglect to take student complaints seriously for most physical, not-psych issues). In regards to the rape when I ran away from Hyde, I did file a police report. The man who raped me was sentenced to 8 years in prison. I am sure he is out now. He lived in Portland, Maine.

So to those of you who say this place helped you, great, but don't for a second diminish the fact that this establishment unlawfully, knowingly, and intentionally ruined others' lives and changed their whole futures in a negative way.

[END OF SERMON]

Commentary by Rev. Angela Smith:

The HEAL Mission has received 28 separate complaints from individuals and families unrelated to each other alleging fraud, undue influence, abuse, and more at The Hyde School and as described above by guest sermonizer Megan Price. The most recent complaint the church and/or mission received regarding The Hyde School occurred in 2012. The mission and church are thankful to Megan Price for participating and contributing in-kind and beyond. That being said, Megan was approached by another survivor, who was already an active sponsor of Hyde's placement, and provided the above at their request. I had explained to the other survivor that the following two questions should be addressed in guest sermons about programs on the watch-list:

1. Did you report fraud or other unlawful actions to the proper authorities? If not, why? If so, what happened with the reports? (So, 2 part question)
2. Why do you believe The Hyde School should be denied merciful release from the COPE Conversion Program?

I do feel Price effectively answered both questions.

For those reading this who need to report false advertising, misleading marketing, or scams of any sort (including diploma mills), you can report to your home state's attorney general by filing a consumer complaint or file a complaint with the FTC. You can find reporting resources at <https://www.heal-online.org/report.htm> and <https://www.heal-online.org/hyde.htm>. It is my hope that all find this helpful.

There are opportunities to send messages, receive mystery bonus blessings, and more with or without donating available now on our "Pass the Basket" page at <https://www.cope.church/basket.htm> . Thank You.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32 KJV Willful blindness is an abomination.

COPE accepts Feedback, critical and complimentary. Learn more at <https://www.cope.church/feedback.htm> . For the sake of keeping myself and others humble, a sense of humor is welcome on all sides.

For More About COPE and the HEAL Mission, see:

<https://www.cope.church> and <https://www.heal-online.org>