**“What would you say if I seduced you?”**

*Behind the gates of Upper Canada College, the private Toronto enclave for Canada's elite, scenes of sexual coercion and even assault by teachers upon students are alleged to have played themselves out over decades, always*

*covered up by its old boys club. Now, legal charges have brought those claims into the open. Globe and Mail investigative reporter PETER CHENEY tells tales out of school.*

By Peter Cheney

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He sits in his fifth-floor apartment in Kingston, Ont., with his cat and his duct-taped guitar case, looking out over a landscape of highway interchanges and strip malls. Before him is a plastic box of medications and a package of

Players Lights, which he smokes in endless succession as he tells the story of how he was raped by his teacher.

His name is Ron. He does not want his last name published, even though it is familiar to a generation at his alma mater -- Upper Canada College, this country's most elite private school. The public has never heard his story, but for decades Ron's rape has been one of upper-crust Toronto's dirty little secrets. The crime was known to the principal of the school, many members of its staff and classmates who went on to become blue-chip members of the

Canadian establishment.

Ron went on to an emotional breakdown, a diagnosis of schizophrenia and the anguish that comes from watching the man who raped you go unpunished for 26 years.

Ron is 48 now, a greying version of the sensitive young man who appears in UCC yearbooks from 1971 and 1972. Then, he was a boy of promise and good grades, an amateur guitar player with a talent for squash and tennis.

The memory that made him a good student is still acute. And he has not forgotten Clark Winton Noble, the UCC teacher who raped him on the night of Dec. 17, 1971.

It began at Toronto's upscale Badminton and Racquet Club, where Noble had invited him for a game of doubles. Ron recalls that Noble played poorly, but with a certain charisma -- "he had a lot of style." After the game, the teacher bought him drinks: Noble was 33 at the time; Ron was 17. He was not a member of Noble's inner circle of young men, but he found himself magnetized by his charm, and thrilled to be served drinks like an adult.

He remembers downing a series of Zombies, then some Rusty Nails. Then there was a bar cruise to Avenue Road, yet more drinking, a slide into alcoholic oblivion, followed by blurry excerpts from the trip to Noble's apartment, which was near the school. Inside the doorway, Ron remembers Noble taking him into his arms and fondling his crotch. He remembers Noble saying, "Would you like to go to bed now?"

Ron sagged, passing out from the liquor. And then he tells the part of the story that he relegates to a back shelf of his brain like a dusty, rarely watched movie: He woke up in darkness and realized that he was in Noble's

bedroom. His face was pressed into the sheets, and Noble was sodomizing him.

In the morning, Noble acted as though nothing had happened. He drove Ron to his parent’s house and said, "I'll call you." Ron got out and slammed the door.

A few days later, overcome with shame, Ron confided to a friend. Soon, the word went around the school. Everywhere he went, students stared at him. "It was overwhelming," Ron says. "Everyone was talking about it. But

nothing happened. Things just went on like before."

Noble ignored him. Ron walked past his class one day and saw that the desks had been pulled up in a circle. Noble was in the centre, all eyes upon him -- "like he was God."

Ron went to his father, a former military officer who had gone on to become a senior executive with a major Canadian company, and told him what had happened. His father went to see Patrick Johnson, the principal of UCC at the time.

His father returned, angry. He told Ron that he didn't think anything could be done. "He said the school had closed ranks," Ron says.

Ron's rape did not end with criminal charges against Noble. Nor did it end Noble's teaching career -- or even his pedophile career. Instead, Noble was allowed to teach at two other elite private schools, a process referred to in the profession as "passing the trash."

But for the events of the past month, Ron's rape might have slipped from public memory. Now, his story has been made fresh by developments that have recently rocked UCC.

It began on Aug. 2 with the arrest of Doug Brown, a charismatic former teacher who has been charged with 18 sex-related crimes. Brown, who taught at the school from 1975 until 1992, allegedly committed a series of

sexual assaults in a UCC dormitory where he worked as a supervisor. These latest charges have shaken the school's blue-chip image and raised questions about its handling of sexual-abuse allegations.

Ian Douglas, a former lawyer who attended UCC in the 1950s and 1960s, said he believes that the institution used its overwhelming power to control information and, by extension, to maintain its public image.

"Society's acknowledged leaders believed that it was their birthright to influence people, events and what made it into the newspapers or onto

TV," Douglas says.

The result, he believes, is that there is a story that has never been told about UCC: "That story," he says, "would describe an institution which utterly and consciously debased its most basic duties to the children in its care."

UCC has seen many golden boys and, until he was branded as a pedophile, Clark Winton Noble counted himself among them. Noble had the kind of gifts that can only be conferred: patrician looks, school connections and the

confidence that comes with being a son of the Canadian establishment.

He grew up in a mansion in Toronto's Forest Hill, just across the street from the Timothy Eaton Memorial Church. His father was E. Clark Noble, a prominent physician; his uncle was Dr. Robert Laing Noble, a cancer researcher whose accomplishments earned him a place in the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame. Noble's brother went on to become a highly regarded cardiologist.

Noble chose teaching, a profession that was considered appropriate for children of the upper class, particularly if they secured a position at an elite institution.

To the outside world, UCC was monolithic, an ivy-covered school that was a stepping stone to a life of power and influence; by extension, it was assumed that the school's standards were far above average and that its staff was the

finest.

Although that was partly true, UCC could also be a place of fantastic eccentricity and uneven standards. A boy might find himself in real-life

Dead Poets Society, with a gifted and imaginative teacher who would give equal class time to Shakespeare and Pink Floyd. That same student might also have a teacher who would devote an entire double algebra class to the reading of hardcore gay pornography.

"For all of the late 1950s and early 1960s, UCC employed a population of usually bachelor, sometimes alcoholic, frequently sadistic and occasionally pedophilic masters who brought a pervasive terror to young boys," Douglas says.

This was Noble's world. He arrived at UCC in 1966, and made an immediate impression. "He was a very striking guy," one of his former students says. "He had a lot of presence."

Noble -- nicknamed Nobby by peers and students -- was a modern-day Pied Piper, attracting a flock of young male students with his flamboyant style. His academic standards were relaxed; his classes were widely regarded as useful for pulling up a sagging average. He spoke to teenagers as if they were peers. He drank with underaged students and invited them to his apartment. He took them on trips out west and on sailing expeditions where he was alone with them for days on end.

In the summer, he sometimes served as a leader on European tours organized by a company called Butterfield & Robinson -- a staple item in the life of upper-crust Canadian boys. He spent weeks travelling through Europe with his young charges, staying in hotels, sightseeing and drinking.

He was also a summer counsellor at Camp Hurontario on Georgian Bay, which catered to the sons of the wealthy. At the camp, Noble made the most of his physique by wearing tiny shorts and tight T-shirts. One camper later

referred to him as "Michelangelo's David."

Only later would it be noted that Noble had created a life in which he was surrounded by young people almost every day of the year.

Not everyone bought Noble's act. A student who was interviewed by author James FitzGerald for his book on UCC called Old Boys recalled him as "a particularly repellent individual . . . an extraordinarily pretentious guy

always trying to make a big impression."

Publicly, Noble embraced the school's homophobia. He once interrupted a 1968 history class to offer his opinion of a newly arrived Grade 10 English teacher believed to be gay: "God, I hate that guy," he announced. He used his classroom as a pulpit, declaiming on everything from the origin of man to his hatred of homosexuals, whom he denounced as "fags."

Privately, Noble was no stranger to gay sex. It was an open secret among students and staff alike. One student recalled how he shared a motel room with the teacher, who was in a twin bed next to his own, during a summer trip to Europe. Noble reached over, dropped an ice cube in the boy's navel, and asked, "What would you say if I seduced you?"

He told the boy that he had slept with at least a dozen of his classmates and that he enjoyed boys and girls equally. He offered his bisexual credo: "Double your pleasure, double your fun."

For nearly a year, Noble carried on a love affair with a young man who headed the school's cadet squad, a blond, muscular boy from a prominent family. He was sighted at a party, rolling around under a table with a teenaged girl from Bishop Strachan School.

But Ron's rape in December of 1971 was a bridge too far. When his father went to the school to complain, Noble was called in for a discussion with the principal. A short time later, Noble resigned his position at UCC. The police

were never called.

In September of 1972, Noble went to British Columbia to teach at Pacific College, a new private school that was about to open. When the school's opening was delayed because of construction problems, headmaster Jack

Matthews called a colleague at Shawnigan Lake School, an upscale private school on Vancouver Island and secured a teaching position for Noble.

David Robertson, the current headmaster at Shawnigan Lake, says his school had no idea of Noble's controversial past. "If that was the case, I'm certain he wouldn't have been hired."

Noble lasted only two months at Shawnigan Lake. He left after a falling-out with the administration over a wilderness program he wanted to set up. A short time later, he arrived at Appleby College, a private school in Oakville, Ont.

At Appleby, he repeated the patterns of UCC. He was very popular with students, known for his sense of fashion, his physical attractiveness and his apparent breeding. "He never talked about it," a teacher says. "But you knew he came from money. He'd mention a club he was in, or the trip he just came back from."

As at UCC, Noble spent a lot of time with students outside the classroom -- one of his distinctions at Appleby was the creation of a Temagami wilderness program, which he ran for 14 years. Noble took the students into the bush for week-long sessions of canoeing, hiking and camping. For much of the time, he was alone with the students.

In 1991, there was another accusation. The father of an Appleby student told the administration that Noble had sexually assaulted his son. Again, there were no charges. Instead, Noble left the school. Staff members were told only that Noble had decided to retire.

For years, there was no explanation. The first official insight came in 1997, when Noble was finally charged by police. The investigation that led to the charges was launched after Ron went to the police, determined that something finally be done.

After the charges were announced, the boy Noble had assaulted at Appleby came forward as well. In 1998, Noble pleaded guilty to a 1988 sexual assault at Appleby and to the 1971 rape at his apartment. In July of 1998, he was sentenced to one year, which was suspended. In the courtroom, Noble's lawyer, Frank Felkai, read a statement:

"The incident happened a long time ago. . . .[Noble] has asked me to tell Your Honour that he's sorry about what happened, he's sorry that he caused emotional problems."

A reporter from Canadian Press filed a news story on Noble's sentencing, but it never ran in the newspapers, keeping his crime an essentially private affair.

"I think that to this day, a lot of people really don't know what happened," says a private school official who once taught with Noble at Appleby College. "One day he was just gone, and that was it. End of story."

There is an obvious question: How could school officials allow teachers accused of criminal conduct to move on to other schools and avoid charges?

"I don't know what happened," says Doug Blakey, the current principal of UCC. "I can only imagine. It's hard to know what the principal of the day was contemplating."

Blakey says there are no records relating to Ron's rape, his father's complaint or Noble's departure. "And the individuals involved are no longer with us."

In fact, UCC officials of the time knew exactly what happened to Ron, and they were also aware of other problems with Noble. In a 1994 interview, just months before his death, former principal Patrick Johnson told FitzGerald, the author of Old Boys, that Ron's rape was common knowledge and that the school had been lucky to escape litigation:

"I'm amazed the parents didn't take legal action in that particular case," Johnson said in a transcript of his interview that was never published.

He also admitted that he was well aware that Noble had a reputation as a pedophile: "Nobby used to take boys on trips out west," Johnson said. "God knows what happened on those trips. I heard things through my grapevine."

The arrest of Brown has sparked a sort of institutional catharsis. Student after student has come forward to offer his version of past events at UCC. Some have emerged to defend the school as well as Brown and Noble, whom they recall as gifted, caring teachers.

"Doug Brown was the most influential teacher in my life," says Ben Peterson, who was taught by Brown in 1989 and 1990, when he was in

Grades 7 and 8. Peterson, the son of former Ontario premier David Peterson, says Mr. Brown had inspired him to rise from last in his class to first. "He saw in me what many others had not. . . . Doug Brown was a gifted teacher

-- a UCC institution -- who benefited numerous people in ways that most teachers can only dream of."

Many more have savaged their alma mater for concealing allegations of past crimes, and for using the power of its name to suppress discussion.

"What's happened here is a disgrace," says Walter Tedman, who attended the school from 1954 to 1963. "None of this is new. It was an open secret. It was everywhere. I can't imagine that there was anyone who didn't know about it. . . .

"I'm not surprised it's taken so long to come out," Tedman says. "Everyone who's tried to approach the topic realized that the college had no interest in anything but silencing them."

Tedman recalls how, as a small boy, he was repeatedly molested by Tim Gibson, a former UCC teacher who was referred to by many students as "Mo" Gibson for his habit of fondling his young charges. Gibson would circle around the back of the room and put his hand inside the clothes of the boys who sat in the back rows, he says.

"There was nothing I could do," he says. "It was just part of life at UCC. It was 10 o'clock in the morning, and the sun was shining through the windows and I was being mauled."

Tedman recalls how he went to the headmaster and asked for a seat closer to the front of the class. When he was asked why, he says, he said he couldn't see the board. When that failed to get him a new seat, he tried to tell the

headmaster what Gibson was doing.

"I said that Mr. Gibson troubled me -- I said he sits down beside me and I don't like it. And the headmaster said, 'That's the end of this meeting.' "

To understand how the abuse of small boys was once tolerated at UCC requires an understanding of the school's position in society during the era when the crimes took place. Douglas, the former lawyer who attended UCC

in the 1950s and 1960s, says the school was a central pillar in a small but dominant WASP society where social standing counted above all -- and to criticize the school entailed the very real possibility of ostracism.

"UCC was . . . the perfect environment for the cover-up, the big lie, inaction, studied disbelief. No one would ever complain, no one could ever complain. Maintaining appearances meant that parents needed to keep their children in

UCC, more for their own sake than for the sake of their children."

Although many have said brutality and sexual abuse were rampant, others say they never caught a whiff of it.

"I didn't see sexual abuse, and I didn't hear about it," says Ron Atkey, a lawyer who went to UCC from 1958 until 1960. "The only place I encountered it was in British novels. I would say that it is an unfair rap."

Rob Prichard, who went on to a stellar career that has included the presidency of the University of Toronto after graduating from UCC in 1967, has always been considered a poster boy for the elite school, and one of its

staunchest defenders. But in his interview for Old Boys, he alluded to darker undercurrents:

"There is an ugly side to UCC. Some men get a sexual rush from caning little boys. Unfortunately, private schools that encourage you to cane little boys attract such people to teach. I assume there are various nasty secrets

hidden away in the bowels of the school's history. They are best left there."

For those directly involved, leaving behind the "nasty secrets" of UCC is impossible.

Some would obviously like to -- like Noble, who is now 63 years old. He lives in an exclusive Toronto neighbourhood across the street from Branksome Hall, an upper-crust private girls school. He refuses to talk about UCC, his teaching career or anything else. A phone call ends after one question: "I'm not involved," Noble says. "And I'm not interested in talking. Goodbye."

Ron, the boy Noble raped 30 years ago, cannot dismiss the past so easily, even if he would sometimes like to. The defining quality of his life is loneliness. His days are all the same, spent in his $500-a-month apartment, with a daily walk to buy lottery tickets.

The apartment looks like the dorm room of a student who has stayed on after all his friends have graduated and moved on with their lives. The shelves are filled with old paperbacks and VHS tapes. There are a few books on the Civil War, and a Time-Life series of hardbacks on psychology.

For Ron, being raped was the beginning of a steep personal slide. After leaving UCC in1972, he went to Queen's University to study arts, but suffered a complete breakdown. He was diagnosed with schizophrenia. He has tried to slash his wrists twice. Until 1986, he worked at a series of dead-end jobs, including farm labourer, health-spa attendant and squash instructor. Finally, he retreated to his apartment full-time, living on $900 a month from a disability allowance plus the occasional gift from his mother. His father died several years ago.

To control his schizophrenia, he takes a long list of medications, which he keeps in a plastic case that is marked with hours and days. He doesn't know whether being raped by Noble contributed to his mental condition.

"Maybe I was going to be this way anyway," he says. "But I don't think it helped. How could it? I can't deal with the feelings I have about it. I've spent all these years trying to bury it, but I can't. I had a good childhood. I had a great family. This was the first really bad thing that ever happened to me."

He says he has no anger toward his father for his inability to get justice done in 1971. "I don't know what my father was up against," he says. "I'm sure he did what he could."

Ron says he deals with the past by controlling his mind, which he sees as a damaged machine, a piece of equipment that has valves and levers that can allow or deny access to particular trains of thought and memories. The section that holds Noble is rarely opened: "I can make it so he's not here," he says. "That's what I do most of the time."

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In a story published Aug. 25, convicted pedophile Clark Winton Noble, a

former teacher at Upper Canada College, was incorrectly identified as the son of Dr. Robert Laing Noble. In fact, Mr. Noble is Dr. Noble's nephew. Mr. Noble's father is Dr. E. Clark Noble.