



## ***An Attempt to Mend a Broken Network & Save the Cause of Christ from Reproach***

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Tommy Shelton  
Ordination Sus-  
pended in '85  
Victims  
Victims' Families  
Eyewitnesses  
Sherry Avery

### **Eyewitness Account: Sherry Avery**

#### **Tommy Shelton Caught**

It was late October, 1984, when Sherry says she caught Tommy Shelton red-handed. Here is her account of what happened that day, and of how it all got explained away and covered up.

'03 Dryden Letter  
Riva's '03 Threat  
Dryden's Reply  
Tommy's  
Confession  
'06 in Virginia  
'06 3ABN Tribute  
Riva's '07 Threat

Danny Shelton  
Danny's Apologists  
Leonard Westphal  
Litigation, etc.  
Letters of Support  
News Releases  
Contact Us

02/04/2007

...

I'm so sorry for taking longer than I first told you. We were at the Hospital everyday with a sick friend and I just couldn't get this together. It takes me longer to do things in my old age....

I hope this will give a little insight to what went on that day, I forget some things that have happened in my life but that day stuck in my mind forever. I really pray that these boys will soon get peace from what they have carried around with them all these years. I do not feel any animosity towards the people at Ezra Church of God. I have felt hurt but God has helped me all these years. I can tell Judy Woods has been deeply hurt and disappointed by Tommy and Carol; I know exactly how he can make you feel. He use to come to my house and talk for hours about his feelings for Carol. He said be worked on programming his mind so that if he was ever in an accident he wouldn't say the wrong things if he was under a mind altering drug. I think I know what he was trying to keep from saying.

God bless your efforts in these matters with 3ABN and your Church. We will certainly keep you in our prayers.

Sincerely,

Added on 4/1/2007  
Furniture

Added on 3/28/2007  
Defy the Board  
Board Action

Added on 3/22/2007  
Book Deals  
Emails  
Financial Aff.

Added on 3/20/2007  
The Lost Bet

Added on 3/17/2007  
Walt Admits: No  
Evidence

Added on 3/16/2007  
Pregnancy Test

Added on 3/15/2007  
Dan & Brandy  
Abused You?

Must Read:

## Mom in Pain #1



Sherry Avery

PS: I do know who wrote that last letter....The Mother...

This will take awhile to explain but let me start by saying that in 1975 my husband and I were married at Ezra Church of God by Tommy Shelton. We were very close to Tommy and Carol (his wife) for a number of years. I had lived in Paducah with mutual friends before I was married; they were like family to all of us, We had a wonderful church family and God blessed my husband and me with two wonderful boys.

The problems started of course with the first accusations of misconduct with Brad Dunning. I knew Brad as a fine young man; he didn't go to our church but I knew his mother and grandfather. I didn't know quite how to handle what I had heard and I wasn't 100% sure of what went on. I couldn't feel free to disbelieve my pastor but I asked God to show me the truth before I could blame anyone. I just had to be sure I was right. What made it harder was that our mutual friends (from Paducah) had told us a couple of years before that they felt uneasy about Tommy bringing boys to their home and always wanting to counsel them in his room. This was tearing on me as I prayed that God would please make things clear to me so I could be 100% sure.

In late October 1984 I went to our mutual friends' weekend home (in West Frankfort) to look in her closet for the size of a blouse; her birthday was the next week and I wanted to buy her a gift. When I drove up to the house I saw Tommy's car in the driveway. I also saw two boys raking leaves in the backyard. I went to the door and rung the doorbell but no one came to open the door. I then went to the backyard and asked the boys (they were from our church) if they knew what Bro. Tommy was doing in the house. They said they hadn't seen him

and that his car was there when they arrived. I went around to the door again and opened it with my key. When I went inside I saw both bedroom doors shut (unusual for my friends to shut these doors). This made me very nervous; I thought to myself, "Would Tommy have another woman in this house?"... I turned and went to the front porch and when I turned around and came back inside there was Tommy in his stocking feet coming up the stairs from the basement. He said he was checking to see if there was water on the basement floor. I thought that was very strange for when I went to the bedroom the door was opened and someone was in the bathroom. I asked him who was in the bathroom and he said it was his son, Ricky. I went into the bedroom and the bed was a total mess; the bedcovers were all in disarray. I was really getting nervous now and I went over to the closet and looked inside for the size and then got out of there.

I drove out to the church and walked into the Christian school gym and there was Ricky playing basketball with other boys. I then went upstairs where I knew they were having a meeting with new prospects for the school; I saw the principal's wife and motioned for her to come out. I asked her where Tommy was and she said he was with a certain boy somewhere.

I went to my car and proceeded to drive back to the house and on the way I saw Tommy's car coming down the road. I was sure the boy had hid when they saw my car coming down the country road. When I got back to the house I went inside and found the bedroom doors opened and the bed all made up. I walked back to the front porch and Tommy drove up. My question to him was, "What is going on? You've been caught haven't you?" His reply was, "I knew you would think that something was going on. I [page 2] was just cutting his hair." I asked him why the bed was a mess and he just said, "I don't know." He said he didn't have a chance anymore; he had to hide everything he did because everyone would think the worst. He then told me he would leave the church. I told him to do what he thought he should do and I left.

That afternoon he sent Carol to talk to me. She told me I

was mistaken on what I saw and he was just trying to help this boy. She said I was just jealous of Tommy and his relationship with our mutual friends. I thought, why or how would he come up with that? She told me it would ruin the church and it would be my fault. We talked for hours that night just enough for me to question what I should do. I decided I would not tell anyone what went on that day but continue to watch and pray for God to tell me what to do. I thought it was enough to scare Tommy into changing his ways. I wanted him to get help.

Several months went by and I was praying constantly telling others I had a great burden and needed them to help me pray about it. One Sunday while at the same house with my friends, Ricky came in. He was really upset; his dad was going on another trip and was taking one of the young boys with him (the same boy that was at the house with him that day in October). Ricky cried and asked why his dad would take these other boys and not take him. Well, that did it for me. The next day I went to my friends (the mutual friends who owned the house) and told them the whole story. They both realized that Tommy had a problem and I will never forget the words said, "Even if he were my blood son he must be confronted; he must pay for his sins." That's all I needed, I had to go home and talk with one of the leaders in the church, the Sunday School Supt.

I told her (the Sunday School Supt.) what had happened and she told me she had been seeing things that didn't look right to her and she and her husband had questioned it. Her husband had seen cars at the church late at night when he had come home from work on midnight shift, cars that belonged to young boys. I told her I wanted to see the church get him help; he had a problem that was more than we could handle. She hugged me on her front porch and told me it would be taken care of.

Just two days later at Prayer Meeting she stood up and testified and ended with, "I love my pastor and I stand behind him 100%." I was shocked. Of course Tommy wasn't there because he was sick.

The next Sunday the Asst. Pastor and Principal of the

Christian School stood up and said Tommy was having a nervous breakdown and would be out for a few weeks. That night he stood up and said, "Everyone that is behind our pastor stand up". Well, everyone stood up but me. I think I was in total shock at what was happening. The people that knew my life and me began to wonder what was going on; they knew something wasn't right. They began to call me but I still didn't tell what was going on, they soon got wind that I was jealous and trying to destroy the church.

Soon I did have to explain in detail what was going on and what had happened. There were many supporters of Tommy that gave our family a hard time, even to the point of [page 3] writing nasty letters to my mother-in-law, who didn't have a thing to do with what happened; she had been gone from Ezra Church for a long time. I think maybe there should be some apologies made before there can be healing. Even the young men that came forward had terrible things said about them; some supporters made the comment that you couldn't believe these boys because they weren't Christians and going to church. I wonder how many young men that were molested by their pastors are in church today? It was hard enough for me to ever trust a pastor or the church people again. I lost all confidence in those people that knew what was going on and still backed Tommy, yet I didn't lose hope in the God I knew. These were the things that led to Tommy losing his credentials with the Church of God, Anderson, Indiana, the awful sins he committed against the children! Those that are still backing Tommy (I think we know who they are) need to realize that the judgment is coming and is swift. The devil wants to deceive us all; open your eyes people: it's time to make it right.

Sincerely,



Sherry Avery

11/23/2006 15:44 6186272970 5 6/11/07 PAGE 07

02/04/2007

Dear [REDACTED]

I'm so sorry for taking longer than I first told you, we were at the Hospital everyday with a sick friend and I just couldn't get this together. It takes me longer to do things in my old age....

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11/20/2006 1:07:06 64BE277570

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PAGE 07

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Page: 04

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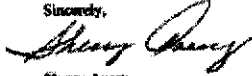
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11/22/2006 19:44 6106272570 S AVERY PAGE 02

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Sincerely,  
  
 Sherry Avery

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***"Truth invites examination & needs no defense.  
 Lies hide in darkness & blame everyone else."***