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Great Is the Truth: Secrecy, Scandal, and the Quest for Justice at the Horace Mann School

Amos Kamil, Sean Elder

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A shocking exposé of sexual abuse and the struggle for justice at one of America's most prestigious schools

In June 2012, Amos Kamil's *New York Times Magazine* cover story, "Prep-School Predators," caused a shock wave that is still rippling. In his piece, Kamil detailed a decades-long pattern of sexual abuse at the highly prestigious Horace Mann School in the Bronx. After the article appeared, Kamil closely observed the fallout. While the article revealed the misdeeds of three teachers, this was just the beginning: an extraordinary twenty-two former Horace Mann teachers and administrators have since been accused of abuse.

In *Great Is the Truth*, Kamil and his coauthor, Sean Elder, tell the riveting story of how one of the country's leading schools was beset by scandal. In 1970, Horace Mann hired R. Inslee "Inky" Clark Jr. as its headmaster. As Yale's wunderkind dean of admissions, Clark had helped revolutionize the Ivy League by recruiting a more diverse student body. In the coming years, he would raise Horace Mann to new heights of academic distinction even as serious complaints against beloved teachers were ignored. Kamil and Elder introduce those teachers, among them a popular football coach who had reportedly tried out for the Washington Redskins, a distinguished conductor who took his prize students on foreign trips, an otherworldly English teacher who discussed Eastern philosophy over tea and helped tend the school's gardens, and another English instructor, who told his students that they were mere dust under his foot in comparison to Shakespeare.

In gripping detail, Kamil and Elder relate what happened as survivors of abuse came forward and sought redress. We see the school and its influential backers circle the wagons. We meet Horace Mann alumni who work to change New York State's sexual abuse laws. We follow a celebrity lawyer's contentious efforts to achieve a settlement. And we encounter a former teacher who candidly recalls his inappropriate relationships with students. Kamil and Elder also examine other institutions-from prep schools to the Catholic Church-that have sought to atone for their complicity in abuse and to prevent it from reoccurring.

"Great is the truth and it prevails" may be the motto of Horace Mann, but for many alumni the truth remains all too hard to come by. This book is essential reading for anyone trying to understand how an elite institution can fail those in its charge, and what can be done about it.

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