

The Boston Globe

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PLEASED TO SLEET YOU

TODAY: Snow or sleet early,
then all sleet, 25-29

TOMORROW: Rain, high near 40
HIGH TIDE: 12:39 a.m., 12:54 p.m.
FULL REPORT: PAGE B8

Scores of priests involved in sex abuse cases



This article was reported by the Globe Spotlight Team: Reporters Matt Carroll, Sacha Pfeiffer, and Michael Rezendes; senior assistant metropolitan editor Stephen Kurkjian; and editor Walter V. Robinson. It was written by Robinson.

Under an extraordinary cloak of secrecy, the Archdiocese of Boston in the last 10 years has quietly settled child molestation claims against at least 70 priests, according to an investigation by the Globe Spotlight Team.

In the public arena alone, the Globe found court records and other documents that identify 19 present and former priests as accused pedophiles. Four have been convicted of criminal charges of sex abuse, including former priest John J. Geoghan. Two others face criminal charges.

But those public cases represent just a fraction of the priests whose cases have been disposed of in private negotiations that never brought the parties near a courthouse, according to interviews with many of the attorneys involved.

One law firm alone won financial settlements for its clients against at least 45 priests and five brothers from religious orders, according to the lead attorney in those

Settlements kept scope of issue out of public eye

cases, Roderick MacLeish Jr.

Although the settlements are secret, the church's annual directories, which list where priests are assigned, are public. From them, the Globe developed a database to track assignments of clergy, and those data strongly suggest that large numbers of priests were involved in sexual abuse cases that were settled.

The database identified 102 priests who were placed on sick leave or otherwise removed from parish assignments in the early

to mid-1990s. The archdiocese settled claims of sexual abuse against at least 30 of those priests, according to public records, lawyers involved in the cases, and, in some instances, their own admissions.

The estimate of 70 is conservative, according to lawyers. It includes priests named in lawsuits, the 50 cited by MacLeish, the estimates of other attorneys who also settled cases privately, and interviews with some victims who have contacted the Globe about their settlements. Moreover, the Globe learned of about 20 other court suits where the records have been impounded.

In another sign of the extent of the clergy
SPOTLIGHT, Page A20

Disclosure announced

The Archdiocese of Boston says it has given authorities the names of priests accused of molesting children in the last 40 years. **B3.**

Reports of betrayal

A priest who reached out to Boston youth in the 1960s and '70s is called a sexual predator. **A21.**

Unassigned status

A recent nursing home priest says he was treated at two institutions for sexually abusive clergy. **B3.**