



MEMO TO FILE

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM: Rev. Joseph R. Cistone  
ITEM: Interview with [redacted] James  
DATE: September 28, 1992  
RE: Rev. Edward V. Avery (1970)

Rev. William J. Lynn, Secretary For Clergy, and Rev. Joseph R. Cistone met with [redacted] James today at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary to discuss James's undated letter to Msgr. John J. Jagodzinski, then Secretary For Clergy, and the copy of James's letter to Father Avery. What follows is the account of James's best recollection of his association with Father Avery and the issues of concern.

[redacted] James is presently twenty-nine years of age, a medical student, married and the father of one child. James first met Father Avery at Saint Philip Neri parish in East Greenville. James was in the 6th or 7th grade at the time. He found Father Avery a very outgoing person, with an attractive persona. Father Avery befriended him at a time when James needed a good relationship with an adult, since his relationship with his own father was not strong. Father Avery would take James down the shore to do work at his home. He also would have James help him when he would do D.J. work at dances.

James felt this was all fairly innocent. Looking back, however, he finds it all very inappropriate. For example, Father Avery was responsible for James's first drink of beer at the age of 12. James said that Father Avery actually encouraged drinking. This would occur at Father Avery's house in North Wildwood. When assisting Father Avery's work as a D.J. at weddings, he would have alcohol served to him to the point of being sick and vomiting. James said there was never any admonition from Father Avery.

On one occasion, Father Avery took a group of altar boys to the shore. The boys slept together in the loft. Father Avery would come up and wrestle with the boys and tickle them. During this encounter, James recalls that Father Avery's hand slipped to James's crotch, at least on two or three occasions. James never thought anything of it at the time.

After grade school, James attended Pius X High School. Father Avery was assigned to Saint Agatha/Saint James parish and James continued to visit him. He enjoyed Father Avery's company. "He affirmed me." "He taught me to drive." On one particular night, James's best recollection is that it was during his freshman year, he took the train to Father Avery's rectory. They went to Smokey Joe's where Father Avery was D.J. for a gathering of Penn students. A college girl bought a drink for James and the bar passed up several pitchers of beer for both Father Avery and James. James eventually passed out. When he awoke, he was

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somewhere in a back hallway. Afterwards, he and Father Avery went back to the rectory. Father Avery told him to sleep in his bed. James awoke several hours later and felt Father Avery's hand grabbing him. James was wearing underclothes. He turned over to avoid these touches; however, Father Avery's hands were reaching down inside his shorts. James never said anything to Father Avery. He was in a state of disbelief. He felt that Father Avery had always shown so much positive support. James did note that Father Avery may have been under the influence of alcohol at this time.

There were other instances where James continued to help Father Avery with dances. However, on these occasions the only issue was the drinking.

Father Avery later was involved with helping a Laotian family. At one point, they took a trip to Wisconsin and went camping. A few Hmong people were also there. There was drinking, but nothing of a sexual nature happened at this time. However, James recalls that Father Avery told him he had found pictures/magazines of nude men in the rectory and then dropped the issue. James found it a bit unusual that Father Avery would mention this.

James's last encounter with Father Avery occurred on a ski trip to Vermont. James was approximately 19 years old and in college. Father Avery, Father Avery's brother and James spent the first night at the home of a family who were friends of Father Avery. On this night, James slept on the floor. The last night, the three stayed in a hotel. There were two double beds. James slept in one and Father's brother slept in the other. This time James said he could not recall if Father Avery was under the influence of alcohol; however, he himself was not drinking and was aware of what was happening. Father Avery got in bed with him and began groping. He reached over and fondled James. James was shocked. He thought: "What do I do?" "Grab his hand?" He couldn't act and was afraid of what Father Avery might do. At this point he acted very distant towards Father Avery. He was very quiet on the way home and never met with Father Avery again.

Father Avery continued to visit James's home to see his parents, whenever he visited the parish. However, James was never there on those occasions. James eventually told his parents and family what had happened. They never addressed the issue with Father Avery. They did support James and encouraged him to do something about this problem.

James never forgot these incidences. He always blamed himself, believing he must have done something wrong, especially since Father Avery was always viewed as such a great priest. James felt very alone.

Five years ago, James called the Archdiocese to set up a meeting to discuss these happenings. He was told to write a letter first, but he did not have the courage to do so.

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In February, 1992, he began counselling with Dr. Richard Fitzgibbons. He was in his first year of medical school and it was a very stressful time. He was having difficulty relating to male professors and male authority figures. Dr. Fitzgibbons encouraged him to write the letter to Father Avery. James wrote to Father Avery and sent a copy of this letter to the archdiocese. Father Avery never responded to his letter. His letter to the archdiocese was unsigned; so Father Lynn wrote to James, who did contact Father Lynn with an interest to pursue this issue.

When asked how this may have affected his marriage, James noted that to an extent it affects his ability to interact with men, especially priests and the Church. His wife is a Catholic and gives great encouragement. James noted that he wishes no vendetta. He does want to see Father Avery evaluated and treated. He is looking for some assurance that Father Avery will not harm anyone else.

During this interview, Father Lynn expressed the concern of the archdiocese for James's well-being. He noted that our order of priorities is the victim, the victim's family, the Church and the priest himself. He offered any assistance at our disposal. Father Lynn offered to have James inform Dr. Fitzgibbons that the bills from his counselling sessions be forwarded to the archdiocese in care of Father Lynn.

Father Lynn also explained that once this interview is transcribed, Father Cistone will meet with James again to assure the accuracy of this account and have him sign the transcript. Upon receipt of this signed account, Father Lynn will meet with Father Avery. Father Avery will be instructed not to contact James unless James is ready for such contact. Following the interview with Father Avery, the matter will be presented to the Cardinal for his review and action.

THE ABOVE SUMMARY REFLECTS ACCURATELY MY TESTIMONY AND MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE RESPONSE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE.

James  
Date 10/2/92

(Rev) Joseph R. Cistone  
witness Date 10-2-92

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