

AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF \_\_\_\_\_ )  
 ) ss:  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_ )

I, [redacted], being first duly sworn under oath, states as follows:

1. My name is [redacted] and I was born on [redacted] 1946 in Davenport, Iowa. My family lived in Davenport until 1950 when we moved to Houston, Texas.

2. In 1960 when I was 14 years old, my father was doing a great deal of business and travel to the midwest and my parents decided to rent a house in Bettendorf, Iowa, for the summer. After living at the house for a few weeks, a neighbor boy who I worked with as a caddy at the Davenport Country Club mentioned that his family was friends with a Catholic priest and the priest had asked him to go on a vacation with him to Florida at the end of the summer. The boy asked if I would like to join him and the priest on the trip and that the priest would put me on the train from Florida back to Houston at the end of the trip. I was naturally excited about the trip and thought that my parents might approve since we would be going with a "priest".

3. A few weeks later, the boy told me that he had talked to the priest and that he had no problem with me going to Florida with them. He also told me the priest was taking some boys on a camping trip to a cabin on the Mississippi River that weekend and asked me to come along. He told me that we could go fishing and swimming in the river and have a campfire. My parents quickly approved of the camping trip since we would be with a "priest". On that Friday afternoon, the boy's parents took us to a cabin near the river, where we met the priest and 4-5 other boys who had been dropped off by their parents. Late that afternoon, after the last boy had been dropped off, someone said it was time to go swimming. I began looking for my swimsuit in my bag when I noticed everyone else, including the priest, were naked and heading toward the river. I remember the priest yelling back and telling me that I did not need a swimsuit. I was extremely surprised, but since everyone else was doing it, I joined the group in the river naked. When everyone was in the water, the priest began flipping boys into the air while standing waist deep in the water. This looked like fun, so everyone lined up to be flipped. The priest would cup his hands together and have each boy in turn stand in front of him with his back to him and then step into his hands under the water and he would raise up and flip them into the air. When my turn came, I stepped in front of him and he put his arms around me and vigorously fondled my genitals under the water. I was totally shocked and scared. He ultimately put his hands together and flipped me into the air. I was totally confused by what had just happened and did not want to get in line again and started to swim away. Several of the boys and the priest called me back

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into line. The second time through the line, he fondled me again and rubbed himself against me. I then swam a good distance away and avoided getting in line again. Later, the priest suggested that everyone float on their backs and while floating, arch their backs and expose their genitals out of the water. When this happened, the priest would laugh and say "weenie on a plate". He then had each boy "show the moon" by tucking our knees, curling up in the water and exposing our rear ends out of the water.

4. After we got out of the water, we got dressed and ate dinner. When bedtime came that night, there were cots set up close together in a large room in the cabin. Just before the lights were turned out, the priest came and laid down in the cot next to mine. Sometime after the lights went out, I felt the priest's hand come under my blanket and touch my genitals. I pretended to be asleep and started to squirm. He persisted and put his hand inside my underwear and started to stroke my penis. I was terrified after what happened in the river and I could not believe what was happening to me. I rolled on my side away from him, but he persisted. I finally rolled onto my stomach which caused him to withdraw his hand from my underwear. He then began to massage my buttocks and continued to try to touch my genitals and anus. I thought about yelling out for help, but I thought that none of the other boys would believe me because he was a "priest" and I was just a young boy. Ultimately, one of the other boys got up to use the bathroom and the noise and movement caused him to stop. I remember laying there awake on my stomach trying to comprehend what had just happened to me.

5. When everyone got up the next morning, I told my friend I was feeling sick and wanted to go home. I was terrified of what might happen if I'd stay another night in that cabin. I remember the priest telling me that I would feel better and now wanting to call my parents. I continued to tell everyone that I was sick and ultimately my parents were called to pick me up. When my parents picked me up, I told them I had a stomach ache and I thought I was going to vomit. On the way home, my mind was racing about whether I should tell my parents what happened to me. By that time, I had gone to 8 years of Catholic School and my parents were devout Catholics. I was afraid that they would not believe me because it would be my word against the word of a priest. I decided to remain silent. Shortly thereafter, I told the boy next door that my parents would not allow me to go on the trip to Florida.

6. At the time of the camp-out at the cabin on the river, the priest was the only adult at the cabin and there was no other adult supervision.

7. In 2002, I decided it was time to report this incident to the local Catholic authorities. I called the Diocese of Davenport and told the operator that I wanted to report sexual abuse by a priest. The operator told me that I would have to speak to the Chancellor (Irene Prior Loftus), but that she was unavailable at that time. I left my name and number and asked her to have Ms. Loftus call me. I never received a call back and called back 2-3 times before I finally spoke to Ms. Loftus. I introduced myself and told her the story that I have detailed above. I told her that I realized that this had happened many years ago, but I just wanted to make sure that the priest could not still be around

*molesting children.* I also told her that I could not remember the priest's name, but that he was probably from the Catholic Church that was near the house in Bettendorf. She told me that she would do an investigation and get back to me. Two or three weeks went by without a response from her, so I called back and she told me that she had mentioned my story to Bishop Franklin and that his response was "it was not unusual for boys to go swimming in the nude back in those days." I was shocked and disgusted by this comment because it was unusual for this to happen on a "church outing" and for molestation to occur. She told me that she was continuing to investigate. I got the impression from this conversation that there was not a lot of enthusiasm for this discussion and that she hoped that I would let the issue drop and "just go away". Several weeks went by without a response from her and I decided I had done all I could do by finally reporting the incident.

8. In November of 2003, my mother called me and told me that there had been a lawsuit filed by a boy who had been molested by a local Catholic priest at about the same time my incident occurred. I was shocked when I read the article because I realized that I may not have been alone in my terror after all of these years. I now remember that the priest's name was Father James Janssen and I have viewed photographs of him and know this is the priest who sexually abused me. I also believe that James Wells, his nephew, was along on this trip. James Wells, in his Affidavit, remembered a boy being at the cabin and being sick and going home after the first night. I have not spoken with James Wells, but this is what happened to me and I believe I am the same boy that James Wells knew left after the first night of the camping trip.

9. My adolescence was ended that night in the cabin by the river. Not only was I robbed of my youthful innocence that night, I was robbed of something more precious, my faith. Although I was raised and educated as a Catholic, the Diocese of Davenport did nothing to provide me with any information regarding the abusive priest, Father James Janssen. In fact, they hid and concealed this information from me.

Further, Affiant sayeth not

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Subscribed and sworn to before me this

27 day of April, 2004

Monica Bernal

Notary Public in and for the  
State of TEXAS

