



June 1, 2002

TO: Eric MacLeish

FROM: David Coleman

RE: 1985 meeting with RCAB Monsignor John McCormack

On Nov. 15, 1985, I met with Msgr. John McCormack at the Chancery in Brighton to alert him to a priest formerly of the archdiocese of Boston who had molested me as a child. The priest, Richard Coughlin, had molested me by fondling my genitals on numerous occasions between 1958 and early 1963 while he was a member of two Catholic parishes, St. Patrick's in Stoneham and St. Mary's in Lynn. I had continued my relationship with Coughlin after his sudden transfer from Stoneham to Lynn in 1960. Coughlin had left the area in 1965 and been reassigned to Los Angeles (I believe) at his request.

Coughlin had molested me regularly in his car following CYO basketball games when he would drive me home; he also molested me on more than several other occasions when I would accompany him on day- and overnight trips to Alton Bay, NH (where his brother owned a vacation cottage), to Lake George, NY and to Manhattan, as well as later golfing excursions to NII and Cape Cod. On trips such as these, overnight accommodations meant sharing a bed with Coughlin; needless to say, the fondling continued.

Coughlin was unexpectedly transferred from St. Patrick's in Stoneham to St. Mary's in Lynn about 1960; no reason was given for his transfer, nor (as far as I knew as a 13-year-old) was any explanation requested by any member of the parish, certainly not publicly. Coughlin was replaced at St. Patrick's by the Reverend Paul Shanley, in his first posting. Many years later, as part of my efforts to try to expose Coughlin to public scrutiny, Shanley told me he "resented the hell out of Coughlin; the kids blamed me for his (Coughlin's) transfer but I couldn't tell them why he'd been moved."

I told Msgr. McCormack that after Coughlin went to California, he had done parish duty, had taught at a boys monastery named St. Michael's Abbey and had formed something called the All-American Boys Chorus (AABC). I told McCormack my reason for informing him was that I was fearful that Coughlin was still molesting young boys.

At the 1985 meeting's conclusion McCormack told me that he or someone with the archdiocese would investigate my story. McCormack added, though, that "they would never tell me what they did about it."

Prior to informing Msgr. McCormack of Coughlin's assaults on me, I had never brought this matter to the attention of my parents, local authorities or the Chancery. I finally realized the nature of Coughlin's action during a session of group therapy in late-1984 or early-1985.

12/92 — In 1993, I participated in an Orange County diocesan investigation of Coughlin in a case involving his sexual assaults on several members of the AABC. Coughlin was banned from further association with the choir and forbidden any further public priestly duties. At that time, Orange County diocesan Chancellor Msgr. John Urrell said he had never received any warnings of Coughlin's past by anyone from the Boston archdiocese.

David Coleman
