

Priest B

*Priest B* found his victims in the sacristy<sup>11</sup> of his church. There, he would fondle the genitals of the young sacristans as they tried to prepare for mass. *Priest B* often talked about sports and invited the boys to play racquetball at his health club. He abused the boys in the sauna by groping them under their bathing suits. Once at a party in the rectory *Priest B* invited two boys, each sacristans, into another priest's room. There, he began to wrestle with them. One of the boys noticed that during the wrestling *Priest B* had an erection. At the same time he noticed that the wrestling had stopped and *Priest B* was actually grinding his body against his. However, before this conduct escalated any further, another priest interrupted *Priest B*. The other priest was angry at what he saw, especially after the boys told him that *Priest B* had an erection. In addition to notifying the parents of the boys, the priest told the parish pastor what *Priest B* had been doing, he was told to "mind his fucking business."<sup>12</sup> Until that time none of the boys had told their parents about *Priest B*, even though one of the boys was feeling depressed and at times suicidal.<sup>13</sup>

Documents in *Priest B's* secret archive folder confirm that the Diocese knew about the complaint that *Priest B* had fondled a sacristan. (Grand Jury Exhibit 214). A high-ranking official in the Diocese wrote a memo to the file in this case. (Grand Jury Exhibit 153E). The memo documents that:

<sup>11</sup> The sacristy is the area behind the altar where preparations for mass and other sacraments are carried out by sacristans. Sacristans are usually young boys.

<sup>12</sup> Later, this pastor refused to recommend *Priest B* to be a pastor. He did not base his refusal on the fact that *Priest B* had sexually abused boys but because he was belligerent, angry, impatient and often absent from the parish. (Grand Jury Exhibit 153F).

<sup>13</sup> At one point, this victim confided in a priest from the Diocese of Brooklyn, who was a personal friend, that he wanted to kill himself because of the things *Priest B* was doing. This information was passed along to Diocesan officials.

Father (name omitted) called in reference to a conversation he had with two young men and their parents. The charges made by the young men are that *Priest B* physically molested them. Father (name omitted) also stated that he has heard from other parents of similar incidents. Father (name omitted) related that about two years ago, an incident was brought to the attention of Father (name omitted) concerning *Priest B* and a young teenage boy. The case was handled on the parish level and no record is found in the Chancery files. A search of the Chancery files reveals a letter in which *Priest B* describes allegations made about him while he was in the military. The allegations of homosexual acts seems to be circumstantial but consistent.

The Grand Jury heard evidence that a meeting took place about *Priest B* with the families of the boys who were involved. At this meeting, the families assured the Diocese that they would not go to the police or initiate a civil lawsuit if *Priest B* was removed from his ministry. It was made very clear that they viewed *Priest B* as a continuing threat to children:

The message I gave to the diocese was that I felt other children my age or younger would not have the same luxury or the same reaction, that he was potentially dangerous and the way he was behaving, not being a psychiatrist, just being a young teenager, it was still even obvious to me that this was a man who was not able to perform his day-to-day duties as, I thought he was sick and I felt sorry for him but I also felt angry that he had betrayed my trust and the trust of other people that he was friendly with.

Despite the request that *Priest B* be removed from ministry, and assurances that the request would be honored, *Priest B* was simply transferred to another parish in the Diocese. (Grand Jury Exhibit 153). The families were notified that *Priest B* was seeing a psychologist, but no reports from him appear in *Priest B's* records. (Grand Jury Exhibit 153D).

Subsequent to *Priest B's* transfer, one of the boys met with a priest who was involved in the agency responsible for the investigation and monitoring of priests accused of sexually abusing children. He spoke to the victim in his backyard outside of the presence of his parents.

This priest identified himself as the Bishop's representative. Although the priest was also a civil lawyer, he never mentioned that fact during their conversation. When the priest who had arranged this meeting discovered that the interviewing priest was also an attorney, he believed

that he had betrayed the victims. He felt this was a clear indication that the Diocese was concerned with protecting its interests, not those of the victims. The pastor of the parish where *Priest B* was transferred was not informed that *Priest B* had sexually abused children in his prior assignment. Nine months later, *Priest B* was transferred again. The pastor of that parish was not informed of *Priest B's* history either. During this time period *Priest B* was an applicant to the Diocesan pastorate pool. In 1987, he was invited to update his application and did so.

Since no restrictions had ever been placed on *Priest B*, sometime after his transfer, he returned to the parish where he had abused the sacristans to perform a wedding. One of the sacristans was in the church and saw him. He immediately reported this to his parents who were outraged. They requested another meeting with members of the Diocese in the Chancery. This meeting produced no meaningful change in *Priest B's* status. In fact, neither the boys nor their families ever received any further follow up about *Priest B* from the Diocese.

In fact, what happened to *Priest B* was that in early 1989, he requested a transfer to another Diocese in a warmer climate for health reasons. (Grand Jury Exhibit 153I). He was granted permission to do this, and a letter testifying to his “good standing in the Diocese of Rockville Centre” was forwarded to the bishop of this new diocese. (Grand Jury Exhibit 153J). No information about his history of sexually abusing children was disclosed. Soon, *Priest B* applied to be formally incardinated into the new diocese. This request was also granted.

During the investigation that followed, *Priest B's* new diocese was informed of an allegation that *Priest B* had acted inappropriately with a seminarian there. The complaint was sexual in nature.

The Diocese of Rockville Centre was asked about *Priest B's* history. At this time, they were forced to disclose *Priest B's* history of sexually abusing children. Additional information,

from *Priest B's* secret archive file, about two complaints involving *Priest B's* solicitation of two men for sex earlier in his career was also forwarded to his new diocese. (Grand Jury Exhibit 153L). They were informed that:

There is another reference to an accusation made sometime in 1985. A fellow priest accused *Priest B* of improper behavior with a young man who worked in the sacristy. The parents of the young man spoke with (name omitted) and the matter was dropped. ...the allegations were never proven, and there is no further documentation or evidence. It may well be that *Priest B* is naïve and immature in his dealings with young people and there is no impropriety involved in these incidents. However, I do believe that there is reason to cautiously and thoroughly investigate the current allegation. (Grand Jury Exhibit 153B).

Nevertheless, *Priest B* was incardinated in the out of state diocese. In response to a March 2002 inquiry, the Diocese of Rockville Centre was informed, that *Priest B* was no longer in ministry there.