

This statement is disingenuous since the Diocese was aware that, at the time of the original complaint, a school principal had specifically asked *Priest V* to stay away from the school because his involvement was inappropriate. (Grand Jury Exhibit 230, p. 4). In typical fashion, this did not signal anything to the Diocese about *Priest V*.

The Intervention Team member author of this memo admits to lying about what the Diocese knew about *Priest V* to the press. He writes:

In dealing with the press in connection with the present allegations, I have responded to questions about past allegations against *Priest V* by saying that I have no knowledge of “similar allegations”.

He argues this was done exclusively to protect the confidentiality of the prior victim. Nevertheless, the writer is very concerned that his statements have angered the victim’s family to the extent they may go public.

„revelation of the (name omitted) allegations will make it seem that the Diocese has attempted to “cover up” *Priest V*’s past conduct and (name omitted) family may decide to bring a civil lawsuit against *Priest V* and the Diocese. For a variety of reasons, a suit against the Diocese in connection with the present allegations would probably fail in court, but the anticipated attendant publicity would be extremely harmful.

Priest V was eventually sent to prison for his crimes against children.

In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, it apparently did not matter if you were a priest or lay person; as a victim of sexual abuse committed by a priest, you were likely to be treated badly. The case of *Priest W* is instructive on this point.

Priest W attended the seminary and was ordained as a priest of the Diocese of Rockville Centre in 1993. Subsequent to his ordination and while serving as a priest, he sexually abused an underage parishioner. This abuse led to his arrest.

Upon his arrest, a high-ranking Diocesan Official visited him in jail. He asked him to detail his sexual history and later arranged for him to receive psychological counseling and therapy at a Church-selected facility. During the in-patient phase of the counseling, *Priest W* received regular visits from representatives of the Diocese. While still in-patient, *Priest W* disclosed to his therapist that *Priest O*, as chaplain of a Diocesan High School, had sexually abused him during his first three years of school. He told *Priest W* that he needed to feel “loveable” and this was his entrée to begin the abuse. Each year he was abused from 6-10 times by *Priest O*. The abuse *Priest W* described is substantially similar to abuse described by other victims of *Priest O* detailed in Part III of this report.

His therapist told *Priest W* to report this to the Diocese. The next day, during a regularly scheduled visit with a high-ranking Diocesan official, *Priest W* told him of the abuse by *Priest O*. The Diocesan Official testified that he believed *Priest W*'s allegations of sexual abuse by *Priest O*. At this time, *Priest O* was the pastor of a wealthy and influential parish that had schools attached to it. The Official told *Priest W* that Diocesan protocol would be followed. This clearly means that the official sexual abuse policy of the Diocese would be followed. Pursuant thereto, *Priest O* should have been removed from ministry and sent for an immediate psychological evaluation. The high-ranking Diocesan Official told *Priest W* that the matter would be reported to the board that handles such matters. This Board was the Intervention Team previously described.

In a telephone call a few days later, *Priest W* learned that the team had been informed of the abuse. *Priest O*, however, was not told. The reason was that the Diocese did not have a bishop at the time. The new bishop was arriving a week later and Diocesan officials were planning his installation and party. They wanted to wait for a few weeks after the bishop's

installation before notifying him This decision was admitted by the Diocesan official to be wrong. The following colloquy ensued when the official testified in the Grand Jury:

Q: That is a pretty long, pretty substantial period of time when the priorities were that we have to get the new bishop installed rather than we have to address the issue of a sexually abusing priest who is the pastor of a parish where there is a number of schools.

A: Well, it was a confluence of things happening, but it's true, there was a time gap there, yes...

Q: ... was that your decision to wait...

A: That was my decision...

Q: What, under the written policy that is in existence, or was in existence at the time, that is in evidence as Grand Jury Exhibit 144, gives you the authority to do that...?

A: Well, nothing really. There was just so many things happening all at once that, you know, as you ask these questions, I, you know, it was a mistake...

Q: ...you and the Diocese became aware of the fact, by his admissions, he [Priest O] had abused roughly 13 boys; is that right?

A: Around that, yes...

Q: ...and yet you took a delay in even accepting him for the initial evaluation, waiting for the installation of the bishop; is that right?

A: Yes...from hindsight, it was not prudent.

Approximately six weeks after the original disclosure, *Priest W* was informed by a high-ranking Diocesan official that *Priest O* admitted abusing him. *Priest O* was then to be sent for a psychological evaluation Initially, the Diocese wanted to send *Priest O* to the same facility that was treating *Priest W*. Upon *Priest W's* objection, the Diocese chose a different one. *Priest W* was also told that the parish was informed that *Priest O* was having heart problems and needed

treatment for them The Diocese told *Priest W* that *Priest O* would be the most heavily evaluated priest ever, and they hoped to reassign him to his parish at a later time.

The Diocese was very concerned that *Priest W* would disclose the abuse if they reassigned the priest. A high-ranking Diocesan official spoke to *Priest W* and stressed that the abuse occurred twenty years ago, *Priest W* was led to believe there were no other victims.⁸⁴ Diocesan officials emphasized that *Priest O* was the pastor of a financially important parish; disclosure of the abuse would ruin the priest's credibility and be bad for Diocesan public relations and finances *Priest W* was also told that that his parents should tell no one of the abuse. If *Priest W* kept this quiet, the Diocese would continue to help him and pay for his treatment

A Diocesan Official confirmed for the Grand Jury that he indeed told *Priest W* not to talk about the sexual abuse he suffered at the hands of *Priest O*. The following colloquy ensued in the Grand Jury:

Q: Did you tell him [*Priest W*] outright, don't tell anybody else about this?

A: ...um, I said to him, you know, I wouldn't tell anybody else about this at this time.

Q: Why did you say that to him?

A: Because I just didn't think it would be good for him to start blabbering that around at that time.

Q: You were very concerned about the adverse publicity that such an allegation would have concerning [*Priest O's*] position and the diocese?

A: Yes, of course.

⁸⁴ This of course was not true. As set forth in the narrative concerning *Priest O*, there was an earlier allegation of sexual abuse against him by another student at the same High School. Diocesan Officials summarily dismissed the charge as baseless. When *Priest O* was ultimately evaluated, the charge was found to be true.

Three or four weeks later, another high-ranking Diocesan Official visited *Priest W* at his treatment facility. *Priest W* told him about the abuse and its effect on his life. This official could only say about the allegation, “That’s sad...because I hear he’s a very talented man”

In December 2001, *Priest W* was back in Rockville Centre for a visit. A Diocesan official told him that they knew his mother had told another priest in the Diocese about the abuse. At the same time he reminded *Priest W* that the Diocese wanted to put *Priest O* back in his parish assignment. There was a simple *quid pro quo*: remain silent about the abuse and the Diocese would continue to pay for his continued therapy. This official, who knew *Priest W*’s mother as she had once worked for him, told him to call her and tell her to be quiet. Indeed, *Priest O* was returned to his assignment before Christmas with the explanation that his heart problems had been treated

Shortly after hearing of *Priest O*’s return, *Priest W* was visited again by a high-ranking Diocesan official. He confirmed the reassignment and the importance of remaining quiet. *Priest W* explained that he would not volunteer the information to the general public but would tell the Court handling his case about it as well as the probation department during his pre-sentence interview. The Diocesan official asked him to limit his disclosure and “...just say I had experienced sexual abuse by a significant adult in my life and not say he was a priest and not say his name” *Priest W* agreed to try and do so.

About five months later, Diocesan officials spoke with *Priest W* about a pending article in Newsday that would reveal the abuse he had suffered. They told *Priest W* that he must call Newsday and deny the truth of the article. They characterized the abuse as not that serious and advised *Priest W* “you better consult your conscience and call and try to save him [*Priest O*]

from this” Again, *Priest W* said he would not volunteer the information but would not deny it if asked.

To appreciate the gravity of the situation, the testimony of *Priest W* and a high-ranking Diocesan official must be examined together and in conjunction with the psychological evaluations of *Priest O*. While *Priest W* clearly has a motive to slant the testimony in his favor, the salient facts were admitted by the Diocese in the Grand Jury. *Priest W* was, indeed, sexually abused by *Priest O*; the priest confirmed this to the Diocese and to his evaluators. In fact, *Priest O* had subsequently admitted to Diocesan officials his sexual abuse of approximately a dozen underage boys while assigned to the High School.

In the Grand Jury, a Diocesan Official admitted that he had implied to *Priest W* that the Diocese would require his silence in return for continued insurance coverage of his treatment and other benefits. In this regard, the following colloquy took place in the Grand Jury:

A: ...I did tell him that, that it would not be a good thing for him to speak with Newsday. I don't recall specifically saying to him not to, not to mention something...It's definite that I told him it was not good to speak to Newsday.

Q: Did you tell him the diocese had been very good to him in terms of paying for his therapy, paying for any transitional expenses that he might incur?

A: Yes...

Q: So his treatment at St. Luke's was very expensive, tens of thousands of dollars; was it not?

A: Yes.

Q: He's going to have to start a whole new life and find a whole new career and that's also going to be very expensive; is it not?

A: Yes.

Q: And the diocese would help him with that, under ordinary circumstances. You certainly have done it before?

A: Yes.

Q: You certainly have paid many expenses of priests similarly situated before?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you imply to [Priest W] that if he spoke to Newsday and told them about his relationship with [Priest O], that perhaps that money would not be there to help him with those transitional expenses?

A: I think I might have implied that, yes...

Q: ...did you tell him that if was asked by a Newsday reporter to confirm or deny his, the fact that [Priest O] had sexually abused him...he should deny it?

A: I don't recall telling him he should deny it because I knew that it was true.

Q: Did you have any similar conversation with...any other priest whose name appeared in Newsday in 2002 that if they talked to Newsday they could lose their benefits?

A: I don't recall that.

Q: So it's just [Priest W] that you said that with?

A: Yes.

So afraid was the Diocese of bad publicity that even after *Priest O* was relieved of his priestly faculties after he retired, he was denoted in the parish bulletin of his former parish as *Pastor Emeritus*. Although now retired and technically entitled to this title, such a designation indicates that a priest is in good standing and possesses his priestly faculties. A Diocesan official conceded that this was misleading and the designation was later removed

The concern of the Diocesan hierarchy has always been to avoid scandal and the resultant loss of financial revenue. To avoid these disasters, payment of healthcare coverage for *Priest W* was offered to induce him to remain silent. This was not surprising since the Diocese had been doing this same thing for years with the victims of priest sexual abuse. The Intervention Team offered counseling payments to victims while assuring them that the offending priest would be properly dealt with. All the while, the real goal was to return the priest to ministry despite the nature of the offense or the wishes of the victim. Money to victims bought their silence so this could be accomplished.

Diocesan practice was at odds with official written policy. *Priest O* was not sent for an immediate evaluation. Weeks passed because of the upcoming installation reception for the new bishop. *Priest O* was evaluated and returned to ministry within two months, hardly enough time to effectively evaluate and treat his disease.

Parishioners were misled about his absence. Despite his admission that he had abused *Priest W* and many other boys, his parish was told only that *Priest O* needed treatment for his heart condition. Only when his victim refused total silence was *Priest O* sent for further evaluation and, only after this evaluation concluded that he should not be around young males was he required to retire or face removal from his position. Wittingly or not, the psychological evaluation process utilized by the Diocese was clearly ineffective. Reassignment of priests were made upon faulty and incomplete information designed more as a basis to justify reassignment than for the proper treatment of offenders. The Grand Jury finds that the Diocesan practice of evaluating priest/abusers was fatally flawed. The handling of *Priest O's* case epitomizes this.

In the spring of 2002, when allegations of clergy sexual abuse in the Diocese of Rockville Centre were publicized in the media, *Priest D* contacted Diocesan officials and admitted to