

EXHIBIT
A

A statement of [REDACTED]

Twenty years ago when Father Cotter was assigned to St. Theresa's church I had been involved in the Boy Scouts of America program for 15 years and, because of work in training, was well known in the Boston Council. I also was secretary of the archdiocesan Catholic Committee on Boy Scouting under the directorship of Monsignor Robert McNeill. These facts were helpful in having my story taken seriously.

Father Cotter was placed in charge of the Scout troops and Cub Scout Packs which were sponsored by the church. He was very enthusiastic about the program, took training, went camping and rose to high position of Council Commissioner. He also became Boston Council chairman of the Catholic Committee on Boy Scouting.

He became very friendly with some "Scout families", visited their homes often and was extremely well liked.

[The mother of SW No. 2] a close friend and Den Mother, called me one morning very upset. She told me she had found a motel key in her oldest boy's room and had confronted him with it. He said he had to prove to himself that he was a man because of being molested by Father Cotter over a period of time. He went into details with her.

Mrs. [SW No. 2] questioned her other three boys and found the same story. She remembered her son with tears in his eyes, asking if he had to go to Father Cotter's beach house with him. She made him go. When asked why he had not told of the molestations, he said, "because you thought so much of him."

My husband and I remember whenever we were at the [SW No.]' home in the evening, Father Cotter would always announce he was going upstairs to say good night to the boys.

When I heard Mrs. [SW No 2]' story I told her that Father Cotter was at the Scout camp in New Hampshire with a small group of boys and that I had to alert their families.

I called the [REDACTED] family first and [REDACTED] went up to camp. I believe the [SW] family was at a family camp near the Boy Scout reservation. [REDACTED] was to tell them.

Since Monsignor Sheehan, the pastor at St. Theresa's, was fairly new there and didn't know me well I first called Monsignor McNeill at the CYO office. I told him the story and asked him to call Monsignor Sheehan and tell him that I was a reliable person.

I saw Monsignor Sheehan at the rectory and told him my story. He was very kind and considerate. I then asked him, "What is done in a case like this?" and he replied, "We'll see." I never heard from him again about the problem.

Monsignor McNeill told me later that he had talked with Father Cotter.

Before speaking to Monsignor Sheehan I called an executive at the Boston Council. Two executives came to my house and told me they had sent people to camp to remove Father Cotter.

While the executives were at my house, a strange coincidence occurred. The doorbell rang and the person at the door was Bud Pettibone, a Scout executive, whom I had known very well at the Boston Council, but who had transferred to the Framingham Council. (he has since retired.)

We told him the problem and he said a family that lived beside him when he resided in West Roxbury had moved suddenly because their son had told them he had been molested by Father Cotter.

The Scout office called me that night to tell me that Father Cotter had denied the accusation and asked who his accuser was. They gave him my name and asked him to leave camp.

Dan O'Neill who is now the Scout Executive of the Cambridge Council, BSA, was very hard hit by the affair and mentions it to me everytime we meet.

The story around the parish was that Father Cotter was ill and the only time he came back to St. Theresa's was for a reception given in his honor. I did not attend.

However, Father Cotter telephoned me and said that he felt he "had been at the bottom of a deep well and was finally seeing a light at the top." I don't remember his exact words but he said he was sorry for all the suffering he had caused.

A few days later I received a call from Mrs. [REDACTED] who had two boys in Scouting. They also had been molested. She said she had received a visit from Monsignor Sheehan about the problem. She said Father Cotter had used the excuse of her boys' illness (hemophilia) to have them sleep in his tent. She also said that when one of the boys was in the hospital, Father Cotter molested him when the family was out of the room. She said her boys would be willing to testify against him.

I learned from Mrs. [SW No 2] that Father Cotter was having therapy -- I believe it was for a year -- and that he was transferred to a parish on the North Shore.

Mrs. [SW No. 2] is a compassionate and forgiving person. She kept in touch with Father Cotter and she related a conversation she had with his new pastor when she attended Mass one Sunday. He said he knew Father Cotter was in trouble, but he did not know what it was.

I always worried about Father Cotter and was relieved when I heard he had died.

[REDACTED]

