

**LOG OF TESTIMONY — ANN HAGAN WEBB**

[Note from BishopAccountability: Redactions were made in this oral history with the survivor’s approval to protect the confidentiality of some persons mentioned in it.]

<p>Ann Hagan Webb November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008</p>	<p>My name is Ann Hagan Webb. I’m 56 years old and I’m here because I was abused by a Roman Catholic priest when I was a child.</p>	
<p>Abused often from very devout families....</p>	<p>I was born Catholic. My mother was English and Italian. My father was Irish. And we were very much involved in the Italian Parish, Sacred Heart, in West Warwick, Rhode Island. So much so that I was in the very first class of the school that they built. My father helped raise the money to build the school. Actually there wasn’t a school until I was in second grade. They rented rooms. Kindergarten was in the convent. The first grade was in the public school across the street. And then by second grade they had built a school. And every year, my year was the oldest year. So we were always the oldest class until the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.</p> <p>And I was always the favorite and that was obvious to everybody. My grandfather was really good friends with then-Father Anthony DeAngelis. Our family was prominent in the church.</p> <p>He started abusing me when I was in kindergarten. He took me out of school.</p>	<p>1:00</p>
<p>Abuse not remembered until 40, but attendant details remembered...  Adults notice irregularities.....</p>	<p>I didn’t remember my abuse until I was 40. But I did remember all along that I was taken out of school a lot.</p> <p>And I was helping at the rectory. There were lots of things I remembered, like I remember being scared of the piece of pavement between the school grounds and the rectory. Knowing about the secret passage behind the altar in the church and not knowing why I knew about it or even questioning why. I was always the one who went around the school to collect the lunch money who was asked to go down to help with this or</p>	<p>2:00</p>

<p>Never slept. Feeling not good enough; empty inside.....</p> <p>Effects.....</p> <p>What triggers memories...</p>	<p>that. My mother even says in retrospect that one of the teachers complained to her once that I was out of class too much and she didn't understand why.</p> <p>They told her it was because I was the smartest one in the class and I could afford to lose the time, but I was over at the rectory with father DeAngelis who then later became Monsignor DeAngelis. There were some days I would go to the convent with the nuns and they'd call my mother to come get me. It could be like half hour before school ended. And I knew that I didn't feel really sick enough that it warranted her coming instead of me going on the bus. But I would play it up to them. I had to go home. I couldn't stay. And for years I didn't even think about why I did that. It wasn't that school was hard for me. I always got A's. It must have been that those were days that I was abused.</p> <p>Until I remembered the abuse there were lots of things that I lived with like I never slept. I always had a sense inside I wasn't good enough. If you could unzip my body and look inside it was empty, there was no me in there.</p> <p>So I always tried real hard to be good, to get good grades, to be the nice person, to somehow prove that I wasn't as bad as I felt inside. People didn't know it. I didn't talk about that.</p> <p>I think the other effect that happened all through my life that I didn't put together until I started remembering is that I always needed male attention. I don't think I went 2 weeks in my life without a boyfriend from first grade on. It's how I identified myself. It's how I had some worth and I think that was because of the abuse. I know it is.</p> <p>Anyway in some ways that was a blessing. I became an overachiever. I went to graduate school. I got a doctorate. I got married and had 3 great kids. It was when they were older and were about the age that I</p>	<p>3:00</p> <p>4:00</p> <p>5:00</p>
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<p>Anxieties rising....</p>	<p>was when all this started happening to me that I started to remember.</p> <p>When I was 39 I went into therapy. My anxiety was off the Richter scale. I know exactly when I began to remember. A friend visited from out of town and told me she had been abused by her father.</p> <p>When she told me that, that day I fainted in the store. Then I came down with one of the worst cases of oral herpes I ever had. It closed up my throat. I should have gone in the hospital. I ended up in the emergency room. That always happens when. It's stress for me. Maybe I got the herpes from him. I'll never know.</p>	<p>6:00</p>
<p>Body memories.....</p>	<p>After that I said I've got to get into therapy. I was so anxious. It took about a year before I really started to remember.</p> <p>First thing I remembered, I was saying to myself, I don't have to feel anything, I don't have to feel anything, I don't have to feel anything. Just like Monsignor's cross. And I was numb. I didn't have any sensation in my lower body.</p> <p>Then I remembered the feelings of my skin on a wooden table or desk, my naked skin and being face down.</p> <p>The crazy part about it was when I told my husband about remembering about the cross, because I had been kind of working up to a memory, he said, "You told me that months ago." I had such dissociation that I didn't even remember that I had remembered it a couple of months ago. From then the memories came slowly but surely. I was going to therapy twice a week and going to a group therapy for clergy abuse survivors. So three times a week I was going to therapy with 3 little kids and working.</p>	<p>7:00</p> <p>8:00</p>

<p>Grooming....</p>	<p>From there I started to remember a lot of the things that he did to me. It started in kindergarten. I had memories of sitting in his front room with pony tails in my hair and that was the only year I had pony tails. And my feet dangling from the chair waiting for him to come to bring me upstairs.</p> <p>I have memories of when I was in second and third grade of my uniform feeling too tight and then not having my uniform on. I have memories of looking for my underpants and thinking I had to find them before I went back to school.</p> <p>I don't think he ever raped me with his penis, but I know he raped me with a crucifix. I know I had to have oral sex with him.</p> <p>But it was this crazy kind of seduction thing too. It wasn't like a person in a back alley, you know a stranger. It was this guy who was a priest. He called me Bella Anna, who told me I was beautiful. I can remember sitting on his lap in my slip in the chair.</p> <p>I can remember his genitals this close to my face. When I had that memory of his genitals, I don't, they were too ugly and too fat and big almost unrecognizable. Like you would when you were a kid and you don't remember, you don't know what that is. I hadn't seen that before.</p>	<p>9:00</p> <p>10:00</p>
<p>Self blame.....</p>	<p>I think the abuse ended when I was in, between seventh, I think in seventh grade. I started having my period between seventh and eighth grade. I don't know how often it happened. I have lots of memories. I can't remember who my second or third grade teacher was. There was one of the years I can't remember much of at all.</p> <p>But like I say, I was the favorite. It was like, the hard part about remembering is that I remember that I traded this, you know, I don't think I consciously traded it, but it really felt like I traded off being the favorite and this was kind of like I had to do to be the</p>	<p>11:00</p>

<p>Dissociation and focus on others.....”saved me”</p>	<p>favorite. And if I didn't do this then I, not only would I not be the favorite anymore, it would be like some of the kids they beat up in the hallway. There were certainly boys that they hit constantly. The nuns were really brutal. So, to say I went along with it, I don't know that I had a choice but I felt that. It took a long time for me to accept that I didn't have a choice. That I wasn't complicit. That I didn't run away.</p> <p>I can remember the nuns bringing me there. I can remember one of the nuns bringing me to the church hearing her rosary beads as she brings me there and waiting in the church while he came to get me and then going through that corridor behind like a little passageway behind the altar. I know the altar boys knew about the passageway but I certainly wasn't an altar boy.</p>	<p>12:00</p>
<p>Suffering body memories.....</p>	<p>It was a really strange time in my life to remember this. I felt really really crazy. But I had this gift of being able to dissociate. And I would go into work. And I think work saved me and my children saved me. I had to hold it together. I could focus on other people's problems, I'm a psychologist, and I could focus on other people's problems and it would take me away from mine.</p> <p>But there were many many nights I would fantasize about driving into the abutment on a bridge or just ending it.</p>	<p>13:00</p>
<p>Initial response of spouse.....</p>	<p>There were times when I would wake up in the middle of the night and I couldn't breathe and I was gagging 'cause I was remembering the oral sex. There were times when I would get phantom pains in my arm and then I would remember that I had to give him a hand job essentially. I think he justified it that he never actually put his penis in me. I think he somehow believed that that didn't count. I have no idea. Or at least not in my vagina.</p> <p>I'm trying not to dissociate right now while I'm talking about it. It was a really hard crazy time to remember all this.</p>	<p>14:00</p>

	<p>There was a difficult piece in that my husband didn't want me to remember any of this. He said, "He's dead. There's nothing you can do about it. This doesn't make any ..." He would walk out of the room if I had emotional feelings about it. He said to let me be emotional about it was like giving a cocaine addict cocaine and he would leave or tell me I had to hold it together. So I didn't feel like I...</p>	
Church response...	<p>I had therapy to go to, to get it out of my system, thank goodness. And maybe that was a gift. Maybe that helped me keep me steady. I've seen plenty of survivors that didn't keep steady while they were remembering.</p>	15:00
Family response.....	<p>Along this line about 2 years into my therapy, things were starting to get hot. The Father Porter thing had been in the news. We're talking about in the early 90's now. The Catholic Church in Providence said that they would help people with therapy similar to the office that they have now in Massachusetts. So I went there thinking they could help me with therapy because it was certainly costing a lot. I did have insurance but I was paying about 50%. They fought me for a couple of years. The person that I went to for the diocese was an ex-state policeman, Robert McCarthy. He still works for their office doing this. And he was interrogating me. He wanted proof like you have proof for a crime. I had no proof I had no dress with semen on it. I had nothing to prove it except my memories and except for the things my parents put together when I told them.</p>	16:00
	<p>They were very supportive by the way. Before I went in for that I told my parents and my siblings. I told them after I had to go to a funeral at Sacred Heart and I remember telling my mother on the porch. And she said, "I have to go inside and get a drink of water. And don't tell your father. This will kill him." She went right in and told my father. He comes marching out the door. He's white as a ghost. He has to go for a walk. He couldn't address it with me. But they've been very supportive. It was shocking to them. Horrible for them.</p>	17:00
		18:00

<p>Legal settlement or lawsuit.....</p>	<p>So anyway, I went to that office. I brought my sister Carol with me. She's a lawyer but she came as moral support not as a lawyer and that office never talked to me again. They sent legal letters to her and legal letters said that since I obviously had a supportive family and was well enough off, there was no reason for me to ask them to help pay for my therapy.</p>	
	<p>Robert McCarthy told me that he was going to investigate at the church with my parents. So I had to go the church and talk to Father Turillo and tell him the whole story. He said it was very sad. It made him cry and he was going to take what I wrote and put it in a vault. And he said he wouldn't do anything about it. I asked him would you see if there are any other victims out there. And would you maybe help me find them in the church. I didn't know what but something. He didn't do anything. And Robert McCarthy never called him, of course. He never called my parents either. He never called any of the people he was going to call to investigate. He just decided that it was unfounded. I later heard that he was bragging that 70% of the people that came to him, he found unfounded.</p>	<p>19:00</p> <p>20:00</p>
	<p>I fought it legally. Well not exactly. I had my sister write legal letters to them. They finally agreed to pay my copay after I handed over 3 or 4 years of therapy notes to be examined by this psychologist who had no history of clinical work never mind abuse. They have my therapy notes to this day which I regret terribly. Because at any point they could take something out of context and use it against me. But finally they did pay what I had spent in therapy with the promise that I wouldn't sue them. And that amounted to \$12,500. And it was just a couple of days before my 3-year statute of limitations to file a law suit. They agreed to pay. So I didn't think I could possibly tolerate a lawsuit anyway. I thought I would probably forget my</p>	<p>21:00</p>

<p>Effects of activism</p>	<p>own name on the stand so I went with that. I'm glad I did. I really am. Sometimes lately I wish I had gone after a lawsuit but I know at the time emotionally I couldn't have handled it.</p> <p>And so I went on and healed as best I could. The therapy helped a lot. I still see that same therapist today and she's wonderful. Then I had a few years of kind of pulling it back together.</p> <p>Then 2002 things got really hot in the news again and felt like I had to speak out. I did that by, I wrote a letter to the <i>Globe</i> and identified myself publicly as an abuse survivor for the first time. Then I got very involved. And that was a good thing. That felt like taking my power back. Because there were lots of ways that my power had been taken away. (Pause) I started to blank out.</p> <p>I guess I'm starting to think of things I didn't say. If I could back up a little bit, is that okay? I said there were things I had to do when I said I was the favorite. I was the one who had to give Monsignor DeAngelis an award when he became a Monsignor. I was the one that was picked to go with them to the Cathedral to do whatever it is they do. And go and wear a white dress with flowers in my hair and bring flowers up to the altar. I had to represent the school. There were lots of things that feel so creepy to me now.in retrospect. All part of that trade, that favoritism, that I don't know what was going on with him and me. He also got a nun pregnant while I was in school, Sister [Redacted] who was my favorite nun. She had to leave the convent in disgrace. That's the year they made him a monsignor.</p> <p>Back to recovering. I recovered more or less. I still never slept. I recovered from my eating disorder. It</p>	<p>22:00</p> <p>23:00</p> <p>24:00</p>
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<p>Collateral damage.....</p>	<p>was a control thing. I gained a few pounds. That was good.</p> <p>Getting really involved in SNAP, Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests, and STTOP, all the activism was wonderful. And there was another really wonderful part about it. My husband got involved. It was like he redeemed himself from the earlier years when he was so helpless. He became my hero. And he stood outside the cathedral with a bullhorn and said, These people raped my wife. And he was angry. And he wanted Cardinal Law gone and he wanted the church...he wasn't going to be silent for my sake and that was wonderful.</p>	<p>25:00</p>
<p>Church continues to deny responsibility....</p>	<p>There was some collateral damage from doing that too though. [Redacted], my children were involved in all our picketing over the years which I thought was a good thing. We were teaching them to be activists. [Sentences redacted.]</p> <p>Other collateral damage; I've certainly lost my faith. In some ways I think that's a good thing. I'm not Christian anymore. I don't think I'm anything. My siblings don't go to church anymore. My parents don't go...once in a while. A big loss for them. My children have no religion whatsoever. Although one of my daughters might become Jewish.</p>	<p>26:00</p>
	<p>It just continues. This year, a year ago, I went back to Sacred Heart. It seemed like it was time to address the stuff at Sacred Heart. I had been contacting the current priest at Sacred Heart, Father Bucci, over the last few years when I had been more of an activist and a whole lot braver than I was in the 90's and asked him to take Monsignor DeAngelis' picture down which is in this place in the front foyer of the church when you go in, a place of honor, him in the whole regalia with the hat, the Monsignor hat, the cape and the whole bit. And he wouldn't. And I asked him, of course to try to reach</p>	<p>27:00</p>

<p>Other validation....</p>	<p>out to the people in the church because there were probably other victims besides me. I can't imagine he [DeAngelis] decided that he liked little girls about 50ish and he never did before. He certainly liked this young nun that he got pregnant. She was very young.</p>	<p>28:00</p>
<p>Church aggressively hostile</p>	<p>But he [Bucci] wouldn't help and he wouldn't take the picture down because he said my claims were unfounded even though the church had eventually paid my therapy. They weren't paying anybody's therapy at the time, I should add. Everybody was receiving the same treatment as me and most were walking away from it without any help. That was just a PR move on their part to say that they were helping people. So that when they finally did, it felt to me like a validation. They believed me. They had some reason to believe me.</p> <p>The other validation that I had along the way was that I went to a priest who had been my CYO (Catholic Youth Organization) priest. He wasn't a priest anymore. He had left the church and gotten married. And when I told him he wasn't surprised. He said, "I'm horrified but I'm not surprised." That's what he said. And when I described the room that Monsignor always took me up to, he said, "That's exactly what it looked like." I could describe the wallpaper and the shades. He said it wasn't a bedroom. And I knew it wasn't a bedroom. There was a big wooden desk there. And that's where he'd take me. I've never been able to sleep with the shades down because the shades were always down in that room. Matter of fact, there are no shades in anybody's room in our house.</p> <p>Anyway, I went back there in 2007 with help, with wonderful people supporting me to picket because he wouldn't take down the picture. I wasn't going to go myself. I was just going to let other people go. But then I couldn't stay home. Just as I got there my dear husband had punched the picture and broken it which</p>	<p>29:00</p> <p>30:00</p>

<p>Some parishioners also aggressive .....</p>	<p>made the front page of <i>The Providence Journal</i>. So the news got out again and DeAngelis' name was there. It was in the West Warwick paper where the church is.</p> <p>The priest decided to fight back. He had my husband arrested. He wrote a letter to all the parishioners that was given out at all the masses the following week that called my husband a criminal and me a liar.</p>	<p>31:00</p>
	<p>I can't say how awful that was for me. Half the people in the church are second and third and fourth cousins. People I grew up with. The reception I got there was difficult. There were people...even after 5 years of information about the priest abuse scandal, I remember one woman in particular stopping traffic and screaming out the window at me, "You must have loved it. You kept going back for more. What's wrong with you? Didn't your mother teach you right from wrong?" That was horrible.</p>	<p>32:00</p>
<p>Effects continue.....</p>	<p>I knew I had to fight back. I couldn't let him have the last word, have the last thing the people in this church hear. You know, he wrote this letter saying I was a liar and it was false memory. So I had to go back and give them at least a printed sheet with my side of the story. So I went back about a month later because I wanted to avoid Christmas time, with supporters again with wonderful people and got a cool reception. Some people received me well. I remember the woman who did Girl Scouts with my mother. She was wonderful. Some of my relatives were wonderful. Some people greeted me by name and said, "No thank you Ann, I won't take that paper from you." The same woman screamed out of the car. Other people fought with each other on the sidewalk, pro and con. There was a wonderful man from the apartments around the corner, named after Monsignor DeAngelis by the way, the elderly housing, who said that he wanted to get the name taken off the building. I thought that was great.</p>	<p>33:00</p>

	<p>But I still haven't recovered from those recent incidents in Sacred Heart. His picture is still in that place of honor. They said they would drop the charges so they could fix the picture so they could put it back up on the wall. Which he did.</p> <p>But I'm going to have to go back there. I have a lot of older relatives that are going to be buried from the church and I'm sure I'll be at their funerals.</p> <p>So it doesn't stop. My anger at the church is ridiculous. I have zero respect for the Catholic Church; for the people in it; for most of the priests in it; for the people who put their blinders on and don't see what's happening.</p> <p>And it's still happening. I have a young client who is 17 years old, priest abuse victim. People don't get it. It's still happening. I'm losing my energy to continue to fight the church although I continue to have a caseload of abuse survivors. I feel like that is what I can give back. I've managed to survive all this and come out pretty much okay. People come to me because they know that I understand. And I feel that's kind of my calling at this point.</p> <p>I may or may not get back my energy for activism. [Sentence redacted.] There's a lot to it. It's complicated. It's something that runs through your veins and comes out in all the little capillaries in your body. I know there are times when I have a week of nightmares where I'm cornered and that's related to the abuse. I can't stand to look at crucifixes. I learned a little trick when people come into my office with a crucifix on. I turn it into an angel and let it fly away.</p> <p>I know I still dissociate once in a while. And that scares me. It scares me to know that there are things I do or hear or say and don't remember. That was brought home real clear to me one time at work when I happened to flip open the pages of a book and</p>	<p>34:00</p> <p>35:00</p> <p>36:00</p>
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<p>But effects do not dominate.....</p>	<p>somebody had decorated their house with a huge crucifix in the living room. And I went home. It was the end of the night. And I didn't lock up. I didn't turn off the lights. I just got in my car. And I remembered nothing of that until someone said, "Who did that last night?" I knew I was the last one in the building. So it scares me that how many times am I doing that kind of dissociation that there's no trail of evidence to make me know that I did lose some time.</p> <p>My kids sometimes say, "We told you that stuff." [Sentence redacted.] And I don't know if I dissociate or maybe I'm just getting old. So that's scary.</p> <p>But for the most part I've recovered. I've won. He hasn't won. I've spoken out. I've screamed loud. The people that believe me believe me and the people that don't, well I can't make them. But I've added my voice to a lot of other voices and I think together the world can't ignore this problem. They can't ignore how horrible the bishops and the pope and the priests have been to turn a blind eye and to protect their church at all costs. I think that's all I've got to say.</p>	<p>37:00</p> <p>38:00</p>
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