

Priest admits to molesting 28 children in the 1960s

NEW BEDFORD, Mass. (AP) — A former Roman Catholic priest admitted Monday he molested 28 children at three Massachusetts parishes in the 1960s in one of the largest child sex abuse cases of its kind.

Prosecutors said 125 men and women had come forward willing to testify that James R. Porter had molested them when they were children. They said several had complained to church officials at the time, without results.

The pleas culminate a case that surfaced in May 1992 and helped to focus the Roman Catholic Church's attention on sexual abuse by priests.

"I hope that every victim of sexual abuse someday in their ordeal can have a day like this," said John Robataille, one of Porter's victims.

When Superior Court Judge Robert Steadman asked Porter why he pleaded guilty, he replied: "Because I am guilty,

your honor."

Initially, he had pleaded innocent. The former priest, who remains free on bail, was hustled from the courthouse and did not respond to reporters' questions.

His attorney, Peter DeGelleke, said Porter, 58, felt "tremendous guilt." "He's obviously very nervous. He feels that he's reached a positive decision, a decision that will allow him to proceed with the rest of his life."

Porter pleaded guilty to 27 counts of indecent assault and battery on a child under 14, seven counts of unnatural acts on a child under 16, six counts of abominable and detestable crimes against nature and one charge of assault and battery.

Porter could be sentenced to more than 200 years in prison. Sentencing was set for Dec. 6.

Some of Porter's victims, now in their 30s and 40s, sat in the courtroom and

cried softly as court officials read a litany of Porter's crimes.

"I've done my 30 years and now it's his turn," one, George Hardie, said later.

District Attorney Paul Walsh said that in compiling the case against Porter, investigators found that parents of molested children had complained to church officials, who moved Porter from one parish to another, but otherwise took no action.

Porter began his service to the church in Massachusetts in 1960 and worked at parishes in North Attleboro, Fall River and New Bedford. In 1967, he left Massachusetts and entered a treatment program in New Mexico for pedophilia. He was assigned to a church in Bemidji, Minn., but left in 1970.

Several victims formed a group called Survivor Connections and demanded that the church make it a policy to immediately investigate any sexual abuse complaints involving clergy; remove the per-

petrator if the charges are true; and report the complaints to civil authorities.

The Diocese of Fall River, where Porter worked in the 1960s, has since adopted such a policy and last year reached an undisclosed out-of-court settlement with 68 people who said they were Porter's victims.

A spokesman for the diocese declined comment Monday.

Prosecutors said Porter molested his victims in his church office, rectories, a changing room beside the altar, a summer camp and a junior high school locker room, and threatened that "God would get them" if they informed on him.

Porter left the priesthood in the early 1970s and now lives in Oakdale, Minn. He is married and has four children.

Porter was convicted last year in Minnesota of molesting his children's babysitter and received a six-month prison sentence.

Wife maims man, pleads insanity

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Virginia woman who cut off her husband's penis will try to prove in court she was temporarily insane at the time, her lawyer said.

Attorney James Lowe said Lorena Bobbitt was repeatedly beaten and raped by her husband, John Wayne Bobbitt. After he attacked her in their Manassas, Va., apartment on June 23, she was seized by an "irresistible impulse" that caused her to reach for a knife and cut him, Lowe said in an interview in the November issue of *Vanity Fair* magazine.

Mrs. Bobbitt faces trial Nov. 29 on a charge of malicious wounding.

Lowe said he will argue that people who have been repeatedly abused or beaten often have an altered mental state.

Mrs. Bobbitt told police she mutilated her husband after he raped her when he came home drunk from a night out with a friend.

Bobbitt has been charged with marital sexual assault and his trial is set for Nov. 8. He denies the charge.

Both Bobbitts face up to 20 years in prison if convicted.

Mrs. Bobbitt told the magazine she is appalled that some women have hailed her as a feminist heroine for striking back against alleged abuse.

"Nobody knows what I went through," she said.

"Nobody knows anything about me."

She said that after her husband assaulted her, she went to the kitchen to get a glass of water.

"It was just so many things together. I was scared.... I was physically hurt.... The first thing I saw was a knife, when I turned. I grabbed that knife and, um, I went to the bedroom, and he was there, I guess, and he kind of, like, moved or something. I don't know. And I took the sheets off and I cut him."

She said she wishes she had never done it, but can't say for sure if she feels remorse, or if she feels Bobbitt deserved it.

Mrs. Bobbitt said she met her husband at a bar for enlisted men near the Quantico Marine base where he was posted.

After they married, their relationship deteriorated quickly into physical and sexual abuse, she said. She said she became pregnant once, but Bobbitt told her she would not be a good mother and forced her to get an abortion.

James Sehn, a urologist who helped perform the nine-and-a-half-hour operation to reattach Bobbitt's penis, said, "He has a working organ. It's very possible he's already had sex, and I wouldn't be surprised."

Bobbitt has declined requests for interviews.

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10/25 UO Jazz Ensembles 8 p.m. Beall Hall.
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Missing girl found asleep in her house

LAKE WORTH, Fla. (AP) — No white rabbits or walruses were blamed, but a five-year-old girl whose disappearance set off a frantic police search turned up sleeping behind a looking glass.

Police mobilized 15 patrol cars, a canine unit and a helicopter in a two-hour effort to find Fawn Davis after her mother reported her missing Monday,

said Palm Beach sheriff's spokeswoman Teri Barbera.

Officers had searched the house twice and were talking to the mother, Denise Weimann, when Fawn emerged sleepily from her nap.

"She apparently was rolled up in a ball behind a mirror in the laundry room," Barbera said

Tuesday.

Unlike her counterpart in *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*, Fawn didn't blame rabbits, queens or even Tweedledee.

She just wanted to know if she was in trouble, her mother said. "I didn't know whether to hug her or beat her up."

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