

THE FIRST WAVE

The 1,000 victims of 'predator priests' in Pennsylvania are only the beginning, says Mitchell Garabedian, the attorney who helped the Boston Globe's Spotlight team investigate clergy sex abuse



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When a Pennsylvania grand jury recently released its findings on child sex abuse in the Catholic Church, the conclusions – and the numbers – were staggering: more than 1,000 identified children abused at the hands of more than 300 “predator priests,” occurring over decades under a systemic cover-up by the church.

The report, released Aug. 15, suggests that the real number of victims is much higher, with some records lost to time and many people too scared to come forward.

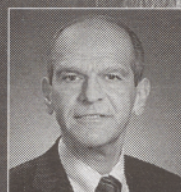
While the report is unprecedented in its scope, attorney Mitchell Garabedian believes it's just “the tip of the iceberg.”

“There's many more victims in Pennsylvania, and many more abusing priests,” Garabedian said. “And many more supervisors who allowed the sexual abuse to occur.”

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Garabedian has represented thousands of victims who were sexually abused by priests in the Catholic Church over the past two decades. In 2002, he helped reporters in the Boston Globe's Spotlight team shed

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ATTORNEY REPRESENTING VICTIMS
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light on decades of abuse in the Boston archdiocese. The investigation was depicted in the Academy Award-winning movie “Spotlight.”

The Globe won a Pulitzer Prize for its reporting, which led to a flood of thousands of sexual abuse allegations against clergy members from around the world, including in Canada, Australia, Ireland, Belgium and France, according to the newspaper.

Garabedian said he's been contacted by victims as far away as Haiti, Germany and

England.

“You name it,” Garabedian said. “It's unfortunate.”

Garabedian said that when he began working with victims who had been abused in 1994, not many people believed him.

“People were highly skeptical of me,” he said. “And of the victims.”

It all started when a single mother living in Boston's housing projects came to him worried about changes in the behavior of her three children, Garabedian said.

“One was washing his hands every day until they bled,” Garabedian said. “Another one was taking two-hour showers, and another was being violent towards his brothers, which was not characteristic of any of them.”

Garabedian said he started investigating the children's odd behavior and discovered a common thread.

“I came to find out, after investigating, that Father John J. Geoghan had been putting them to bed every night, and had been sexually molesting them,” Garabedian said.

Other mothers in the housing project started sharing similar stories, Garabedian said. He soon uncovered 86 children who had been abused by Geoghan.

After the number of victims reached

See GARABEDIAN, page 5