

# TELEGRAM & GAZETTE

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## Four men to sue diocese

### Plaintiffs allege abuse by Holley

By George B. Griffin  
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Four men are seeking damages from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Worcester, alleging it failed to prevent the Rev. David A. Holley from sexually assaulting them in the 1960s.

Holley, who pleaded guilty last month in New Mexico to charges that he had sexually molested eight boys there in the 1970s, served in four Worcester Diocese parishes before he left Massachusetts to be treated for pedophilia. Now 65, Holley could face sentences totaling 275 years in prison as a result of those pleas.

The lawsuit was to be filed today in Boston on behalf of William Schultz of Natick, Philip Saviano of Jamaica Plain, and Barry Navin and Paul F. Roughan, both of Worcester. It alleges that the men, then boys, were assaulted in church offices and rectories and on church-sponsored retreats.



DAVID CARSON

Paul F. Roughan of Worcester

The alleged acts include rapes and an incident in which one of the plaintiffs was forced to engage in oral sex with several unnamed priests.

#### THREE TALK ABOUT CASE

Roughan, Saviano and Schultz discussed the case yesterday at the offices of lawyer Matthew

McNamara, who represents them.

They said Holley followed a pattern, first trying to strike up friendships with boys who were involved in catechism classes, attended church schools or served as altar boys. Holley then adopted an outgoing, easy manner that made it appear as though he understood them and was interested in their welfare, the men said.

They said that only later, after Holley had gained their trust, did he begin to tell obscene jokes, show them pornographic pictures, and, finally, fondle and assault them.

The lawsuit alleges that the bishop of Worcester at the time — Bernard J. Flanagan, who is now retired — knew or should have known of Holley's tendency to sexually abuse children, and that he transferred Holley from one parish to another, rather than properly supervising him. The lawsuit, which seeks unspecified damages on a number of counts, also alleges negligence by the bishop for failing to prevent the abuse and protect the defendants when they were children.

Flanagan said last night that

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# Lawsuit against diocese

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when the diocese learned from a local hospital that Holley had a problem with children, it removed him from contact with parishioners.

"The only thing I can say is the very first report we had on that, we sent him away to be treated," Flanagan said. "We took immediate action."

Holley was sent to an outpatient facility in Holliston run by the church, Flanagan said. From there, Flanagan said, he was sent to residential treatment facilities in Maryland, then New Mexico.

The Rev. John W. Barrett, spokesman for the diocese and for current Bishop Timothy J. Harrington, said he was aware the lawsuit was to be filed. He said Harrington would not comment and referred questions to attorney James G. Reardon.

"I have no more knowledge, other than the fact that claims have been made against the diocese for alleged actions by Father Holley," Reardon said. Noting that the alleged actions date back 15 to 25 years, he said he had advised the diocese not to make offers of counseling help for alleged victims after they sought legal representation.

"I have no proof that what the alleged victims say happened in fact did happen," Reardon said. "If a person approaches the diocese and seeks help and they go outside and get a lawyer, that changes the equation. I feel if the claim has validity, it should be confirmed in court. My advice to the diocese was that we should not make offers until we have some determination as to the validity of the so-called allegations."

## 11 YEARS OLD

Saviano said he was 11 years old when Holley first assaulted him in 1964. At the time, he was a member of St. Denis Parish in East Douglas, and Holley was an assistant pastor there.

Roughan said he was 15 when the assaults began, and Schultz said he was 16. Both were members of St. Mary of the Hills Church in Boylston, where Holley served from 1965 to 1967, after he left St. Denis.

Both eventually left the church. Roughan said he dropped out of school and joined the Marines to get away.



DAVID CARSON

Philip Saviano of Jamaica Plain

Saviano said it was hard for him to avoid Holley once the assaults began, because he lived near the church and had to pass the rectory on his way to and from school. He also had a paper route for The Evening Gazette, and the St. Denis Church rectory was one of his customers.

Saviano said there were many instances in which Holley forced him to perform oral sex and other sexual acts in the rectory. He said that sometimes Holley assaulted him alone; at other times, he said, Holley would have another child involved.

## NEVER TOLD ANYONE

"I couldn't figure out how to get out of it," he said. "I never told anyone then. That was not really an option. I had very strict parents. My father was Italian and Catholic. My grandparents came over from Italy. We were very religious.

"My parents thought a priest was a holy man," he said. "He was next to God."

Saviano said the assaults left him confused and guilt-ridden. He said he remembers having to go to confession and knowing Holley was the priest on the other side of the curtain.

He recalled telling Holley in the confessional "I yelled at my

mother and you know the rest."

Saviano said Holley left St. Denis Parish in 1965 without explanation and that for a long time, he did not know where the priest had gone. Over the years, he said, he sought counseling for personal problems that he did not realize were related to the childhood incidents.

He said that when he saw news accounts about James Porter, another former priest who is accused of molesting children, he realized he needed to come forward with his story.

He told his family shortly before last Christmas.

The lawsuit alleges Navin was 10 when Holley began abusing him in 1966. According to statements by Navin, the assaults began after Confraternity of Christian Doctrine classes at the St. Mary of the Hills Church and occurred from 1966 to 1968.

The statement says Holley gave Navin alcohol and raped him repeatedly, forcing the boy to perform oral sex.

## OTHER PRIESTS

At one point, the statement says, Navin was forced into sexual acts with other priests.

The lawsuit says that "in or about 1968," Holley brought Navin, then 13, to meet "male acquaintances ... for the purpose of the sexual molestation of minor Plaintiff Barry Navin." It says Navin's parents encouraged him to attend a church-run weekend retreat. During that retreat, it alleges, Holley held Navin "out as a kind of sex toy," and, at the suggestion of Holley, Navin was forced to have oral sex with "four or five other Roman Catholic priests."

"During all of these occasions, Defendant Holley told Plaintiff Barry Navin that he was a bad and evil person and that his evil nature caused the sexual acts," the suit states.

Holley left Central Massachusetts in 1972 to be treated at a center run by a religious order called Servants of the Paraclete in Jemez Springs, N.M. He pleaded guilty March 23 to charges including sexual assault, sodomy and aggravated sodomy. He was ordered to undergo 60 days of evaluation and was to be held without bail pending sentencing.

Staff Reporter Winston W. Wiley contributed to this story.