

# NUNFUCKED



In February 1999, St. Mary's Church in suburban Boston celebrated its 125th anniversary. Cardinal Bernard Law oversaw the festivities, including a mass where parish children were summoned to the altar for a special blessing.

Sister Ann Daylor, a Dominican nun and St. Mary's director of religious education, glowingly told a reporter that the celebration would launch a yearlong program in which the Catholic young'uns would learn "the importance of their place in the future of the parish."

Oh, you got *that* right, Sister.

In December 2002, Cardinal Law would resign amid allegations that he covered up child sexual abuse committed by priests in his flock. The Cardinal's sagging, pale, pig-gish visage was splayed all over the media as an emblem of the exploding pedophile-priest scandal.

But less than a month before Cardinal Law resigned amid blinding flashbulbs, Sister Ann Daylor—the nun who predicted that children would play a crucial role in her church's future—was quietly placed on leave. She had been accused of sexually abusing a fifth-grade girl almost 40 years ago, a charge that she denies.

While an estimated 300 American priests were removed from duty during 2002 for similar reasons, Daylor is thought to be the only American nun relieved from her post last year due to sex-abuse charges.

A recent statement by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), an organization representing

abuse," claims Cait Finnegan, a Pennsylvania resident who says she was "sexually abused by a Sister of Mercy for several years."

"There are obviously more nuns than priests or brothers, and more kids in their charge for much more extended periods of time," Finnegan says. "One need only do the math."

Although one rarely hears about it, there are dozens of documented cases of nuns sexually abusing children, most of them girls. Some cases suggest a level of sadism far beyond anything that priests have been accused of doing.

In the past decade, more than 100 nuns have been publicly accused of sexual misconduct with children in the United States alone. Over a dozen lawsuits have been filed in the U.S. alleging sexual abuse by nuns. Most have been settled out of court. But there is no evidence that an American nun has ever been criminally prosecuted for sex crimes.

Most estimates peg society's quotient of female sex offenders at roughly 5% of the total. Some put the percentage as high as one quarter of all sex predators. But even when women are accused of sex crimes, they are much less likely than males to be prosecuted. And they are almost never convicted.



have more of a Jekyll-and-Hyde personality: The abuse is presented as a loving gesture, then the moment it ends, they begin screaming at the child for being evil."

Such a pattern of "fondle-then-punish" is echoed in a recent Australian case where a woman claimed daily sexual abuse at a Catholic girls' home 30 years ago. She said the nun would digitally penetrate her, beat her with a blackboard ruler, call her parents and tell them she'd been bad, then send her home, where she'd be punished all over again.

Hill speculates that people have a hard time believing that nuns can be sexual predators "because women have not been regarded as sexual beings for so long, for much of history, I guess. If you're not a sexual being, you cannot possibly be a sexual predator."

And if women can't be sexual predators, goes the logic, then men certainly can't be their victims. On an Internet message board for a group calling itself SNAP (Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests), one anonymous poster recently claimed he has been rendered a self-loathing, drug-addled homosexual adult due to a nun's sexual abuse of him in grade school. He alleged that at age six, a nun wrongly accused him of looking up a girl's dress in the schoolyard. He said she led him to a private room and snarled that "boys who look up little girls' dresses should have their little dickies spanked." He claimed she slapped him hard across the face several times, forced him to drop trou, and then poked at his li'l-boy genitals with her cane, calling his penis a "horrible thing that boys have and it makes them do awful things!" She then allegedly forced him to wear a paper sign with the word PERVERT written on it and then paraded him in front of other students, who jeered at him until he "wanted to die."

"YOU ARE PATHETIC," came the unsympathetic response from a woman, a self-proclaimed survivor of sexual abuse by priests. "I am sick of men feeling sorry for themselves...GET OVER IT BIG BOY...did the nuns put something inside of you like what happened to me? No, they didn't, did they?...Putting focus on nuns instead of rapist men? This website is pathetic...and you women who support this are playing into their hands."

In 1994, nine male ex-residents of the Holy Childhood of Jesus School in Harbor Springs, Michigan, went public with allegations of sexual abuse by the Sisters of Notre Dame. The abuse, allegedly ranging

## THE HIDDEN STORY OF SEXUAL ABUSE BY NUNS

America's 75,000 or so nuns, claimed that its ranks were "deeply troubled" by the snowballing pedophile-priest debacle. Yet the LCWR refused to sign a recent Bishop's Charter condemning clerical sex abuse, arguing that it didn't apply to nuns. Similarly, a nun-led group in the Philippines recently made public a report they wrote detailing "sordid disclosures about sexual abuse by [Filipino] priests."

To many, the nuns appeared bold for "speaking out" and "taking a stand" against pedophile clergymen. But to some of their alleged victims, the specter of finger-wagging nuns is bitterly ironic. "I must admit this boils my blood almost more than the initial

One study showed that six out of every seven victims of childhood sexual abuse by women are not believed when they first tell their stories.

Ashley Hill is the author of *Habits of Sin: An Exposé of Nuns Who Sexually Abuse Children and Each Other* (Xlibris Corporation, 1995), which might be the only book in world history devoted exclusively to sexual abuse by nuns. Hill claims a nun molested her when she was seven.

"I believe that among the nuns, the level of mental illness runs deeper than with the priests," says Hill via e-mail. "To me, it seems as though the abuse by priests is more along the lines of sexual gratification, whereas with the nuns, they often seem to

from "fondling to intercourse," was

said to have occurred throughout the 1960s and into the early '70s. Bed-wetters were reportedly forced to wear their piss-stained sheets on their heads like turbans. One former resident charged that one nun came in almost nightly and would lie on top of him...for starters. The nuns reportedly would refer to the boys, all of whom were Native Americans, as "heathens" and "black savages."

At the nearly embryonic age of three, Joey Barquin remembers being dragged into a closet by a nun at St. Joseph's Orphanage in Burlington, Vermont. He says she yanked his trousers down to his feet and began groping his preschool penis. When he tried to pull away, he says she forcefully grabbed his balls and ran an unidentified sharp item between his thighs. "Next thing I know," he was later to tell a reporter, "there was unimaginable pain, and there was just blood everywhere." He also alleges that one nun had a habit of arousing him to the point of erection and then burning his penis. Barquin claims that he still has anal scarring from repeated rapes at the orphanage. He says the abuse only stopped when he was adopted as a five-year-old in 1953.

After Joey made his accusations public 40 years later, an estimated 100 other former residents of St. Joseph's also came forward with tales of being abused by nuns there in the 1940s and '50s. Their compiled stories became what Barquin called "the Schindler's List of Vermont."

At four years old, with his mother dead and haunted by vague memories that his father had hung himself, Paddy Doyle was sentenced to 11 years at an Irish industrial school run by the Sisters of Mercy. His "crime," according to the state, was "being in possession of a guardian who did not exercise proper guardianship." In essence, he was declared a criminal for being an orphan.

In his book *The God Squad* (Raven Arts Press, 1988), Doyle recounts a creepy incident of a nun jacking him off at age six:

*She held my limp penis in her hand and drew back the foreskin. It hurt slightly but I was too scared to say anything....She moved the skin backwards and forwards until I had an erection. A sensation I had never experienced swept through my body, causing me to squirm and writhe involuntarily. When it had passed I sobbed uncontrollably, frightened at what had happened.*

Doyle's punishment extended to a series of brain operations with the stated intent of fixing a defective foot. Many of the operations were unnecessary and probably experimental, rendering him crippled as an adult.

"In a recent article I wrote for an Irish newspaper," Doyle says via e-mail, "I made the comment that wherever you have vulnerable people, you will have predators. Who or what can be more vulnerable than a child who is institutionalized and under a fear of terror of being punished by the 'predators'—in my case, the nuns, in whose care I had been placed?"

In an Irish TV documentary called *States of Fear*, another survivor of the Catholic industrial schools echoed Doyle's terror: "The one good thing about Christmas Day was that there was no sexual abuse on Christmas Day."

Perhaps the most sensational claims of nuns goin' "up in it" come from the Land Down Under. In the late 1990s, a wave of Australian adults surfaced with accounts of having suffered monstrous childhood abuses at Catholic orphanages.

At Nazareth House near Brisbane, children were allegedly subjected to savage beatings for such infractions as being left-handed or opening their eyes while praying. A woman named Lizzie Walsh,

who'd been a child resident of Nazareth House in the 1950s, recounted tales of being vaginally raped by a nun with a flagstick "to get the Devil out of me." When another nun found her sitting in a pool of her own blood after the rape, she reportedly chided Walsh to clean up the mess and return to class. Walsh also says nuns refused to believe her claims of being raped by two priests. Amid allegations of having been made to drink her own urine and eat vomit, Walsh also claims to have been force-fed the feces of a sexually predatory nun.

Bobbie Ford, another alleged Nazareth House victim, corroborated tales of nuns raping girls with "broomsticks and flagsticks...to get the Devil out of them." She also tells of nuns rubbing Vicks onto girls' pre-pube crotches in order "to get their puberty hair to grow." Ford claims that while a child at Nazareth House, she was imprisoned in dark cells for days and was once hung naked by her wrists for hours. She also recalled an incident where nuns shoved a guinea pig down one girl's pants and forced her to remain still while it nibbled on her crotch. Other alleged victims of Nazareth House told of being forced to kiss dead bodies. Some were reportedly warned that if they told anyone of the abuses,



the Devil would turn into a dog and rip their throats out.

As far-fetched as some of these claims sound, there appears to be solid supporting evidence. "The story of Lizzie Walsh at Nazareth House is beyond understanding," concedes Bruce Grundy, a journalism professor in Brisbane who has written extensively about abuses in Australian orphanages, "[but] I know the Lizzie Walsh matter was presented to the police. I saw her statement....With respect, we are NOT talking about hysterical people," Grundy says. "I have surveyed scores of them, read their files and their psychologist's reports, and cross-checked their claims with others. I have sat and listened while they have cried, hour after hour, grown men and women. Dozens and dozens of them."

Grundy, who says that his reports have outraged Church officials but that "no one sued," claims Nazareth House was "a shocking place for some of the kids. Absolutely beyond belief....The nuns seemed to specialize in physical and psychological cruelty, torture, and terror....There was a sort of madness that singled some out and others not....The psychological warfare they waged against [a girl named] Helen Forde at Nazareth makes Machiavelli a saint."

Grundy also wrote a detailed report regarding lurid allegations against Sisters of Mercy at a children's home in Neerkol, northern Queensland. The abuse, reportedly spanning a 90-year period beginning in the 1890s, included: a red-hot poker applied to a girl's bare back in order to "exorcise" her; children raped by priests with nuns' consent and even direction; forcible toenail-removal with pliers; a nun forcing a girl's leg down into boiling water; a pregnant girl being forced to take judo lessons until she miscarried; and live naked floggings of children in front of the entire school.

Grundy recounts one allegation of a nun sexually abusing a boy at Neerkol: "At Christmas, the Neerkol kids used to be taken down to the beach for a holiday. A boy wanted a drink and went to a tap, [then] put his mouth in his hand under it and turned it on. He washed a wasp (or a hornet) into his mouth. It stung him in the back of the throat. He was in agony for hours and was sent to the dormitory.

"That night he was still sobbing in bed. A nun came and took him to her room, took him to bed, and, I suspect you call it rape, but, whatever, she had sex with him. It was a bit of a shock for the boy,

since sex was something he had not encountered before. There were no witnesses, so there is no corroboration."

In contrast with the blunt concentration-camp brutality of the orphanages, there exists a pattern of nuns sexually abusing those placed under their care in pastoral or "teacher's-pet"-style situations. These cases, while seemingly more benign, tend to involve high levels of psychological manipulation. They often feature relationships lasting several years, and because they sometimes bear a quasi-romantic flavor, it is difficult to discern where consent ends and abuse begins.

In 1989, a Minnesota woman filed a lawsuit claiming that Sister Georgene Stuppy "regularly and repeatedly engaged in unpermitted, harmful, and offensive sexual contact" with her over three years beginning in 1978 when she was 13 and Stuppy was in her 40s. Strangely, Sister Stuppy admitted to engaging in sexual contact with the girl but acted surprised that anyone deemed it sexual—she always considered it a "spiritual" thing. The case was settled out of court.

A woman named Jill Thornton was given my e-mail address from someone at Broken Rites, an Australian anti-clergy-abuse watchdog group. Jill tells me that in 1980 at age 40, she entered into a "Therapeutic Relationship" with a nun acting as a psychologist. But it was an odd sort of therapy, Thornton says, one which "was described as working on skin to skin...with the client." Thornton says the counseling, which lasted over 12 years, "included seeing clients in bedrooms, using the bed. I was a 40-year-old adult; however...I always regressed during these 'touching sessions'....[This] nun came in...with only knickers underneath, at times. The grooming procedure was very subtle over a number of years. As I became 'more adult,' I began to resist this form of therapy."

Although Jill is reluctant to share details (but really, isn't the "knickers" thing plenty?), she says she has recently made a complaint of "indecent assault" to Australian police, who are deciding whether there is sufficient evidence to prosecute the nun. "SHE WILL HAVE TO ANSWER BEFORE THE POLICE AND NOT HIDE BEHIND THE LEADER," Jill ominously tells me in all-caps letters via e-mail.

Thornton claims that her prolonged sexual abuse led to "a complete nervous breakdown....I sat in a chair for a year not able to care for myself." She has since learned to deal with the trauma by becoming "an advocate to others in Australia, including nuns who have been sexually abused or raped by nuns."

Sometimes, as Thornton alleges, nuns even reach out and touch other nuns. The book *Habits of Sin* claims that nun-on-nun sexual abuse is used as a coercive tool for establishing convent hierarchies, even for fucking your way to the top. Young nuns willing to indulge the Mother Superior's ungodly tastes might just find themselves awarded that peachy post-grad scholarship.

A Kentucky lawsuit recently filed by a former nun hinges on similar accusations. Emily Feistritzer, now in her 60s, claims that as a schoolgirl, she was molested by a nun who was grooming her to be a nun, only to be molested again by other nuns after she actually became a nun. Whew! The suit alleges that Sister Eugene [real name Rosemary Imbus], Feistritzer's eighth-grade teacher, "repeatedly sexually molested" her, which involved "unwanted and lewd touching...of the plaintiff's breasts, attempts to undress her, kissing her and actual or attempted



vaginal contact." It also claims that Sister Eugene pawed at Feistritzer's privates while she was dressing as a postulant.

Feistritzer's lawsuit also claims she was molested by two nuns upon entering the convent in 1959. It alleges that a certain Sister Christopher committed dastardly acts such as "attempting to forcibly have sexual contact with her...forcibly undressing her, and...having unwanted sexual contact with her."

There's a somewhat indirect strain of sexual abuse by nuns which might properly be called "nuns-as-pimps." Such cases involve nuns facilitating or overseeing rape and molestation committed by others. One allegation against a Sister Philomena at Australia's notorious Nazareth House orphanage says she handpicked child victims for a pedophile priest, knowing he'd rape them. At the Neerkol orphanage, nuns were said to have "loaned" children at Christmas to known pedophiles who'd made large cash donations to the home.

In 1999, Sister Dominic, an Irish nun whose real name is Nora Wall, was sentenced to life imprisonment. She'd been convicted of holding down a ten-year-old girl's ankles, allowing a homeless man to rape her. The act allegedly occurred on an unnamed date in 1987 or '88 at St. Michael's Child Care Centre in Cappoquin—the same place where Paddy Doyle says a nun masturbated him in the early 1960s. Wall's victim, Regina Walsh, testified about the alleged rape in court. She claimed to have suffered repeated sexual abuse at Cappoquin from ages nine to 12. She called Sister Dominic "evil to the bone" and "ice cold."

Sister Dominic's conviction—and, mind you, it's the ONLY criminal conviction on record of a nun for sex abuse which this reporter was able to find after exhaustive research—was quickly overturned due to a minor point of prosecutorial misconduct, one which appeared to have little to do with the evidence against the nun.

So as it stands, there is no record...or at least none I could find, and none that the experts knew about, either...of a nun ever being convicted of a sex crime and serving time as a result.

It's hard to make a sex beef stick against a nun. In many cases, the alleged atrocities occurred decades ago, so evidence is hard to obtain. Memories are lost, blurred, or worse, "recovered." And nuns exist in a cloistered world that thrives on secrecy even more than the Mafia. Nuns move around. Nuns change their nun names to other nun names, and sometimes you never know their "real" names.

But in contrast with an almost utter lack of criminal indictments against sexually abusive nuns, victims have made some headway with civil complaints.

In Vermont, the church made cash settlements in an estimated five dozen cases involving St. Joseph's orphanage, where Joey Barquin claims to have suffered a bloody scrotum at age three. At least a dozen of these settlements are thought to have involved sexual abuse.

In Australia, church officials doled out an estimated \$1 million total in settlements to over a dozen women who'd claimed physical and sexual abuse at Nazareth House. There were also settlements regarding abuse at the Neerkol orphanage, but secrecy clauses prohibit further disclosure.

In America, the Catholic church has reached settlements regarding claims of sexual abuse by nuns in New York, Georgia, Minnesota, and Massachusetts. There are also pending lawsuits alleging sexual misconduct by nuns in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Kentucky.

Despite all the settlements, not once has the church admitted liability for sexual abuse by nuns, nor does the word "sorry" seem to surface in any of its official statements. Payments of hush money aren't legally an acknowledgment of guilt, so I have to state here that it's possible no nuns ever molested anyone.

It's possible. But not likely.

"I don't think we are close to having a handle on this problem," Ashley Hill says. "It is only beginning to unfold. This issue is about where the priest scandal was 25 years ago—just emerging."