

SB3

1. Honorable members of this chamber, I thank you for this opportunity to speak before you.
I do not know any of you personally yet I am here to reveal my inner, most private secret.
2. My name is Duane Michael Gray. I was born on February 8, 1962 and am currently 57 years old.
3. My parents were both Roman Catholic devout parishioners attending St. Elizabeth's church in Branford, CT.
4. At St. Elizabeth's, my younger brother Charles, Jr. and I joined the St. Elizabeth's altar boys & participated in catechism.
5. My family moved to Guilford, CT. where we became members of St. George's Catholic church in Guilford.
6. My parents enrolled us in the St. George's youth program where Reverend Daniel McSheffery was the parish priest.
7. I served as an altar boy under Reverend McSheffery approximately during the years 1973, 1974, 1975 & a portion of 1976.

8. In the later part of 1975, Reverend McSheffery began a ritual of committing oral sex on me which continued for 5 or 6 months, usually in a room off the sacristy.

9. One Saturday after mass, in the spring of 1976, Reverend McSheffery had me accompany him to a small cottage type house behind the church. He instructed me to remove my clothing and lie down on a bunch of large pillows and he began to again commit oral sex on me. After a while Reverend McSheffery informed me he was going to teach me about "warm fuzzies". He rolled me onto my stomach & I felt something pushing against my buttocks. I glanced back at this huge man as he attempted to force his penis into me. It hurt & I screamed and then he grabbed my hips forcefully and tried to penetrate me. I twisted my body and was able to push away from him which caused him to fall back onto his legs. Reverend McSheffery began to yell at me, cursing whereas I scurried to my feet, grabbed my clothing and ran out of the cottage and into a patch of bushes outside. I walked around for hours trying to comprehend what had happened. Little did I know what was waiting for me when I arrived home.

10. I arrived home before dark and as I walked into the kitchen from the garage, I found myself on the floor seeing stars. My parents were screaming at me as I crawled away to hide under the kitchen table, trying to make sense as to what they were screaming about. My mother was screaming that the rectory at St. George's called to inform them that my services were no longer needed as an altar boy because of what I did to Father McSheffery. My father was screaming something to the effect that I can't hit a priest and that the church referred to me as an evil child.

11. My parents' rage subsided and I was banished to my room with no dinner. I awoke the next morning to my mother beating me with a belt as I lay in bed. These beatings continued daily.

12. During all of the time I was a parishioner at St. George's, I never heard any announcement or warning to the parishioners that Reverend McSheffery had been accused of sexually abusing a minor child nor did I ever hear about this from others or read it in the church bulletin.

13. I have never publicly spoke of this abuse, perhaps out of shame or guilt or maybe even the stigma attached to this kind of abuse. The church is too powerful, who would believe me over them?

14. Because of the abuse I suffered at the hands of Reverend McSheffery and the anger in me it caused, I made a conscious decision later in life not to have children. I could not trust myself in how my anger would manifest itself. I now find myself alone, my entire family has passed on. Through all of the baggage this abuse has created, I have fought to lead a good, honorable life. I became a Drug & Money Laundering agent with the State of Florida, Dept. of Revenue for 9 years. Upon my return to Connecticut, I became the Secretary of VFW Post 7666 Men's Auxiliary and owned my own successful business for 12 years.

In closing, I implore the honorable members of this body to allow me & others the chance for justice by supporting this bill.