November 21, 1993

Dear Robert

Peace. I hope you are well; please be assured always of my love and support.

As you know, the Santa Barbara situation is fast coming to a close. With this letter I would like to bring you up to date on happenings.

The Board of Inquiry has issued two reports: an Internal Administrative Report to me which contains all the pertinent information and details of the allegations; a public report which will be presented to the public (whoever comes) on Monday evening, November 29th, at the Goleta Valley Community Center in Santa Barbara. The public report is about eighty pages long, and it does contain a section listing the number of friars reported (12), the number of victims (35), and a description of the behavior involved. No names are used.

There is also a series of five composite portraits (sort of like case studies) of the types of abuse that occurred. This is followed by a description of the impact of the actions on the victims. There is a brief description of the actions the fraternity and the provincial minister have taken with respect to the friars reported. This is generic and I do not think anyone will be able to identify the individual friars from what has been said. With respect to yourself, the text reads, "Two friars have been completely removed from ministry and are currently enrolled in sexual offender treatment programs known to be rigorous. They are forbidden contact with minors, required to participate in therapy, and have a local monitor."

The report concludes with some recommendations to the fraternity, the laity, and the administration. Overall, it is a good document, but parts of the text are very difficult to read, very explicit and jarring. Many of us have worked long and hard to get it in this shape and to protect as much as possible the good name of the fraternity and the identity and dignity of the friars involved.
Given the circumstances, we have done the best we could.

As you know, your name has been publicly identified in the papers, and I have no idea how much further exposure will be given. I think we have taken all the best steps to move the situation forward, and I am deeply grateful for your cooperation. Certainly, under no circumstances should you return to Santa Barbara County at this time. Probably, if the people ask there about your disposition explicitly, I will give them as much information as is warranted. I am grateful for your release in this area. I want so much to treat you with the respect and dignity you deserve. We know that this has happened, Robert; but I also know, that there is so much more to you than this--and you are good.

I know that the press will be present when the report is released; this event will probably be covered on local tv, the newspaper, possibly the LA Times, and the National Catholic Reporter. We have little control over what will be reported. It is my hope that they will indicate how well the friars have responded: the fraternity in helping the victims and friars, the composition and establishment of the Board, the willingness to be honest about this problem in our midst, the adoption of a continuing mechanism for addressing this problem, the cooperation of the friars who have been reported, etc. But, I do not know that these positive notes will be reported in the press. I do think that all of us, including yourself, can say that we did the best we could and acted in the best Christian and Franciscan way.

Thanks, Robert. Let us remember each other in prayers.

Fraternally,

[Redacted]

Provincial Minister
To Whom It May Concern
St. Luke Institute

re: status of Rev. Robert Van Handel, OFM

From: Provincial Minister

I have been in contact with Robert Van Handel about every six weeks. This contact usually occurs when I stop at his place of residence; there has been little formal discussion, and the initiative lies with me.

2. Robert and I have a very good relationship. We had one serious discussion in which we were able to share mutual feelings about the whole circumstances which have ensued after the disclosure of his activity at St. Anthony Seminary. I found this to be a very good exchange; he seems to me to be making progress around the expression of his feelings.

3. Currently, Robert is enrolled, at my insistence and his final agreement, in a sexual offender treatment clinic in Santa Cruz, California. I believe this has moved him beyond the point where he was when discharged from St. Luke's. The approach appears to be more confrontive and is not church-based. He does not engage in external sacramental ministry, but has been very useful to the province in taking on administrative projects, something I hope he can do more of in the future. He has been present at some very difficult community meetings where it was well known that he had abused children and that this has caused great difficulty for the fraternity, its public image and liabilities. The friars, I think, have received him well, and he has faced the situation with courage. I hope that progress can continue along these lines, as it is beneficial for all involved.

4. A more accurate description of his current progress can be obtained from the members of his support group. I think he needs to take more initiative in contacting people, getting involved in productive work, speaking about his feelings. The current program in Santa Cruz is absolutely essential to progress.
To: The Official Superior of Robert Vanbezdice

Robert will be returning to Saint Luke Institute in the near future to participate in a Continuing Care Workshop. In order to assist us in assessing his/her progress, we would ask that you take a short period of time to answer the following questions and to return this form to us in the accompanying envelope.

1. How often have you been in contact with the client over the past six months? Have these contacts been initiated by them or by you?

2. How would you characterize the relationship between the client and yourself? To what do you attribute the character of this relationship?

3. How would you characterize his/her progress in recovery? You may want to address some issues such as ministerial functioning, relations with those with whom they live, relationships with authorities, participation in support group or recovery oriented activities, such as Twelve Step meetings, psychotherapy, priest's/religious support groups, community activities, etc.

4. What other information are you aware of that you feel would be relevant to our assessment that has not been covered by the first three questions?

You may also wish to share your concerns with the Continuing Care client at this time. We encourage our clients to seek out and take advantage of your observations.

Thank you again for your help, and do not hesitate to contact me with your concerns at (301) 420-7395.

Sincerely,

Michael Brenneis, MA, M.Div, CPC
Coordinator, Continuing Care Services and Three Quarter Way House, Outpatient Department

Please identify yourself:

Name:  
Relationship to Client:  

OFM VANH 1 0588

2420 Brooks Drive • Suitland, Maryland 20746-5294 • (301) 967-3700 • FAX: (301) 967-3953

Affiliated with the Daughters of Charity, National Health System
Mary Simoni  
Pacific Treatment Associates  
313 Soquel Ave, Suite B  
Santa Cruz, California 95062  

September 24, 1993  

Dear Ms. Simoni  

Let me introduce myself. I am the religious superior  
of one of our friars, Father Robert Van Handel, who  
has been referred to Pacific Counselling Associates  
for treatment. It is my understanding that you are  
his current therapist.  

As you know, Father Robert was engaged in pedophilic  
behavior with a group of children associated with a  
Boys Choir which he founded in Santa Barbara. The  
same activity extended to some of the high school  
seminarians at St. Anthony Seminary. You are probably  
well aware of this history both from Father Robert and  
also from the evaluations from the treatment center  
in Maryland, St. Luke's Institute.  

Over the past year, a Board of Inquiry established by  
our Province has been investigating the allegations of  
sexual abuse perpetrated by some of the friars in  
Santa Barbara. In the course of the investigation, many  
of Robert Van Handel's victims came forward to describe  
what has happened to them. The Board has compiled  
a profile of his behavior as they have heard it, and  
they have now presented that profile to me so that it  
might become part of his therapeutic process. I have  
already spoken to Robert about it, and have told him  
that I would be forwarding this profile to you so that  
it can be dealt with in the therapy. Please find this  
enclosed.  

If you have any questions of myself, please call or  
write, as I want to be as available as necessary.  

Thank you very much.  

Sincerely  

Provincial Minister  

OFM VANH 1  
0589
Robert Van Handel, have been tested for HIV and the test was negative. This test was done at St. Luke Institute, Suitland, Maryland, in June, 1992.

I may use this information in the manner which he may choose. It is my understanding that this will be for private use rather than as part of a press release.

Admittance of having been HIV tested does not imply that I was in sexual contact with any minor in such a manner that a virus could be transmitted.

signed

Robert Van Handel

date

Nov. 3, 1993
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Please accept this letter as certification that I, Robert Van Handel, give permission for my name to be specifically used in the Report of the Board of Inquiry into sexual misconduct at St. Anthony's Seminary.

signed Robert Van Handel

date Nov. 3, 1993
The purpose of this letter is to describe to you the goals and requirements of the Pacific Treatment Associates OFFENDER PROGRAM and to give you a general idea of what you can expect during your time here. It would be a good idea to keep this letter in your personal folder so that you can refer to it in the future.

The primary goal of the Offender Program is the prevention of reoffense. Because you have committed a crime against another person or persons you are considered to be a risk to the community — there is a strong possibility that you could reoffend. Therefore, it is important that you recognize from the beginning that your presence here in this program is a privilege not a right. You, your primary counselor, and the rest of the staff will work together to decrease that risk.

The Offender Program provides group and individual counseling as well as family reunification counseling when desired and appropriate. You can expect to be in treatment for two to three years; you are required to attend group for the entire time and individual counseling for as long as necessary. Your group counselor will be your primary counselor for the duration of your treatment. He or she will be responsible for monitoring your progress. Your individual counselor will be someone other than your group counselor.

You are expected to:

- Attend all group meetings.
- Participate actively in group meetings and individual sessions.
- Do assigned work within the given period of time.
- Pay for group counseling at the beginning of each month.
- Pay for individual and family counseling before each session, unless arranged otherwise, and be responsible for other costs (see below).
- Adhere to the "personal rules" developed by you in your group.
- Take a polygraph exam six months into treatment. You may also be required to take a polygraph exam at any time.
- Comply with treatment as prescribed by your therapist.

Suspension from your group or from the program will occur when there are violations of the above stated expectations. If suspension occurs the court will be notified.
Costs you can expect re:* 

Group - $30 per session, payable at the first meeting of the month for the entire month

Individual - fee set by your individual counselor

Behavioral treatment - group $20 per hour - individual $35 per hour

Letter writing & phone calls - $50 per hour

Court appearances and visits to jail - $75 per hour

Workshops - $10 per hour

Additional testing -

Polygraph - Initial polygraph - $150; follow up polygraph - $75

Plethysmograph - $75 per hour

*Individuals in the Alternative Prosecution Program may have a different fee schedule.

In most treatment programs confidentiality is guaranteed to the client. Due to the nature of the behavior for which you are being treated, this is a guarantee we cannot give you. People in the community, neighbors or employers for example, might know of your offense. Several government agencies who have become involved in your life from the moment of reporting will continue to be involved. We will be working with these agencies throughout your treatment here in order to insure that your behavior is consistent with your treatment and legal requirements. Being honest about your thoughts, feelings and behaviors may be difficult under these circumstances. However, we expect you to make this commitment. It is the first step in reconstructing your life.

Staff

Offender Program

PACIFIC TREATMENT ASSOCIATES

OFM VANH 1
0593
GROUP THERAPY

The purpose of this letter is to give you some information about the goals and structure of the group you will be starting, and to help you do well in that setting. When you begin group, you are likely to hear things that shock you or make you feel uncomfortable. You might think, "I don't like this, I don't need it, I'm not as bad as these other guys." Let the group know what you're thinking and give the men a little time to let you know who they are, what they can offer, and what they expect from you.

If you are like most new men here, you'll look for differences rather than similarities between you and the others. That could slow the pace of your progress, so for now, let's look at how you're alike rather than different.

Most of the men in the program are law abiding except for their deviant sexual behavior. Generally, their sexual problems continued despite remorse, promises, anger, prayer, the realization that the behavior is wrong, and their own attempts to control the problem. Many in your group have tried to avoid experiencing the emotional fear and pain following offense by burying themselves in work, refusing to think about it, drinking, blaming and/or making excuses.

Most new men in group are convinced that they won't offend again. For most group members, the offense is contrary to their own values and beliefs. It's as though they have been leading a double life. They have probably disappointed people important to them just as you have. You are probably reluctant to be completely honest about the problem because you're embarrassed, and because you've lied already to important people and don't want to have to go back to them and tell them about the problem as it really is. You might also be concerned about legal consequences following full disclosure.

Most men in your group don't want to offend but they don't know how to stop permanently, on their own.

Let's talk now about the purpose of group therapy. Group is a weekly reminder of the problem you are working to correct. Before being caught, most men didn't think about their sexual behavior problem unless they were planning it, doing it, being angry with themselves afterwards or worrying about getting caught. The primary purpose of group is to UNDERSTAND, PREDICT, AND CONTROL your problem behavior. In group you'll learn about your warning signs, that is, what you're thinking, feeling, and doing and what's going on in your body prior to the offending. You'll learn about patterns, cycles and controls. There will be instruction, support, and confrontation when you minimize, blame or lie. You'll
get rules and assignments that will help you not to offend again.

Group encourages honesty and self-disclosure. In return you'll get treatment tools that are well-matched and helpful and you'll get a knowledgeable, supportive group to turn to when you need it. There will be good role models in group. Men who are doing well and getting what they want for themselves and their families.

In group, you'll reenact, perhaps unintentionally, some of the problems that bring you here. These might be, for example, secrecy, manipulation, withdrawal, aggressiveness, and blaming. These behaviors will be pointed out to you. You'll be encouraged to try out different, appropriate ways to get what you want: assertiveness, honesty, compassion, and a willingness to compromise and negotiate. Also, you'll learn to tolerate frustration without acting in ways that are hurtful to yourself and others.

Your group will meet once a week for two hours. There will be approximately twelve men in the group and they will all have sexual behavior problems. Some of the men are voluntary and some are ordered to be here by other agencies. There will be a therapist in the room at all times. The amount of time you spend in group is related to your honesty, effort, cooperation and progress. You will be placed in a group that is appropriate for you, given your sexual problem, lifestyle, strengths and limitations.

In group, there are candidates, members and graduates; you are a candidate. After a few weeks, when you'll be asking for membership, you'll find there are several requirements. All the members and graduates have to vote you in. In order to decide, they will be looking for the following: that you see yourself as a sex offender, that you are motivated to change, that you have been helpful to the best of your ability, and that you are demonstrating change both inside and out of the group setting. In addition, your first written assignment, a sexual autobiography, must be read to and approved by your group prior to the granting of membership status.

In order to graduate from the program, you must have your sexual deviance problem under control for some time and have a working knowledge of your patterns and controls. All assignments must be completed. There will have been healthy changes in your behavior, attitude and lifestyle. All counselors who have worked with you and your family must be in agreement that you are ready to leave the program.

About your first meeting: Group begins with a summary of the previous week's process provided by that week's leader. Then, a new leader is elected. Each man in the group will tell you about his history of sexual deviancy and then tell the leader what he'd like to accomplish in that week's agenda.

Now, it's your turn. You'll tell the group your history of sexual
deviancy as best you can from the beginning to the present. Members of the group will ask questions so that they can help you do well. Through their questions, support and confrontations you'll learn a lot about yourself. You'll learn how you developed your problem and why you repeated your hurtful behaviors. You'll learn to predict the slide into reoffense and how to control the urge before it becomes hurtful behavior.

When you finish discussing your sexual history, the group will answer any questions you have about the program. Then, you and your group will discuss and get together your rules that will guide your behavior in and out of treatment. For example, whether you can use alcohol, live with children or drive without a destination in mind. There are many standard rules and one of the most important ones is that whatever is said in group, stays in group unless the member himself says it's okay to discuss his situation with others. You will be expected to attend every session. You will be expected to be punctual and have your assignments in on time.

Immediately after the first meeting, a couple of the men will stay after with you and give you the first assignment. It's called a sexual autobiography and the content and purpose will be clearly defined for you. You will have two weeks to complete it. If you have any questions or complaints about the program, assignments, rules, or process, tell your group and your counselor right away.

The staff's suggestion is that you accept that you do have a sexual behavior problem that could come back and that you have a lot in common with the other men in your group. They have much to offer and like you, they've "been there." They know what it's like to do what you've done and to struggle to free themselves from the patterns and -- they are succeeding.

The group is on your side. They don't expect perfection, but they do demand that you be honest and do what you've agreed to do. If you are honest and work hard, you'll find acceptance and community in your group. You'll learn to like yourself again and to become hopeful about your future. With the group's help, you'll stop hurting people. Perhaps you will return to your family if you are now separated. You will stop wasting your time and energy planning your offense, offending, getting angry with yourself, making false promises and then worrying about getting caught.

Whatever happens in your group, you can handle it. If your therapist has asked you to begin group, it's because he or she is convinced that you have all the necessary skills and strengths to do well and to benefit from the experience.

Staff
PACIFIC TREATMENT ASSOCIATES
I, __________________________, have read the description and requirements of Pacific Treatment Associates Offender Program. I understand that my participation in this program is privilege, not a right, and therefore my full and honest participation is expected and monitored by the staff.

I understand that the goals of this treatment program are:

1. to demonstrate complete responsibility for the illegal actions which have brought me to this program.
2. to understand the reasons for my behavior.
3. to understand the physical, emotional, and social impact that my behavior has had and continues to have on the victim(s), his/her family, my family, friends, and the community.
4. to accomplish the behavior and attitude changes needed to prevent reoffense in the future.

Additional goals I want to accomplish:

________________________________________

________________________________________

I agree to attend every weekly group session (except when emergencies arise or when I have obtained group or staff permission) and to pay $30 for each weekly group session whether I am present or not. I understand that should I miss attending two consecutive meetings without notifying the staff, or miss paying for two consecutive meetings, I will automatically be dropped from the program. Should this occur, I understand that my probation officer (or other appropriate person) will be notified.

I agree to participate in group meetings, to attend individual and other counseling session when applicable, to do assignments which have been designed to help me fulfill my treatment goals, and to respect the privacy of other group members by not revealing names or other identifying information to anyone outside of Pacific Treatment Associates.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand this contract, and that in signing it, I make a pledge to complete the entire treatment program.

Signed __________________________ Date __________________________

Witness __________________________

OFM VANH 1
0597
INTRODUCTION

Child molestation is a common sexual crime that affects one in four females in the United States. A variety of programs have been established to deal with the aftermath of child molestation, but few programs focus on preventing molestation by treating the molester himself. Those programs that do focus on this aspect have come into existence because they believe that if the incidence of child molestation is to be decreased, greater efforts need to be focused on treatment methods which will help the molester gain control over his deviant behavior.

The treatment of those who commit sex offenses (including child molestation) is a relatively new discipline. At least two factors have significantly affected the direction of sex offender treatment over the years: 1) the gradual movement away from the medical or psychiatric model, in which the preferred form is individual therapy sessions, using conventional diagnoses and 2) the new perceptions of rape that have grown out of the women's movement. Before the development of a cohesive women's movement the prevailing view about rapists were that they were sexually unfulfilled men carried away by sudden, uncontrollable surges of sexual desire. It was believed that these desires might have been unleashed by provocative victims and that rapists were psychologically sick men. Today, the majority of programs are rooted in the perception that 1) rape is basically an assaultive crime acted out sexually; 2) that such behavior is generally culturally or experientially learned; and 3) that rape victims include a powerless range of subjects such as little babies, young children, elderly women, and the infirm, as well as other more able but equally unprovocative victims—young women and young men. These ideas are now seen to be applicable to the entire range of sex offenses.

The new sex offender discipline is an integrated one which includes a variety of psychodynamic, behavioral, cognitive, and biomedical elements and incorporates a wide range of educational and training components. The roots of current techniques can be traced back partially to the work of Masters & Johnson in treating sexual dysfunction. However, most of the concepts now in use have only been developed over the last 10 to 15 years. During this time, scientific research methods have been used to determine the effectiveness of the various approaches in changing behavior and attitudes.

COMPREHENSIVE TREATMENT GOALS

Treatment programs currently existing, both inpatient and outpatient, use the following goals to structure treatment:
1. Each offender needs a complete, individualized assessment and treatment plan. Assessment determines individual needs and, in the case of CSATP, as well as other outpatient programs, determines the risk to the community.

2. Each offender needs to a) accept responsibility for the offense(s) in which he has been involved and b) have an understanding of the sequence of thoughts, feelings, events, circumstances, and arousal stimuli that make up the "offense syndrome" that precedes his involvement in sexually aggressive behaviors.

3. Each offender needs to learn how to a) intervene in or break into his offense pattern at its very first sign and b) call upon the appropriate methods, tools, or procedures he has learned, in order to suppress, control, manage, and stop the behavior.

4. Each offender needs to participate in a re-education and resocialization process in order to a) replace antisocial thoughts and behaviors with prosocial ones, b) acquire a positive self-concept and new attitudes and expectations of himself, and c) learn new social and sexual skills to help cultivate positive, satisfying, pleasurable, and non-threatening relationships with others.

5. Each offender needs time to assimilate new concepts, attitudes, and behaviors and a place to test them safely.

6. Each offender needs a) post-treatment support, peer, or "rap" group and b) continual post-treatment access to therapy and support in order to maintain permanently a safe lifestyle.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment includes testings, clinical interview, and a measure of arousal by the plethysmograph. Richard Laws, a pioneer in the development of behavioral procedures operates on two beliefs: 1) All sex offenders have problems with deviant sexual arousal and 2) all offenders have problems with self-control of that arousal. The erection response, therefore, gives information on the kinds of things that will "turn a person on." This can help in determining risk for community-based program.

RESPONSIBILITY AND UNDERSTANDING

We use police reports, reports from victim therapists, interviews of family members, and polygraph testing to promote honesty and acceptance of full responsibility. At CSATP a variety of educational units are presented which help offenders to become familiar with the sequence of thoughts, feelings, events, circumstances and arousal stimuli that make up his offense.

INTERVENTION AND CONTROL
Interventions come in the form of simple behavioral techniques such as cognitive deterrents, impulse-charting, thought-shifting or stronger ones such as scheduled overmasturbation, monitoring of behavior and manipulation of the environment. Most researchers recommend that at least two behavioral interventions be used to decrease deviant arousal: aversive conditioning (covert sensitization) and verbal satiation (boredom tapes). Some recommend the use of Depo-provera. Covert sensitization teaches the offender to disrupt fantasies of young children by replacing them with aversive images and satiation reduces arousal by satiating or boring the offender with his own deviant sexual fantasies.

Satiation

This is a technique which research has shown to be extremely effective in eliminating deviant sexual arousal. It eliminates or greatly reduces fantasies which would otherwise remain in people's minds. While many child molesters claim that they can control their deviant fantasies by eliminating their use of deviant fantasy, this is effective only for short periods of time. In the long run deviant fantasies will return. Offenders can learn to develop methods that will eradicate fantasies, rather than develop strategies to avoid them. To destroy these fantasies, offenders must reach into their memories and "bring them out" while developing some method to destroy their erotic nature. The use of fantasies during satiation is NOT like the use of fantasy in the past. The use of fantasy during satiation does not increase interest and arousal to young children but instead destroys it.

Covert sensitization

This method pairs aversive consequences with the sexually deviant fantasy so that it becomes less pleasurable and erotic. The covert sensitization cycle consists of 1) a neutral pleasant scene followed by 2) a deviant fantasy followed by 3) an aversive consequence and 4) an escape scene.

RE-EDUCATION AND RE-SOCIALIZATION

In CSATP this goal is addressed through the use of Rational Thinking and other methods to overcome cultural stereotypes about the roles of men and women, to overcome misperceptions about human sexuality, to learn to increase appropriate arousal, to deal with the offender's own victimization as a child, to learn to be empathic, to learn to be an assertive person who can manage anger and other negative feelings, to increase self-esteem; and to learn the means of controlling various impulses. These goals are accomplished through various educational units such as Rational Thinking, Sexuality, Communication and Stress Management, and through various assignments such as writing an empathy paper and a reoffense paper.

ASSIMILATION AND PRACTICE
The length of time spent in treatment is approximately two years, which gives the offender time to assimilate material and begin changes. These changes can be practiced in, and monitored by, the group through support and confrontation.

POSTTREATMENT

Each offender is expected to develop and adhere to a posttreatment plan. This plan, which is approved by the offender’s group and the staff, should address the continued need for support, for healthy interactions with others, and for awareness and monitoring of deviant impulses/fantasies/thoughts, as well as other issues specific to each offender. At CSATP we expect follow-up visits to group for two years following the completion of treatment and a request for additional treatment if the need arises.
To: Patricia Dlugokenski
From: [Name Redacted]

September 9, 1993

In a memorandum dated August 19, 1993, I have received permission from Father Robert Van Handel to grant access to his personnel files to those I deem necessary for the good of the province and his defense.

I hereby grant permission for you to read this file; it is my understanding that any information contained therein will be maintained in confidence, and that no further disclosures will take place to anyone without my prior authorization.

[Name Redacted]
Provincial Minister

[Signatures]

OFM VANH 1
0602
Third Party Privacy Rights

May 5, 1992

Dear

Enclosed is a copy of a letter that is being sent to Fr. Robert Van Handel, O.F.M. We are sending you this copy for your information. The City of Santa Barbara Police Department has assigned this report number [redacted].

Sincerely,

[Redacted]
May 5, 1992

Third Party Privacy Rights

Enclosed is a copy of a letter that is being sent to Fr. Robert Van Handel, O.F.M. We are sending you this copy for your information. The City of Santa Barbara Police Department has assigned this report number OFM VANH 1 0604.

Sincerely,

OFM VANH 1
0604
May 11, 1992

From: [Name]
To: [Name]

Subject: Concerning [Subject]

Please note that [Details of the issue]

Please be advised that [Additional information]

[Signature]

[Date]
Dear Dr. Montana:

This morning I phoned to ask if Robert Van Handel, a Franciscan priest of the St. Barbara Province, could come to St. Luke Institute for diagnostic testing. We agreed that he would arrive Sunday, May 17 and leave sometime after 12:30 pm on Friday, May 22. Following your suggestion, I asked him to call Delia Manning in Admissions for further information regarding what to expect, what to bring, arrival time, etc. I told him that he could also call you if he wished. Thank you for your friendly and professional help and support.

Robert recently received a letter from parents regarding inappropriately touching their son. The letter is enclosed. This incident would have occurred several years ago. My understanding is that the family seems to have no intention of pursuing this situation except (1) I believe they are concerned that Robert get any psychological help he may need; (2) The family filed the issue with the Santa Barbara police. It is not yet clear what the police will do with the information.

Robert is very willing to come to St. Luke Institute for diagnostic testing. He is aware of the fact that you will be forwarding a report with recommendations to Rev. the Provincial of the St. Barbara Province:

[Provincial Office
details redacted]

All official information should go to our Provincial. My role, as a member of our Wellness Committee, is to be a support person for Robert. I am available for any follow-up support.

Thank you for your help.

sincerely,

[Signature]
Dear [Name],

I want to thank you for your concern for me at this time. I really appreciate it. And I am sorry if I seemed pushy, but I was, am rather desperate to help my family heal. It is like seeing them in an airplane that is in a tailspin, and all I can do is watch them hopelessly as they fall deeper into their pain.

I know you will reach out very lovingly to them and anything I can do to help you in this, please let me know. This is truly among the heaviest crosses I have had in my life, and the pain is felt very much for Robert also. Be assured of my prayers for you in the decisions you must make. Besides this you have all the rest of the Province to be concerned about.

I am doing O.K. in all this, and I have people I can talk to. Also, God is near and very supportive. I will keep in touch and where I feel appropriate will make suggestions. I hope you will be open to that, and at the same time, assure me, as you did last evening, that you need to work it out in your own way. These checks and balances will help us cope with this whole thing in the best manner possible.

To briefly summarize what I said on the phone last night, I see a real deterioration in [Name]'s spirit. This is why I suggested using the team mentioned in our guidelines. I see them drifting towards external sanctions-court action if the statute of limitations is lifted by the legislature and/or civil action based on interior suffering. They do not seem to be inclined to publicize the matter at present, but I do not think the door to that is closed.

I urged them to see their counsellors, and I am trying to find out if there is a support group for those whose children have experienced child abuse. I will suggest to them that they join such a group as a means of helping them heal. I am beginning to think that people can get into such a hurting state that they lose the hope of healing, or for whatever reasons, want to stay in their hurt. I'll keep doing what I can.

Thank you, again, for your help and support.

[Signature]

Third Party Privacy Rights

May 21, 1992

OFM VANH 1

0607
Third Party Privacy Rights

June 15, 1992

Dear [Name],

This letter is in response to your May 20th, 1992 letter which offered condolences and payment of counseling services for the devastating consequences of Robert's actions on [Name]'s family and herself. [Name] is currently in counseling in dealing with these issues and we have begun to receive invoices for this.

The current statement from the counselor shows four sessions dated 4/8, 4/23, 4/29, and 5/7/92 for "Individual Psychotherapy". Each session has a unit cost of $110.00 and the total balance is $440.00. We are requesting reimbursement for this balance. We will advise you of additional counselling balances as they arise.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

[Name]

Dear Mr. [Name],

Peace. Thank you very much for your recent letter, which has just arrived in our office yesterday.

Enclosed please find a check for $400.00 dollars to cover the counselling expenses. For our records, I would appreciate it if you could forward a copy of the invoices.

I think and pray about your family and the situation on an almost daily basis. The whole experience is terrible; and please assure [Name] of my continued support and concern.

Sincerely,

[Name]
Provincial Minister
In your most recent letter to us you offered to pay for our counseling costs. We are responding for ourselves.

Before addressing the counseling matter we vividly recall our meeting with you and the Definitiorium during the Philip Wolfe proceedings. During that meeting we presented the board with a series of attainable goals. We asked that you apprise us of the outcome of the board’s deliberations regarding the goals. To-date we have not received a response from you on the resolution. We certainly feel that a response is long overdue.

As we discussed by phone, we definitely want to know the outcome of the psychological testing of Robert VanHandel, whether any further psychological treatment will be undertaken and what the plans for him will be after the aforementioned are completed.

We recall the way in which you preferred to handle the counseling costs for [REDACTED] as a result of the Philip Wolfe rape. We are following the same approach with our counseling costs as you preferred with them. We have sought professional counseling as a means of reaching the stated amount. Given this we are presenting you with a $50,000 bill for each of us, making a total of $100,000. This covers all counseling costs for us associated with the Wolfe
trauma, the VanHandel trauma and future counseling costs associated with both. The heavy anguish experienced by each member of this family occasioned by these events continues on a daily basis. You can have no idea of the extent of the pain and life changes that have come in their aftermath. The latest developments have increased this trauma exponentially. Should you have any questions please call us.

Sincerely,

Third Party Privacy Rights
Robert von Natholz,
Sept 10, 1942

Dear [Redacted],

I must do something more positive.
I don't want to every think of a way

1. Still do reveres.

2. Shall it "face up still she,"

In some ways, the action required in

X am more actively criticized

1:15
will call at 4:15. Sunday. He has come to

give point in his own mind. Think it

Please, not today.

OFM VANH 1
0612
3RD PARTY PRIVACY

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]
41 People directly involved have been consulted.

Shall we move anything?

Keep it rude to consult-

Tell of people o part come-

May we gettin under ract+

To high board, r not shun

Know this. Some high collect-

es isn't do anything...-

1 Some collect - one-

Our decision otherwise.

People consult in past, because-

Every inappropriate becomes my love

This place. - Consult people

Directly - shall we consult

Points - of a child, points

Shall be consulted. By east, consult-

2 Mary's 1 had very good

in this way, another thing.
As mostly expected, while we sat down, the door was bellled—
be that for some important—
that's nothing but — I'm for produc'tion — that's badly a bad
for 3 hours in that interval!
However, must be done one by one.

How we've said we did something,

a pension shall be made

10 next people.

Treatment: 0 pistol and I[r]p[our]

 hereby:

3 Robert's indicated

as already known to

existing. But not from

known shall be returned for him
to who made a sound bread.

Now throw out the process.
* Please turn to Europe *

* Can we have a conference of leaders re: what supplies of goods are required?*

* We had a good job on the basis of open, open, transparent.

She made sure she could keep it closed.

* Ask Bill if he's willing to take it, but he has the later.*

* Need to be sure ... *
3rd PARTY PRIVACY

BUH: phone - 

① willing to show me? we buy them be our

reports with of a plot, a joint hunting

-1979-80 people from '79 -

- Visit with contact -

nothing from '79 meetings in recent history, we want to

② trying to "make our" - though I felt it.

③ how to approach - Sound better - but very - least

④ possibility we will let - even -

though gap:

⑤ have had certain difficulties to our

receiving where fortunate.

⑥ part of past circumstances - but is the same

as big - her opportunity to come forward:

⑦ in we can do more found fact - but her

and forget forever.

⑧ any amount to found -

⑨ next letter to Britain country

Send a letter to about and

OFM VANH 1
0617
3rd Party Privacy

Ofm Vanh 1

0618
Two draft letters have been written by Tom West, OFM, and Bob Hellman of the Santa Barbara Boys Choir. One is a general letter to all former and present members of the Choir. The other is to a specific individual who might have been abused by Robert. A mention of Robert’s cooperation was added to the general letter.

A letter was also sent to the [redacted] family offering to pay for specific counseling bills that were submitted.

[redacted] has met with the friars in Santa Barbara to explain the whole situation.
Peace. Once again, I would like to wish you all of God's blessings. I would like to thank you for your patience and understanding, especially under the most difficult of circumstances. Please know of my constant prayers for you and desire to help.

The definitorium held an extraordinary meeting on Friday, September 11, at which we discussed your last letter to me.

No. many of the fears and anxieties being suffered by the broader community in Santa Barbara. It is surely our desire to address the situation, inasmuch as possible, in a proactive way. Our heart goes out to everyone.

At this time, the province wants very much to pay for the specific counselling bills which are forwarded to us; if you could do this, I would appreciate it. We would like to make these bills the base for further discussions about other costs which may be incurred. We would really like to see if the present situation cannot be used as an opportunity for us to talk. Certainly, our mutual concerns involve both financial costs and personal issues. To further the possibility of contact, I have asked Father Thomas West, one of our friars who is a specialist in the area of abuse, to contact you on my behalf.

We realize the importance of contacting the broader community of the Boys Choir in Santa Barbara. As indicated to you in my previous letter, we had, very early on, decided to take a proactive stance, resting a policy flexible enough to respond to an evolving situation. I know that Father Thomas Westwill be happy to discuss with you the work we have been doing in this area, the necessity at this time of a general letter, and our pastoral desire to reach out to any possible victims. We are doing our best to move forward prudently, and with sensitivity to everyone involved.

This letter brings you up to date on our discussions. I know that Father Tom will be sharing more with you; but I hope that we too can be in further contact.

May God Bless you and your family,
Sincerely in Christ

[Signature]

Third Party Privacy Rights

OFM VANH 1
0620
Third Party Privacy Rights

Oct. 28th

10 am call for KEYT news

Letter from Brown, correction of Phil Wolfe

has called

Thoughts from Brown community. Page Brown, publishing

then said to finish up

These very sorry if being fresh in doing something.

TV: PHIL WOLFE

Dear editor - private message to the editor

-DEB

R. Rose

11:38

KEYT - TV

will go if it

- VIRGIL BROWN

OFM VANH 1
0621
3RD PARTY PRIVACY

In this meet:
- See food: being 4 people regarding to
- Rule city something -
- Then is what - future assignment
to
- In major case to please -
- Phil Wolfsen, required that SAP.
- A history -
- A function -

Should I but keep meeting of bishop.
3RD PARTY PRIVACY

Oct 27

Dr. Branco

- no - they're just putting one
- not sure where to begin

Do we need 20 people? (when & how)

- not sure - more to the less effective

- space room
- questions - all these questions for both

How do I participate - what feeling - have role that can

- do BHH going to be printed?
- as personal sensitivity?
- will be in book or set of children

- angry at 1
- angry at church - BHH
- will be there - want to cancel

OEM VANH 1
0623
SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS WHO WISH TO ASK THEIR CHILDREN ABOUT POSSIBLE SEXUAL INTERFERENCE

In general it best to approach these matters in a calm, relaxed, matter-of-fact way. If you are uncomfortable in asking the questions, your child will most likely be uncomfortable in answering them. An unbiased, non-judgemental approach is most likely to elicit truthful answers. Few children will want to tell their parents about something that the parents view as shocking or horrifying. Therefore, it is best to inquire about specific events in as neutral a fashion as possible.

The following example may help:

"Son, do you remember Father Robert from the Boys' Choir? Some of the boys from the choir have recently mentioned that he sometimes gave them back rubs and tummy rubs. I was just curious, did he ever give back rubs or tummy rubs to you? Did he ever invite you to play games that involved touching you, your legs, tummy, or private parts?"

If the answer is no, you might want to say something like:

"O.K., fine, I was just curious. If you think of something later just let me know. Sometimes some adults do things that aren't such a good idea, or that make you uncomfortable, and it is always important to let another adult know if something like that ever happens to you."

If the child wants to know why Father Robert (or any adult) would do such a thing, you might explain that:

"Sometimes people have problems that make them want to do things that they shouldn't. It doesn't mean that Father Robert is a bad person, but it is important that he get help for his problems. That is why it is important that other adults be told when such things have happened, so that they can help Father Robert. He is getting such help right now."

O.F.M. VANH 1
0624
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4) The Franciscan province has asked Fr. Tom West, M.A., to also be available to all parties concerned for spiritual or counseling assistance. He can be reached at 415 863-6111.

A few parents have expressed questions about how to best handle this subject with their sons. For individuals who are now age 14 and over, it is recommended that they be given a copy of this letter to read for themselves.

It is important that we learn if other individuals were interfered with in any way. If any young men received unwanted attention from Fr. Robert, they are asked to notify their parents, or if they prefer, they can notify Dr. Gorsuch confidentially by phone at (805) 682-3129 or in writing at 133 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101. They may also contact Fr. Tom West confidentially at (415) 863-6111 or write to him at 133 Golden Gate Ave., San Francisco, CA 94102.

Parents of younger children may wish to refer to the enclosed suggestions, or to consult Dr. Gorsuch or Fr. Tom West for assistance. Keep in mind that we have no evidence that any inappropriate activity occurred between Fr. Robert and any other boys in the choir at any time during the past eight years.

Whenever a trusted and admired figure betrays our confidence, feelings of hurt, anger, and dismay are inevitable. We may initially deal with such feelings through the use of denial (disbelieving the truth) or projection (blaming the Church or other individuals or institutions). Conversely, our anger may be aimed directly at the individual in question. Any or all of these feelings are normal. In any event, most individuals and families will benefit from an open discussion of their reactions. They may wish to share their feelings and concerns with other families and individuals from the Boys' Choir, or they may wish to do so privately or with a professional.

For anyone who wishes to take advantage of it, a group meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, October 26th, at 7PM. The purpose of the meeting will be to answer questions, share common concerns, and express the many feelings that inevitably emerge in this type of situation. Please RSVP to 682-5841 if you wish to attend. [Redacted] the Franciscan Minister Provincial, Director, Robert Halman, Fr. Tom West, and Dr. Gorsuch will be present.

Sincerely,

OFM VANH 1
0626

Fr. Joseph Chinnici, Provincial Minister
Santa Barbara Boys Choir, Board of Directors
However, if the child has answered that such incidents did happen to him, you might start by asking:

"Did that ever make you embarrassed or uncomfortable?"

If the child responds that yes it did:

"Well, it was wrong of Father Robert to do that, but it certainly was not your fault."

You might then explain (as above) why Father Robert would do such a thing, and suggest that:

"We talk to a Doctor about this and explain what happened so that Father Robert can get help for his problems, and so that the Doctor can help you to understand that this wasn't your fault."

If the child has answered that yes this did happen to him but no it did not make him embarrassed or uncomfortable, you should probably explain that it was not a good idea for Father Robert to do this and explain (as above) why it is important to always tell another adult when such a thing happens. If you wish, you may still suggest that:

"We explain to a Doctor what happened so that Father Robert can get help for his problems."

The above are just suggestions and you should feel free to use all, some, or none of them. I am available for consultation in person or by phone to assist you in this process, and of course to meet with you and your child if he has been the recipient of any unwanted sexual attention. If you have any questions, please call me (805) 687-3128.

Sincerely,

Scott Gorsuch, Ph.D.
Most Reverend Roger Mahony
Cardinal Archbishop of Los Angeles
Archdiocese of Los Angeles
1531 West Ninth Street
Los Angeles, CA 90015-1194

Dear Cardinal Mahony:

You have not met us, declining our offer to meet with you in 1989, referring us instead to your auxiliary, Bishop Patrick Ziemann. Our names and our story should be familiar to you. You should remember that in September of 1989, Fr. Phillip Mark Wolfe, O.F.M., was convicted of felony sexual molestation of a minor. He admitted of like activity with another minor. Since the statute was by then 21 years of age, the statute of limitations had already run out. Therefore, there was no legal punishment for more than three years of very serious on going sexual molestation under threat to maintain his silence.

What you must know is that in December of 1991, we learned that [redacted] had also been sexually molested when he was around the age of 10 by Fr. Robert Van Handel, O.F.M., founder of the Santa Barbara Boys' Choir, faculty member and sometime Rector of Saint Anthony's Seminary in Santa Barbara. A criminal complaint has been filed with the Santa Barbara Police Department.

You denied jurisdiction in the earlier cases because the priest perpetrator was a Franciscan. Once again we beg to differ with that posture, knowing that no priest can function in the archdiocese without archdiocesan permission.

The circle of pain, distrust and damage caused by these men is
growing and becoming increasingly known in our community. This is
despite years and months respectively of public Church silence.

The destruction to young lives is impossible to measure or even
estimate. The pain of parents, family members and other community
members cannot be described in just a few words, as we consider
the betrayal and manipulation by our dearly loved and trusted
priests.

It is time for the official Church to publicly address this source of
pain and destruction. It refuses to go away. It intrudes and weighs
down all the other moments of our lives. We are attempting to
continue our lives in the shadow of our children's suffering and our
own pain of betrayal and loss.

We spoke of these matters with your Episcopal Vicar, Reverend
Monsignor John Rohde. We asked that you be personally informed of
these tragic developments and our requests for further action by
you. Your support staff was not satisfied with the verbal requests as
conveyed by Monsignor Rohde. They asked that we put our
challenges in writing. So, once again we are writing to you hoping
that you will take a more proactive approach this time. Now that
this is being put in written form you will note that the letter is being
shared with interested members of the community.
Cardinal Mahony, we challenge you as spiritual leader of this
archdiocese, as shepherd of a wounded and wandering flock to
address this horror, the destruction of our children's lives by sexual
abuse by clergy. We challenge you to make a public statement
regarding this matter.

Further, we challenge you to form an independent committee to
formulate a policy for education, prevention, and response to this
evil that includes proper reporting to civil authorities. If such a
policy exists, it should be reviewed especially as it pertains to
outreach and care of victims and family members. It should define a
response to those molested by Order priests, who receive their
permission to work in the area from the Archdiocese.

Finally, we challenge you to implement age-appropriate programs of
education to teach children in Kindergarten through High School to
protect themselves from all forms of sexual abuse. These programs
should be in place and operational in one year. If adequately and
sensitively educated, the children are their own best first line of defense. There needs to be concurrent seminars for parents to educate them and foster knowledge so that the children may turn to their parents and to other adults in safety, knowing that they will be believed and threats cannot be made good to enforce their silence.

These three items can be accomplished without great difficulty or expense. They do require a firm commitment to the safety and health of our children and young people. Implementation of these measures would go a long way toward lessening the heart rending, soul slaying anguish of the horror of clerical sexual abuse. We are ready to meet with you at any time to discuss these three items and any related matters.

You must know that the good works and ministry of the archdiocese have been undermined by this horrendous evil. No ministry has any value if its price is paid with the life of one child. The archdiocese can remain silent no longer in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

cc: Bishop Patrick Ziemann

Rev. Tom West, O.F.M.
Rev. Msgr. John Rohde
Editor Los Angeles Times
Editor National Catholic Reporter
President of Call to Action
President of V.O.C.A.L. (Victims of Clergy Abuse Link Up)
The Provincial Definitorium of the Province of St. Barbara met to discuss the status of Robert Van Handel's relation to the Order now that he has been convicted and sentenced for the sexual molestation of someone under 16 years of age. The Definitorium must consider if Robert is to be dismissed from the Order according to Canon 1395.2. The Canon does not require dismissal (si casus ferat). However, the Definitorium must review the case and offer an opinion to the Minister Provincial.

The Definitorium looked at the factors involved in this discussion: liability for the Province, scandal for the people of God, health of Robert, good of the fraternity, the gospel way of life, the timing and the situation, the reputation and morale of the local community that he might live with if he stays in the Order.

The Definitorium examined the following options available to it:

a. do nothing
b. dismiss him immediately
c. decide not to dismiss
d. request letter from Robert in which he would ask to leave the Order
e. delay any final decision.

The Definitorium is recommending to the Provincial Minister that he not act at this time, but leave the option open for review in the future and that such a review should take place in a year. The Definitorium recommends the above action for the following reasons:

• the frail psychological state of Robert Van Handel
• the lack of further information regarding liability implications
• the expectation of the people of God that the Province oversee Robert in the future
• the desire of the majority of friars to balance justice with mercy in the treatment of Robert
• give Robert time to discern his own future vocation
• the Province's plan to set up a house of containment could impact Robert's future.
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- give Robert time to discern his own future vocation
- the Province's plan to set up a house of containment could impact Robert's future.
reported to the Definitorium that he had visited Robert at the San Luis Obispo Men's Colony. During his visit, raised a number of issues with Robert. One such issue was Robert's future once he is released from prison. Robert and the Definitorium will need to look at a number of options.

It was also reported that individuals are coming forward at this time who say that they were abused by Robert from the years 1984 - 1989 when Robert left Santa Barbara.

It was agreed that there would be a thorough evaluation of Robert's situation at the November meeting of the Definitorium.
The Definitorium reviewed the situation of Robert Van Handel. He is presently in the State Prison at Vacaville, California and has a possible release date of March 1998.

The Provincial Minister made the following observations:

- Robert has not given any consideration as to his future after his release date;
- It is a fact that he will always be in a high risk category which means that he will always need a high level of constant care and monitoring.

In discussing the various options open to Robert, the Definitorium made the following points:

- Robert needs to work through his future vis-à-vis the Order; it would be preferable if he made the decision while he was in a safe environment;
- Robert as part of his decision-making process needs to understand the severity of limitations that will be placed on him if he remains in the Order.

It was agreed that this Definitorium would like to set as its goals with respect to Robert:

- help him make the decision to leave the Order on his own;
- assure him that the Order would take care of him during his probation and help him during his probation to leave the Order and get established;
- make a final decision on this issue by September 1998.

If Robert does not agree to the above, it was the tentative opinion of the Definitorium that the Canon Law regarding dismissal from the Order should be invoked in this case.
Night Assaults at the Seminary

1976-85
Would come to boys at night. Rubbed their backs and bodies would masturbate them. One student believes there may have been oral copulation. One students described the "massages" as going on for hours. Another said when he feigned sleep he would go over to his roommate. One student attempted to make himself undesirable by stopping his moisturizing, They would both feign sleep. One student resorted to another student's room, the motifs and marred were the only ones flashlights.

Assaults in Hot Tub

1976
RVH grabbed his genital in hot tub

Robert Van Handal Profile

1975-1987
# of Victims interviewed as of 8/19/93 = 7
# of Suspected Victims not interviewed = 2-10

Nude Photography/ Choir Members

1975-87 A 6-10 years old at beginning of photo sessions. BOI has seen a sampling of the pictures.
Nude Photography, Pictures taken in Choir room at Seminary, his office, and at the creek on Seminary grounds. X mentioned seeing a copy of pictures and names labeled on the other.

Road Games

1976-
During trip in car, RVH suggested and played I-Spy where the loser would have to take off a piece of clothing, RVH would tickle the boys and "accidently" touch genitals. On trip to Europe, boys father said his son said he played a dart/undress game with RVH.

Suspicions

More than several people we have interviewed, mentioned the trips to Europe. The boys were isolated, in new environments, and who was in charge of setting up the stages, attempted to keep the adult "sponsors" away from the kids. One mother said her son told her that was rubbing their backs at night. On several trips there was a two week period of time where RVH would stay alone with a boys choir member after the rest of the choir left for home. We have an extended list of possible "special" boys RVH supposedly spent alone time with.
Night Assaults at the Seminary

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Robert Van Handal Profile 1975-1987

# of Victims interviewed as of 8/19/93 = 7
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Nude Photography/ Choir Members

1975-87 A. 6-10 years old at beginning of photo sessions. BOI has seen a sampling of the pictures.

Nude Photography. Pictures taken in Choir room at Seminary, his office and at the creek on Seminary grounds. X mentioned seeing a row of slide photo albums labeled with kids names in his room. Their reward was ice cream. "Don't tell, or the other boys will be jealous."

Prior to nude photography with X., RVH told him "It's only Natural" for him to have an erection during massage. X. remembers being fondled while sitting nude in RVH lap while X. was listening to music on a walkman. One Choir Boy mentioned he would eat dinner at Seminary with RVH. Mel Jursich mentioned he would get mad at RVH for having him there.

Naked Swimming

75-80 naked swimming with Choir Boy in pool behind mission.

Road Games

1976-

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Priest at St. Francis arrested for alleged child molestation

By JED LOGAN
Staff Writer

A priest at the St. Francis Retreat Center was arrested by the Santa Barbara Police Department Tuesday for having allegedly molested a young boy during the 1980s.

The Rev. Robert Michael Vanhandel was arrested on suspicion of lewd or lascivious acts with a minor with a $250,000 warrant, according to information from 11 John Thayer of the Santa Barbara Police Department.

Vanhandel, the former head of the Santa Barbara Boys Choir at St. Anthony’s Seminary in Santa Barbara, is accused of repeatedly molesting a choir member, Thayer said.

Vanhandel has been stationed at the retreat center in San Juan Bautista for the past six months where he has been working as a bookkeeper and doing other clerical tasks, according to Thayer.

“I think the church assigned him there not so much to hide (him) as to reduce his exposure to the public,” Thayer said.

Before he was transferred to St. Francis, Vanhandel was sent by the Catholic Church to St. Luke’s, a treatment center in Maryland, from May of 1992 to June of 1993, according to Thayer.

The alleged molestation started in March of 1983 when the boy was 8 years old and continued until September of 1989 when the boy turned 14, according to Thayer.

Vanhandel reportedly had the youth spend at least one night a week at his apartment, Thayer said.

Santa Barbara Police started the investigation earlier this month after the victim reported Vanhandel’s alleged activity.

In December of 1992, Vanhandel was accused of child molestation by another Franciscan priest who was arrested on child molestation charges. However, Vanhandel was never prosecuted because the statute of limitations had expired, Thayer said.

A representative of the St. Francis Retreat Center could not be reached for comment on this story.
Mr. Rueben Guiterrez  
Deputy Probation Officer  
Santa Barbara County Probation  
117 E. Carrillo Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  

Re: Robert Van Handel  

Dear Mr. Guiterrez:  

I am writing on behalf of the above-named client, a self-confessed child molester currently detained at the IRC facility of Santa Barbara County Jail while awaiting sentencing. Please accept the following clinical evaluation and recommendations for your review and consideration.

Mr. Van Handel, a 5'9" tall Caucasian male weighing 156 lbs., with brown eyes, balding with brown hair, is a Franciscan priest whose meek demeanor, hunched stance, and soft-spoken voice reflect his self-reports of feelings of humiliation, guilt and inadequacy. Even while acknowledging his own capacity for being manipulative, this prisoner comes across as a kind, empathic, intelligent, and passive man. His general attitude and behavior during the twice weekly sessions since April 12 have been characterized by cooperativeness, anxiety, displays of remorse and self-pity, and— at times—despair.

The quality of Mr. Van Handel’s speech suggests he is struggling for control over unwanted feelings of helplessness. While speaking spontaneously, clearly and coherently, the rate of flow indicates he is carefully thinking through his thoughts and verbal productions in an effort to reduce his anxieties about imprisonment, while making certain the interviewer obtains needed information. The client readily acknowledged that one of the most anxiety-inducing aspects of imprisonment for him is the loss of control over management of his daily life. Jail time has heightened his self-acknowledged exaggerated control needs by frustrating his abilities to function freely in society. All of Mr. Van Handel’s speech has been relevant in content, with no evidence of loss of goal idea, thought blocking, or circumstantial responses.

His primary mood is depression, currently controlled by a daily intake of 25 mg. of Zoloft, reportedly prescribed by the County Jail psychiatrist, Dr. Howard Babus. Additionally, the prisoner is administered 100 mg. of Nortriptalene to reduce his bedtime anxieties and make sound sleep possible. During the
interview sessions, Mr. Van Handel, appearing preoccupied, frequently moves his right hand across his forehead or touches the back of his neck in an apparent effort to calm or reassure himself as he discloses his life history and daily activities, thoughts and moods. The telling and re-telling of personal details of his life and anti-social behavior has been both anxiety-provoking and depressing for this man.

The onset, duration, and intensity of his depression have an escalating history dating back to 1983 when he sought private therapy with Gerald White, Ph.D., clinical psychologist. At that time, thoughts of suicide were strong and pervasive enough to cause chronic loss of sleep. Currently, obsessive thoughts about suicide do recur, but the client states he would not act on those thoughts and does not view himself as suicidal. In his presentation of self, Mr. Van Handel gave no evidence of complaints or overconcern with his physical health or body functioning. Nor did he display the symptomatic expression of ruminative thinking—repeated thoughts at the abstract ideational level. Such thinking is found in those sex offenders who are either pre-schizophrenic, in a state of denial, or simply trying to distract the interviewer—none of which apply to this client. There is some evidence of echolalia, or perseverated thinking, in Mr. Van Handel’s repetitive references to his conviction that he is “a failure with nothing to live for.” The client produced no thoughts or verbalizations which suggested delusions, hallucinations, or paranoid ideas of reference in which he felt he was being victimized into behaving in anti-social ways.

His description of his life history, the anti-social acts he committed, and his current mood and thoughts reveal a man of above average intelligence. He is oriented to time, place, persons and circumstances in uniformly appropriate ways. Mr. Van Handel makes good eye contact and speaks softly in measured, deliberate tones, both when speaking spontaneously and when responding to inquiries. His verbal and non-verbal communications about himself and his role indicate an awareness that he is responsible for his past compulsive actions. The client questioned whether or not he was engaging in selective perception and recall when describing interactions with minors from 1987 until 1992. He displayed good remote memory in recalling his early childhood, adult life from 1965 to 1983, and good immediate memory describing events from 1992 to the present.

Mr. Van Handel made it clear that he wanted full disclosure of his acting-out history as a step in controlling his pedophilic tendencies. He said he fully recognized that his full and candid disclosures increased the risk of additional or maximum sentencing versus the possibility of parole and outpatient treatment. However, he feels full disclosures to the best of his ability to
recall has a therapeutic effect which outweighs the risk factor associated with the actual sentencing.

Accordingly, he furnished the following personal history. The client states he was born to an American father stationed in the military and a British colonial mother in Georgetown, Guyana, on April 2, 1947. His parents had met in Guyana during World War II, when the territory was known as British Guiana. The couple married and moved to Wisconsin where Mr. Van Handel’s mother gave birth to his older sister, Sandra. His mother became depressed to the point the family returned to what is now known as Guyana. His sister, Christine, was born there April 14, 1945, and two years later he arrived on the scene. In 1949 the entire family returned to Wisconsin and began a series of moves to various military bases. By the time he was seven years old, he had lived in Kimberly, Wisconsin, Fort Wayne, Indiana, Buffalo, New York, and Atlanta, Georgia. Mr. Van Handel’s father was an Air Force officer working in various Air Force finance offices.

The family moved from Van Nuys to Inglewood—then to Buena Park. When he was 5 or 7 years old (1953-54), the client states, he got in trouble for pulling down the pants of another boy. His family lived comfortably since the father worked both as a real estate appraiser and as a savings and loan officer. In 1956 the family settled in Buena Park where Mr. Van Handel attended St. Pious V Catholic Elementary School from 5th through 8th grades. Significant childhood memories during grade school years, which proved to be anxiety provoking, centered around authority figures. He recalls feeling confused and upset by having his genitals examined by a physician.

Interactions with his father were difficult and often frightening. Describing his father as having "a terrible temper due to his alcoholism," the client recalls resenting the rigid, authoritarian parenting the family was subjected to. He said his father "ruined" the good times most families took for granted. Robert was forced, as a child, to pick weeds on Saturdays, not allowed to watch TV on school nights. Father was described as "arrogant, self-centered, cheap, melancholy and concerned with religious show." Mr. Van Handel stated he was prone to being guarded around his father who would not tolerate any look of dissatisfaction on the faces of any of his children. There was to be no disagreement with any of his decrees, no back-talk, and no spontaneous dissent. His younger brother, Peter, was born in 1956. The youngest sibling, David, was born in 1958, as the family continued its traditional and routine rituals of obedience to father and mandatory church attendance.
During his four years at Pious V Elementary School, Robert states he was a B student who was fearful of his parents. He described his mother as critical and emotionally distant. She would wring her hands when upset and say things like, "You lazy boy," "I'm going to wring your ears," or "I'm going to knock your block off." When his father was upset, the sound of his raised voice made Robert try to get out of his way as quickly as possible or to literally hide. When he was in the 8th grade, his father read him a Catholic sex education book. This proved to be a traumatic experience for him, because his sisters witnessed this happening and laughed at him during and after each forced reading.

Upon his graduation from Pious V at age 14, the family sent him to St. Anthony's Seminary in Santa Barbara to continue his education. The client stated that he wanted and welcomed the experience of getting away from his family. His father urged him by stating, "You really ought to try it." Robert declared he liked the seminary high school experience but found languages and math difficult. It was a very structured program. A lot of his friends in the high school left prematurely because of the rigidity of the academic program. He experienced anxiety when four of his friends were expelled for talking to girls. At age 15 his anxiety and confusion escalated when he was molested by an alcoholic priest at the seminary. The allegedly offending priest was unnamed but was identified as the vice-principal of the school.

According to Mr. Van Handel, the priest entered his room, pulled down his pajamas, rubbed his chest until he got an erection, then played with Robert's genitals for about 10 minutes. Robert states he was embarrassed and ashamed but didn't know who to talk to about the trauma. The priest reportedly told him "the rubbing exercise" was designed to make him perspire and thereby rid him of his "fever." The client states he was confused by the experience which did not affect his academic or social performance at the seminary. Throughout his high school years he was perceived and treated by peers and faculty as "boyishly naive."

During these years (1961-1965), his temperamental, alcoholic father visited him once a month, usually alone, because his mother suffered from car sickness. While he welcomed the infrequent visits by both parents, he was apprehensive when his father came alone. Every summer the family rented a cabin near Big Bear. Robert spent the summers from 1961 to 1965 struggling with nighttime wet dreams and guilt stemming from the foreboding warnings, "Try not to enjoy it" he read in a book written by a conservative Catholic. Upon his graduation from the high school at the seminary in 1965, he took a neighborhood girl, [redacted], to a movie theater. It was memorable because it was his first and
last date, ending with a kissless "goodnight."

That fall he entered San Luis Rey College, a Franciscan seminary near Oceanside, California. He, like other seminarians whose parents couldn't subsidize them, was required to pay his own tuition. After his father was laid off, Robert began to work full-time during the summer in order to pay for his college tuition for his final two years. In his second year at San Luis Rey, fellow seminarians began to confide in one another about the frequency of their masturbation. Robert states he was "amazed" by the revelation and began to fantasize interchangeably about having sex with boys and women. He realized in 1966 for the first time that the sexual attraction to children was real after he saw a picture of a young boy swimming while in an inner tube. The client states he was aroused and startled by the experience of being aroused. When he questioned a fellow seminarian regarding his classmates' reaction to the same picture and got a neutral response, he felt uneasy at his own reaction of arousal.

From 1966 through 1969, he developed and cultivated an intense interest in music. In retrospect, he realizes he was sublimating his sexual interest into the world of music. After graduation in 1969 from the college at San Luis Rey with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, Mr. Van Handel spent the summer of 1969 in Oregon. In Corvalis he worked at the Children's Farm Home as a child care worker. The client states he shared a caseload of older teenagers with whom he shared a non-sexual relationship for three months. According to him, there were no acting-out episodes on his part during this period. From there, he was transferred to the Franciscan Novitiate in Sacramento where he worked at St. Patrick's Children's Home as a child care worker during the period of August 15, 1969 to August 16, 1970. No offenses were perpetrated, he declares, in this time period.

In September 1970 he enrolled in the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, California and pursued theological studies there until October 1973. During this time he started a boys' choir and found himself attracted to the young boys in the choir. During October 1973 he was sent to Oxford University in England, University of Freiburg in Germany, and then to Cambridge University to continue his graduate studies in theology. Mr. Van Handel states he was shocked and aroused by the open display of pictures of nude children and sex between children and adults in many magazines for sale in European cities.

He returned from Europe during the summer of 1974 and went to Phoenix, Arizona at the direction of his Provincial in order to enter an internship as a church deacon. Robert worked in a
parochial school teaching singing for six months. He states he was attracted to a young boy at the school but did not act-out because of the attraction. This child, approximately 9 years old, fit the profile of so many of Mr. Van Handel's subsequent victims, he declared. He was slight, slender and appeared helpless. When encouraged to describe his own attitudes, behavior and appearance at a similar stage of psychosexual development, Mr. Van Handel wept and stated he recalls feeling frightened and needing reassurance but not knowing how to ask for it. There was a lack of comforting touching from parents.

In the spring of 1975, he completed his graduate work in Theology in Berkeley where he resumed working with the Boys' Choir which he started. On May 17, 1975, he was ordained a Franciscan priest at St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco. His plan and goal was to enter the graduate program in Education at U.C. Berkeley where he had applied and was accepted for admission. Robert stated he was bitterly disappointed and upset when the Provincial would not let him attend. Instead, he was sent---over his protest---to St. Anthony's Seminary in Santa Barbara. His dislike for the assignment was immediate and pervasive, and he cited several reasons for his reaction to St. Anthony's.

First, the staff had been depleted with the departure of teachers for financial and personal reasons. Mr. Van Handel was given the work of two former instructors in his first year as a teacher. Secondly, the academic climate, as well as the social milieu, had changed since he was a student at the school in the early 1960's. The stress was severe, because the student body had changed from predominantly well-mannered Caucasian children willing to pursue rigorous academic studies to a mixture of lower income minorities who refused to study Latin and Greek, and generally behaved in an unruly manner, according to him. The curriculum had changed from classical to modern, and he was not really equipped to provide first-class teaching in math and science.

Mr. Van Handel remained a teacher at St. Anthony's from 1975 until 1985. He says that the combination of his attraction to children and his frustration with work led him in 1976 to succumb to the temptation to photograph children in the nude and to tickle them. He stated this activity was self-reinforcing, because no one resisted or complained. Further, he assumed their parents knew but didn't care about what he viewed as harmless fun at the time. Mr. Van Handel appeared eager to stress that he was never naked with any of the boys, never masturbated in front of them, and never had oral sex with any of them. At the same time, he did acknowledge that he did derive sexual gratification from these activities which took place from 1975 until 1983. He named
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as the six youngsters who were recipients of his molest activities during that eight-year period.

These activities ceased, the client states, when he saw a 1983 article in the L.A. Times documenting the arrest of the director of the California Boys' Choir on charges of molestation. Mr. Van Handel consulted Jerry White, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist, for about six months in 1983 and in 1987 to cope with his suicidal depression over the realization that he could be facing similar charges one day. He says he did not reveal to Dr. White the etiology of his depression, because he was aware of reporting requirements therapists are bound by in all cases of child abuse. After terminating his therapy with Dr. White, he began to take an eight-year-old choir member, under his wing. The client states he did so because his mother was "unreliable and unpredictable." Robert took into his apartment on those occasions from 1984 through 1989 when his mother was unavailable or did not show up after choir. She was a single, working mother.

According to Mr. Van Handel, [redacted] requested a backrub before going to bed, and this request was accommodated from 1987 through 1989. Over a three-year period, he was given help with homework and meals. This was culminated with nightly massages which included "inappropriate touching." In describing this aspect of his history, Robert stated that he has "a lot of terrible fears about the potential damage done." He wept as he described the personal history he wrote for the District Attorney. His explicit sexual history was outlined in a journal written specifically for his therapist, Mary Simoni, at Pacific Treatment Center in Santa Cruz. He was at the Center from August 1993 until March 1994 when he was arrested and brought to Santa Barbara County to face child sex abuse charges. The arrest interrupted a painful but effective therapeutic program which can document significant gains in controlling his latent pedophilia, he states.

The client reviewed his prior in-patient and out-patient treatment at St. Luke's Institute in Maryland. He received in-patient care from June 3, 1992 until January 15, 1993, and out-patient care from January 16, 1993 until July 15, 1993 at St. Luke's. This resulted after the family of [redacted] (no relation to [redacted]) wrote to his Provincial, alleging sexual improprieties took place between their son and Father Van Handel at the priest's initiative. Mr. Van Handel states that when he switched to the out-patient program which features art therapy as well as individual and group therapy, he got in touch with his anger at his father. In art therapy sessions, he experienced fears of monsters he was drawing as he visualized his father's face on
the completed drawings. In August 1993, his Provincial made him return to California to enter the Pacific Treatment Program for sex offenders in Santa Cruz. This client states agency records will substantiate that his sexual urges and interests were eradicated as a result of intramuscular injections of Depo Provera used in conjunction with traditional therapies, and that he no longer poses a threat to children.

The following responses to questions posed provide clues to his current state of mind.

(1) WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST CONCERN OR FEAR AT THIS TIME?
The actual and potential damage I've done to the young men, the Friars, and the Catholic Church. I'm also afraid I won't overcome my feeling of failure and that I'll never be able to function as a priest.

(2) IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE BOtherING YOU?
I feel that I have nothing to live for—that everything will be horrible from here on in. I feel I'm a big embarrassment to the Friars, the Church, and to my family. I feel an anguish over the people I've harmed. I'm bothered by the fact there's nothing I can do or say to make amends that would make a difference in their lives. I don't understand how the Friars, my family, and so many other people can be so extraordinarily supportive of me.

(3) WHAT DO YOU VISUALIZE AS THE WORST CASE SCENARIO FACING YOU? Having the District Attorney's office copy and circulate the sexual history I produced for my therapist, Mary Simoni, at the Pacific Treatment Center. It's a confidential medical document for use in therapy. The journal contains the names of three women I've had sex with—and their identities need to be protected. I'm just waiting for the News-Press to get a copy of the journal and identify me as just another of society's monsters, while naming those female partners who are adults. I couldn't handle that.

(4) WHY SHOULD YOU BE TREATED DIFFERENTLY FROM ANY OTHER SEX OFFENDER?
I don't expect to be treated differently. I do know that I am different from others labelled pedophile, because I've had sex with adults of the opposite sex. I also know that the treatment was working. The Depo Provera eliminated my drive and interests. I'm depressed at having lost the benefits of the group therapy program at Santa Cruz. The court has all those records, but I'm prepared for the social price of my actions and fully expect a jail sentence, regardless of the
psychiatrist's report or any recommendation made by you.

(5) WHAT GAINS DID YOU MAKE DURING INTENSIVE TREATMENT AT ST. LUKE'S AND PACIFIC TREATMENT CENTER WHICH LEAD YOU TO BELIEVE YOU COULD BE CONSIDERED FOR IMMEDIATE PAROLE AND RETURN TO OUT-PATIENT TREATMENT?
The main things are the awareness of my anger, the ability to express my feelings including anger, and the fact I'm not aroused physically by an erotic stimulus--like a picture or a recording--as long as I'm on Depo Provera. I was putting the pieces together at the time of my arrest by learning not to lie in order to cover up my fears. I feel very badly that I lied to the staff at St. Luke's.

(6) WHAT IS THE BEST CASE SCENARIO YOU VISUALIZE IN THE SENTENCING PROCESS?
A full year in jail with lengthy probation and parole, along with a return to mandatory, intensive treatment. I'm fearful of losing contact with my therapist, Mary Simoni, at Pacific Treatment Center if sent to State prison. I'd certainly welcome sessions with you if I'm sentenced to County Jail. The contact does help.

(7) WHAT IS THE HARDEST PART OF BEING BEHIND BARS?
The painful realization I'm a convicted felon. I wake up numb to my feelings until I start talking to you. I'm in hideous pain here and expect it to get worse. My energy is focused on fighting self-pity, because it's counter-productive. I'm acknowledging real feelings of despair, but I can't let those feelings push me into a state of total helplessness. Whatever happens, happens, and I'll have to learn to develop the strength to deal with it. (Long silence and tears) The alternative is suicide.

(8) WHY SUICIDE?
The most difficult part of incarceration is the recurrent, intrusive feelings of remorse and guilt over the actual molestations. When you're not in the therapy situation on a day-to-day basis, it's hard to digest those feelings. (Tears) I recognize I've done wrong and harmed people in the past, but there's been nothing since 1989. I understand why people are angry with me, and I accept their right to be angry. What I don't understand is why people are so unforgiving and vindictive.

(9) ASSUMING YOUR BEST CASE SCENARIO DOES MATERIALIZE, WHAT PLANS, HOPES OR GOALS DO YOU HOPE TO PURSUE AFTER ONE YEAR IN JAIL? All of my work in studying for the priesthood turned out to be
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in vain. There is nothing that I aspire to. I would like to return to San Juan Baptista Retreat House and function as a bookkeeper. That way I can resume my therapy at Pacific Treatment Center in Santa Cruz. Their program is more confrontational than the program at St. Luke’s. One thing is certain. With the insights I’ve gained and my status as a convicted felon, I will not put myself in a situation where a temptation to re-offend can occur.

{10) DO YOU FEEL YOU HAVE OTHER ALTERNATIVES IN THE EVENT YOU ARE GRANTED IMMEDIATE PAROLE WITHOUT SERVING ADDITIONAL TIME IN JAIL?
My other option is to stay with the Franciscans and work at the Archive Library in the American Academy of Franciscan History in Berkeley, California. But really, I’d like to hide in the retreat at San Juan Baptista. (Silence and tears. Client began to tremble.) ...I don’t think I can make it outside of the Franciscan order.

(11) WHAT MAKES YOU BELIEVE THAT?
It doesn’t take much for me to think about suicide. The idea seems so attractive to the cowardly side of me. I think the thoughts of suicide are attractive because it gives me the feeling of control. I don’t do well when I’m not in control; I get really depressed. In jail you’re under the control of people doing the job they’re paid to do. They’re not paid to have concern for or awareness of individual prisoners.

(12) WHY SHOULD ANYONE GIVE CONSIDERATION TO A RECOMMENDATION FOR PAROLE WITH NO ADDITIONAL JAIL TIME?
As I said, I haven’t committed any offenses since 1989 and have been very committed to the treatment programs at St. Luke’s and Santa Cruz. While I appreciate such a recommendation because I know I’m no risk to children now, I have no realistic expectation that the judge would act on such a recommendation. As much as I’m terrified of it, I’m prepared for a State prison sentence.

(13) WHY?
I have real enemies in Santa Barbara--the people I’ve molested and their families. (Tears) ...I felt like an animal when I came into this facility and gave me hard, cold stares. I would expect the judge to make his decision based on all of the statements made by everyone affected by my actions, and not just by the many statements of support I’ve received.

OFM VANH 1
0647
As you can see from the foregoing responses, Mr. Van Handel, despite his vulnerability and desperation in the jail setting, maintains his stance of accepting responsibility for his acts. He has an exaggerated negative self-image, stating he cannot accept compliments or positive statements about himself from any source. This client exhibits many of the distinctive characteristics seen in sex offenders. His self-reports and personal history reveal a basic inadequate personality. He is easily discouraged and displays a propensity for wanting to give up or quit because he feels he has nothing to live for. There is evidence of selective perception in his descriptions of recent history, although he gives his accusers the benefit of the doubt and states they "must be right" because they can remember things he cannot. His exaggerated control needs, when thwarted, reinforce his pre-existing feelings of helplessness and depression.

Mr. Van Handel is non-assertive and exhibits pervasive guilt along with his subjective judgment that his life would be unmanageable outside of the Franciscan order. He acknowledges that his peer interactions and interpersonal relations with adults outside of the Franciscan Order have been poor. From childhood, where he lived in a repressive environment, this client displaced his suppressed emotions through fantasy and, eventually, inappropriate sexual acting-out. Deviant arousal patterns and distorted sexual values propelled him obsessively-compulsively to engage in sexual activities with minors under his control from 1975 through 1989. The fourteen year history of acting-out suggests cleverness in concealing his pedophilia while dealing with the community relating to St. Anthony’s Seminary and the Santa Barbara Boy’s Choir. Thus, Mr. Van Handel’s capacity for manipulative behavior should not be underestimated.

Despite these well documented traits, he has abstained from sexual contacts with children during the past five years. Additionally, this client has a very high level of motivation to resume his intensive and effective therapy for the treatment of pedophilia at Pacific Treatment Center in Santa Cruz. This suggests that Robert Van Handel is a better than average candidate for immediate release and parole, despite his anticipation of a lengthy state prison term. If he is released, I believe latent pedophilic tendencies can be controlled on an out-patient basis outlined in the attached treatment protocol.
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DIAGNOSIS: Axis I 302.20 Pedophilia; Axis II 301.60 Dependent Personality Disorder  

Yours truly,  

Michael Eremia, LCSW  
Licensed Clinical Social Worker  
AASECT Certified Sex Therapist  

Enclosure  

cc: Robert Sanger, Attorney-at-Law  
233 East Carrillo – Suite C  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
RECONDITIONING IN TREATMENT OF PARAPHILIAS
[ADAPTED FROM THE WORK OF WILLIAM MASTERS, MD. AND VIRGINIA JOHNSON, MD. AND THE WORK OF SANDRA LIEBLUM, PH.D. AND RAYMOND ROSEN, PH.D.]

(1) OBTAIN FROM YOUR PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN OR UROLOGIST A ONE MONTH (30 DAYS) PRESCRIPTION OF CYPROTERONE ACETATE, AN ANTIANDROGENIC DRUG WHICH LOWERS CIRCULATING TESTOSTERONE LEVELS. FOLLOW YOUR DOCTOR'S ORDERS ON THE DAILY USE OF THIS PRESCRIPTION.

(2) ONE THE FIRST DAY OF THIS COURSE OF PRESCRIBED MEDICATION, OBTAIN A TAPE RECORDER AND SEVEN (7) AUDIOCASSETTE TAPE BLANKS. EACH DAY OF THE WEEK, DESCRIBE A NON-DEVIAN T SEXUAL FANTASY SCENE OUT LOUD, WHILE TALKING INTO A TAPE RECORDER AT THE SAME TIME YOU MASTURBATE TO ORGASM.

(3) IMMEDIATELY AFTER ORGASM OCCURS, BEGIN DESCRIBING ALOUD INTO THE TAPE RECORDER ONE OF YOUR FAVORITE PARAPHILIC FANTASIES (SADO-MASOCHISM, MOLESTATION, ETC.) AND CONTINUE MASTURBATING. JUST BEFORE EJACULATING, PICTURE THE POLICE BREAKING DOWN YOUR DOOR TO ARREST YOU AT GUNPOINT. BRING THIS TAPE TO YOUR NEXT THERAPY SESSION.

(4) REPEAT THIS SEQUENCE - A NON-DEVIAN T SEXUAL FANTASY UNTIL YOU CLIMAX FOLLOWED BY A DEVIAN T FANTASY AND CONTINUED MASTURBATION - EVERY DAY FOR 28 DAYS. IF THE URGE TO RESUME DEVIAN T BEHAVIOR RECURS, DISCUSS WITH YOUR THERAPIST AND RETURN TO YOUR PHYSICIAN FOR A 30 DAY PRESCRIPTION OF NALOXONE, AN OPIOID RECEPTOR ANTAGONIST WHICH INHIBITS PLASMA OXYTOCIN LEVELS DURING STIMULATION OF SEXUAL AROUSAL.

(5) USING NALOXONE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF YOUR DOCTOR, REPEAT THE EXERCISES OUTLINED IN PARAGRAPHS (2), (3), AND (4).
Opinions of the Professed Community:

Bob seems very sincere, but about what? He impresses some as being in a bubble: every once in a while he opens it and says hello to the world. He is very conscientious about his work with the boys at St. Patrick's Home, and this means a great deal to him.

Is his prayer-life developing?

He is open and sensitive to the needs of the community; he thinks in terms of the community. He is so taken up with his work that he might want to do this professionally; he asks himself what the priesthood would add to this. He may well be relating his present activity to what he's striving to become; we just don't know.

Bob seems lost (to some); he doesn't seem to be with us. Will he be happy next year at Berkeley? Sometimes he seems almost a stranger in the house.
BROTHER ROBERT VAN HANDEL, OFM
Discussion prior to first profession, 1970
five affirmative votes, no negatives

Bob has made continued progress: he is frank and open, with a good sense of humor. He is conscientious in his work and considerate of others. He is very frank and genuine.

He helped out at Ascension in Portland for a number of weeks during the summer.
ROBERT VAN HANDEL

Age: 23 (April 2, 1947)

Vows: Promises Sept. 14, 1970

Bob is presently in his first year of theology and in the M.A. program.

Bob seems to have a good understanding of fraternity and what it means in the practical order. He is responsible in the work that has been assigned him to do, though sometimes falling down in expectations one might have of him in the line of volunteering.

These is a kind of "absent-mindedness" that shows itself occasionally, as well as a kind of lack of "organization" and planning that will have to be worked on. On the other hand, Bob does show initiative. He is intelligent, and seems to be maturing.

His principal interest has been in the area of working with children. One of his projects has been to organize and direct a boys' choir for the Newman Center. He remains faithful to this project, despite the normal difficulties involved in which work and the built-in disappointments.
In these last five months, Bob seems to have developed a real interest in his studies. He is in the M.A. program and taking it quite seriously.

Bob is very prayerful. Along with serious participation in the various community gatherings we have for prayer, Bob manages consistently to include private prayer and reflection as an important part of his day.

His work with the Boys Choir at the Newman Center, demanding as it is, is well worked into his schedule and he shows good sense in making necessary choices.

At present, we feel that there are several areas where Bob is not clear in his own mind as to where he stands; he needs some room and some time to think.
Bates Numbers 655-656 were ordered removed by the trial court.
THE OFFENSE:

Source of Information: Santa Barbara Police Department
Arrest Report No. 94-04212.

On March 1, 1994, (the victim), age eighteen, presented himself at the Santa Barbara Police Department to report a 288 PC, CHILD MOLEST, which occurred between the years of 1983 through 1989. He reported that the acts occurred when he was a member of the Santa Barbara Boys' Choir at St. Anthony's Seminary located in the 2300 block of Garden Street. The victim informed officers that the molest acts started occurring when he was eight or nine years of age and ended when he was fourteen, spanning the years 1983 through 1989. He reported that the suspect in the case was the choir director, Robert Van Handel, the defendant in this matter.

The victim indicated he was a member of the Santa Barbara Boys' Choir which was comprised of approximately thirty boys. He noted his father had left the family when he was approximately four years of age and that he viewed the defendant as a father figure and trusted him completely. The victim went on to state that at the time of most of the molest acts, the defendant lived on the St. Anthony's Seminary grounds. The victim also stated that he could not be specific with regard to the dates and times of the acts, but did note that they occurred on a regular basis. For the most part, the molest incidents took place in the defendant's apartment at the seminary. In addition to this, there were also some trips that he and other choir members went on at which times molest acts occurred, as well.
The victim went on to inform officers that he would stay in the defendant's apartment, in a dwelling known as "the Casa." He informed officers that he would always spend the night on Tuesdays and Sundays. In fact, he noted that there were times on Thursdays, and once in a while on Fridays and Saturdays, that he would also spend the night in the defendant's apartment. The victim reported that on Tuesdays, he attended the Boys' Choir practice in the afternoon at approximately 2:30 p.m. until 4:00 or 4:30 p.m. After that, he had dinner at the seminary and then attended the Men's Choir group at approximately 7:00 or 7:30 p.m., which ended at approximately 9:00 p.m. He then would stay in the defendant's apartment.

Officers noted that the victim's mother was a chef, working many odd shifts, and hardly ever got to see her son. The victim informed officers that there were times his mother was leaving for work very early in the morning, and there were times she worked extremely late. Consequently, the victim spent an immense amount of time at the seminary, staying with the defendant.

When specifically questioned regarding the molest acts, the victim stated that when he did stay at the defendant's apartment, he wore pajamas, and just before bedtime, as he was lying almost asleep on a bed, the defendant would come and start massaging his back or stomach area, depending on which way he (victim) was lying at the time. The defendant would start massaging him on top of his clothing and then eventually would start massaging him underneath his
The defendant then subsequently would start massaging his genital area. The victim indicated he would simply try to go to sleep and ignore what the defendant was doing.

The victim believed the defendant had his clothes on while he was giving the massages, but did not know if the defendant tried to masturbate while giving the massages. The victim also noted there were no words ever spoken between them during the molestations. The molestations always occurred just before the victim went to sleep at night or during trips or when the victim took a daytime or afternoon nap.

The victim told officers he would get an erection when the defendant would massage his testicles and penis area. He stressed that at no time was there any oral sex involved, and at no time did he (victim) reciprocate in masturbatng the defendant. These acts of massaging his genital area occurred until the victim fell asleep, and this would be at times a half hour in duration.

The victim went on to report that although he could not specifically remember dates or times, he did remember the defendant massaging his penis and testicles approximately three nights a week during the timespan from September, 1986, through June, 1987. In the summer of 1987, when he went to England with the Boys' Choir for approximately three weeks, the victim could not recall any acts occurring while he was there. He noted things began to slow down during that time, and the defendant would only massage his testicles and penis approximately one to two nights a week. In September of 1987, when the victim was twelve years old, he started the seventh
grade and recalled usually spending Sunday nights in the
defendant's apartment at "the Casa." In the evening, just prior
to falling asleep, the defendant would then massage his back,
stomach, thighs, penis, and testicles. The victim recalled
getting an erection when the defendant massaged his penis and
stated it was obvious to the defendant that an erection had taken
place.

During the period of October, 1987,
through June, 1988, when the victim was twelve years old, the
defendant molested him approximately one to two times a week. In
the summer of 1988, the molestations tapered off to approximately
once a month. When the victim was thirteen years old, he was not
seeing much of the defendant and would only spend the night at
his residence approximately once per month. However, each time
he did spend the night, the defendant would molest him by rubbing
his penis and testicles. In December of 1989, when he (victim)
was placed in a drug rehabilitation program, the incidents
stopped. The victim could not recall any incidents occurring
after December, 1989, nor did he spend the night at the
defendant's apartment after that.

The victim stated when the
molestations first started, he did not know that what the
defendant was doing to him was wrong. He looked up to the
defendant because he was a priest and also a father figure for
him. The victim noted that when the acts occurred, the defendant
would not give him alcohol. There was no pornography shown to
him during the molestations, and he was never threatened to keep
silent about the incidents.

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Additionally, the defendant never took photographs of him in the nude.

During the timespan of the molestations, the defendant rubbed his (victim's) penis and testicles both with his clothes on, on top of his clothes, and under his clothes with skin-to-skin contact.

The victim stated that he was emotionally bothered by the molestations and did not want to see the defendant, who was still a priest, molest any other children. He noted he had not had any contact with the defendant since he (the defendant) was given a going-away party in 1991.

A warrant for the defendant's arrest was subsequently issued by the Santa Barbara Municipal Court. The defendant was thereafter arrested pursuant to this warrant on March 22, 1994, while residing at the St. Francis Retreat Center in San Juan Bautista, in San Benito County, California. The Defendant did not submit a statement to arresting officers. He was then transported to Santa Barbara County Jail where he was booked on a charge of 288(a) PC, LEWD OR LASCIVIOUS ACTS INVOLVING CHILDREN.

Source of Information:

CII, FBI, DMV, and NCIC automated records.

According to the above-mentioned bureau files, the defendant has no prior record of arrests.

Additional Arrest Information:

None
DEFENDANT'S STATEMENT: The defendant was interviewed in person while in custody at the Santa Barbara County Jail on July 20, 1994, and via the closed-circuit CourtVision system on July 22, 1994. The defendant submitted information regarding his social background and noted he has no prior record of arrests. Upon being informed that a copy of his sexual history profile he had produced for a therapist of his at the Pacific Treatment Center had been obtained and reviewed by this officer, the defendant became quite concerned in that it contained very sensitive and embarrassing information about members of the community in Santa Barbara. However, after being informed that the document was, in fact, going to be made part of the Probation Report in that it had been submitted as part of the statement made by Detective McGrew of the Santa Barbara Police Department, the defendant agreed to discuss it.

With regard to the time he was at St. Anthony's as a high school student, the defendant was asked about the molestation (1962) noted in his autobiography. He recalled falling ill and reporting to the infirmary where he was allowed to rest. At that time, a seminary priest (Father Martin McKeon) came into the room, put a towel on his (the defendant's) chest, and then started to rub his stomach and chest area. The defendant stated he subsequently obtained an erection when Father McKeon rubbed against his (the defendant's) penis. The defendant remembered being alarmed as to what was happening to him and also recalled being very concerned that he would ejaculate in that he felt it was a wrong thing to do. The defendant was very confused and embarrassed about the situation and decided to put it out of
his mind. The defendant added, "I have trouble dealing with the idea that I, myself, was molested, but I don't want to switch the blame for what I did to him (Father McKeon)." The defendant added that being molested by a father did not help or contribute to his confusion about sexuality. He noted that it was not until college that he was sexually stimulated by someone other than himself. The defendant admits that, now at the age of forty-seven, the molestation still affects him.

When questioned regarding his molesting young boys, the defendant stated in his autobiography that his first victim was either a seven- or eight-year-old boy that was in a boys' choir the defendant conducted while attending Graduate Theological Union College in Berkeley, California (1972) or his five-year-old nephew while he was visiting his sister in Oregon. However, the defendant admits that the person he feels he molested the worst was a boy named [REDACTED] who was a member of the Santa Barbara Boys' Choir. As noted in the defendant's autobiography, he acknowledged doing some "kinky" things to [REDACTED] who was approximately nine years of age at the time. For the Probation Report, the defendant stated he realized [REDACTED] as the person he molested the most and that he was much more "obvious and blatant" with what he did to this boy as compared to his other victims. The defendant felt he was "really out of control with [REDACTED] and would basically do whatever his imagination would come up with. As noted in the defendant's autobiography, he took numerous photographs of [REDACTED] in the nude. He also would photograph him in ragged clothes, making him look like an impoverished boy, and also while in the tower at St.
Anthony's, which has stark concrete and steel-barred windows, while he posed as a prisoner with few clothes on. The defendant also photographed tied up with rope, yet at the same time, would photograph him in choir robes against a stained glass window.

With regard to the molestations of the victim in the matter before the Court at this time, the defendant noted that none of the boys in the Santa Barbara Boys' Choir were students at St. Anthony's, but some of the Boys' Choir members subsequently enrolled as students. The defendant could not recall when he actually met the victim, but did remember him being an "eight-year-old, bright-eyed, spiritual boy with a nice voice." The defendant indicated that the victim's father was never present and that his mother was working two jobs. The victim appeared to him as a very needy boy, which he admits made him "particularly attractive." He then started taking care of the victim, such as helping him with his homework, washing some of his clothes, providing him with food, and letting him stay overnight in his apartment.

The defendant indicated he tried to play the "father substitute" and basically believes that, at the time of the molestations, he felt there were no molestations occurring. The defendant elaborated by noting he had heard of another choir director being charged with child molestation, which very much affected him, and also convinced him not to touch boys in the way he had been doing. However, the defendant acknowledged giving the victim back rubs as a way of comforting him and also tried to be tender. The defendant claims he
sincerely tried to avoid touching the victim's genitals, and to date, does not recall actually doing this. Yet, he believes the victim is telling the truth and that the back rubs were sexually stimulating to him (the defendant). The defendant indicated that, after the massages, he would leave the victim, go to his room, and masturbate to the memories of what he had just done. He added, "I could not say I guarantee I did not touch his genitals. I don't really see it makes a difference; I still did abuse him, but I felt at the time if I were not touching his genitals, I wasn't abusing him."

The defendant went on to state that he never provided any of the boys he molested with alcohol or cigarettes. The defendant noted that subsequently he grew out of the choir, and as he started to get older, stopped coming to visit. After the victim was entered into a drug rehabilitation program, the defendant tried to visit him, but was told he was not available. During the time he was involved with he was not touching other boys. He also wished to note that there were a lot of boys he never molested and that he never considered what he was doing to all of his victims as harming. However, the defendant wished to point that is how he felt at that time, but now acknowledges that what he did to them was certainly wrong and has impacted their lives greatly.

The defendant described his involvement with women as a way of "feeling or being normal, a way to try to be sexually normal." He noted that he really had no adolescence and was trying to discover things about himself and that he could, in fact, have a relationship with a woman.
The defendant pointed out that his involvement with women, in
terms of re-offending, shows that he, at least, is interested in
something other than boys.

In addition to the above, the
defendant also wished to submit the following oral statement:

"Your honor:

"During the two years since I was confronted with my
sexual abuse behavior, I have spent twenty-one months
in treatment programs. I was a resident patient of the
St. Luke Institute in Maryland for thirteen months.
St. Luke's is a psychiatric hospital for the treatment
of addictive behavior. At this same time, I became:
intensely involved with the appropriate Twelve-Step
groups.

"Upon returning to California, I became a client of
Pacific Treatment Associates in Santa Cruz as part of
their behavioral and group therapy for child sex
offenders. This private facility is used by the Santa
Cruz County Probation Department for some of their sex
offenders. In ten years of operation, no graduate of
this program has ever re-offended. I was attending
Pacific Treatment Associates three to four times a
week. I also was a member of several close-knit
groups. I understand that my arrest was necessary, but
it came as an interruption to these therapy programs.

"I would ask the Court to allow me to return to these
recovery programs at the earliest possible date.

"In addition, to those I have victimized and to their
families, I would like to acknowledge that you have
suffered great pain and distress. I know this will be
difficult to understand, but I never realized at the
time that I was causing harm, and I never meant to hurt
anyone. But, I am responsible for much damage and
suffering. I am truly sorry for the pain and hurt I
have caused.

"Thank you."

VICTIM INFORMATION:

Victim's Statement: On June 6, 1994, was
interviewed while in the office of the Santa Barbara County
Probation Department. noted he was never a student of

REDACTED
St. Anthony's and did not actually live on the seminary grounds. However, he spent a considerable amount of time there after his mother signed him up to join the Boys' Choir. He noted she was always working, and his father was no longer in the family. Due to this, he then started spending a considerable amount of time with the defendant, who was the choir director. Went on to state that he would usually stay in the defendant's apartment in a dwelling known as "the Casa," which is located on seminary grounds. He pointed out the defendant would always be busy doing work for the seminary or the choir while he was in the apartment with him. Because of this, would then usually play darts or play with the rest of the boys of the seminary. In retrospect, believes that, although he spent a considerable amount of time in the defendant's apartment, the defendant would not actually spend very much time with him in that he was always doing something involving the seminary or the Boys' Choir.

With regard to the molestations, indicated the defendant at first started giving him what he viewed as a "regular" back rub so he could fall asleep easier. However, the defendant then started touching his stomach, thighs, legs, and eventually worked up to the point of fondling his genitals. He noted the defendant would usually not say anything to him, and the defendant never undressed or exposed himself. The defendant never masturbated while he was doing the back rubs or fondling.

indicated that the defendant would pretty much molest him every time he went to his
apartment. He noted that the defendant kept a sleeping bag for him, and that he would either sleep on the floor or in the sleeping bag and that the defendant would always sleep in his own room apart from him. He pointed out that the defendant would provide him with food, clothing, and even purchased a bike for him. In addition to this, he would take him out to eat at places such as Taco Bell. Indicated he enjoyed this very much in that he did not have a father figure in his life, and the defendant seemed to fit this role.

During the molestations, indicated that he would obtain an erection. Although he tried to hide this from the defendant, he noted that the defendant would have to be blind not to see what was going on. He noted that the molestations happened so often that it was like "taking a shower or putting on my shoes." He stated that it actually got to the point that it seemed like the "normal type of thing to do."

Did not actually feel that anything wrong was going on in that he completely trusted the defendant. He pointed out the defendant would even give him communion during masses, at times when they were camping, or during small gatherings.

Started drinking alcoholic beverages at the age of twelve. He then started smoking marijuana at the age of thirteen. By this time, the defendant was only molesting him three to four times per month. He noted he never went to visit the defendant while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and the defendant never actually offered him any alcohol other than a sip of his drink once in a while. Once his drug use became severe,
eventually entered into a drug rehabilitation center, which is when he stopped having any contact with the defendant.

With regard to his drug use, said,

"I didn’t think of it (molestations); it didn’t seem to affect my life at all. But, when things started happening is when I started slipping. I guess my drugs would help me; I don’t know. I guess when I popped into my drugs and alcohol, it would make me think of it (the molestations) as being something else."

Eventually, on or about January 1994, started seeing a therapist. He noted that he first started seeing the therapist two times per week and is now attending once per week (since May of 1994). He feels that he is benefitting much from his therapy, but feels that he will most likely need a therapist for the rest of his life. He noted that his entire social life is non-existent, but that he is trying to find new friends. He acknowledges that his trust level has been extremely low and that he has basically destroyed all prior relationships. He noted that his sexuality has been hard to deal with and that drugs made it seem easier. However, now that he has totally abstained from all drug use, he finds this aspect of his life very difficult. Yet, he foresees being involved in a relationship in the future, but that the deeper he involves himself in a relationship, the more he will need therapy.

With regard to a sentence in this matter, believes that the defendant should be sentenced to the maximum time allowed by law. He believes that a maximum sentence will teach him a lesson and that if he gets less time, it will only appear to be like a slap on the hand. He
firmly believes that a maximum prison sentence will make it less possible for the defendant to re-offend.

In addition to the above statement, also submitted a two-page typewritten statement which has been read and considered by this officer in its entirety. A copy is attached for the Court's review and consideration.

SOCIAL HISTORY

Source of Information: The defendant


State: 1953 U.S.: 1948

Father: Robert Joseph Van Handel, 7234 N. Seaward, Portland, OR

Mother: Joyce Van Handel, 7234 N. Seaward, Portland OR

Marital Status: (X) Single ( ) Married ( ) Separated ( ) Divorced

Present Spouse/Cohabitant: None

Children: None

Education: The defendant graduated from St. Anthony's Seminary in 1965, San Luis Rey College in 1969 (B.A. in Philosophy), Graduate Theological Union College in 1972 (M.A. in Theology, and Master of Divinity in 1975), and from UCSB in 1991 (M.A. in History).

Reported Physical Health at Present:

( ) Excellent (X) Good ( ) Fair ( ) Poor

Additional Information:

The defendant suffers from allergies and high blood pressure. He is on medication for high blood pressure, as well as allergies. The defendant also is being administered antidepressants.

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Psychological: On May 18, 1994, Mr. Michael John Eremia, MSW, prepared an 11-page psychological report on the defendant. The Court is respectfully directed to said report, which is appended to the Probation Report.

Abuse of Alcohol or Controlled Substance:

Alcohol Use

Frequency: Minimal

Additional Information:

As part of the defendant’s therapy prior to being arrested, he entered into an agreement not to drink any type of alcoholic beverages for a period of two years. However, the defendant wished to note that he feels he has never had a problem with the substance.

Drug Use

Frequency: The defendant denies ever indulging in any type of illegal narcotics or drugs.

Drugs of choice: Does not apply

Past Substance Abuse, Treatment: None

Military History: None

EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCIAL STATUS

Employment History

Occupation/Job Skills: Catholic priest

Present Employer: Franciscans
Date: 1975 to present

Additional Pertinent Information: Since 1975, the defendant has been supported by the Catholic Church as a Franciscan.

Assets: -0-
Debts: -0-
Income: $75/mo.
Monthly Expenses: -0-

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Ability to Pay Fine, Restitution and Probation Fees:

Based on the above, it would seem appropriate to assess the defendant minimum probation report and supervision fees. With regard to restitution, it is notable that the victim has been undergoing therapy and is expected to continue therapy into the foreseeable future. However, it appears that all therapy costs are being paid by the Catholic Church.

Other Relevant Information:

As noted in the defendant's statement, during the past two years, he has spent approximately 21 months in treatment programs as a resident patient of St. Luke's Institute in Maryland and then at the Pacific Treatment Associates in Santa Cruz, California, as part of their behavioral and group therapy for child sex offenders.

As indicated earlier, Detective McGrew submitted a document the defendant prepared for a therapy session, which is 27 pages in length, single-spaced, typewritten. In this document, the defendant mentions several boys he molested throughout his lifetime. The following are excerpts from this document, which is attached in its entirety for the Court's review.

"When first joined the Boys' Choir he was young, seven or eight years old, and very vulnerable because his parents were going through a divorce. He had light brown or blond hair and blue eyes. He also sang quite well. Before long, he was singing solos and coming for extra practices. I knew his mother well, as his sisters and grandmother. The family was comfortable with me and with the care and interest I took in him. Once, I was with alone at a borrowed beach cabin. I had decided we were going to do a one-day look at a boy's life in pictures. I had a photo journal from which I got the idea. So, we did a sequence from rising to going to bed, complete with bath and a trip to the beach. I don't remember how Michael reacted to all of this, but he was cooperative. He trusted me. I'm sure for me the exercise was sexually stimulating. I eventually had the film developed in Germany and small prints made, which I would look at from time to time. Finally, I destroyed negatives and prints. But there is more to the story of and me. We used to wrestle, I would tickle him while paying special attention to touching his genitals. One summer he came and spent a month with me in Oregon, where the same type of activity was repeated many times. Always this was done under the cover of some 'legitimate' touching. never seemed to mind, and I wasn't about to stop on my own. He sang some solos at mass..."
following my ordination and I have been in touch with
his mother for years. When my provincial requested
names of those I had abused, I gave him along
with a recent address. Today, he is in therapy
trying to recover from my molesting him."

"About this same time (during the molestation of
, or possibly before, I molested in Oregon. I was staying at my sister's home,
and while she was at work, I would babysit and
I also took some nude photographs of him when
he was very small, as he wandered about. I
also posed some photos of him pretending to be changed
by his sister. But this was not the worst. One night
after Christmas, I was visiting my sister; I think it
might have been New Year’s Eve. Certainly we had been
drinking, although I was not drunk. The children were
still awake and we were watching television when I
realized my sister had gone to bed in her room, which
was at a distance from the children’s rooms. At any
rate, I told my niece to go to bed, and I took my nephew
to his room, helped him with his pajamas, and put him in
bed. I was rubbing his back and then his chest, while
touching his penis. It became erect, but I was sure he
was asleep. Wondering what it would feel like, I put
his penis in my mouth for perhaps five seconds. I
remember thinking it was similar to sucking my thumb. A
little shaken by this impulsive act, I went to bed. The
next morning, my and I were watching cartoons.
He asked me what I was doing to him last night. A wave
of panic came over me as I realized he had not been
asleep and knew exactly what had happened. I told him I
was just playing a game, and not to worry about it, it
was nothing. For the next several years, I was worried
he would bring it up some night at the dinner table. I
don't know if he ever told my sister about that night.
No one has ever spoken to me about it."

was a very attractive little boy, perhaps nine
years old when he first joined choir. He was very well
tanned, and now that I think back on it, he was probably
the most beautiful child that I molested. He also had
rather effeminate mannerisms, although I did not find
these particularly attractive. His mother was divorced,
and he had three older sisters, so his mom was very
happy at the attention I was giving him. used to
come over some days after school, and often came over on
weekends. He was only an average singer, so we did not
do a lot of music together. I think we talked a lot, as
he was fairly sophisticated. I used to play darts with
him, which would end with the tickling I described
above. I don't remember ever actually touching his penis, but the game was still sexually exciting. He seemed to enjoy himself, also. Somehow, I coerced him into posing for nude photographs. We would go into the music room, which locked from the inside in a way that no one could get in. Using a black stage curtain as background, I took various shots of him, either dressed or undressed. The poses were formal and not in themselves erotic, but photographing a naked boy was stimulating for me. I developed the photos myself in the school lab, with varying degrees of success. I remember one picture in particular. In it, was naked and standing sideways to the camera with his hands clasped behind his back. He was partially erect, and the contrast of him against the black background was soft with an elusive quality. It was a very good picture that I could show to no one. It was very hard for me to destroy this photo, and I tried to discover a way that I could keep the negative, but I was afraid of getting caught with it, so after some time, I burned both. As he grew older, he lost interest in the choir, and I saw him less and less. I am quite sure he is one of those who responded to the call to report me, because my provincial knew about these photos even though I never told him that I photographed him. I don't know if he has accepted the offer of counseling which has been extended to all my victims. I hope he is recovering from the damage I did.

first came to choir when he was too young to join, but his two brothers were in choir, and his mother usually helped in practices with passing out music or bringing cookies. I abused both of his brothers with tickling games where I rubbed against their penises, and I did take a few nude photos of him when he was quite young, perhaps seven years old. Some of these I gave to his mother as I thought they were quite artistic. Over perhaps a four-year period, I took dozens of photos of him, some nude, many clothed, but I never again gave nude pictures to his mother. He was a very fair boy, with blond hair. Sometimes he was not anxious to come to St. Anthony's to see me, but with some pushing or promise of ice cream, he would usually agree. Once there, he never balked at the photo sessions. I would get him to undress gradually, by taking a picture of him first, fully clothed, then without shirt, then without pants, and so on until he was nude. Sometimes we would take these pictures outside, in the foothills of Santa Barbara, but more often somewhere around the seminary. There were many private spots available. We would do other activities together, like go rowing in Santa Barbara harbor, or go
for a hike, but my main interest was in seeing
nude or in tickling, touching, or rubbing him. One game
I would play with him, which allowed me to touch him, as
well, as to see how long he could lie quietly acting as
though he were asleep. Sometimes we would do this with
a 'Walkman' radio over his ears. I would already have
made sure he was dressed in loose-fitting shorts with no
underwear. With him lying across my lap on a couch, I
would pretend I was playing the piano on him, all up and
down his body, or I would just lightly tickle him all
over, including his genitals. This game could go on for
twenty minutes or longer. Once, I rubbed his penis so
intensely that he actually reached a form of orgasm, as
his penis jerked by itself. This excited me a great
deal, and I remember being very sexually excited by
this. was still pretending to be asleep. I never
again tried to bring him to orgasm, but the memory gave
me many re-run experiences while masturbating by myself.
I also did some 'kinky' things to his whole body with oil so that the photo lights made
him look shiny. This was also, of course, an excuse to rub his penis. I took some photos of him as though he
were an impoverished Appalachian boy in the depression,
his ragged tee shirt. Once, or perhaps more than
that, I took him up into our tower which was stark
concrete with steel-barred windows, and he posed as a
prisoner with few clothes on. I took some photos of him
tied up with a big rope. It was as though I felt I
could do anything to him that I wanted. In marked
contrast, I also photographed him in choir robes against
stained glass windows. When was about eleven, one
day I was playing the dart game with him. I told him he
had to wear these special shorts with no underwear. He
said he did not want to. I insisted. He started to
cry, and that snapped something in my head. For the
first time, I was seeing signs that he really did not
like this. Just about then, his father drove up on a
motorcycle, and I told him he could get dressed and go
home. That marked the end of my molestations of
He remained in choir, and afterwards followed his
brothers to becoming a boarding student at St.
Anthony's, but I did not approach him again."

"There were several other boys with whom I played these
sexual games, like darts with sexual tickling, or
massage including either directly rubbing their penis or
rubbing near it. This was the case with and perhaps
brothers, and with who
wrote the intervention letter. Once at night, I also
gave a 'rubdown,' which included some touching of
his penis. He did not really want me to do this, but I
kept asking (begging) until he consented. Sometimes, I
would take some boys on a special outing, or on vacation
with me. Usually, I took four boys, but perhaps only two. These would include back rubs (read sexual touching) with some of the boys. I gave the same type of treatment, that is, 'back rubs,' which included some rubbing of the genitals to a few boys who were students at St. Anthony's. I clearly remember this with two boys, both of whom had been in the Boys' Choir. At least one more young man has accused me of molesting him in this way, but I don't remember doing this, although I don't think he is lying, and clearly I am capable of doing it. I don't think I continued this activity in the dormitories for a long time. The official report on this behavior calls it 'assaults in the dormitory.'

"I arranged for one of the choir boys from Santa Barbara to spend the month of December with me while attending school in England. No one ever said that they thought this an odd thing to do, but in hindsight, Sister Monica said she was surprised by my request. I knew I would enjoy my stay much more if I had one of the boys to share the experience with. came over, and we did have a great time. I like to have a child to take care of, and got along well with the English boys and with the convent sisters. He became the darling of the older girls who often invited him to their common room for hot cocoa in the evening. I did not molest that is, I never touched his genitals. But, I did give him 'back rubs' (body rubs) and prepared his bath, etc. There is something about me that is happier when accompanied by a small boy. I think it is probably a combination of sexual feelings, emotional attachment, and permission to stay on a child's level. Perhaps, besides the sexual element, the child in me wants a playmate."

"Also during these years, I practically raised a boy. He was without a father, and his mother worked two jobs. He was a bright boy with a sweet singing voice who needed help. I put together a fund to pay for a better school for him, and often helped him with his homework, took him to his therapist, etc. He had his own room in my apartment and often stayed the night. Many times I gave him back rubs and body rubs, but I avoided his genital area. I was determined not to molest him. Now, I realize that I put myself in some very dangerous circumstances, but I never touched his genitals. After I went on sabbatical, he spent less time with me, but we remained friends (almost a father-son relationship actually) until he grew out of choir."
COLLATERAL INFORMATION: Contact was made with Deputy
District Attorney Ron Zonen. He noted that by the defendant's own
admission, he has been molesting children for years, and his
actions are a very serious breach of trust. He also noted that
the offense involved planning and sophistication; he abused his
position of trust; and his victim was particularly vulnerable.
Additionally, Mr. Zonen pointed out that the defendant has
multiple victims to his name. Despite the fact that the defendant
acknowledges culpability and has no prior record, Mr. Zonen
believes that it would be unconscionable to sentence the defendant
for anything less than eight years. He believes that this matter
is the worst breach of trust and confidence in that it involves a
priest and a penitent. He believes the defendant should be
sentenced to state prison for the maximum time, and if this
happens, he will be out in four years, which Mr. Zonen equates to
approximately four to six months for each child he molested.

Contact was made with defense
attorney Robert Sanger. He said,
"We're asking the Court to grant probation. We expect
that might involve substantial time in county jail. The
reason for this (probation) is that this man has made
significant progress towards not only taking full
responsibility, but towards rehabilitation. We always
see people talking about reforming, but here we have a
person who is not in denial, has been in therapy, and
received a favorable report from Dr. Stulberg. It would
be reasonable to grant probation."

In addition to the above, Mr. Sanger
provided this officer with a copy of a "defendant's sentencing
statement" he filed with the Court.

On May 24, 1994, Detective McGrew
was interviewed while in the offices of the Santa Barbara County

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PrObation Department. In addition to providing background information on the defendant, as well as details of the offense, Detective McGrew indicated he would be submitting a written statement for this report. Said statement was subsequently received, along with several documents that were recovered when a search warrant was executed at the defendant's residence, which includes a diary prepared by the defendant (January, 1993, to March, 1994), and an autobiography of the defendant's sexual life. Detective McGrew also supplied this officer with a copy of the Independent Board of Inquiry report regarding St. Anthony's Seminary, dated November, 1993. All these documents have been read and considered in their entirety and are attached for the Court's review and consideration.

On June 25, 1994, Dr. Michael Stulberg conducted a psychiatric evaluation of the defendant relative to the question of the advisability of a grant of probation in this case pursuant to Penal Code Section 288.1. This
"I am writing this letter as psychotherapist to and and victims and parents of victims of Robert Van Handel’s sexual predation. All have signed releases allowing me to disclose confidential information.

started seeing me twice a week in December 1993. He was in the process of giving up drugs and alcohol after six years of addiction (since age 12). He revealed that he realized he had been abused by Robert when he began to stop drinking and using. He had lived on the streets, spent time in juvenile detention and rehabilitation. He was shaken, non-trusting and terrified. As therapy progressed and more feelings surfaced (combined with stress of hearings, etc.), has had difficulty staying clean and sober. So far, the use has been fairly intermittent. He completed a semester at SBCC to make up for high school he never finished. He was emotionally unable to continue this summer and dropped out. is on a roller coaster of feelings and confusions resulting in the drug use, inability to stay in school and having unprotected sex with female drug users. In addition, he is blindly trusting of others and has little trust in his ability to judge people. This makes him potential prey to any male authority figure which I believe is a direct result of his abuse. His rage is turned inward and gets acted out in dangerous activities. We continue to address these issues in therapy as well as the other ordinary and expected symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

"The full scope of damage to is yet to be revealed. Although very bright and loving, he has not been able to finish high school, hold down a job, stay straight and sober or maintain even marginally healthy friendships. He has a long, painful struggle ahead of him.

arrived enraged for his therapy session one day having just seen Van Handel on TV apologizing to his victim ). He screamed, ‘What about apologizing to me?’ ‘s abuse did not fall within the criminal statute.) Van Handel took countless nude photos of as well as acting out the usual ‘father’ Robert sexual abuse. agonized that he may have traded or sold them. He continues to have nightmares about Van Handel.

"In his first session with me, who is gay, speculated in a short undefended moment that if this (the abuse) had not happened, perhaps he would have a wife and family now. He quickly recovered his composure and strongly stated his beliefs in the genetics of homosexuality.

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have suffered greatly as parents of a victim. has helped resolve some of his pain through a remarkable and successful series of political actions. has not. She describes this whole thing as a nuclear explosion with never-ending fallout from which she cannot escape.

as Catholics, have suffered a spiritual abuse that is unimaginable. This man of God, who was rector, director, and priest betrayed their faith at the deepest level. They have turned away from the Church in different degrees. Healing the spirit is the mission of the church. Where can they go?

"Perhaps the greatest and longest-lasting hurt of all is the profound confusion resulting from the self-doubt and self-mistrust. Van Handel was beloved of all. He was kind, warm, understanding, charming . . . plus all the expected pastoral attributes. Both still profess their love for him. He was frequently in the home. Both weep at the memory of his refusal to speak to them, which was his way of rejecting them when they were thirteen or fourteen . . . too old for his pedophile tastes.

"If Van Handel started his abuse career at age of twenty, continuing until forty-five, acting out on only ten boys per year, he could easily have abused 150 boys. This very sick man needs to be safely locked away for so long as the law allows.

Sincerely,

Annette Goodheart, Ph.D."

Thirteen character reference letters were submitted on the defendant's behalf. All have been read and considered in their entirety and are attached for the Court's consideration.

Eighteen letters were received from members of the community wishing to voice their opinions in regard to this matter. All have been read and considered in their entirety and are attached for the Court's consideration.
SENTENCING CONSIDERATIONS:

Offense:

288(a) PC, LEWD ACTS UPON A CHILD UNDER AGE 14

Base Term: 3 - 6 - 8 years

Circumstances in Aggravation (Judicial Rule 421):

1. The crime involved great callousness in that the defendant consciously knew, from past negative reactions he had from prior victims, that what he was doing was wrong, yet continued with the molestations.

2. The victim was particularly vulnerable in that the defendant knew he was from a broken home, with little or no supervision from his mother, and lacking in material things.

3. The manner in which the crime was carried out indicates planning in that the defendant, through his numerous molestations of other children, followed a similar modus operandi in the molestation of the victim in the instant matter.

4. The defendant took advantage of a position of trust or confidence to commit the offense by using his position of not only Director of the Santa Barbara Boys' Choir, but as priest and Rector of St. Anthony's Seminary, in order to convince the victim's mother to allow the victim to stay with him overnight, thus facilitating the molestations.

(Judicial Rule 408(a))

5. The defendant molested the victim on numerous occasions, over a period of years, thus leading to significant emotional and psychological trauma.

Circumstances in Mitigation (Judicial Rule 423):

1. The defendant has no prior record.

2. The defendant was suffering from a mental or physical condition that could be viewed as significantly reducing his culpability for the crime (pedophilia).

3. The defendant voluntarily acknowledged wrongdoing at an early stage of the criminal process.

(Judicial Rule 408(a))

4. The defendant voluntarily enrolled and participated in extensive residential psychiatric treatment.
Although factors in aggravation do not greatly outnumber those in mitigation, it is believed the aggravating factors deal directly with the type of perpetual crime committed against the victim and the social and moral conscience of the community. The selected mitigating factors either basically reflect the defendant's behavior prior to or after the molestations. Therefore, it is believed the upper term would be most appropriate.

Selected Term: 8 years

EVALUATION:

Before the Court stands a defendant who has submitted a plea to the charge of COMMITTING LEWD ACTS UPON A CHILD who, when first molested, was but nine years of age. The defendant continuously molested the victim for approximately three years and only stopped after the victim was committed to a drug rehabilitation program.

In an attempt to at least begin understanding how a person could involve himself in such an incredibly adulterated life of child sexual molestations, one may take into consideration that the defendant, himself, was a victim of same. As noted earlier, in 1962, when the defendant was a student at St. Anthony's, and during a time he was sick in bed, a priest molested him by rubbing his stomach, chest, and penis. It appears this event in the defendant's young life had a significant impact on him and, to this very day, still affects him. It is not known if this molestation, combined with the defendant's rather emotionally deprived childhood, channelled him toward the deviant sexual acts he committed on the victim;
however, the similarities are remarkable.

It is of important significance to note the defendant started molesting young boys as early as 1972. In fact, his first victim may have been when he orally copulated his five-year-old nephew. Since 1975, it would seem safe to speculate that not a year, or for that matter a month, went by that the defendant did not involve himself in some form of sexual gratification by molesting members of the Santa Barbara Boys' Choir. As the defendant noted in his sexual autobiography,

"Early in the choir's history, I began involving parents in planning, fund raising, etc., but it was clearly my choir, and the fulfillment of one my fondest dreams. Now I understand that it was also a constant supply of attractive little boys."

It is very clear the defendant desecrated his position of trust as not only the choir director, but as a priest and Rector of St. Anthony's Seminary in order to fulfill his predatory desires. As noted in the numerous letters submitted by concerned members of the community, the defendant was very much loved and respected by all. Yet, as pointed out by his therapist, the defendant's fourteen-year history of child molestation "suggests cleverness in concealing his pedophilia while dealing with the community relating to St. Anthony's Seminary and the Santa Barbara Boys' Choir." It certainly seems the defendant manipulated the victim's mother into believing her son would be in good hands, yet he seemed to be only interested in continuing with his usual pattern of luring unsuspecting victims into his world of sexual perversion.

The defendant's victimization of children has reportedly been halted for the past five years.
However, it is important to note that it should in no means be interpreted as a voluntary realization of wrongdoing on the defendant's part. As it turns out, it seems the defendant was directed by his provincial to enter a psychiatric program in Maryland that has been specifically established by the Catholic Church for priests exhibiting behavior such as the defendant's. It is to his credit that he successfully completed that program and attended yet a second program after his return to California. It must also be remembered, however, that although he may have been able to recognize the wrongfulness and illegality of his actions, it took an arrest warrant and police officers to physically place the defendant into custody and oblige him to appear before the Court and admit his violations of state law.

Upon considering the defendant's eligibility for probation, and as indicated in defense counsel's sentencing statement filed with the Court, there is little doubt he statutorily qualifies for such a consideration. It is notable that in the 288.1 PC report, the evaluating psychiatrist supports a recommendation for probation; the defendant states a willingness to comply with all probation terms and conditions; and he has also indicated remorse for his victim.

However, simply because the defendant is statutorily eligible for probation, this is not viewed as sufficient grounds to grant it. As illustrated within the preceding pages of this report, the defendant has not only emotionally and psychologically traumatized the victim and his mother, but also literally devastated numerous other children and their families, for which he will not have to face any charges.
In essence, one could basically state he "got away with it."

Additionally, the question of deterrence of others is perhaps the focal point of this entire criminal matter. For these reasons, it is believed the defendant should, indeed, be punished with the maximum time allowed by law.

The selection of the upper term of eight years for a single Count of 288(a) PC is not only justified, but could arguably be viewed as lenient and a stroke of luck for the defendant. It seems that had the victim not completely fallen to his drug addiction and been subsequently institutionalized, the defendant would most likely have continued molesting him through at least the latter part of 1989. Had this occurred, he would clearly be in violation of the then-newly instated 288.5 Penal Code Section, CONTINUOUS SEXUAL ABUSE OF A CHILD, which carries a maximum term of sixteen years.

In light of what has been presented within the contents of this report, it is not believed the defendant should be afforded the privilege of probation supervision and should, instead, be sentenced to state prison with the hope that such a disposition will not only serve to significantly punish the defendant, but also send a clear message to others involved in similar criminal acts that their behavior will not be tolerated. It can only be hoped that upon his release from state prison, the Catholic Church will not alienate itself from the defendant and will continue to provide him with the same therapy and support that it so vigorously pursued prior to his arrest and conviction. To this end, the following recommendation is respectfully submitted.

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RECOMMENDATION: It is, therefore, recommended that
probation be denied and the defendant committed to the California
Department of Corrections for the aggravated term of eight years.
In addition to the above, it is
also recommended that the defendant be assessed a restitution
fine of $200.00 pursuant to Penal Code Section 1202.4.

Respectfully submitted,

SUSAN J. GIONFRIDDO
CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER

RUBEN G. GUTIERREZ
DEPUTY PROBATION OFFICER III

I have read and considered
the foregoing report of
the Probation Officer.

JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT