

How to Research an Abuser

1. Go to any large library or Catholic university. Get a copy of the *Official Catholic Directory (OCD)* for the years that you are interested in. It lists names of all clergy by year and it lists all the dioceses. Find the years you are interested in then you can look up the diocese and find the parish and find who was assigned to your parish or school at that time. Or you can go to the index and find the abuser that way. The *Directory* is organized by year. You know that you were abused in _____ diocese in 1975, then get the 1975 OCD, go to the _____ diocese and find the clergy assigned there. Then go to years before and after 1975 to find the assignment of the predator.

It takes a little research, but you can follow the career of the abuser. It lists all the assignments of all the clergy. It will help find out when he was ordained, where he/she was assigned, etc. This is the best resource.

2. Go to www.bishopaccountability.org (BA) Search by diocese and name of abuser. BA has a database that lists all the publicly known clergy abusers. Keep in mind these are public documents, those clergy abusers not cited in newspapers or court documents are not listed. BA has also overall analysis of seminaries. They also have links to newspapers that have done a fair amount of research in dioceses around the US. (Pass on any documentation, notes, etc. that you acquire and develop to BA. Even though they may not be able to post it immediately it may help substantiate other cases.)

3. Most dioceses are dishonest and refuse to list religious order priests (Jesuits, Salesians, Christian Brothers, Franciscans, etc) in their disclosures. So, go to the religious order of the abuser and get their list.

4. Check the local newspaper archive or go to your local central library and search newspaper archives for the time period you are interested in. You can also search through the website, <http://newspaperarchive.com/us/> It is a paid service but they do have a wealth of information.

5. Place an advertisement in the local newspapers where your abuser was assigned, including neighborhood newspapers. You only need to place a simple statement in a personal ad such as --
“Do you know the priest, Father Peter B. Murphy, at St. Patrick’s parish around the time period 1963 to 1965? Please contact me at ___email or P.O. Box _____ All information will be held in confidence.”

I used this technique and I found it very effective. I placed ads in some small town newspapers where my abuser was located. The ad was very simple like the example above. I got six response, four of them mentioning Murphy’s abuse of minors and children.

6. Contact your family, friends and neighbors. They may have a picture of the picnic for altar boys or other pictures of the abuser. Collect school pictures, ask about friends of friends, etc. Get out the family album, etc. Those closest to you can be a powerful source. Search for an old diary or Christmas cards or notes mentioning the abuser.

7. Go to the diocese and search old diocesan newspapers. You can make up some ruse, “I am searching family history,” etc. I used this ruse to good effect. Similarly, there may have been a school newspaper or a parish bulletin that may add useful information.

8. Go to an old survivor discussion board <https://www.tapatalk.com/groups/snapsurvivorsnetwork/> (previously <http://snapsurvivorsnetwork.yuku.com/>) Most of the data is old and it takes patience to ferret out information. But it does provide a wealth of historical information provided by other survivors that may be of some help.

9. Keep in mind there are other organizations that research abuse:

Baptist <http://stopbaptistpredators.org/index.htm> Their name says it all.

Jehovah's Witness <http://www.silentlambs.org/assistance/index.cfm>

RAINN www.RAINN.org The Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network has a wealth of information and links to many other organizations.

Cults http://www.xfamily.org/index.php/Main_Page

Google Search (name, title, 'sexual abuse', location, etc.)

10. Contact the local SNAP leader in the area that you were abused. They may know of other victims of the same abuser. Sadly and tragically abusers harm dozens if not hundreds of children, more than likely you were not the only victim. The local SNAP leader may know of other resources (Knights of Columbus annual report, amateur sports team, altar boy picnics, school plays, etc.) that the abuser was identified. Lastly, your local SNAP leader can help provide references for therapists, counselors and legal advisors.

11. Two resources: whitepages.com and 411.com

12. **Update** 2020

A. **ProPublic** published a list of predators. See:

<https://projects.propublica.org/credibly-accused/>

B. **National Enquirer** <https://www.nationalenquirer.com/>

The Enquirer began a series of disclosures by looking at states alphabetically. The first issue, February 10, 2020, addresses A, B, and C states. More states to come in future issues. I did not see an online list.

I urge you to take notes! Really, there can be a fair amount of information available and to keep it straight, take notes, otherwise it may lead to the necessity of researching the material again. Contact me if you need more help.

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SNAP

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