

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE HIDDEN PREDATORS ACT – SB 134  
CIVIL ACTIONS – CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE – DEFINITION AND STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS  
\*\*SUPPORT\*\***

**TO: Hon. Chairman William C. Smith, Hon. Vice Chair Jeff Waldstreicher, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**FROM: David Samuel Schappelle**

**DATE: 01/20/2021**

My name is David Samuel Schappelle, and I currently live in Ellicott City, MD with my wife of 18 years, and our five children. This year, 2021, our two sons will be 15 and 13, and our daughters will be 11, 9 and 4. My family attends mass every Sunday at St. Louis in Clarksville, but I have stopped going because I have a difficult time at church nowadays. My wife is still active in our parish and we believe God is greater than the actions of the Catholic church. My oldest two boys were even altar servers before the COVID-19 pandemic, which is one reason for why my memories started coming back when my boys were around ages 9-11.

I can testify that repressed memory is very real and very tragic. I'm 43 years old, and in April of 2019 I began to recall the sexual and physical abuse that happened to me when I was age 9 in 1986 by priests working through St. Rose of Lima in Gaithersburg, MD. I would like to support anyone else who have repressed memories of child abuse, or who remember but are afraid to come forward and be heard. I would like to testify in support of The Hidden Predators Act, which will help myself and countless others.

My memory recollection process has been excruciating, painful, and debilitating at times. The memories still become clearer and clearer as the months (now years) pass since I first recalled my abuse in April 2019. My memories will flash at any time of the day or night (mostly at night and I can't sleep). Part of my therapy has been to write all my memories into a journal, which is now full of awful memories from a childhood of lost innocence.

The thought of suicide is a constant fear and threat in my head. It is only because of the tremendous love and support of my family that I am still here today, as well as thanks to my therapist who I started seeing when I recalled my abuse in 2019. I suffer from chronic PTSD, depression, anxiety, and I have anger management issues. The intense therapy and counseling that I have been receiving since April 2019 has cost us out-of-pocket close to \$40,000!

My primary abuser was Wayland Brown (formerly Father Brown – he was excommunicated), who pled guilty and was convicted in 2018 to child sexual abuse and the rape of two boys between 1987-1988 in Savannah, Georgia. In fact, the only reason

that they could sentence him was because some of the crimes occurred in South Carolina, which has no statute of limitations to bar prosecution.

Mr. Brown sexually abused me numerous times during the fall of 1986 when my family had just moved to Gaithersburg, MD and started attending mass and CCD/religious education through St. Rose of Lima. Since my memory recollection, I've come to learn that in 1986 Mr. Brown was receiving treatment at St. Luke's Institute in Silver Spring, MD. He was sent there by the Archdiocese of Savannah, GA for outpatient "rehabilitation" related to prior sexual abuse allegations in Georgia. He was allowed to volunteer in my CCD classes and attend church events at St. Rose of Lima. While he was playful and charismatic with a friendly smile on the outside, he was horrible and sinister and dark on the inside. He used God as a way to prey on me, and other children. Our church community, especially the CCD teacher and organizer, had blind faith in this man because he was a priest and he abused that privilege.

Mr. Brown taught me "special" ways to pray, a perverted way to receive communion, and how I could speak to God directly by putting my mouth on his penis. I was 9 years old and was being sexually abused by an ordained Catholic priest. He even introduced me to another priest who together they sexually abused me in a car. The other man who abused me in that car, I believe, is still in ministry in Massachusetts.

One time at a church picnic for kids, Mr. Brown took me alone into a house on church grounds, and led me to a room and showed me a handgun. He made it clear that he had the gun so that he could be sure that I "won't tell anyone about what was about to happen." Then he showed me how to put a condom on him, and then he raped me. I blacked out from the excruciating pain. When I awoke, he said the Hail Mary prayer to me and told me to say it with him. I could barely get a word out of my mouth. Later that same day, he asked me to leave with him to go to Georgia. That he had to leave soon. I said "No", my family just moved here, and I can't go with you. It sickens me to think about what happened next to other boys in Georgia and South Carolina.

After a time of transition at St. Rose, a new priest, Father Duggan, was assigned to our parish and I told him about what had happened. Father Duggan replied saying that those priests were no longer around, and that some priests have different ways, and that he would keep me safe. I was never abused again sexually, but my mental abuse continued when nothing happened, and my brain went into survival mode. For whatever reason, and however my brain worked, in order to function as a normal adolescent, teenager, and adult, my brain suppressed the trauma that I experienced.

Sexual abuse (no matter when it happened) is an attack on the survivor's body, mind, and soul. Sexual abuse done by religious figures is an attack on everyone's faith. Remembering and reliving the horrible events of my abuse have had a catastrophic effect on my life and family. My wounds are still very fresh, as if I was abused and raped in 2019 when the memories started coming back to me. I am choosing to be a survivor, though, and I am starting to heal, but part of a survivor's healing process is to hold the responsible parties accountable for their bad practices and poor judgment. We

deserve this opportunity to be heard in court. My memories of the tragic events that happened to me are very real.

***I urge a favorable committee report and passage of The Hidden Predators Act without amendments.***