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SPRING 2015
PROTECT OUR CHILDREN
EDITION

Bridgeport Priest Named in Sixth Sexual Abuse Lawsuit

Father Walter Phillip Coleman, who once served as priest of St. Patrick Parish, now known as The Cathedral Parish, of Bridgeport, has been named in yet another sexual abuse lawsuit. To date, five victims have accused Coleman of sexual abuse dating back to the late 1970s and early 1980s. Now, a sixth victim has come forward.

“Father Coleman was sexually exploiting, assaulting, and abusing minor children in his parish for years, with impunity,” said Atty. Jason Tremont. “Parents and guardians entrusted their children to the care and protection of the church. Rather than protect them, Father Coleman violated them physically, morally and spiritually. The Diocese of Bridgeport, which was responsible for supervising Father Coleman’s behavior, allowed and encouraged him to have unchaperoned, one-on-one contact with minor parishioners, in secluded places on and off church premises. Moreover, the Diocese systematically covered up sexual misconduct by its priests so as to further endanger minor children such as the current plaintiff,” Tremont said.

Coleman, who has been residing in Florida for close to 20 years, still volunteered in at least two known churches in Florida even after the first allegations were filed against him. A Pastoral Bulletin from the Archdiocese of Miami has a warning that “Rev. Walter Phillip Coleman [Diocese of Bridgeport] does not enjoy the faculties of the Archdiocese of Miami.”

As early as 1976, before the abuse occurred to the victim in this lawsuit, the Diocese had received complaints about Coleman and his relationship with underage boys.

Coleman served at St. Teresa’s Church in Trumbull from 1960-1966 and at St. Maurice’s Church, Stamford 1966-1968. He then served at St. Joseph’s Church in Danbury; St. Aloysius Church, New Canaan; and St. Thomas Church, Fairfield, before joining St. Patrick’s Church in Bridgeport in 1976. From 1983 to 1987 he was at St. Joseph’s Church, Brookfield and then Immaculate High School, Danbury; Central Catholic High School, Norwalk; Sacred Heart Church, Georgetown and then St. Joseph’s Manor, Trumbull, from 1991-1993 when he was assigned to St. Margaret March Church, Shelton.

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Lawsuits Filed Against Stamford School Board, a Teacher & Rogers School Principal

Atty. Cindy Robinson of Tremont Sheldon Robinson Mahoney has recently filed five lawsuits on behalf of former students of Robert Martinez, a physical education teacher of Rogers School in Stamford. All of the former students were abused in the 1970s and 1980s. Tremont Sheldon Robinson Mahoney is currently representing other victims who were sexually abused as students in both public and private schools throughout the state of Connecticut. “It is particularly traumatic for these boys who had no choice in their school attendance and equally devastating for the parents who entrusted their children to the school,” said Robinson. In addition, the firm has two child molestation cases against former substitute gym teacher James Brown while he was employed at a Newington public school.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Car and Truck Accidents | Clergy Sexual Abuse | Defective Products | Dog Bites | Dram Shop (bars overserving alcohol) | Falls | Legal Malpractice
Medical Malpractice | Motorcycle Accidents | Nursing Home Neglect and Elder Abuse | Public Transportation Accidents | Security Issues
Sexual Abuse (including teachers, coaches, medical professionals) | Spinal Cord Injuries | Workplace Injuries | Wrongful Death

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Cindy Robinson Joins the Fight Against Child Sex Trafficking



The International Academy of Trial Lawyers (IATL) is comprised of a select group of litigators, many of whom are plaintiffs' personal injury lawyers. Cindy Robinson, the first woman in Connecticut to be inducted into IATL, attended the mid-year meeting in July 2014. At the meeting, a compelling presentation was given by various speakers on human sex trafficking of minors throughout the country. Since the meeting, Robinson, along with other Connecticut Fellows, has met with experts on child sex trafficking in order to learn more about the problem. The group was shocked to learn that sex trafficking of minors is happening right here in the state of Connecticut! Pimps advertise

online on a number of sites, giving young girls VISA debit cards as a form of payment. The girls then find themselves in hotels within major Connecticut cities where they meet up with a John. The group hopes to work in conjunction with other agencies in order to formulate and promote a plan to combat child sex trafficking.

How You Can Help Fight Child Sex Trafficking

1. Ask schools, your local truck stop, travel center, hotel/motel, bus or train station, convenience or grocery store, library or other business for permission to post the hotline number;
2. Ask your friends to put the number in their phones. Ask them one at a time or ask a group at work, school or at places of worship. You can even hand out hotline flyers or stickers at concerts, fairs and community events. Let people know that if they suspect human trafficking, they can make a call that connects someone to freedom.
3. Help pass hotline posting laws. Right now, fewer than half of our states have laws that mandate or encourage certain kinds of businesses to post the hotline. The more states that pass these laws, the more places a trafficking victim could learn about this life-changing number. Find out if your state has this law, and if not, ask your lawmaker to sponsor one.

An Act Concerning a State-Wide Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness Program to be implemented in Schools by October 1, 2015. *On July 1, 2014 an act was passed in Connecticut Legislature requiring all regional and local school boards to implement a Sexual Abuse and Awareness Program by October 1, 2015.*

NHTRC | NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESOURCE CENTER

Human trafficking is modern-day slavery, and it's happening right here in the United States.

You can help.

1-888-373-7888
CONFIDENTIAL | TOLL-FREE | 24/7
www.TraffickingResourceCenter.org
NHTRC@polarisproject.org
Interpreters available

CALL THE HOTLINE TO:

- 1 Get help.
- 2 Report a tip.
- 3 Find services.
- 4 Request training and information.

Victims are forced to provide labor or commercial sex in many situations, including the following venues/industries:

SEX TRAFFICKING	LABOR TRAFFICKING
Hotel-Based Commercial Sex	Domestic Work
Fake Massage Businesses	Agriculture
Street-Based Commercial Sex	Travelling Sales Crew
Residential Brothels	Health & Beauty Services
Truck Stops	Restaurants
Escort Services	Construction

This publication was made possible in part through Grant Number 920V1032 from the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Division, Office of Refugee Resettlement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Division, Office of Refugee Resettlement, or HHS.

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The firm currently has other court cases pending against the Diocese of Bridgeport as a result of sexual molestation by priests Robert Morrisey, James Gildea, and Martin Federici, all of whom had been previously named in other claims.

“Over the years our firm has represented 95 victims who were abused by priests within the Diocese of Bridgeport alone. These victims have named 35 priests as their abusers and have identified at least 30 different parishes and institutions where the abuse occurred,” Tremont said. The firm continues to represent victims of sexual abuse and has represented over 200 victims against religious institutions.

5 Dangerous Apps for Pre-Teens and Teens

If you're a parent or a grandparent, you know kids pick up the latest technology lightning fast. Of course, that means the children in your life can also be using apps and visiting sites that are totally inappropriate for their ages. Worse yet, you might not even realize it. Below are 5 apps to beware of.



1. SNAPCHAT

Snapchat is a picture-messaging app whose claim to fame is that the messages last only for a few seconds once they're opened, then supposedly evaporate into thin air. In theory, you can send embarrassing or risqué pictures without being afraid someone will steal or distribute them.

Unfortunately, the claim that Snapchat makes it safe to send risqué pictures is just plain wrong. It's way too simple for anyone to grab a screenshot of the image before it's deleted. In fact, several teenage boys have gotten in serious legal trouble over the last few years for capturing and distributing illegal photos sent to them by underage girls.

In fairness, many teens use Snapchat for innocent picture-conversations with each other. And as Snapchat grows in popularity, the company is moving further away from its sexting association. But it's still a big concern.



2. TINDER

While Snapchat has uses besides sharing inappropriate images, Tinder is all about meeting new romantic partners, which probably isn't something you want your teen doing with strangers.

Tinder allows a person to create a profile and see images of potential romantic matches in the immediate area. If two people like each other, they can have a conversation through the app and potentially "hook up."

Actually, underage teens aren't even supposed to be using Tinder. The only way to get on the app is to have a Facebook account with a birthdate that indicates the user is 18 years old or over. Of course, children can set any birthdate they wish with a simple keyboard entry. There is no age verification.

Any child who uses the app will be meeting people who are over legal age. They might come across predators and scammers.



3. VINE

Vine, which lets you record and share six-second videos, seems like a totally safe app at first. It gets dangerous when you consider how strong peer pressure is on social media. Last year, in the most dramatic example yet, teens across the world took to setting themselves on fire.

In response to this, Vine just released the Vine Kids app, which features hand-selected videos that are supposed to be appropriate for younger audiences. Unlike the real Vine app, Vine Kids can't record videos.



4. WHISPER

Whisper, an app built specifically for spreading rumors and secrets, lets users post pictures and text anonymously. Apps like Whisper could potentially be a good outlet for teens, as anonymous confessions can help people unburden themselves. But Whisper shares the secrets based on geographic location, so the users nearest to your child are the ones more likely to see the secret. If your child reveals too much, it can put him or her in a dangerous situation with friends or adversaries.



5. 9GAG

9Gag is one of the most popular apps for distributing memes and pictures online. The risky part for teens is that all kinds of pictures are shared on 9Gag. These pictures aren't moderated and could come from any uploader and feature terrible images you don't want kids seeing.

MYTH: People aren't volunteering to help with the Little League, Boy/Girl Scouts, etc., because they are afraid of lawsuits.

FACT: A federal law protects volunteers of nonprofits in the course of their charity work.*

**From American Association of Justice (AAJ)*

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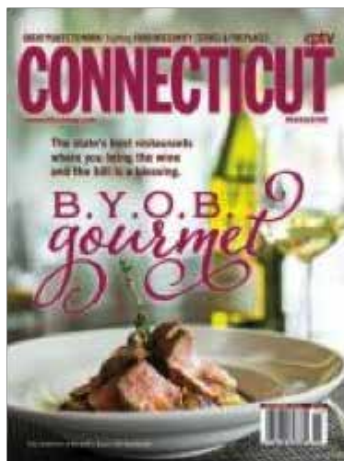
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Spotlight on Bridgeport Organization



The Center for Family Justice provides free, confidential, bilingual crisis services that help all people plagued by domestic and sexual violence restore their lives, and educates our communities to prevent future abuse.

The Center for Family Justice serves six Fairfield County towns: Bridgeport, Easton, Fairfield, Monroe, Stratford and Trumbull. **To find out more go to: <http://centerforfamilyjustice.org>.**



Tremont Sheldon Robinson Mahoney Attorneys Recognized for Achievement

4 Tremont Sheldon Robinson Mahoney attorneys were featured as Connecticut Super Lawyers® in the November 2014 edition of Connecticut Magazine. Attorneys Jason Tremont, Robert Sheldon, Cindy Robinson, and Doug Mahoney were recognized for their outstanding work in personal injury.

We congratulate all our attorneys on their great achievements.