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The 11 abuse cases the P-I examined

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[See also [the main article in this series on accusations against "Fathers who acted as fathers"](#), maps and photos of the [Washington church properties where abuse is alleged](#) with synopses of the charges and in-depth reports on two priests: [Rev. Edward T. Olszewski](#) and [Rev. James Mitchell](#).]

A synopsis of 11 abuse cases examined by the Seattle Post-Intelligencer:

Washington cases

- The **Rev. James Mitchell** brought two teens to Washington from Colombia and promised to adopt them, subjecting them to frequent sexual abuse, according to a complaint filed by one of them in May. A recent visit to his home in Pullman revealed that two young men are living there today. One said their relationship with Mitchell is not sexual. The other did not comment. Mitchell has been removed from active ministry.
- The **Rev. Arthur C. Mertens** of the Spokane Diocese invited a Mexican-born boy to live with him in his Walla Walla rectory as a way of escaping violence at home, then raped him for years, according to a recently filed lawsuit. Mertens has been removed from active ministry.
- The **Rev. G. Barry Ashwell** was a state-licensed foster father to at least five children on Whidbey Island -- including one who settled a molestation claim with the Seattle Archdiocese in 1996. Ashwell has vehemently denied the allegations. In 2002, he was removed from active ministry after the Seattle Archdiocese found credible evidence of sexual abuse in another case.
- A Seattle priest, the **Rev. John Cornelius**, took in as many as 13 children. None of them has claimed abuse, but more than 20 other men have accused him of abusing them. Cornelius resigned in 2002, saying "To all those I have hurt, I express to you my sorrow, and I ask for your forgiveness." Contacted recently, Cornelius said he has no further comment.

Cases elsewhere

- A Milwaukee jury found the **Rev. Marvin Knighton** not guilty last year of charges that he sexually assaulted a teen in the late '80s, but the Milwaukee Archdiocese reviewed claims against Knighton, and in April found that there is a "preponderance of evidence" that Knighton committed sexual abuse. According Knighton's attorney, Gerald P. Boyle, Knighton has three adopted sons.
- In Michigan, the **Rev. Edward Olszewski** was found guilty in December 2002 of four counts of indecent liberties with Albert Green, now a Lynnwood resident, who lived with him in the '70s when he was a child.

Olszewski is now registered in Florida as a sexual offender. He has said his trial was flawed, and he is not guilty of any sexual misconduct. He said Green is "a pathological liar. ... This is all made up."

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- According to a recently settled lawsuit, the **Rev. Dozia Wilson** molested a youth who lived with him in his rectory in Massachusetts for three years in the 1970s. According to the lawsuit, Wilson was the boy's partial guardian -- he had legal authority to handle his financial, school and medical affairs. A second man who has sued Wilson alleging abuse -- Joe Woodward -- said he lived with Wilson for a brief period in New York.
- Former Toledo, Ohio, **Deacon Glen Shrimplin** has recently been sued by two men alleging abuse. One of those men, who filed as John Doe, said Shrimplin was a foster father to a boy who was placed in Shrimplin's home by the Catholic Charities arm of the Toledo Diocese in the early '70s. He says he knew that child when they were kids and were both being molested by Shrimplin. He said he has since spoken to the man, who has decided not to go public with his allegations.

Claudia Vercellotti, co-coordinator of the Toledo chapter of SNAP -- the Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests -- said she also spoke with the alleged victim. "He said emphatically that he was placed in foster care as a child through Catholic Charities with Glen Shrimplin," she said.

John Doe said he told a case manager and a priest at the diocese last year that Shrimplin was a foster parent who had abused the foster child who stayed with him.

But Sally Oberski, director of communications at the diocese, said that "if it happened, we don't know about it." She said none of the officials in the diocese recall ever being told there was a foster child or any child living with Shrimplin.

"A lot of people take people in to help them out" without going through formal channels, she said. "If that was the situation, we might not have even known about it. It's kind of scary if that's what he was doing," she said.

Shrimplin did not return calls placed to a number registered in his name, but has said in the past that the abuse allegations are false.

- Rochester, N.Y., priest **Robert O'Neill** had a young man living with him in his rectory for about a year in the 1980s. Mark Furnish -- who has sued O'Neill alleging sexual abuse -- said he believes the boy was 16, but O'Neill said he was 20.

Diocese spokesman Michael Tedesco said he and others in the Rochester Diocese "have no knowledge of ... any kind of information about a young man or boy who lived with him in the rectory."

The Rochester Diocese removed O'Neill's priestly faculties in May 2002 "because of what we thought were credible allegations of abuse," Tedesco said.

Tedesco said the diocese did not have rules against minors living with or staying overnight with priests at the time, but in 2003 passed a new code of conduct that prohibits it.

- In Minnesota, the **Rev. Francis Hoefgen** invited a suicidal teenager to move into his home. He later admitted to sexually abusing the boy.
- And in California, the **Rev. Oliver O'Grady** was found guilty of moving in with a single woman and sexually abusing her children throughout most of the 1980s.