

# Suit against pope, Vatican details U.S. abuse case

By Dinesh Ramde and Eric Gorski  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITERS

MILWAUKEE — The case of a priest accused of preying on boys at a school for the deaf was presented to the Vatican by one of the victims a year earlier than previously thought, according to documents revealed Thursday in another lawsuit aimed at the highest levels of the Roman Catholic Church.

A man identified in the lawsuit as "John Doe 16" of Illinois wrote a March 5, 1995, letter to then-Vatican Secretary of State Angelo Sodano alleging that the Rev. Lawrence Murphy molested him for a number of years. Previously, it was believed that the Vatican first learned of the allegations against Murphy in a July 1996 letter from Milwaukee Archbishop Rembert Weakland.

Murphy, who died in 1998, is accused of sexually abusing some 200 boys at the school from 1950 to 1974. His case drew renewed scrutiny after the recent release of documents suggesting that a Vatican office led by then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger — now the pope

— failed to aggressively discipline Murphy. Doe 16's letter was released by his attorney, Jeff Anderson of St. Paul, Minnesota, who provided a copy of a receipt showing the registered letter had reached the Vatican. The man wrote Sodano again and got no response, according to Anderson.

The Vatican dismissed the lawsuit as a publicity stunt that is entirely without merit and rehashes theories already rejected by U.S. courts. Jeffrey Lena, a U.S. attorney for the Vatican, said in a statement that Murphy's victims deserve sympathy, but the Vatican knew nothing of the crimes until decades later and isn't responsible for the abuse.

Lena said the lawsuit "is simply the latest attempt by certain U.S. lawyers to use the judicial process as a tool of media relations."

A Vatican spokesman has previously said the church's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was only informed of the Murphy case some 20 years after the diocese knew of the allegations and after civil authorities decided to drop their investigation. The congregation suggested

that the Wisconsin bishops restrict his ministry rather than stage a full-blown canonical trial, which it had earlier supported.

The lawsuit seeks the release of confidential Vatican files detailing clergy abuse allegations, as well as unspecified monetary damages. It also seeks a jury trial.

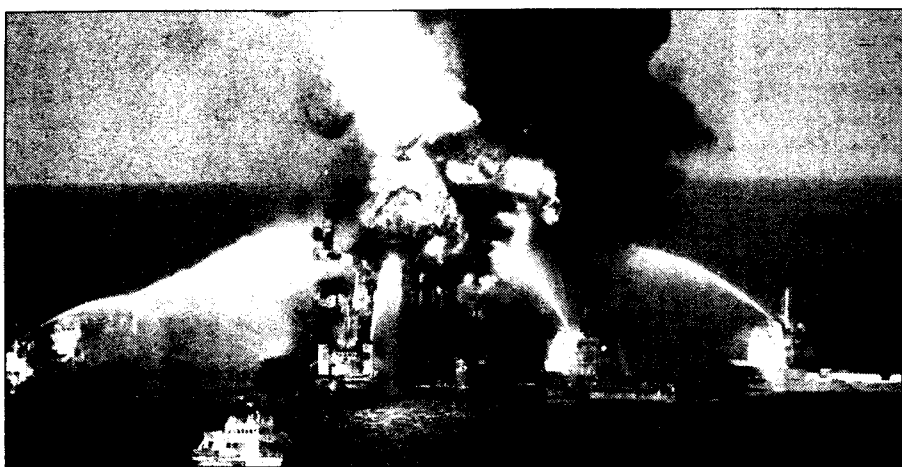
The lawsuit says Sodano, Ratzinger and fellow Vatican official Tarcisio Bertone all knew about the allegations against Murphy and conspired to keep them secret. The lawsuit says the claims are based on "information and belief" but doesn't offer proof.

"Ratzinger and Bertone each knew that their inaction and delay would cause harm to Plaintiff and other former deaf students," the lawsuit states.

The court document suggests that the Vatican failed to discipline Murphy because he was a prolific fundraiser. The defendants are Ratzinger, Bertone, Sodano and the Holy See, identified as the state of the Vatican City. Cardinal Bertone was Ratzinger's deputy at the time of the investigation and is now the Vatican's secretary of state.



Morry Gash/Associated Press  
Pamela Meyer holds a picture outside the federal courthouse for the lawsuit filed against Pope Benedict XVI and senior Vatican officials.



US Coast Guard/Associated Press  
Fire boat response crews battle the blazing remnants of the off shore oil rig Deepwater Horizon on Wednesday. Eleven workers are missing since the explosion occurred.

## Oil rig sinks, may cause spill

By Holbrook Mohr and Kevin McGill  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITERS

NEW ORLEANS — A deepwater oil platform that burned for more than a day after a massive explosion sank into the Gulf of Mexico on Thursday, creating the potential for a major spill as it underscored the slim chances that the 11 workers still missing survived.

The sinking of the Deepwater Horizon, which burned violently until the gulf itself extinguished the fire, could unleash more than 300,000 gallons of crude a day into the water. The environmental hazards would be greatest if the spill were to reach the Louisiana coast, some 50 miles away.

Crews searched by air and water for the missing workers, hoping they had managed to reach a lifeboat, but one relative said family members have been told it's unlikely any of the missing survived Tuesday night's blast. More than 100 workers escaped the explosion and fire; four were critically injured.

Carolyn Kemp of Monterey, La., said her grandson, Roy Wyatt Kemp, 27, was among the missing. She said he would have been on the drilling platform when it exploded. "They're assuming all those men who were on the platform are dead," Kemp said. "That's the last we've heard."

A fleet of supply vessels had shot water into the rig to try to control the fire enough to keep it afloat and keep crude oil and diesel fuel out of the water. Officials had previously said the environmental damage appeared minimal, but new challenges have arisen now that the platform has sunk.

The well could be spilling up to 336,000

gallons of crude oil a day, Coast Guard Petty Officer Katherine McNamara said. She said she didn't know whether the crude oil was spilling into the gulf. The rig also carried 700,000 gallons of diesel fuel, but that would likely evaporate if the fire didn't consume it.

Coast Guard Rear Adm. Mary Landry said crews saw a 1-mile-by-5-mile sheen of what appeared to be a crude oil mix on the surface of the water.

She said there wasn't any evidence crude oil was coming out after the rig sank, but officials also aren't sure what's going on underwater. They have dispatched a vessel to check.

The oil will do much less damage at sea than it would if it hits the shore, said Cynthia Sarthou, executive director of the Gulf Restoration Network.

"If it gets landward, it could be a disaster in the making," Sarthou said.

Doug Helton, incident operations coordinator for the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's office of response and restoration, said the spill is not expected to come onshore in next three to four days. "But if the winds were to change, it could come ashore more rapidly," he said.

At the worst-case figure of 336,000 gallons a day, it would take more than a month for the amount of crude oil spilled to equal the 11 million gallons spilled from the Exxon Valdez in Prince William Sound.

The well will need to be capped off underwater.

Coast Guard Petty Officer Ashley Butler said crews were prepared for the platform to sink and had the equipment at the site to limit the environmental damage.

## Earth Day now mainstream

By Frederic J. Frommer  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON — There was no "Green Movement" yet and little talk of global warming. Instead, the original Earth Day 40 years ago emphasized "ecology" and goals like cleaning up pollution and litter — along with a more anti-establishment vibe than today.

"Welcome, sulfur dioxide, hello, carbon monoxide," a woman sang from the 1968 countercultural Broadway hit, "Hair," at a rally in Philadelphia that day. Across the country, activists donned gas masks or spread out in grassy parks to hear speeches about overpopulation, smog and dirty rivers.

"It was brand new on the scene. We were basically using a new vocabulary," recalled Denis Hayes, who was the 25-year-old national coordinator for that first Earth Day. "So it was all fresh."

"In 1969, most Americans couldn't even define the word environment," Hayes said. "By the end of 1970, a huge fraction of them thought of themselves as environmentalists."

The movement capitalized on the experience and passion of activists who had organized anti-war, civil rights and feminist rallies in the 1960s. Today, the environmental cause is far more sophisticated, with thousands of environmental lawyers and advocates with advanced degrees and corporations rushing to advertise "green" products.

"But some of that passion that we had in 1970 has faded," Hayes said.

The original Earth Day was the brainchild of the late Sen. Gaylord Nelson, D-Wis., who called for a nationwide teach-in on the environment in a speech in Seattle in September 1969.

His daughter, Tia Nelson, said he decided to launch it after a major oil spill in California, and wrote the speech on airplane napkins. Forty years ago Thursday, the youth-driven movement sparked participation of about 2,000 college campuses and 10,000 elementary and high schools. Congress adjourned so members could give speeches, tens of thousands of people filled Fifth Avenue in New York City — which was closed to traffic — and millions took part across the country in activities like trash removal and bicycle rides.

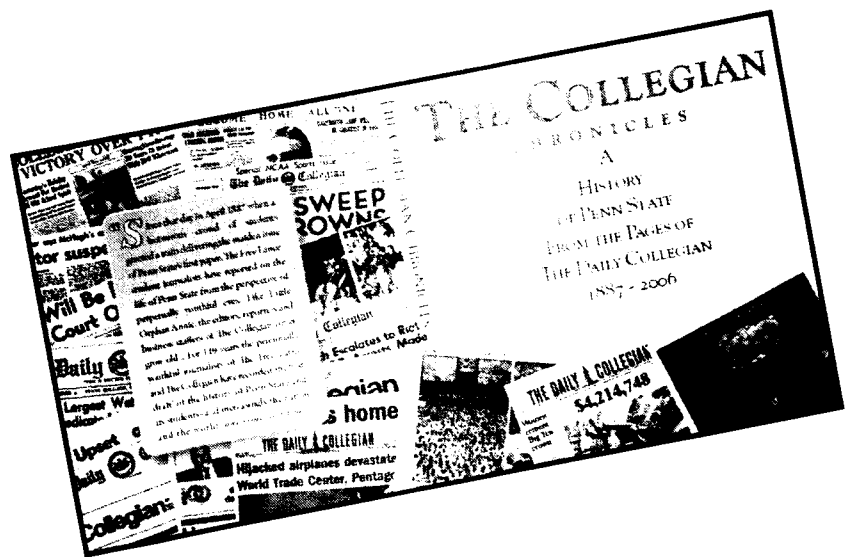
Many people used the word "ecology" to describe the cause — "a shorthand way to say we need to think more holistically," said Adam Rome, an environmental historian at Penn State who is writing a book on the first Earth Day.

"A lot of people were beginning to question our affluence, the huge environmental costs of the way we lived, and technological progress," he said.

"Ecology" went out of fashion later because it had a "hippie-ish, countercultural" feel. Rome said, as the movement worked to cultivate an image of professionalism and legal expertise. Although politicians took part in the first Earth Day, organizers stiff-armed the Nixon administration. Hayes declined a White House invitation for a meeting before the event, and President Richard Nixon himself did not participate in any Earth Day activities.

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