

Summer of Shame 2021

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News: [US News](#)



by Gene Thomas Gomulka • ChurchMilitant.com • July 22, 2021

Vatican, US bishops drowning in sexual-predation scandal



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These weeks mark the three-year anniversary of the 2018 "Summer of Shame," when decades of sexual abuse allegations against ex-cardinal Theodore McCarrick implicated numerous U.S. and Vatican bishops who covered up for him and enabled his ascent to power.



Anthony Gorgia

Watching prelates like Theodore McCarrick and Donald Wuerl being dethroned, bishops and institutions like the Pontifical North American College (NAC) in Rome were spotlighted for failing to protect seminarians and minors or abetting McCarrick's sexual acts. The comments of prelates who feared a similar fall were suspiciously uniform, with many giving boilerplate comments like "I don't remember" or "I was shocked."

At the end of months of scandal, exasperated Catholics hoped the Church would never again be visited by such a summer. Just three years later, however, we find ourselves in the "Summer of Shame 2021," once again with the U.S. and Vatican episcopacy drowning in scandal.

US and Vatican Bishops Implicated

A damning June 2021 affidavit has been submitted by a highly experienced former special agent in charge (SAC) of the Federal Bureau of Investigation against New York cardinal Timothy Dolan and NAC officials in support of former NAC seminarian Anthony Gorgia's landmark case. The affidavit implicates more than 30 U.S. and Vatican bishops who were informed of and covered up sexual predation allegations at the NAC.

This time, the "Summer of Shame" features, among others, the NAC rector Fr. Peter Harman and McCarrick and Wuerl protégé, vice rector Fr. Adam Park. It also highlights Cdl. Dolan and his longtime relationship with Harman's alleged homosexual lover, Abp. George Lucas — a relationship that affidavits allege was at least a partial motive for Dolan's cover-up of sexual misconduct at the NAC.

In allegations from multiple witnesses deemed "credible" by the former FBI SAC, Park stands accused of sexual harassment and misconduct toward seminarians under his authority, and Harman is accused of graphic sexual acts with Lucas at an orgy in the presence of vulnerable seminarians and current NAC board of governors member, Bp. Kevin Vann.

The orgy allegedly involving Lucas and Harman had been successfully covered up by Vatican and other Church officials.

Unlike the June 2017 "drug-fueled gay orgy" in Vatican City — at which Cdl. Francesco Coccopalmerio and his secretary, Msgr. Luigi Capozzi, were reportedly found — the orgy alleged to have involved Lucas and Harman had been successfully covered up by Vatican and other Church officials until the February 2021 filing of the Gorgia lawsuit.



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After reviewing copious amounts of evidence substantiating the orgy allegations against Harman and Lucas, the former FBI SAC stated the "entirely credible" details the eyewitness provided include "the alleged dimensions and specific descriptions of Harman's and other participants' intimate body parts" and "the graphic sexual acts attributed to Harman and Lucas, among others."

A separate June 2021 affidavit by one victim of Park's sexual misconduct recounted Park's unwelcome homosexual advances — acts with a "definite sexual connotation" — and his proclivities for NAC seminarians.

These prelates received no less than seven such reports, each of which went uninvestigated.

The question at the fore of this year's "Summer of Shame" is "Who knew about sexual misconduct toward the NAC's vulnerable seminarians, and who failed to prevent it?" The former FBI SAC's affidavit gives every indication that U.S. and Vatican prelates and NAC officials will not be able to feign ignorance or shift blame as so many had done in evasive media statements circa 2018.



Abp. George Lucas and Fr. Peter Harman

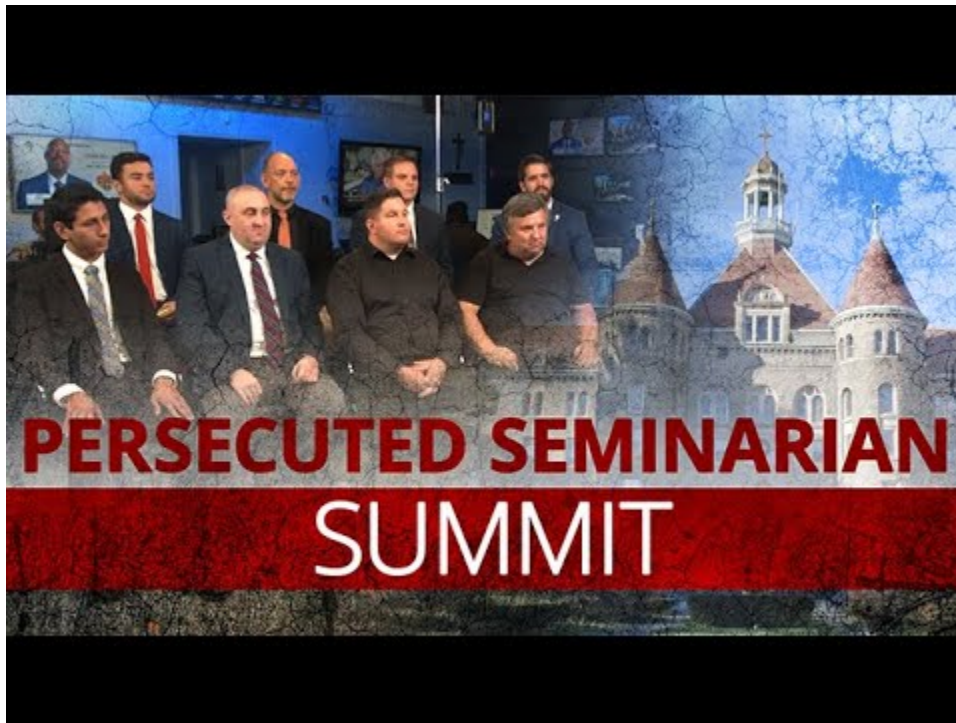
After reviewing evidence, the former FBI SAC identified Cdl. Dolan, the NAC board of governors and many other prelates who "received and ignored incriminating reports" about Frs. Harman and Park. Over the course of two years, these prelates received no less than seven such reports, each of which went uninvestigated. Even though Cdl. Seán O'Malley and other U.S. bishops reported the "deeply troubling allegations" to the Apostolic Nunciature, the Vatican has kept Harman and Park in their posts without any impartial investigation.

Deception: The Special Panel

Summer of Shame 2021 not only demands accountability of complicit prelates but also exposes deceptive tactics used to ensure that the defendants' secrets would not come to light. As in the case of the whitewashed "McCarrick Report" crafted by American attorney Jeffrey Lena (who defended the Holy See for more than 20 years), Lucas employed a defense attorney, Bill Roberts, to direct a "special panel," which, according to experts, masked "credible" accusations against Lucas himself and Springfield priests with whom he was reportedly sexually involved.

In that Roberts was handpicked and even compensated by the diocese, the panel was hardly more "independent" for purposes of handling allegations against Lucas than would be a defense attorney tasked by Bill Clinton to investigate allegations that he was having an affair with a White House intern.

In line with the "McCarrick Report," which failed to interview key witnesses like Abp. Carlo Maria Viganò, the panel smeared a credible eyewitness who offered damaging accounts against Lucas while omitting evidence that would have left no choice but to act upon the incriminating allegations. The eyewitness recounted that he became a victim of threats and retaliation by leading Springfield officials in an effort to intimidate him from coming forward with his credible information against Lucas and Harman. In a July 2021 statement to Church Militant, Springfield's general counsel, James Bock Jr., concealed that Springfield received multiple reports over the course of two years concerning Harman and Park that went ignored, uninvestigated and undenied.



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/Xck53kmVM9Y>

Church Militant convened seminarians in July to hear their stories firsthand

After reviewing the Springfield panel's highly suspect report and compelling eyewitness evidence, the former FBI SAC debunked the legitimacy of the Lucas-commissioned panel and affirmed, "After my thorough analysis ... I find no reason to doubt the credibility of the information provided by the eyewitness regarding the orgy." The former FBI SAC's findings are supported not only by crushing evidence against Harman and Lucas, but also by

separate allegations of sexual misconduct as recently as 2018 against no less than 20 Springfield priests — a list which includes some of the very same alleged participants in the orgy and even present leadership in the [Springfield diocese](#).

Seminarians: Pervasive Pattern

Just as Abp. Viganò's [testimony](#) and the graphic [2018 Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report](#) revealed a crisis of epic proportions, the recent video-recorded [testimony](#) of seminarians from across the country proves no less consequential. This time, the testimony reveals that the [sexual misconduct covered up at the NAC](#) accords with a [pervasive pattern](#) taking place in numerous other seminaries. Seminarians who came forward described not only disturbing sexual acts by seminary officials but also retaliatory subcultures and networks that protected accused predators while revictimizing the abused.

Decades of cover-up and shattered lives could be summarized in two words: 'Everybody knew.'

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, which claimed that "[every time one bishop fails to act, the entire episcopate is tainted](#)," is now among those who failed to investigate sexual misconduct and cover-up at the NAC. Among those who concealed the allegations are the chairman of the [USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations](#) and former NAC rector [Bp. James Checchio](#); [Cdl. Gregory—protégé Fr. Luke Ballman](#), Harman's long-time NAC contemporary; and many others with longstanding personal ties to the NAC or to one or more of the accused parties.

Victims of McCarrick contend that decades of cover-up and shattered lives could be summarized in two words: "[Everybody knew](#)" — the same words a NAC seminarian used to describe Park's misconduct toward vulnerable seminarians. Had every Church official proven to have "known" not ignored misconduct at the NAC, Gorgia would not have had to [file suit](#) to address the crisis Church leadership chose to ignore. Just as McCarrick's Summer of Shame exposed a network that enabled his rise in the Church, so too does the lawsuit against Dolan and the NAC leave no stone unturned by revealing a web of clerics who enabled the defendants' ascent to power.

Donations are appreciated for the [Save Our Seminarians Fund](#), which applies protections to vulnerable seminarians.

Gene Thomas Gomulka is a victims' abuse advocate and retired Navy captain/chaplain. Ordained a priest for the Altoona-Johnstown diocese and later named a monsignor, Gomulka was reprimed against by Church leaders he confronted for underreporting and covering up abuse.

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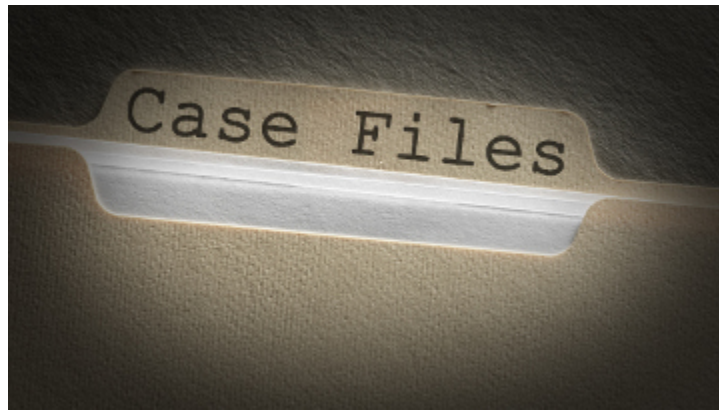
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