



## FALSE PRIEST ABUSE CLAIM BRINGS \$60K IN SANCTIONS

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*Chicago Daily Law Bulletin*

A Cook County judge ordered more than \$60,000 in sanctions Wednesday against a man accused of making false sex abuse claims against ex-priest Daniel McCormack.

The Archdiocese of Chicago filed a motion in July requesting Supreme Court Rule 137 sanctions against John J. Doe one month after he voluntarily dismissed his suit against McCormack.

The church, represented by James C. Geoly and Adam T. Rick of Burke, Warren, MacKay & Serritella P.C., alleged Doe's "entire case is based on a lie."

Doe's former attorney, Michael T. Mertz of Hurley McKenna & Mertz P.C., withdrew his firm as counsel on Aug. 2. No one has filed an appearance or any court documents on Doe's behalf since then, according to court records.

Supreme Court Rule 137 allows attorney fees or monetary penalties when the court finds sanctionable conduct has been committed under the rules by another party or attorney.

Cook County Circuit Judge Kathy M. Flanagan issued an order granting \$60,627.99 in monetary sanctions requested by the church for attorney fees and costs associated with the case.

Flanagan also ordered that Doe would no longer be able to use a fictitious name as of Wednesday.

"[The fictitious name statute] cannot and will not be used to protect the identity of those, such as [p]laintiff herein, who have no legitimate, good-faith interest in privacy and/or protection of their identity, because they have no legitimate, good-faith claims to pursue and are perpetrating a fraud upon the court," Flanagan wrote in her order.

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Geoly said Doe did not appear in court nor did he file a pro se response to the archdiocese's motion for sanctions.

Doe's June 2015 complaint alleged McCormack engaged in inappropriate conduct and cultivated a "sexually and/or otherwise abusive relationship" with him through his visits to St. Agatha's Catholic Church in the Lawndale neighborhood in June 2004.

McCormack pleaded guilty in 2007 to molesting five boys, served a five-year prison sentence and was remanded to a mental health facility in downstate Rushville after his release. He has since been deemed a "sexually violent" person after a September court hearing.

The motion for sanctions alleged Doe, while in prison on unrelated charges, talked to his cousin and girlfriend about his interest in suing the church.

His cousin previously settled a lawsuit against the archdiocese.

Citing a transcript of a recorded January 2014 phone call between Doe and his girlfriend, the archdiocese alleged Doe discussed his cousin's settlement with her and said, "I'm just ready to get out man so I can get my little slice of the pie ... "

And in June 2014, the motion alleged, Doe's cousin said during a phone call he was considering helping Doe contact lawyers who could help him "bring a case."

The motion alleges part of Doe's response included, "... As long as m-----f----- ain't got to touch me for real, I don't give a f---."

Geoly said he was glad to be able to "expose a fraud on the court" through these sanctions.

"False claims injure the whole system, they injure legitimate victims and, of course, they injure the church," he said in a phone interview.

The case is *John J. Doe v. The Archdiocese of Chicago, et al.* 15 L 6189.

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