

Blinded by Faith?

Part 1 of 3

Long-Secret Documents Reveal That Fort Worth Catholic Bishop Was Aware of Priest's Troubled Past

[See also [Part 2: Delaney's Decision](#) and [Part 3: More Allegations](#). Photographs interleaved in these articles originally appeared in a gallery that accompanied the stories.]

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Fort Worth Star-Telegram

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By Darren Barbee
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With the quiet rumble of tires over red brick streets, the priest slipped away from Ranger.

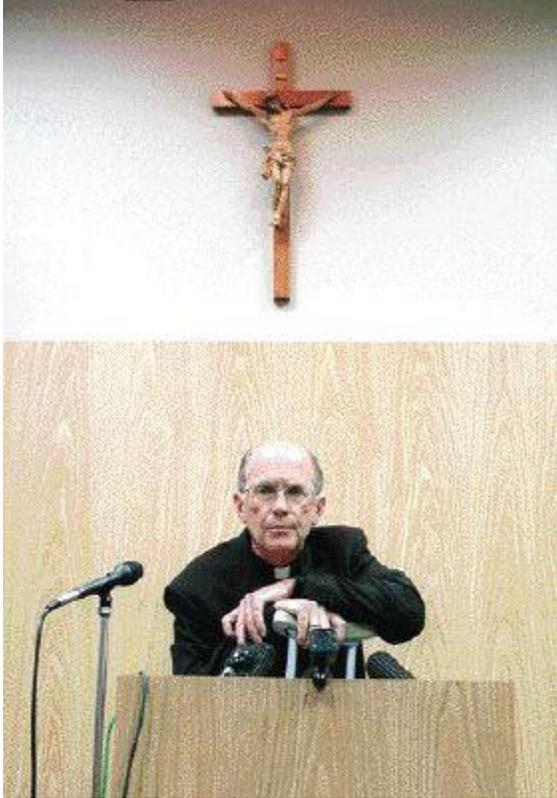
A few hours before, the Eastland County sheriff had confronted him about the sexual abuse of young boys. It wasn't the first time such allegations had been made.

This time, they would end the Rev. Thomas Teczar's career.

On that March day in 1993, Teczar drove east toward the chancellery of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth. Inside, documents detailing his reasons for leaving Ranger would stay sealed for more than a decade in the secret diocese archives known as the Confidential Files.

This spring, the Star-Telegram examined the files, which were opened during a lawsuit filed by two men who said Teczar molested them when they were boys living in Ranger. The suit was settled, and the diocese paid the men \$4.1 million.

The documents show how a priest with an admitted sexual attraction to boys was placed in charge of four rural parishes with no supervision. And they raise nagging questions about the actions of Fort Worth Bishop Joseph P. Delaney, who sent him to Ranger.



Bishop Joseph P. Delaney

Delaney, the chief keeper of the files, met with Teczar and the priest's two attorneys on March 18, 1993, the day after Teczar left Ranger. As Delaney took notes, he felt uneasy. The more he heard, the less he wanted to know.

By then, Delaney had known for a month that Teczar had failed to report the sexual abuse of children by two men in Ranger. But now he was learning that Teczar's involvement might go further. The sheriff and the district attorney were "hinting further trouble -- accusing Tom of pedophilia," according to Delaney's handwritten notes.

Teczar's name surfaced in the investigation in January 1993. In Ranger, two men had sexually assaulted as many as seven boys and two girls over a period of three years, according to police and Child Protective Services reports.

Police learned that the priest had had sex with both men and that he had warned one of them when officers were closing in.

When an Eastland County grand jury convened to consider the case, Teczar was subpoenaed. But the priest refused through his attorneys to answer questions on the grounds that he might incriminate himself.

With the storm around the priest growing, Delaney wrote, "Recommendation: Tom get out somehow."

In time, Eastland County law enforcement officials came to believe that the diocese and Delaney had hampered their investigation by ignoring the sheriff's and district attorney's requests for information about Teczar's past.

Delaney said he never knew they were seeking information about Teczar.

But the facts that Delaney had gleaned five years earlier, before he brought Teczar in, would have been crucial to their investigation, they said.

Documents that Delaney placed in the Confidential Files showed that Teczar had a sexual fixation on boys and young men, according to depositions, court documents and Star-Telegram interviews.

Delaney also knew that Teczar had been forced out of active ministry in Massachusetts after a boy accused him of sexual misconduct and that two other bishops had rejected Teczar before Delaney accepted him.

And after Teczar became the parish priest in Ranger in 1989, Delaney continued to support him, even when other problems surfaced during the priest's 3½ years there.

One of the men who sued the Fort Worth Diocese was 12 when he met Teczar in 1990. The man, called John Doe II in court documents, said Teczar raped him and molested him several times from spring 1990 until late 1992.

The man filed a criminal complaint with the Texas Rangers in May 2002. Teczar was indicted in March 2003 on three counts of aggravated sexual assault and one count of indecency with a child in connection with John Doe's complaint. Teczar, who is free on \$30,000 bond, is expected to stand trial in Eastland County next year.



Teczar in 2003

Teczar has also been sued by three Massachusetts men who allege that he abused them when they were boys. The suits have been settled by the Diocese of Worcester, Mass., where Teczar had previously worked. Other complaints of sexual misconduct

against Teczar have also surfaced in Worcester Diocese files and in at least one other lawsuit.

In a recent telephone interview, Teczar, 64, said he did not abuse the Massachusetts men who sued him. Asked if he has ever abused anyone, he said, "I'm not at liberty to say."

He declined to elaborate.

Teczar said he did not abuse the two men who sued the Fort Worth Diocese and that they were only after money.

"This man lied his way into a settlement," Teczar said, referring to John Doe. "I don't know this guy. I never touched him. I don't know anything except what I've read in the papers."

In a recent interview, Delaney said he knew nothing of sexual-misconduct allegations against Teczar before or during the priest's time in the Fort Worth Diocese. But Delaney's notes in the Confidential Files show that he knew of such suspicions.

Given the information he has now, it was a mistake to bring Teczar to the diocese, Delaney said.

"When I brought him here, obviously I thought it was a good thing to do," Delaney, 70, said in a May 11 interview with the Star-Telegram. "I didn't bring somebody in that I thought, let alone knew, was going to do these things."

Delaney would have known more about Teczar's past had he read the priest's personnel file, said Dallas attorney Tahira Khan Merritt, who represented John Doe in his lawsuit against the diocese.

With further investigation, he might have learned about Teczar giving a 10-year-old boy a bath at a boys' home in Massachusetts. And Delaney could have pressed for details when a Massachusetts monsignor said Teczar had other incidents in his past.

But Delaney didn't press for details.

Delaney said he couldn't get access to the personnel file from the Worcester Diocese because it isn't common practice for such documents to be circulated among bishops. Instead, he relied on recommendations from Teczar's therapist and the Massachusetts diocese. He examined a clinical report about Teczar that was nearly three years old. And he talked to Teczar.

Delaney documented his steps in the Confidential Files, which reveal the diocese's place in a national scandal involving 10,000 accusations of sexual abuse by Catholic clergy.

For more than a decade, the diocese has required employees to watch a 90-minute video on preventing sexual misconduct. And since 2002, the diocese has spent at least \$200,000 training thousands of employees, priests and volunteers to prevent abuse.

The training was prompted by lawsuits alleging widespread child abuse that have cost the U.S. Roman Catholic Church more than \$650 million and involve complaints against more than 4,000 priests.

Merritt said the bishop looked the other way when it came to Teczar, who left before the diocese changed its policies.

Merritt called Delaney's actions a case of willful blindness.

"He doesn't see exactly what's in front of his eyes," she said.

Her client, John Doe, said his lawsuit showed that the Fort Worth Diocese knew that Teczar "could hurt more kids."

"People need to know that even though they say that they want to help victims of abuse, they care more about covering up their lies," he said.

Delaney said that he has been truthful and that Teczar's accusers are liars who have their money and now want to make mischief.

But more than a decade ago, Ronnie White, who was then Eastland County's sheriff, saw things differently.



St. Rita's rectory

On March 17, 1993, White said, he drove to the rectory at St. Rita's Catholic Church in Ranger, 90 miles west of Fort Worth. White said he had no intention of strong-arming the priest. He wasn't angry about Teczar's refusal to testify before the grand jury, he said. But he was suspicious.



St. Rita's church in Ranger

White told the priest that he planned to invite St. Rita's parishioners to the upcoming trial of Teczar's intimate friends, who had been indicted on charges of aggravated sexual assault of children. Teczar, who had not yet been charged with a crime, said nothing.

"He was gone before daylight the next morning," White said.

Teczar says the meeting never happened.

The first accusations

"He was becoming very discouraged about how difficult it was to overcome his past."

-- Delaney's notes to the Confidential Files in June 1988, shortly before Teczar came to Fort Worth.

In the mid-1960s, when he was attending seminary, Teczar found himself alone with an unruly 10-year-old boy who refused to take a bath.

Teczar, then about 25, was working at the Nazareth Home for Boys, a Catholic home for troubled youths in Leicester, Mass. He bathed the boy himself.

Teczar was later fired from the home after he took a group of boys swimming and one complained afterward that Teczar had touched him inappropriately, according to a deposition given by a friend of Teczar's who also worked there.

Teczar said last month that he was fired because he wasn't getting along with the staff and the boys.

"That's the official word," he said.

From the beginning of his seminary years, Teczar was dogged by questions about his suitability for the priesthood. He was twice kicked out of seminary because of erratic behavior, only to be given second and third chances. Officials would note his exclusive friendships with boys as he neared ordination.

From an early age, Teczar's fascination with the church was obvious. He was an altar boy and played the organ at the suburban Massachusetts church of his childhood, said his sister, Pat Ernitz of Millbury, Mass. His education, too, was attuned to his parents' faith -- he studied at a Catholic high school and college, and as early as junior high school he expressed a desire to become a priest.

His early life was not marked by the tremendous wealth that came to the family in 1967, when his mother married the trustee of a local company. Until then, the family was upper-middle class, but not rich, Ernitz said.

Also in 1967, months before his ordination, officials at Teczar's home diocese in Worcester expressed concern about his "manifested predilection for intimate and rather exclusive companionship with young boys." The letter also noted, "if this breaks out again, I do not think he should be ordained."

In a deposition, Teczar said his relationships with the boys were friendships that another priest feared could be misread as sexual relationships.



Teczar in 1967

After his December 1967 ordination, Teczar began serving in churches. He was so well-liked in one parish that congregants signed a petition asking the Worcester bishop to allow him to stay.

At another Massachusetts church, Teczar befriended 16-year-old John Riganati. In 2003, Riganati filed a lawsuit in Worcester accusing the priest of sexually abusing him over four years beginning in 1968.

In an interview last month, Teczar said he did not have sex with Riganati, who has since settled the suit with the Worcester Diocese.

In a 1996 lawsuit filed in Massachusetts, Teczar was also accused of sexually abusing 16-year-old David Lewcon in 1971 after giving him Southern Comfort whiskey. Teczar said he did not abuse Lewcon, though he admitted in a deposition that he had given him alcohol.

Another man, George Shea, sued the Worcester diocese in 2002, alleging he was abused by Teczar. Teczar says he didn't know Shea and didn't abuse him.

But one incident with a boy in 1984 would force Teczar out of ministry for years -- until he found work in Fort Worth.

Placed on leave

"He was fortunately able to control himself. That may not have been the case on some other occasions."

-- Delaney's notes from a June 1988 conversation with Teczar about an incident with a 15-year-old boy that led the Worcester Diocese to suspend the priest.

They enjoyed a meal at a posh Massachusetts restaurant called Plum's. Teczar provided wine to the 15-year-old boy, and the conversation went well, the priest remembers.

"He was a very good conversationalist," Teczar said in an interview.

He took the dark-haired boy back to his home at the church.

Teczar said he brewed coffee and the two talked about circumcision. Teczar said the boy tried to seduce him, asking in a lowered voice for candlelight and soft music.

The evening ended with a hug shared during a joke, Teczar said. He thought the boy "was getting an erection, and I backed off almost immediately. I didn't want to take any chances," he said in an interview.

"I didn't touch his body or any private parts at all, nor did I intend to," Teczar said.

The boy's mother, Norma Maciorowski, said the priest made sexual innuendoes, then sexually abused her son. He has never told her all the details about what happened that night in May 1984, she said. The Star-Telegram is not naming her son at the family's request.

The incident forced Teczar from active ministry and led to a criminal conviction for providing alcohol to the boy. It also landed him in a psychological treatment center for clergy and in four Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.

At the Worcester Diocese, Monsignor Raymond Page spoke with Teczar and wrote on Aug. 29, 1984, that he was concerned Teczar that "had not at all seen this incident as compromising or 'scandalous' or inappropriate."

In a deposition, Teczar acknowledged being sexually attracted to the boy. Years later he told Delaney, while interviewing for a job in the Fort Worth Diocese, that he was able to control himself that night. "That may not have been the case on some other occasions," the bishop wrote.

As a result of that incident, Teczar was placed on leave in 1985 and was told to seek professional help. He entered the House of Affirmation in California, where he received psychological treatment for his problems with anger, sexuality and alcohol use.

Almost three years passed as he sought new employment in the Diocese of Norwich, Conn., and the Archdiocese of Boston. Both rejected him.

The Diocese of Norwich received a letter from Page in October 1986 that noted the "trail of damaged youngsters he [Teczar] left in one town. The police there were far from pleased. In that town, the police threatened to find a reason to arrest him if he returned there." Teczar said in an interview that he knew nothing of the matter. He said the police would have come looking for him if he had left youngsters damaged.

"Why would they have to go looking for a reason to arrest me?" he said.

Teczar applied to, among other places, the Diocese of Austin, where he was on the verge of being accepted. But he was directed to Fort Worth, where priests were needed.

Excerpts from the secret files:

"T admits to being attracted to adolescents in every way, including sexually."
-- Bishop Joseph Delaney's notes, June 12-13, 1988, shortly before he hired the Rev. Thomas Teczar

"His time in therapy was very intense and painful but very successful. He no longer has the need to seek out adolescents for companions. ... Because of all the other good qualities for ministry in T's life, S feels he will be a very successful priest."
-- Delaney's notes from a June 14, 1988, conversation with Gilbert Skidmore, Teczar's therapist

"I am willing to give Father Teczar an opportunity to get back into active ministry, fully aware of the possible risks that may be involved. ... Please pray with me that my decision will be of benefit to all concerned and for the good of souls."
-- Delaney in a July 13, 1988, letter to Bishop Timothy Harrington in Worcester, Mass.

"I laid down a request that he not have any social relationships with anyone under 25 in future."
-- Delaney's notes from a Jan. 25, 1991, meeting with Teczar to discuss the priest's meetings with two young men in Bedford

"DA and sheriff threatening prosecution ... hinting further trouble -- ???accusing Tom of pedophilia???"
-- Delaney's notes after a March 18, 1993, conversation with Teczar and two attorneys

"After weighing the options and considering the uncertainty of litigation and the related costs, the diocese ... settled the claims. ... At the time that Thomas Teczar came to the

diocese, there were no allegations of sexual misconduct against him."
-- April 7, 2005, news release from the Fort Worth Diocese after it agreed to settle a lawsuit by two men who said Teczar sexually abused them

[Next [Part 2: Delaney's Decision.](#)]

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Part 2 of 3

Delaney's Decision

[See also [Part 1: Long-Secret Documents Reveal That Fort Worth Bishop Was Aware of Priest's Troubled Past](#) and [Part 3: More Allegations](#). Photographs interleaved in these articles originally appeared in a gallery that accompanied the stories.]

Posted: **Monday, June 6, 2005**
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

By Darren Barbee
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Series editor: Sonny Bohanan
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

"In view of the past, I understand the current risks involved and hereby pledge my financial assets towards any settlement the diocese may have to make on my behalf."

-- June 1988 letter from Teczar, asking Delaney for permission to work in the Fort Worth diocese.

Should he take the priest?

Delaney needed clergy in the summer of 1988. But, in an unusual step, the Diocese of Worcester required him to take full legal responsibility for Teczar -- in writing -- three years before he was officially a part of the Fort Worth Diocese.

Delaney was concerned that Teczar had been suspended and that other bishops had rejected him, he later said in a deposition.

Most of the information Delaney said he received was related to the Maciorowski matter: reports from the House of Affirmation, interviews with Teczar's therapist, a letter from the Worcester Diocese and conversations with Teczar himself.

Delaney did not order new psychological tests for Teczar, instead relying on a 3-year-old report from the House of Affirmation.

On June 12 and June 13, 1988, Teczar came to Fort Worth. He told Delaney he had been sexually attracted to adolescents, but now saw his past behavior as bizarre.

He also told Delaney that he was living at his mother's home on Cape Cod, Mass., had held two jobs to support himself, and could live off of his mother's wealth without working.

"But he has had a deep desire to return to ministry," Delaney's notes state.

The next day, June 14, Gilbert Skidmore, Teczar's therapist at the House of Affirmation, told Delaney about the priest's past problems of impulsively acting out sexually with adolescents.

But Skidmore also said the priest's therapy was successful and that he had matured. Gone were Teczar's impulsiveness, poor judgment and terror of authority figures. "His personality problems have been generally resolved," according to Delaney's notes from the conversation.

Teczar "no longer has the need to seek out adolescents for companions, and this means he no longer finds them irresistible sexual objects," Skidmore told Delaney.

Teczar was willing to go the extra mile that June. In view of his past, Teczar, a millionaire's son, pledged his financial assets toward any settlement the diocese might have to make because of him. But years later, when the diocese settled the lawsuit, he paid nothing.

There were loose ends Delaney didn't tie up in 1988. For instance, he spoke with Page, the Worcester monsignor, who told him Teczar had "not only one incident but others," according to Delaney's notes.

Page didn't go into what those incidents were, Delaney said in his deposition.

"He just said that they were -- nothing had ever been proved, nothing was clear, but that there were some suspicions about his commitment to celibacy in the past," Delaney said in his deposition. Delaney didn't ask for any details. But only two years before, Page had described Teczar's past in greater detail for the bishop of Norwich, citing the "trail of damaged youngsters" the priest had left behind.

Delaney also called an old friend of his, the Rev. Michael Jamail, a psychologist, and asked his advice. Jamail reasoned that if Teczar was emotionally immature, as Skidmore had indicated, Teczar's sexual acting out with children didn't mean that he was "acting as a pedophile," according to Delaney's notes.

"If he has matured (as the counselor stresses), then he will relate to adults in every way, including sexually, and not find the young so attractive," Delaney wrote.

And if he had not matured? Delaney's notes don't reflect whether he asked that question.

On July 13, 1988, Delaney wrote to Worcester Bishop Timothy Harrington: "Having thought the matter over and prayed over it, I am now writing to tell you that I am willing to give Father Teczar an opportunity to get back into active ministry, fully aware of the possible risks that may be involved."

Years later, in his deposition, Delaney said he meant the risk of bad publicity from the Maciorowski incident.

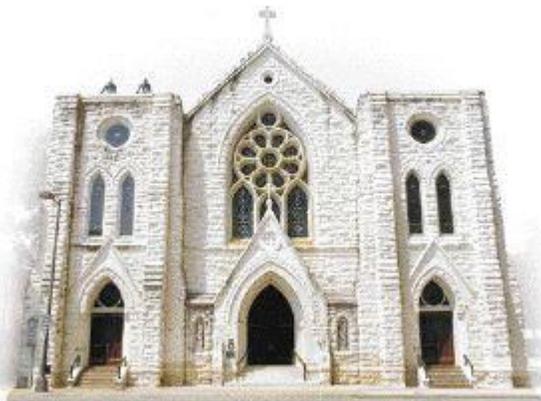
"At that time, he seemed to be safe," Delaney said in an interview last month. "And a good minister."

But others did not share Delaney's confidence. On Sept. 13, 1988, a Worcester Diocese attorney urged Harrington to require Fort Worth to take legal responsibility for Teczar to "lessen the potential for future liability."

Delaney saw the attorney's letter, but was willing to take a chance.

He wrote to Harrington in October 1988, saying that he did not have concerns "about Tom's past problem."

"If I had any fear that that problem would ever arise again I could not and would not accept him at all for any length of time. Instead, I am confident that he will be able to give effective priestly service in the future in spite of the past difficulty."



St. Patrick cathedral in Fort Worth

By then, the priest had already worked at St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth, where he served for eight weeks. Beginning in September 1988, he served for a year as an associate pastor at St. Michael Catholic Church in Bedford, Teczar said.

Delaney's 1988 files note that Teczar should be supervised during his time in pastoral ministry. In his deposition, Delaney said such supervision is typical for new priests.

In August 1989, with what must have been growing confidence in the priest, Delaney sent Teczar to lead the tiny parishes in Ranger, Strawn, Cisco and Eastland. He sent no one to supervise him.

In an Oct. 4, 1989, letter, he told Teczar that he had suggested a mentor for him but that the priest would not report to Delaney or anyone else about Teczar's activities.

"There was no need or call for it," Teczar said in an interview.

Though the bishop did not know it yet, Teczar would be coming back for visits to Bedford.

A new setting

"He admitted it was inappropriate."

-- Delaney's notes, January 1991, after learning of Teczar's visits to two young men in Bedford.

Teczar didn't like the barrenness of Eastland County, though he said he did like the people. In Ranger, he drove his dark blue Mercedes past rusted street signs and clumps of cactuses -- but would often head back to his family's 10-bedroom house on Cape Cod with its 105 feet of private beach, said Ernitz, Teczar's sister.

He had wild parties there, she said.

"They had grand old times," she said.



Teczar home on Cape Cod

Teczar said he threw parties, but they weren't wild.

Teczar told Delaney he was unhappy. "I can walk in these Texas boots, but the fit is not comfortable," he told the bishop, according to a deposition given by Teczar.

But to the parishioners in the small town of less than 2,500 people, Teczar was kind and generous. He bought ornate candelabras, an expensive altar cloth and a refrigerator for St. Rita's, a congregant said.

No one in the town knew -- and Delaney did not tell them -- that Teczar had been suspended from his diocese in Massachusetts after a 15-year-old boy accused him of sexual misconduct.

Delaney didn't tell anyone that the Maciorowski family had discovered that Teczar was back in ministry in Texas, or that in January 1990 the family was demanding that the priest be removed. Delaney dismissed a letter from the family as "overwrought and overwritten," he said in a deposition. He never contacted the family, Norma Maciorowski said.

Following the Maciorowskis' complaint, Harrington, the Worcester bishop, wanted Teczar removed, too. He wrote a letter to Delaney in February 1990 informing him that Teczar no longer had his approval to function as a priest.

But Delaney had the authority to keep Teczar working in the Fort Worth Diocese, and he did so.

By October 1990, Massachusetts prosecutors were pursuing a charge of providing alcohol to a minor against Teczar, but they dropped a charge of sexual abuse.

On Oct. 11, 1990, as part of the court case, Delaney wrote a letter to Teczar's attorney, stating, "He is not working with young people in his present assignment." At the time, Teczar was heading churches with at least eight altar boys in Ranger, Cisco, Strawn and Eastland, according to his deposition.

Delaney also wrote that Teczar had begun a new phase of his life, fully intending "to avoid even the appearance of anything untoward in the future."

About three months later, on Jan. 15, 1991, Teczar returned to Worcester, where he pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges of contributing to the delinquency of a minor and furnishing alcohol to a minor. He was fined \$375, according to court records.

Ten days later, Delaney called Teczar to the chancellery in downtown Fort Worth to discuss a new problem.

Delaney had learned that Teczar was driving 90 miles -- it isn't clear how often -- from his new assignment in Ranger to visit two young men in Bedford, where he had served in 1988 and 1989.

Delaney requested that Teczar no longer socialize with anyone under age 25, according to the bishop's handwritten notes. Teczar agreed that the requirement was necessary, but it would be like "walking on eggs," he told Delaney.

Teczar said in an interview that he has no recollection of the Bedford men.

In a deposition, Delaney said he believed the priest would keep his word.

The meeting ended, Teczar returned to Ranger, unsupervised. For the next three years, he took advantage.

Painful memories

"I warned T [Teczar] he had an obligation to report the sex abuse."

-- Delaney's notes following a March 18, 1993, conversation with Teczar.

John Doe has had the dream many times. He holds a 12-gauge shotgun, pointed at Daniel Hawley.

In Ranger, Hawley had raped John over a period of more than two years, beginning in 1990, when John was about 12.

His more violent dreams involve Teczar.

John Doe, a former truck driver, is now 27 and lives in Abilene. He believes the Fort Worth Diocese protected Teczar, even as police were asking for the church's help to investigate him.

In St. Rita's rectory, Teczar's personal possessions included a vibrator and a camera.

It was there that Teczar had sex with John's abuser, Hawley, and another man, DeWilliam Bixler. He photographed both men naked, according to a statement Hawley gave police.

Teczar said he did not take the photograph. But he looked through Hawley's stack of Polaroids of naked, vulnerable boys from Ranger.

Hawley offered Teczar more than photos. He and Bixler were by then raping as many as seven boys, according to police reports. Two girls may also have been molested, according to police reports. The children were ages 7 or 8 to 16.

Hawley offered to bring a minor to Teczar's house, according to a letter Hawley wrote. Merritt said he wrote the letter at the request of the diocese. "Thomas Teczar stated 'It's tempting but no! I've been through therapy and I just couldn't do it.' He advised me to stop messing with young boys," the letter said.

Teczar said he knew Hawley and Bixler were abusing children, but did not report it to police.

"I didn't know I had an obligation to do that," Teczar said in an interview last month.



Teczar in an undated photo

By January 1993, police had begun investigating Hawley and Bixler. When Teczar found out, he finally took action.

He went to Hawley's house in Ranger and warned him to "get rid of" the Polaroids he had taken of his victims, Teczar said. Hawley said in a statement to police that he burned two photos of boys, including one of John Doe.

More than a decade later, Teczar defends his actions.

"At the time, there were no charges against Daniel whatsoever," Teczar said in a recent interview. "I had no proof that the police were coming."

In August 1993, Hawley admitted what he had done and pleaded guilty to aggravated sexual assault. He received a 35-year prison sentence. In January 1994, Bixler was sentenced to 34 years in prison.

By March 1993, White, the sheriff, was suspicious that Teczar might be involved, too. White, who knew nothing of Teczar's past, called the Fort Worth Diocese at least three times during his investigation and left messages asking for help.

His last call was placed after Teczar refused to testify before an Eastland County grand jury on March 17, 1993.

Leslie Vance, the former Eastland County district attorney, said in an interview he believes the diocese hampered the investigation.

"We expected the church to respond to our request for help in running down leads that involved possible sexual abuse of children," Vance said in a deposition. "And we could not understand why that was a problem."

Delaney said in an interview last month that he was unaware of attempts by law enforcement officers to contact him.

"Neither I nor anybody I talked to at the Catholic Center has any recollection" of a call, he said. "Certainly nothing ever came in the mail. It came as a complete surprise to us that they're saying that. We never heard from them, as far as I know, at all."

But Teczar had already hired two attorneys, and he met with them and Delaney at the Fort Worth chancellery on March 18, 1993, according to a note Delaney put in the Confidential Files.

In the meeting, Delaney learned that White and Vance were suspicious that Teczar was involved in pedophilia with Hawley and Bixler.

Delaney said the attorneys made him feel uneasy.

"There was a lot I didn't want to know at that point," he said.

Teczar's attorneys were the ones who said he needed to get out of the diocese, Delaney said.

"I don't remember very much. It was a huge surprise. They came up to see me," Delaney said in a recent interview. "They did most of the talking and spun this whole thing."

In his notes, Delaney wrote that Teczar "will have to devise something to tell the parish."

In an interview last month, when Delaney was asked why he didn't direct Teczar to tell parishioners the truth, the bishop answered, "To what end?"

In 2002, John Doe filed a complaint with the Texas Rangers alleging that Teczar had joined in the abuse against him. In April of this year, the diocese agreed to pay him \$2.75 million to settle his lawsuit. Most of the money is set aside in a trust to pay for expenses such as counseling, Merritt said.

Teczar said that he never met his accuser and that the criminal case was filed to bolster the man's claims for money. Teczar said he is accused, for instance, of abusing the boy in a plane with Hawley. But Teczar said he never flew a plane or had a pilot's license.

John Doe said he came forward after he was contacted by Lewcon, the Massachusetts man who says he was victimized by Teczar in 1971 when he was 16. Lewcon said he found John Doe by contacting people in Ranger after finding out that Teczar had worked there.

John Doe said Lewcon "told me that Teczar was still loose."

"Then, I found the strength to call the authorities about Teczar to make sure he didn't hurt any other child," he said.

In recurring dreams, John Doe shoots Hawley. He dreams of running Teczar down in an 18-wheeler.

"We're talking about driving over him, running over him, running over him, you have 18 tires, just trickling over him, one at a time," he said in a deposition.

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"I feel bitter that you should have taken him in and put him out here where there was nobody to watch over him."

-- A Feb. 15, 1994, letter to Delaney from a Strawn man, now deceased, concerning Teczar being moved to Ranger.

The mechanic was in his mid-30s, unmarried, and had a bachelor's degree in history, according to notes Delaney took when he met with him in 1994.

In the 1990s, the man lived in Strawn, one of the parishes served by Teczar. In February 1994, he wrote to Delaney saying he was angry at the bishop because he allowed Teczar to lead the church unsupervised.

Teczar "tried to kiss me twice, suggested 'we get closer.' He even asked me to spend the night with him. When I tried to explain to him that I am a conservative Catholic, he sidestepped the issue by saying that God does not care who we get naked with as long as we love them."

Teczar also took the man's confession, then used his words as leverage when trying to solicit sex from him in 1990, according to Delaney's notes.

The man, now deceased, told Delaney he was terrified of going to confession, Delaney wrote in his notes from his Feb. 7, 1994, meeting with the man.

Teczar said he made no sexual advances toward the man.

"He might have misconstrued some of the things that I said," Teczar said.

Delaney told him Teczar was no longer in ministry. He also wrote the man in March 1994, telling him, "Yours is the only incident that has come to my attention" involving Teczar.

The bishop didn't disclose any other information about Teczar, such as the incident with the 15-year-old boy in Massachusetts.

Delaney agreed to pay for the man's counseling. He then wrote to Teczar, saying that the man's complaint "rings all too true."

"Personally, I feel betrayed by you," Delaney wrote in 1994 to Teczar, who had moved back to Massachusetts after leaving the Fort Worth Diocese.

Teczar continues to receive monthly benefits and health insurance from the Worcester Diocese. He lives in a \$92,000 house in Dudley, Mass., on money he inherited, he said.

Further revelations came in 1996, when Lewcon, who later founded a Massachusetts chapter of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, filed a lawsuit against Teczar and the Worcester Diocese.

"The only thing I can tell you is he lost his civil suit against me," Teczar said.

But court records show that a Worcester Superior Court jury found that Teczar committed "reckless infliction of emotional distress" upon Lewcon.

Lewcon and his attorney, Laurence Hardoon of Boston, said the jury awarded Lewcon no money because it felt other issues unrelated to Teczar had caused some of his suffering.

Lewcon said he had earlier settled the part of the case against the Worcester Diocese for \$110,000.

By filing his lawsuit, Lewcon brought Teczar's past to public attention in Fort Worth. In a 1998 interview about the suit, Delaney told the Star-Telegram: "I am told that the bishop in Worcester wrote letters to other bishops detailing Father Teczar's history. But I did not get that information."

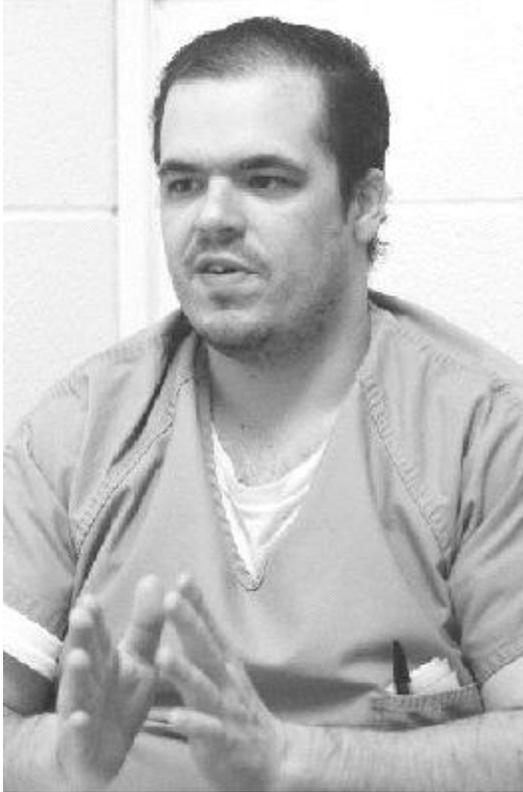
Bishop is blamed

"Your complaint against him is the first that I know of that involves misconduct with a minor."

-- Delaney letter to Wade Driskill, July 2002.

Wade Driskill started getting into trouble with the law just after his sexual abuse ended in 1992, Merritt said.

After that, Driskill always drank too much. He led a promiscuous life, sleeping with one woman after another.



Wade Driskill

Driskill is 29. He sees irony, he says, in the fact that he is in jail while Teczar is a free man.

Driskill, an electrician, alleged in his lawsuit against the Fort Worth Diocese that Teczar sexually abused him from 1990, when he was about 14, until 1992. About \$350,000 from his \$1.4 million settlement with the Fort Worth Diocese has been set aside for his counseling, he said.

He is in jail for forgery. But he does not blame his criminal acts on Teczar.

Teczar said he knew Driskill from a local convenience store but didn't abuse him.

Driskill and John Doe said their years of suffering could have been prevented if Delaney had heeded the many warnings and refused to hire Teczar. They also said the diocese covered for the priest after he left by misleading them and others.

Driskill was in jail in Dallas when he wrote his first letter to Delaney in 2002, asking for help with counseling.

Delaney wrote a response similar to the one he gave the Strawn man eight years earlier: "Your complaint against him is the first that I know of that involves misconduct with a minor."

Again, the bishop didn't disclose information about Teczar's past problems.

Driskill is still angry about the letter.

"Bishop Delaney has lied about everything," he said. "It's like a slap in the face when he preaches on accountability yet he can't stand up and say 'I made a mistake, I erred, I was wrong, and I'm sorry.' "

Driskill is also angry about a statement the diocese released to the press April 7 following the \$4.1 million settlement of his and John Doe's lawsuit. The statement said, "At the time that Thomas Teczar came to the diocese there were no allegations of sexual misconduct against him."

Driskill said the statement contradicts Delaney's depositions and letters about the 1984 Maciorowski incident.

"All the evidence in this case points otherwise," Driskill said. "Bishop Delaney gave a deposition saying that he was aware of allegations against Teczar."

He said parishioners should demand answers from Delaney.

"It took a lot of donations to pay out \$4 million," he said. "To me, they have the right to know, the right to hold him accountable and find out the truth."

Delaney said he made the best judgments he could with the information he had in hiring Teczar. And he said the matter belongs in the past.

Delaney met with Driskill in August 2002 and, according to his notes from the meeting, "expressed my regret at the abuse he suffered from" Teczar. The April 7 statement also expressed Delaney's regret about any abuse that may have occurred.

But in an interview last month, Delaney bristled when told the two men consider him a liar. He said he suspects Driskill and John Doe were both lying for money. The diocese settled the lawsuit to avoid paying millions more in legal fees, he said.

The settlement was paid from the diocese's funds and by insurance. In agreeing to the settlement, the diocese admitted no wrongdoing. Teczar's Worcester Diocese, which was also sued, paid nothing to Driskill and John Doe.

Delaney said his attitude about priests who have abused minors has been consistent.

"I'm certainly not going to tolerate any priest who is sexually abusive of minors or sexually active in a way that is impossible for a priest," he said.

"They can't function in the diocese," he said. "And maybe in a very few cases when we found out something was happening, I think it was only in two cases, they were removed from the diocese."

Eight priests have been accused of sexual abuse in the diocese since 1969. The names of three of the priests, including Teczar, have been made public. The diocese has refused to release the others' names.

Delaney said he hopes Teczar's time in the diocese will not be a part of his legacy. But he said he has not lied to anyone, including the two men with whom the diocese settled lawsuits.

"They've got money now, so they can just do mischief," Delaney said. "How long are we going to put up with it? What happened in 1992 is something we didn't know about. I didn't know until 2000. I knew nothing about it. And now they're talking ... about me having lied to them. It's very discouraging to have this dragging on and on, and, I think, very unfair."

Timeline of troubled ministry

1967: Ordained in the Worcester, Mass., Diocese.

1985: Placed on leave of absence from the Worcester Diocese after providing wine to a 15-year-old boy, who accused Teczar of sexually assaulting him.

1988: Begins work in the Fort Worth Diocese.

1991: Convicted in Worcester of contributing to the delinquency of a minor and furnishing alcohol to a minor.

1993: Resigns from St. Rita Catholic Church in Ranger as police investigate sexual abuse of children.

1996: Sued by a Massachusetts man claiming sexual abuse.

2002: Sued by a second Massachusetts man claiming sexual abuse.

2003: Indicted on three counts of aggravated sexual assault and one count of indecency with a child in Eastland County, based on a criminal complaint by a man now living in Abilene. The Abilene man and Wade Driskill sue Teczar and the Fort Worth Diocese. Sued by a third Massachusetts man claiming sexual abuse.

2005: The Fort Worth Diocese agrees to pay \$4.1 million to settle the lawsuit by Driskill and the Abilene man.

About this project

The Star-Telegram spent more than six weeks examining hundreds of documents and depositions that were part of a 2003 lawsuit filed against the Fort Worth Roman Catholic Diocese, along with previous lawsuits filed against the Rev. Thomas Teczar. Many of the records and depositions were obtained from Dallas attorney Tahira Khan Merritt, who represented John Doe II.



Tahira Khan Merritt

Other information was obtained from the Fort Worth Diocese, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Massachusetts courts and more than a dozen interviews.