

# Letter explains ex-priest's murder

William T. Clew/CNS

WORCESTER, Mass. — A letter to the Worcester diocesan newspaper — purportedly written by the man accused of the Aug. 23 slaying of John J. Geoghan at Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center in Shirley — claimed the killing was meant to show the world that child predators must be dealt with more stringently.

The writer, who identified himself as Joseph L. Druce, told *The Catholic Free Press* that sex offenders he had overheard in prison never showed remorse, but rather have gloated and reminisced over past victims. "That was my motivation," the letter writer said.

The writer also expressed sorrow and sent "sincere and heartfelt apology" to Catherine Geoghan, sister of

the deceased, for her loss, although he noted she would probably not forgive him.

To mail correspondence from the correctional center, a prisoner must give the letter to a corrections officer, who verifies that the name on the letter is the same as that of the prisoner handing in the letter for mailing, according to Justin L. Latini, director of public affairs for the Massachusetts Department of Correction.

Prison and Department of Correction officials said the identifying numbers listed on the letter and envelope in which it was mailed corresponded to those of Druce at the correctional center.

Latini said it is reasonable to assume that the letter is from Druce.

The letter writer said he was the victim of sexual abuse as a child, and

that he was writing to *The Catholic Free Press* for several reasons.

To stop violence toward children, people must demand the enactment of stringent sentences and rehabilitation for abusers, the writer stated. "Joseph Druce says 'Leave the children alone!'" it said.

The writer also noted that Geoghan's murder was intended to let the world know that child predators must be dealt with more stringently.

"Let's look at the crime and not the church," the letter said.

The letter is signed: "Regretfully but sincerely, Joseph L. Druce"

Prison authorities said Geoghan, 68, was bound, beaten and strangled to death in his cell by Druce, who is serving a life sentence for the 1988 murder of a homosexual man. The attack on Geoghan occurred in the protective custody unit of the maxi-

mum-security prison.

District Attorney John J. Conte said Druce planned the attack for more than a month and apparently acted alone. He said Druce, a reputed racist and a member of the neo-Nazi Aryan Nation, has "a long-standing phobia, it appears, toward homosexuals of any kind." He said Druce appeared proud of what he had done and "looked upon Geoghan as a prize."

Geoghan, a former priest in the Archdiocese of Boston, was in the second year of a nine- to 10-year prison sentence for fondling a 10-year-old boy in a swimming pool in the early 1990s. He faced trial on charges involving a 12-year-old boy and had been accused in civil lawsuits of sexual misconduct, from indecent exposure to rape, with nearly 150 minors, mostly boys.



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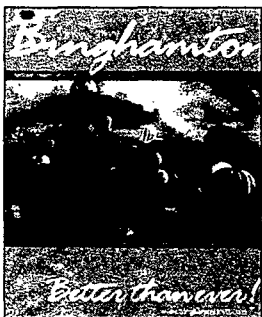


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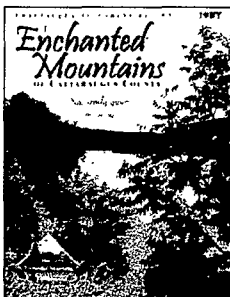
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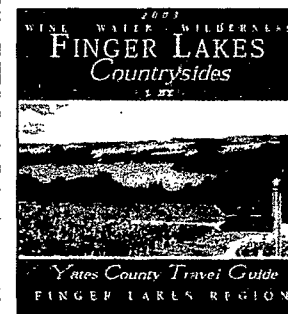
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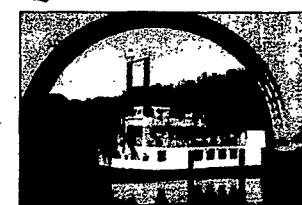
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