

I was 17 years old when I came to Franciscan University as a freshman in 2006. It was the first time I had left where I grew up, came to a new state, knowing absolutely no one, confused about the world, searching for a home and a place to finally feel safe, and carrying the hidden scars and trauma of abuse I had suffered for most of my life at the hands of my own father. I was damaged, had a past, and was completely alone. When I met the defendant within the first month of arriving on campus, he was not just a man, a professor, a mentor or a trusted adult. He was a priest. A friar. The one you are taught to trust because of the collar or the habit. The one you are taught is safe. The one you are taught will protect you. The one you are taught represents God, speaks for God and will only do that which brings you closer to God. The one who holds a powerful level of authority over your life that you feel comfort in because you never imagine the priest being the one who will abuse that power and authority. The friars are the ones you can turn to. The friars are there when you need guidance, protection and safety. I called him Father, because the friars are there as fathers, especially for kids like me who were desperate for a father and desperate to be loved as a child. I kept telling myself those ideas and beliefs were true.

At the end of my sophomore year, two adults in my life who were more like parents, died very close together and very unexpectedly. My whole world turned upside down. Fr. Morrier responded that I was now an orphan. He called me his daughter. He called himself my spiritual father. He told me he loved me. He rapidly gained my trust to the point where I disclosed my deepest secrets and heaviest shame to him. I eventually reached a level of trust with him where I felt safe enough to finally share the memories of my father abusing me that were surfacing. I believed him when he told me I could trust him. I believed him when he said he was a father to me and he loved me as a daughter. I believed him when he told me God wanted to heal me. I believe him when he told me he could help me. I believed him when he told me I was finally safe, seen, heard, loved and protected. I believed him because I called him Father.

I was horribly wrong.

What started as me finally feeling safe enough to begin to disclose the details of abuse by my father to someone I trusted with my life during my last semester of my senior year in 2010 turned into a three-year nightmare of physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, sacramental and sexual abuse.

Instead of being present, listening and providing support to me, my truth was woven into a dark narrative of Satanic Ritual Abuse that I was forced to accept under threat of his abandonment and through hours of gaslighting by him and by a "specialist" I was taken off campus to see.

I was guilted and shamed into agreeing to stay for graduate school at Franciscan University because, as he said to me on my graduation day, "if you don't, it means that you are throwing away all of the energy and effort that I have put into caring for you. You need to stay to continue to receive the treatment you need."

That "treatment" was not mental health treatment.

Instead of receiving therapy to address my diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Alcoholism and Addiction, I endured upwards of 4-5 deliverance sessions, lasting 2-4 hours for the entirety of the summer of 2010 until I was told through "discernment by God" that I was possessed by 36 demons. That is when the Major Rite Exorcisms started in September of 2010. The only role therapy played was to keep me physically alive.

When exorcisms weren't enough, more deliverance sessions were done where adult men restrained me physically in a chair, or on the floor, with their hands, their arms, their legs, and at times, their whole body, while the other adults in the room forced prayer over me.

I was forced to repeat secrets about myself out loud to this group and if I refused, Fr. Morrier betrayed my confidence and trust and revealed them himself under the guise of "prayer," including graphic sexual details of abuses I had endured that read more like a pornographic novel. Some of these secrets revealed were only ever told in the sacrament of confession before it was spoken out loud by him to a room full of adults who barely knew me.

When I screamed and begged and cried for them to let go, the response was to hold me down tighter.

When I would experience severe panic attacks and couldn't breathe, the group was told the demons were manifesting and I was screamed at because it wasn't me, it was the "demon" that never existed.

When I fought against the men restraining me, holy water was sprayed at me to the point where it soaked through my clothing, holy oil was rubbed all over the body, a crucifix was shoved up my back or up my chest under my clothing.

I was called evil. I was accused of cooperating with the devil. I was accused of wasting their time. I was accused of not cooperating with God. I was accused of hurting them all.

In private, behind closed and covered doors in his office, in the basement of the Finnegan Fieldhouse in an old practicum room, and in the chapels alone, I was forced to endure his hands violating me because "this is what God revealed to me in prayer."

I was told, "if you are feeling uncomfortable, it's because of the demons reacting to the power of the priest's hands," not because what he was doing to me was criminal and sexually abusive.

Then it escalated to re-living the details of the sexual abuse by my biological father with Fr. Morrier through the crime of rape because that was how God revealed to him I would be healed. That was "the only way" and that this "method" was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit in prayer. That this was the only way I could experience the true love of a father. Saying no to him was rejecting the power of God and saying no to my salvation.

He told me that there was healing power and grace in the sacraments, but he brought his own perverted desires into what should have been sacred encounters with God. Instead of receiving God's forgiveness in confession, I was forced to relive the details of the very acts he committed against me, confessing them as if I was the one responsible for it all. Inside of the confessional, a place where an intimate encounter with God takes place, I was violated with his hands, his body and his abuse of his priestly authority in refusing to absolve me. The confessional became another place where my soul entered to die, over and over again.

Instead of receiving the Eucharist, those moments were used as a mechanism of spiritual torture, the Eucharist being nothing but a weapon of sexual violation, an object to reinforce how worthless I was, and to deprive me of a true intimate encounter with God.

The private masses in the oratory or in the chapel where his brothers gather to celebrate together are places where I was sexually violated in the context of the mass in order to "purify me" and make me

worthy to receive the Eucharist. The problem was, God always told him I wasn't purified enough, God always told him I still was not worthy, so the process repeated, each time, all I did was beg God to finally make me worthy so it would stop.

This all took place simultaneously on a near weekly basis for almost three years and involved members of the Franciscan University staff, members of the Steubenville Catholic community, prominent figures known to the University community, other members of the clergy, and other students.

By the last year of the abuse, the spring of 2013, I couldn't breathe without his permission. If I did what he asked, I was accused of trying to hurt him and seduce him. If I disobeyed, I was accused of trying to manipulate him. If I fought him, I was wrong. If I agreed with him, I was wrong. If I followed his rules down to the smallest detail, I was wrong. When I tried to kill myself because I saw no other way out, I was accused of being ungrateful for the sacrifices that were made for me. When I did not follow through on killing myself, something he told me to do by saying, "God doesn't want the people in your life to suffer anymore because of you," I was accused of continuing the suffering he was experiencing because of me. Nothing I did at the end of that 3 year nightmare was right. Everything I did at the end was wrong, and the only response to being wrong was to abuse me more.

The fall semester after he was removed in 2013, and for two years following, I reported it to his superiors, some of the other friars, to Franciscan University administration and staff, and the cycle of those disclosures continued. I spent two years repeating the details of the abuse, pleading to be heard, and begging for someone to help me.

I believe it is important for myself, this court, and other individuals listening, to share the collection of responses I received for two years after each attempt at telling someone what happened to me.:

'I assure you we are taking care of it.'

"It's best if we keep this in therapy."

"Do you confirm or deny a consensual sexual relationship with Fr. Morrier?"

"Do you understand I'll have to remove him from his parish now?"

"God looks unkindly upon people who cause scandal."

"It seems like your problem is you're unwilling to forgive him."

"What about his reputation?"

"Are you sure this isn't just spiritual warfare?"

"Did you ever tell him no?"

"Have you even considered what this will do to him?"

"He sacrificed so much for you."

"Do you understand he'll never be allowed in public ministry again?"

"Gossip is a sin."

“I’m certain if I asked him, he’d have a completely different side of the story.”

“Are you taking responsibility for what you did to make this happen?”

“Have you sought forgiveness through confession for this?”

“You don’t need a lawyer, we already said we’ll take care of you.”

“He loved you.”

“If you are denying a consensual relationship then why are we here talking?”

“Do you understand the steps I need to take if you stick with what you are telling me?”

“How old were you, 22?”

“I don’t think you are remembering what happened correctly.”

“I’m sorry for the grievous misunderstanding that’s taken place here, I hope we can still be friends.”

“This will ruin him.”

‘Have you tried forgiving him?’

“You’re more dangerous to this campus; you should have been the one removed.”

“You should be ashamed of yourself.”

“You know, you need to forgive him because if you don’t, God will never forgive you.”

“If he had known he was hurting you, he never would have done it.”

“It will be bad for all of us if she gets a lawyer.”

“You don’t need to get a lawyer, we’ll help settle this.”

“We’d like to recommend a therapist who can help you come to understand the truth of what really happened here.”

I was told repeatedly he was removed from public ministry, told that meant he could no longer act, be represented, dress as, or be referred to or named as a priest in public. Yet I had to sit for years and watch him still be named in a ministry capacity on paper and referred to publicly as “Father.” The greatest insult to my repeatedly ignored and minimized abuse was the public announcement of his ordination anniversary, along with photographs of him celebrating mass, a photograph of him, and a message honoring his priestly sacrifice and years of dedicated ministry. A public honoring for the celebration of vows and an ordination he chose willingly to betray and break for over three years. I had to discover only during the course of this investigation that, while I was on campus being shamed, humiliated and coerced into silence, Fr. Morrier received a going away party from his parishioners with messages of “good luck at your new assignment” after I told the details, again, to his superior of the sexual abuse. While he took pictures with families and received tearful goodbyes that weekend, I was isolated and shamed by my own community. Only after his indictment became public was his existence with the University and the Third Order Regular Franciscans seemingly deleted from the internet to

cover the reputation of religious institutions and to create the outward appearance of full cooperation and follow through on what was told to me following a coerced financial exchange for my silence.

Years of my life, my education, my mental stability, my financial security, my professional career, my chance at normalcy, my sense of safety, my development of trust again in the world and in others, my dignity, my worth and my character were repeatedly and actively stolen from me by a priest, a Catholic community and two institutions who were more concerned about hiding the truth and protecting themselves than protecting me.

I left Franciscan University of Steubenville in August of 2016 terrified of the world, confused about the existence of God, questioning the intentions of every person coming into my life, and believing that I was worthless in the eyes of God, the Church and a community that I once had called home. It has taken a great deal of therapeutic work, with the ongoing support of spiritual direction, to be able to even walk through the doors of a Catholic Church again.

I have had pieces of myself taken from me from the moment the abuse started. I survived numerous red flags being ignored which could have prevented the abuse I endured from escalating as far, and lasting as long, as it did. I survived those in authority at the University, and the religious order, looking the other way when all of the signs of abuse were there. I survived constant and persistent gaslighting, minimizing, public shaming, victim-blaming, guilt trip, character assassination, threats, manipulation, coercion, betrayal, dismissiveness and a forced pay-off.

Because of the systematic betrayal and an ongoing, active cover-up by two institutions, a community and a man who claims to represent God and who claims to represent the Catholic Church, I have spent the last three and a half years having every detail of my life dissected, consenting to countless interviews, reliving the details of a horror that I continue to be haunted by, having every medical, financial, academic, student, personal and therapy file looked at; text messages, phone records, emails, journal entries, individual counseling session notes and letters read and questioned, while his personal information was protected at all cost. I had to sit in front of a room full of strangers, in a courtroom, under oath, answering questions about my life, my choices, my difficulties, my mental health, my shame and the graphic details of numerous incidents of sexual abuse.

I am in treatment for severe Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which takes an incredible physical and psychological toll on me daily. I experience crippling anxiety, nightmares, flashbacks, panic attacks, depression, dissociation, suicidal thoughts, difficulty sleeping and intrusive thoughts.

I've lost the last 12 years of my life to him, the Third Order Regular Franciscans and Franciscan University.

I lost a home and community. I've lost the natural ability to trust myself and to trust in others. I've lost significant relationships in my life, both relationships with members of the Franciscan University community and relationships of support throughout this investigation. I've been accused of being a liar, both by those individuals and institutions who sought every chance to destroy me and by those once closest to me. I've had to remain silent while my pain and trauma were shared, exposed and twisted. I have had to sit back idly and watch as my vulnerability has been used, abused and violated for others self-centered purposes.

I've carried around a destructive level of self-hatred, shame and guilt that was placed upon me for years and it bleeds into relationships with others, my relationship to the Catholic Church and with my relationship with God. To this day, I cannot turn to my own faith for comfort because it is intricately entwined with the trauma of the abuse I suffered. I have little foundation to create because the extremes of Catholicism that were used to justify abusive, violating and criminal behavior made normal Catholicism terrifying and traumatic. I can't turn to God because I am still working through my PTSD that tells me at times that God was my abuser.

On a very basic level, I will carry the financial impact of these crimes with me for the rest of my life. I finished at Franciscan University at the end of my senior year with an estimated \$80,000 in loan debt. I accumulated almost \$300,000 of additional loan debt during my last six years at the university finishing a graduate degree I did not choose, having to drop out of classes in each semester because of the abuse I was experiencing, and because I was forced into an inescapable total dependency on the school for a place to live, food to eat and basic survival. At the end of 2016, I owed close to \$400,000 of student loan debt, all from Franciscan University of Steubenville. With interest, debt from my undergraduate, and debt from my graduate degree combined today, I have accumulated a student loan debt over \$750,000. 90 percent of that debt is directly from my decade at Franciscan University. I work a full-time job, with a livable salary, yet I barely scrape by each month, often being forced to choose paying other bills to keep basic utilities on over food to eat because of the student loan payments I am responsible for after my 10 years at the University. I have been forced to continue to live in the same place I was horrifically violated in and remain in a community that all but turned its back on me because I financially cannot afford to leave. In contract, for the last 7 years, Fr. Morrier has had his every need taken care of, including a place to live, a roof over his head, a bed to sleep in, food to eat each day, psychiatric treatment and medical costs.

I never imagined when I agreed to walk into the Steubenville police station over three and a half years ago to disclose the details of the hell I lived through as a student under the care of Fr David Morrier the Province of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Third Order Regular Franciscans, and Franciscan University of Steubenville that I would be standing in this courtroom today. Justice did not come easy, or quickly, and came at an incredibly personal cost that words can never fully capture. But the reason that I am able to stand here today, alive, and have the courage to speak is because of one simple moment, it was the moment someone looked at me and said I believe you. And that belief echoed. It echoed through each encounter with the Diocese of Steubenville, who never hesitated to immediately do the right thing, to provide me with unwavering care, love and support throughout the criminal investigation from the very moment I came to them. It echoed through each encounter with every member of the team who worked to investigate the crimes that took place. It echoed throughout every step, every conversation, every encounter. Standing here today is what happens when victims are believed. Today is what truly supporting victims looks like. This is what happens when the concern I focused on justice, on healing and on what is right regardless of the consequences to reputations or outward appearances. This is what happens when the code of silence I destroyed.