



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Statutes of limitations that protect accused sexual perpetrator from prosecution is one of the reasons child sexual abuse continues to be an epidemic across the United States**

*Greenwood, IN* – On January 17, The Boston Globe newspaper reported that accused Paul R. Shanley will face prosecution for the charge of rape against a former altar boy who is now 24 years old. Both prosecutors and defense attorneys are preparing for examination of one the four people who came forward and accused Shanley of sexual abuse when they were children.

“This case and others that have been reported in the media about accused priests are bringing to light the irony of statute of limitations. For years, women sexually abused as children have never been able to seek justice for the crime committed against them as children because in the United States statutes of limitations prevent the prosecution of perpetrators. The statutes that protect perpetrators rather than allowing charges to be investigated and when substantiated, prosecuted also allow known perpetrators to continue to sexually abuse children. Sexual perpetrators can move from state to state and avoid prosecution or they can remain in one state and wait out the statute of limitations. The tragic irony is that the trauma of sexual abuse is so devastating to children and is such a secretive crime in the U.S. that adults who are at a stage of life to be able to finally report the sexual abuse committed against them find that the “law” protects the perpetrator from prosecution and prevents the victim from justice. The public needs to be informed about this barrier that places children at-risk every day in families and communities. Sexual perpetrators know they are protected by the law and it adds to their arrogance and the perpetration of the sexual abuse they commit toward children,” said Karen Duncan, national expert on child sexual abuse and the author of the new book, “Healing from the Trauma of Childhood Sexual Abuse: The Journey for Women.”

Duncan is also the creator of "The Right To Be Safe Program," a **new** adult education program for the prevention of child sexual abuse. The Right To Be Safe Program (RTBS®) is available free online at [www.healing4women.com](http://www.healing4women.com). It is also available via the Internet free of charge to individuals and organizations committed to the prevention of sexual abuse and violence to children and women. The Right To Be Safe Program was designed to teach adults how to prevent the type of traumatic crime that is being reported in the cases of priests, like Shanley in Middlesex, Massachusetts and others across the nation including:

- January 2005: A father is convicted of the sexual abuse and beating death of his 2 year old daughter in Galveston, Texas.
- January 2005: In Boston, Mass. a group of teens are charged with the November rape and sexual assault of a 17-year-old girl they knew from school.
- January 2005: Janay Jill Wilson, a Bay City, Calif. high school teacher accused of sexually assaulting a 16-year-old male student
- January 2005: A man residing as a boarder in Arapahoe County, Colorado is arrested for the sexual abuse of a 3 year old girl—he is also charged with failing to register as a convicted sex offender
- January 2005: A gymnastics coach is prosecuted for molesting more than a dozen young girls in Aurora, Illinois
- June 2004: A mother sentenced in Fulton County, Georgia for the rape of her 11 year old daughter by the mother 's boyfriend--his sexual abuse resulted in this 8 year old becoming pregnant
- June 2004: A convicted sex offender is charged with the rape of a 16 year old girl while both are employed at a McDonald's in Evansville, Indiana--she is suing McDonald's Corporation
- September 2004: Debra LaFave, teacher in Tampa, Fla. accused of sexually abusing a 14-year-old male student
- October 2004: A popular meteorologist in South Florida pleas guilty to soliciting sex with a 14 year old boy
- November 2004: A former juvenile probation officer in Concord, New Hampshire faces trial on 5 separate charges for the assault of a 10 year old girl
- November 2004: Walter Schirra, son of former Mercury astronaut, Walter Schirra, is arrested in San Francisco, California for child sex tourism—he was arrested prior to boarding a plane for Thailand where child sex trafficking flourishes unabashed

- December 2004: A convicted sex offender on probation in Minneapolis, Minnesota faces a 7 year prison sentence for child pornography
- December 2004: A mother and her boyfriend are charged with child rape in Gloucester, Massachusetts—the mother filmed the rape of her 8 year old daughter by the boyfriend and then posted it on the Internet
- December 2004: A Baptist Minister in Ohio is charged with sexual abuse of a 12 year old girl
- December 2004: In Lawrenceville, Georgia a man is sentenced to 45 years in prison for the sexual abuse over a three year period of a 13 year old girl—this convicted sex offender had hired a hit man to kill the girl to avoid his conviction
- December 2004: Youth Minister in Louisville, Kentucky charged with 16 counts of child sex abuse and sodomy

“The reports within the Catholic Church that has occurred over the past several years typify the epidemic our country faces because perpetrators are allowed access to children and when they are protected by the law against prosecution, the epidemic continues and increases,” said Duncan.

“Replacing existing laws and improving the procedures by which child sexual abuse cases are prosecuted needs to happen if we are truly going to prevent this traumatic crime. Otherwise, there are thousands of sexual perpetrators who are going to continue this crime against children and who will know they may never face prosecution as they create a whole new generation of victims,” said Duncan.

“We can be proactive and protect children better than we do today but it will take a concerted effort by parents, legislators, law enforcement and the media to prevent and stop this traumatic crime to children and teens,” said Duncan.

Karen A. Duncan, M.A., LSW, LMFT, is a licensed therapist, author, writer, clinical educator and speaker. Known for her advocacy work with women and children in the treatment and prevention of childhood sexual abuse, Duncan specializes in the development and delivery of gender-responsive programs to heal and further prevent the trauma of sexual abuse and family violence. She has conducted national workshops and presentations on victimization prevention, dissociation and trauma; women, trauma

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and substance abuse, evidence-based treatment of sexual abuse, and co-occurring disorders related to interpersonal violence. Duncan's approach is both practical and sensitive providing professionals with a valuable opportunity to learn new skills to approach the healing of sexual abuse; advocating for the screening of sexual abuse for women and children by healthcare providers; and establishing community awareness and prevention programs. She is a dynamic speaker and writer whose lectures and workshops are based on knowledge, research and clinical experience.

Educated at Ball State University and Elmhurst College, Duncan received her Master of Arts Degree in Clinical Psychology in 1980. She is licensed by the state of Indiana in social work and marriage and family therapy. She has served as Adjunct Faculty at Marian College and Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis in the departments of psychology and women studies. Duncan was awarded Diplomat status in the American Psychotherapy Association, and she is a member of the National Association of Social Workers, American Counseling Association, Association for Humanistic Psychology, Association for Women in Psychology, Jacobs Institute of Women's Health, and Mid-West Regional Network for Intervention with Sex Offenders.

Her recent book "Healing from the Trauma of Childhood Sexual Abuse: The Journey for Women" (Praeger, 2004) advocates for the prevention of sexual abuse within families, supports and encourages holistic healing, and discusses how women face a moral and legal challenge to expose perpetrators within their families when protected against prosecution by existing state statutes of limitation. Her recent articles include "Bully Abuse: How Children Harm Other Children" and "The Forgotten Victims: Women, Trauma and the Criminal Justice System" in *Counseling Today* a publication of the American Counseling Association. Duncan is the author of a comprehensive adult education program for the prevention of child sexual abuse entitled "The Right To Be Safe Program: Preventing Child Sexual Abuse" (RTBS®) which she offers free to parents, individuals and organizations committed to the prevention of child sexual abuse. RTBS® can be accessed at [www.theright2besafe.org](http://www.theright2besafe.org) or [www.healing4women.com](http://www.healing4women.com) and viewed by parents, physicians and nurses, educators, counselors, school social workers, caseworkers, probation officers and advocates. Duncan provides RTBS® organizational training for criminal justice systems,

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schools, clergy, social service agencies, prevention councils, mental health associations, parent organizations and healthcare services.

Duncan is based in Greenwood, Indiana where she is the founder of The Right To Be Safe, Inc. a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of sexual abuse and violence on behalf of women and children. Information about Duncan's upcoming speaking engagements can be found at [www.healing4women.com](http://www.healing4women.com).

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