

Prosecutors outline evidence in case against KC priest

| Jul. 10, 2012

KANSAS CITY, Mo. -- Federal prosecutors in a case against a priest charged with possession of child pornography outlined Monday some of the evidence they intend to present at the priest's August trial.

Among the material prosecutors said they will introduce in the trial of Fr. Shawn Ratigan is a long list of images of alleged "child erotica" in his possession, a web history that allegedly proves the priest accessed websites specializing in female child pornography, and web searches that allegedly show he was researching "spy" pens.

Altogether, the evidence will allegedly show that Ratigan's motive in his actions was "to indulge in and satisfy a sexual interest in female children," prosecutors write in their filing, which was first reported [by *The Kansas City Star* Monday](#). [1]

Ratigan, who had served as pastor of a local parish until his arrest in May, 2011, faces 13 federal counts of production and possession of child pornography.

His case made national headlines last fall when county prosecutors separately charged Bishop Robert Finn and his Kansas City-St. Joseph, Mo., diocese with individual counts of failure to report suspected child abuse regarding their oversight of the priest, which are criminal misdemeanors.

County prosecutors say both Finn and the diocese should have reported Ratigan to police as early as December 2010, when they acknowledge becoming aware of lewd images of children on his laptop.

Monday's filing, which is a routine move notifying Ratigan's defense attorney that prosecutors intend to introduce evidence of uncharged crimes and other "bad acts" at trial, lists in detail what evidence will be introduced, citing specific images by their file name and listing an entire folder containing images.

One of those folders, prosecutors write, is "apparently named" for one of the victims in the case, who is remaining anonymous. They also say they will use images which were "printed out by chancery personnel for perusal by Diocesan supervisors and Diocesan counsel."

Among other evidence they say they will introduce are searches from Ratigan's web history for "children in swimsuits, two-way mirrors, and a spy pen." They also say they will provide evidence that Ratigan accessed nine separate websites whose addresses clearly suggest an inappropriate interest in young girls.

Prosecutors also say they will introduce evidence of two separate instances in which Ratigan was found in possession of girls' underwear, allegedly in the summer of 2009 and the spring of 2010.

Other items prosecutors say they may produce at trial are an image of Ratigan "in his underwear" at one of the alleged victim's homes and evidence that the priest allegedly discarded or hid a removable electronic card from his phone after being taken into police custody in May 2011.

The federal trial against Ratigan is currently set to begin Aug. 27. The trial against Finn and the diocese, held in

Jackson County, Mo., is set for Sept. 24.

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