

# CARDINAL PELL PLEADS “NOT GUILTY”

Cardinal George Pell pleaded “not guilty” on May 1 to charges of sexual misconduct dating back decades ago. Though the majority of the charges against him were either thrown out or withdrawn, including the most serious accusations, Melbourne Magistrate Belinda Wallington said there was sufficient evidence to warrant a trial on some of the other charges.

We could see this coming.

Pell’s attorney, Robert Richter, argued that his client, the third-highest ranking Vatican official, is being targeted as the fall guy for crimes that other priests have committed. He attacked Pell’s accusers, saying, “Whether they are the product of fantasy or mental problems...or just pure invention...it’s in order to punish the representative of the Catholic Church in this country [Australia] for not stopping abuse by others.”

Richter said of the accusers that “Their complaints ought to be regarded as impossible and ought to be discharged without batting an eyelid.” He also stressed to the judge that Pell did not seek diplomatic immunity in the Holy See, and answered every question that the police asked.

Prior to the judge’s ruling, Bill Donohue noted that Wallington “is already on record noting the inconsistencies in the testimony of his [Pell’s] accusers, about which the prosecutor readily admits to as well. But both have indicated that any discrepancies could be sorted out in a trial, which suggests that the process will go forward.” Pell appeared in court on May 2 to learn of the details of the trial.

Sometime in the future—it could be a year or more—Cardinal Pell will appear before a jury on charges that he molested two

boys at a pool in Ballarat in the 1970s, and for forcing two boys to engage in a sex act with him in the 1990s in Melbourne's St. Patrick's Cathedral. Both cases are so contrived that only Church haters would be inclined to believe them.

The swimming pool incident involves horsing around with two boys, Lyndon Monument and Damian Dignan. Pell admits to tossing them in the air, but nothing else. They maintain that while he was tossing them he also managed to fondle them.

Did anyone see this? One witness came forward saying he had seen Pell playing with the boys, launching them in the air, but he never saw anything "untoward." Another witness, a woman who often took her daughter to the pool, said she never saw Pell do anything wrong.

Moreover, the court had previously heard that one of the accusers gave police a wholly different account from what he told others. This same person also confessed that he was having trouble remembering the exact placement of the cardinal's hand.

There is a reason why this accuser cannot remember exactly what happened: the alleged offense took place 40 years ago. Why did neither of the two boys say a word about this until a few years ago? And why have the media been so quiet about their identity? Here's what we know.

Monument was a big boozier, a drug addict, and a thug who beat and stalked his girlfriend. An ex-con, he was also arrested for burglary, assault, and making threats to kill. Dignan, who died earlier this year, also had a record of violence, and had been arrested for drunk driving. To top things off, both of them have made accusations against former teachers.

The St. Patrick's Cathedral incident involves two choir boys who are accusing Pell of making them perform oral sex on him after Mass two decades ago. The police investigated this

matter and found nothing to support it. One of the boys has since died, having overdosed on drugs. On two occasions, the boy's mother said her son admitted that Pell never abused him.

Father Charles Portelli, who assisted Pell during cathedral ceremonies, says that Pell was never alone, either before, during, or after Mass. "There was never an opportunity for the archbishop to be alone in the priest's sacristy." Maxwell Porter, who was sacristan at St. Patrick's at the time, agreed with this assessment. Rodney Dearing, a pastoral associate, testified that it would not be easy for Pell to reveal his genitals since his robes were not able to be parted in the middle or to the side. Moreover, he said, the robes were too heavy to be easily lifted to expose himself.

We have been following this case carefully for several years, and have no reason to doubt the veracity of Cardinal Pell.

Pell's morally challenged accusers, and their supporters, have never been interested in him, per se: He is a prominent surrogate for their real enemy—the Catholic Church. To be exact, Cardinal Pell is the whipping boy of the Church haters. That's what this witch-hunt has been about all along.