

THE CINCINNATI POST



SCRIPPS HOWARD

Charges dropped in case of priest stabbed in home

By **Kimball Perry**
Post staff reporter

Unable to get a priest to reveal how he wound up with a knife in his abdomen, Middletown prosecutors Wednesday dropped charges against Marcus Finefrock, a 25-year-old law school graduate who'd been arrested for the attack.

Middletown Prosecutor Bruce Fassler dropped a felonious assault charge against Finefrock, 25, who recently graduated from Capital University Law School.

The Rev. Chuch Mentrup, principal at Middletown's Bishop Fenwick High School, was a staff member at Alter High

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School in Kettering when Finefrock was a student there.

"We believe this is vindication. He was not guilty of any crime," said Finefrock attorney Clyde Bennett II.

Bennett wouldn't comment on:

■ **How** a knife got in to the abdomen of Rev. Mentrup. Police found the knife when they arrived at his Middletown home at 7:30 in the morning May 5;

■ **Why** police focused immediately on Finefrock as a suspect;

■ **Why** Bennett turned Finefrock over to police two days after the stabbing;

■ **Why** Finefrock and the priest were at the Argosy Casino in Lawrenceburg, Ind., together the night before the stabbing;

■ **The** relationship between the two men;

■ **Why** the priest told authorities he wouldn't cooperate with the investigation because he had heard the man's confession.

Mentrup's attorney, John Smith, said Wednesday that Mentrup would have attended Thursday's hearing but would not have testified against Finefrock.

Mentrup is offered broad protection under Ohio law if he chooses to maintain his silence, experts in canon law and lawyers in the case have said.

Canon law of the Catholic Church forbids a priest to reveal anything said in confession.

Bennett disagreed with reports that indicated the priest identified Finefrock as the one who stabbed him.

Rev. Mentrup underwent surgery following the stabbing and was hospitalized until May 10. He is now recuperating at an undisclosed loca-

tion.

Middletown Police Maj. Mike Bruck said police met with the prosecutor's office about the case.

"They (prosecutors) felt they wanted some more investigation done in the case and we withdrew the charges," Bruck said.

Bruck said police hope to complete the investigation in June. Finefrock could face charges in the future, Bruck said.

Bennett insisted that won't happen.

"They're not going to find any more evidence. This case is over," Bennett said.

Finefrock could have faced a prison sentence of two to eight years.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.