News

Former Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick wears a mask during arraignment at Dedham District

Former Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick wears a mask during arraignment at Dedham District Court in Dedham, Mass., Sept. 3, 2021. (CNS photo/David L Ryan, Pool via Reuters)



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Proceedings before a criminal trial involving former Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick will continue March 3 in Massachusetts, where he faces three counts of sexually assaulting a teenager in the 1970s.

A second pretrial hearing took place Dec. 21 to continue on to the next phase in March.

The hearing was preceded by one in October, following the former cardinal's arraignment in early September in Dedham District Court, where he pleaded not

guilty to the charges. Though he was present during the arraignment, McCarrick was not present during the pretrial hearings.

McCarrick was dismissed by the Vatican from the clerical state in 2019 following an investigation of accusations that he had abused multiple children early on in his career of more than 60 years as a cleric and had abused seminarians as a bishop in New Jersey.

Though he wasn't a priest in Massachusetts, state prosecutors have said the alleged abuses of the teenager first took place at a wedding reception in 1974 on the grounds of Wellesley College, just outside Boston, and continued over the years in different states.

Prior to the scheduled Massachusetts trial, McCarrick had not faced criminal charges for assaulting a minor. The state allows for a pause of the statute of limitations in criminal cases "when (the) defendant is not usually and publicly resident," says the website FindLaw.

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McCarrick, 91, has denied abusing anyone. In a 2019 interview with Slate magazine, he said: "I do not believe that I did the things that they accused me of."

In his resignation letter in 2018, he said he had "absolutely no recollection of this reported abuse, and believe in my innocence," but said he was "sorry for the pain the person who brought the charges has gone through, as well as for the scandal such charges cause our people."

In mid-July, a law firm with a history of legal complaints against the Catholic Church, filed a lawsuit against McCarrick and church entities, leveling a new accusation that McCarrick allegedly abused its new client when he was a boy at a beach house in Sea Girt, New Jersey, in the early 1980s.

The same firm is also representing a man in lawsuit, filed in November, saying McCarrick, as Archbishop of Newark, New Jersey, sexually abused him when he was seminarian.