

# ANOTHER “FORMER ALTAR BOY” STORY

Some young guy killed an old lady in Florida and on October 5, the Associated Press (AP) ran a story on it. Halfway through the story, we learn that the killer had a lousy upbringing and suffered from bouts of depression and other psychological maladies. This was helpful in understanding his violence. What we thought was bizarre was the characterization of him as a “former altar boy.” It appeared in the second paragraph.

This is the third time in the past few years that we have complained to AP about crime stories that gratuitously mention the former altar boy status of an accused thug. Our former complaints were answered in a letter and a phone call, and in both instances we were assured that there was no malicious intent and that such remarks would not be made again.

For the record, we have no reason to believe that malice is at work. But that doesn't mean that bigotry isn't. Prejudice can be so deep-seated that its sponsors often fail to realize their bigotry.

The AP reply to us this time gives us reason to believe that they, too, know that the problem runs deep. We hope they can exterminate this problem once and for all. AP is a big company so it's hard to root out some problems. But surely a better job can and must be done.