

# BBC CHIEF TESTIFIES BEFORE PARLIAMENT



This is the seventh installment of Bill Donohue's report on the BBC sexual abuse scandal and its implications for the *New York Times*:

George Entwistle, the new director-general of the BBC, told members of Parliament today that there was no cover-up of the Jimmy Savile scandal, and that no pressure was put on "Newsnight" editor Peter Rippon to cancel a documentary on Savile last December; Rippon has "stepped aside" from the BBC for his role in this matter. But not everyone is buying his account.

It is known that after working on a documentary to expose Savile's exploits, and finding many women who claimed to have been abused by the BBC icon, the documentary never aired. It is also known that the BBC was planning to air three tributes to Savile last Christmas. One influential member of Parliament, John Wittingdale, was skeptical of what Entwistle said, stating that the new BBC chief "was in the process of commissioning the most fulsome tributes to Jimmy Savile, which went out on the BBC over that Christmas, and I just find it very surprising that, having been told by the director of news, given a warning, he didn't think it appropriate at least to ask what the investigation was about."

Parliament members are also expressing disbelief that Entwistle's predecessor, Mark Thompson, who is slated to head the *New York Times* Company starting next month, knew nothing. P.D. James, the famous crime novelist, said the other day that "Thompson has dropped George Entwistle right in it by stepping down as the BBC's director-general when he did." James added

that "It seems everyone knew about Jimmy Savile." Everyone, apparently, but Thompson.

Just recently the head of the National Association for People Abused in Childhood, Esther Rantzen, admitted that she knew Savile had abused children, but never did anything about it. "We made him into the Jimmy Savile who was untouchable, who nobody could criticize." Now that Savile is dead, there is less justification for not telling the truth. Which is why Thompson is sure to be grilled by Parliament.