

# BEHIND THE “BLAME WOODSTOCK” CANARD

FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK

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Despite the multi-media universe we live in, the *New York Times* continues to shape the contemporary narrative on major stories. Indeed, many in the mainstream media (msm) are content to simply parrot their line. This happened recently again when the John Jay study was released: everywhere, it seemed, it was being reported that the study “blamed Woodstock” for the abuse scandal.

Laurie Goodstein’s news article of May 18 on the John Jay study got the ball rolling. “The ‘blame Woodstock’ explanation has been floated by bishops since the church was engulfed by scandal in the United States in 2002,” she wrote, “and by Pope Benedict XVI after it erupted in Europe in 2010.” But, of course, the bishops never invoked this terminology. Neither did the authors of the study. The jazzy term was invented by Goodstein. Then she had the audacity to attribute its origins to the bishops.

Why this appellation? To be sure, the 1969 Woodstock rock festival in upstate New York symbolized the worst of our society at the time—free sex and drugs. Therefore, by dropping the term “blame Woodstock” to describe how the scandal erupted, it suggests that miscreant priests were merely a product of the times. Indeed, in an editorial on this subject, the *Times* said the study cited “the sexual and social turmoil of the 1960s as a possible factor in priests’ crimes.” Then it got angry by claiming that “this is a rather bizarre stab at sociological rationalization.”

In the 1960s, one American city after another went up in

flames. Never once could the *New York Times* find it within itself to blame the rioters, and that is because those who took to the streets were black. What it said instead is that we must understand the “root causes” of the riots. In other words, not only did the *Times* seek to exculpate the rioters by citing social and cultural forces, it sought to shift responsibility to those who allegedly created the “root causes.” Which means they blamed whites.

However, when it comes to understanding the social milieu in which the abuse problem peaked, the same newspaper has nothing but contempt for “root cause” analysis: it wants everyone to know that the Catholic Church is alone responsible for the problem.

No social problem emerges in a vacuum, so it makes good sociological sense to discuss the cultural currents that were extant at the time. Those who seek to exonerate wrongdoers will, of course, allow explanations to facilitate justifications, but this is not true of those who simply seek to clarify the source of the problem. The John Jay study did not seek to exonerate anyone by citing the turmoil of the 1960s and 1970s, so the “blame Woodstock” accusation is a canard.

There is more going on here than just an attempt to negate the social and cultural environment in which the abuse problem took hold. What also bothers the *Times*, and by extension the msm, is the rap on the sexual revolution. They still think it was a glorious chapter in American history, so to cast aspersions on it is to invite a liberal backlash.

The champions of the sexual revolution cite the liberation of women and homosexuals as its greatest achievement. How sad. Yes, it is true that women and gays were liberated from traditional sexual mores, but what exactly did they win? The birth control pill came on the market in 1960, and it was supposed to decrease abortions and illegitimacy. Both have

since skyrocketed. And who are the net losers? Not men. Women have suffered the most.

No one ever heard of AIDS until 1981. If the sexual revolution liberated gays, why did they die in record numbers, and in excruciating pain? Let's face it—before they were liberated, they were relatively healthy. What kind of liberation is it that leaves an unprecedented number of its beneficiaries dead?

The liberal bastions of the academy and the media will have none of it. So what if illegitimacy has spiked? So what if 70 percent of all African-American births are out-of-wedlock? So what if herpes now infects a record number of young people, including half of all young black women? So what if depression among young women, white and black, is most acute among those who like to “hook up” with various guys? So what if a new wave of promiscuity among gays is leading to an increase in sexually transmitted diseases?

For those who share the vision of liberation as understood by the *New York Times*, all of these problems are regrettable, but none can discount, or in any way eviscerate, the good that has come from being emancipated. But was not liberation meant to be enjoyed, not endured?

No one in the Catholic Church is floating the “blame Woodstock” rationale for priestly misconduct. On the other hand, no one who understands anything about sociology fails to note how the onset of this problem coincides with the timeline of the sexual revolution. And no one whose head is not stuck in the time-warp of the 1960s fails to see how the sexual revolution savaged our society, coarsened our culture, and left many for dead.