

CARDINAL O'CONNOR MADE TARGET OF SLANDER

Polly Rothstein, president of the Westchester Coalition for Legal Abortion, has blamed John Cardinal O'Connor for the killing of the Buffalo abortionist, Dr. Barnett Slepian; she has also accused Protestant minister James Dobson for the doctor's death. "Without these leaders spewing hate, there would be no anti-abortion movements," she said. Rothstein then got specific, adding that although the New York Archbishop did not pull the trigger, "Cardinal O'Connor is accountable for these religious followers who do pull the trigger."

Catholic League president William Donohue took note of Rothstein's comment:

"Cardinal O'Connor is a public person and is therefore without the kind of legal protection that court rulings on libel provide for most Americans. But no one has a moral right to slander anyone, and this is certainly something that Polly Rothstein has done to the Cardinal. Indeed, the idea that Cardinal O'Connor is somehow responsible for the death of Dr. Slepian is the kind of charge that even under the 1964 Supreme Court ruling, *New York Times v. Sullivan*, would likely end in a loss for Ms. Rothstein should the New York Archbishop sue her for libel.

"Rev. Martin Luther King was a proponent of civil rights for African Americans and an advocate of non-violence. Cardinal O'Connor has championed the civil rights of the unborn and has always counseled against violence. Some in the civil rights movement resorted to violence, as some in the pro-life movement have, but just as no one in his right mind would blame Dr. King for the crazies supporting his cause, no one in his right mind would blame Cardinal O'Connor for the nuts supporting his.

“In his homily on Sunday, Cardinal O’Connor explicitly denounced the killing of Dr. Slepian. If Polly Rothstein has an ounce of decency in her, she will grant Cardinal O’Connor an apology for her rhetorical violence.”