

CARDINAL PELL AND BRETT KAVANAUGH; TWO DEFAMED CATHOLICS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the defamation of two prominent Catholics:

In some quarters, George Cardinal Pell and Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh are both seen as sexual predators, deserving of imprisonment and impeachment, respectively. The Catholic League stands behind both the Australian cleric and the American judge: they have been maliciously defamed and are deserving of total exoneration.

Cardinal Pell has appealed his conviction of sexually abusing two choirboys to the Australian High Court. In a 2-1 decision rendered in August, the Court of Appeal in Victoria found Pell guilty as charged of abusing the boys after Sunday Mass while he was Archbishop of Melbourne in 1996 and 1997.

The dissenting judge, Justice Mark Weinberg, blasted the majority opinion in a lengthy statement. He noted that the entire case against Pell came from one person, and that his accusation was contradicted by more than 20 witnesses.

Last February, the Associated Press (AP) commented on the issue raised by Justice Weinberg. "More than 20 witnesses, including clerics, choristers and altar servers, testified during the trial. None recalled ever seeing the complainant and the other victim break from a procession of choristers, altar servers and clerics to go to the back room."

If not one person saw the boys break away from the procession, wouldn't this alone be reason to exonerate Pell? The AP story had more to say.

"The complainant testified that he and his friend had run from the procession and back into the cathedral through a side door to, as [Mark] Gibson, the prosecutor, said, 'have some fun.' Monsignor Charles Portelli...testified that he was always with Pell after Mass to help him disrobe in the sacristy." He maintains the charges are totally false.

It needs to be emphasized that the complainant's friend is dead, having overdosed on drugs. But before he died, he admitted to his mother, on two occasions, that he was never abused by Pell. If he was not abused, then neither was the complainant: they were allegedly abused at the same time and place.

Attempts to destroy Brett Kavanaugh failed last year when no one could corroborate the story of Christine Blasey Ford. She accused Kavanaugh of sexually assaulting her when she was in high school. Others who made similar charges also had their cases fall apart after failing to produce any evidence of wrongdoing.

Recently, the *New York Times* resurrected the charges when it allowed an opinion piece by two journalists to be published in its Sunday edition: they claimed that Kavanaugh sexually abused Harmon Joyce while at Yale. However, the paper has since apologized for running the story without notifying the reader that the alleged victim says she has no recollection of ever having been assaulted by Kavanaugh. In other words, what the paper left out was evidence that no crime was ever committed.

Mollie Hemingway and Carrie Severino are the authors of *Justice on Trial: The Kavanaugh Confirmation and the Future of the Supreme Court*. Here is some of what they learned about Ford, the alleged victim.

"Classmates were surprised by the media's portrayal of her as an ingénue, which was very different from how they remembered

her in junior high and high school. Female classmates and friends at area schools recalled a heavy drinker who was much more aggressive with boys than they were." Another one of her friends in college recalled that Ford was a drug user.

Ford said that her friend, Leland Keyser, was with her at the party where Kavanaugh allegedly molested her; Ford said she ran out of the house after the incident happened. Hemingway and Severino spoke to Ford's friends about this, and what they learned is worth repeating.

"It was inconceivable to them that she would have left Leland Keyser behind and that Keyser would not have found her abandonment to be highly noteworthy. She has always filled a protective role for Ford, so it seemed quite unlikely that she would not have become worried and made sure her friend was well. The story of a fifteen-year-old tenth-grader leaving behind the only other female at a party and then finding her way home, miles away, in pre-cell-phone 1982, with no car, no metro, and no cabs readily available is difficult to believe."

By the way, Keyser said of the *New York Times* article by the two journalists, "I don't have any confidence in the story." She previously told the press that she doesn't believe Ford's accusations against Kavanaugh, maintaining she has no recollection of ever being at any such party.

Why are Pell and Kavanaugh being hounded? There are so many vicious hard-left opponents of conservatism these days, many of whom work as activists and reporters, that it is considered perfectly acceptable, when dealing with men of their stature, to dismiss their presumption of innocence and their due process rights. That both Pell and Kavanaugh represent the traditional moral values associated with Catholicism makes them even bigger targets.

The haters are not willing to disagree—their goal is to destroy. Pell and Kavanaugh are hated because of what they

stand for. Their enemies will use every tool they have, including malicious lies, to bring them down. We are at a very sick stage in our country's history when such intellectual barbarism is now commonplace.