

# CHILD RAPE FILM IS SICKENING; FEDERAL PROBE REQUESTED

On January 18, Bill Donohue explained why he wants a federal investigation into the movie "Hounddog." His goal, he said, is to see if federal child pornography laws were violated during filming.

On January 22, the Sundance Film Festival featured the debut of a movie starring 12-year-old actress Dakota Fanning. *Premiere* magazine described the movie, "Hounddog," as featuring "a devastating rape by an older boy." Before it opened, others had also noted how coarse it was.

On January 16, Alan Colmes on "Hannity and Colmes" said, "In the film, 12-year-old Fanning plays a sexually promiscuous character who's physically abused by her father and eventually raped on screen in a violently graphic scene." Canada's *Globe and Mail* newspaper said Fanning's character "is violently raped and appears, at different times, either naked or in underpants." Other sources said it was uncertain whether a mutual masturbation scene featuring other minors would be shown.

"It is unclear whether federal child pornography statutes have been broken in the course of filming this movie," said Donohue. He added, "It matters not a whit whether Fanning's mother, along with Fanning's teacher/child welfare worker, gave their consent. What matters is whether they are an accessory to a crime."

Accordingly, Donohue asked Andrew Oosterbaan, Chief of the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section within the Department of Justice's Criminal Division, to investigate the matter. Federal statutes on child pornography define a minor as anyone younger than 18. Fanning is a pre-teen. Donohue also wrote to

First Lady Laura Bush requesting her assistance in this endeavor. That's because she was cited in the *New York Times*, along with the First Ladies from France, Russia and Egypt, as having recently met "to discuss the fight against child pornography and pedophilia."

"For the past five years," Donohue said, "there has been a steady drumbeat of criticism aimed at the Catholic Church for allowing sexual abuse of minors to continue with impunity." He continued by saying, "Much of that criticism was right on target. Let's see now whether Hollywood will be held to the same level of scrutiny for promoting simulated child rape movies."

We were delighted to learn that the Justice Department turned the case over to the FBI. Whether the law was broken is not known, but it will surely make others think twice the next time they seek to exploit children under the guise of entertainment.

After we pressed the issue, the media coverage exploded. In what is typical fashion, Donohue was attacked personally. The anti-Catholic messages and calls that we received were as voluminous as they were vicious.

Fortunately, the reviews of "Hounddog" were almost uniformly lousy. This, coupled with our protest, left the film's producer without a distributor. It was sickening nonetheless to read how dishonest those associated with the film became. They tried to pitch the movie as a good way to educate the public about child rape. But their motive was never therapeutic. They hoped to make a profit at the expense of the young girl.

The Sundance Film Festival brought out some real sickos. It even showed a film about a man having sex with a horse (a true-life story about a Seattle man a few years ago). The film, "Zoo," was deemed by Sundance judges as a "humanizing

look at the life and bizarre death of a seemingly normal Seattle family man who met his untimely death after an unusual encounter with a horse.” Donohue responded by saying, “To be blunt about it, the movie tries to sanitize the sick death of an obviously deranged Seattle pervert who perforated his colon after he molested a horse.”

The hypocrisy surrounding this story was truly amazing. Consider Kenneth Turin of the *Los Angeles Times*. He was unhappy with Mel Gibson’s “The Passion of the Christ” because of its “almost sadistic violence,” but he loved the bestiality in “Zoo,” calling it “an elegant, eerily lyrical film.” What he liked best was that it was “a poetic film about a forbidden subject.” But as we pointed out, it’s forbidden no more.

Donohue ended his remarks by offering the following: “I have only a few questions. Whatever happened to the horse? Did he survive this ordeal? Has PETA filed suit alleging his animal rights have been violated? And because the horse was an Arabian stallion, does this constitute a bias crime?”

***CNN’s “Showbiz Tonight,” January 22:***

**A.J. Hammer:** *“But Bill, you have not seen the movie and you don’t have the context for it. On the other hand, contextually, they are saying it actually calls attention to something that goes on every day.”*

**Bill Donohue:** “Why don’t we show it in health classes then? Is that what they’re doing now, as they’re running from the argument? Look, this is all about making a fast buck. They are exploiting this kid, and I think most Americans are on my side. You know, it’s like time out, enough is enough, leave the kids alone.”