

DISNEY/ABC RENEWS “O’NEALS”

Bill Donohue comments on the renewal of “The Real O’Neals”:



For weeks, we have been hearing how “The Real O’Neals” was “on the bubble,” meaning that no decision had been made to renew or cancel the show. Now ABC has made it official—the show has been renewed for the new season.

The “O’Neals” consistently performed poorly against its competitors on CBS (“NCIS”) and NBC (“The Voice”), though they are one-hour shows; it also consistently lost hundreds of thousands of viewers following the ABC half-hour show that preceded it, “Fresh Off the Boat.” But it drew a modest-size audience nonetheless.

The Catholic League’s objections to the show center less on its scripts—they have uniformly appealed to those with a juvenile sense of humor—than with the decision to base the show on the life of a morally destitute, and relentlessly anti-Catholic, man, Dan Savage (he is also an executive producer). It just goes to show, once again, what Hollywood thinks of practicing Catholics.

It must be noted, however, that our campaign has not been without effect: the scripts were rarely of a blatantly anti-Catholic nature, and Disney/ABC silenced Dan Savage. That they dumbed-down the content—fearful of provoking a backlash—is indisputable. It is equally clear that Savage was ordered not to engage me; we previously clashed on many occasions.

Whether the scripts next season will stoke anti-Catholic sentiment, or whether they will remove the gag order on

Savage, remains to be seen. If they do, we will gin up our efforts by attacking the Disney brand.

We are not walking away from this fight: Disney/ABC has shown its contempt for Catholics, and they will not escape with impunity.

Contact Disney/ABC chief: ben.sherwood@abc.com