

FEDERAL PROBE OF CHILD RAPE FILM NEEDED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue explains why he wants a federal investigation of the upcoming movie, "Hounddog," to see if federal child pornography laws were violated during the shootings:

"The Sundance Film Festival opens today, and on January 22 a film starring 12-year-old actress Dakota Fanning will debut. The movie, 'Hounddog,' is described in the current edition of *Premiere* magazine as featuring 'a devastating rape by an older boy.' On January 16, Allan 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* said today of Fanning, 'her character is violently raped and appears, at different times, either naked or in underpants.' Other sources say it is uncertain whether a mutual masturbation scene featuring other minors will be shown.

"It is unclear whether federal child pornography statutes have been broken in the course of filming this movie. 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, I am asking Andrew Oosterbaan, Chief of the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section within the Department of Justice's Criminal Division, to investigate this matter. Federal statutes on child pornography define a minor as anyone younger than 18; Fanning is a pre-teen. I am also writing to First Lady Laura Bush requesting her assistance in this endeavor. In today's *New York Times*, it says that Mrs. Bush, along with the First Ladies from France, Russia and Egypt, met yesterday 'to discuss the fight against child pornography and pedophilia.'

“For the past five years, there has been a steady drumbeat of criticism aimed at the Catholic Church for allowing sexual abuse of minors to continue with impunity. 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.”

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