

“FORMER ALTAR BOY” RETURNS

They never learn. Either that, or they don't want to learn. A teenager and his girl friend are charged with murder and he is identified as “a former altar boy.” That was the spin that the Associated Press, the *Bergen Record* and the *New York Post* put on the story about Christopher Vasquez. Vasquez is being tried for killing his drinking friend, Michael McMorrow, on May 23, 1997 in Central Park.

The league has tried repeatedly to get newspapers, and especially the prestigious wire service, Associated Press, to stop with such gratuitous remarks. In our most recent letter to AP, we asked what could be done, in concrete terms, to end this abuse. Declaring our opposition to sensitivity training workshops (they smack of “mind control,” we said), we offered the following suggestion: “If reporters simply asked themselves whether they would note that the accused was ‘formerly barmitzvahed,’ perhaps this would settle the issue.”

The league notes that although the *New York Times* made mention of the “former altar boy” status of Vasquez last year, it did not do so in its reporting this time.

We're still waiting to see a story that reads, “Former Altar Boy” cop saves lives, or words to that effect.