

League Responds to A&E – Again

On February 19 and 20, the Arts and Entertainment Network (A&E) broadcast “The Boys of St. Vincent,” a Canadian film about priestly pedophilia in a Catholic orphanage in Newfoundland. A&E was the only network which chose to air this chilling indictment of the Catholic clergy. On February 8, the League sent a letter to Brooke Bailey Johnson, the Vice President of Programming and Production, with whom it has corresponded in the past.

It is revealing that, despite the fact that the film was funded in part by the National Film Board of Canada, the Canadian courts initially held up the showing of “The Boys of St. Vincent” because it was so vile. And when the film came to America, not even the *Village Voice* missed the fact that the movie was “programmed to offend.” Indeed, A&E was the only network that agreed to air the film. Not even PBS would touch it.

When the League first communicated with Ms. Johnson in the fall of 1994, she defended the network saying A&E has “aired programming which could only be described as highly laudatory about the [Catholic] Church.” But a quick review of past programs aired by A&E proved quite the contrary. Of the five most recently aired programs dealing with the Catholic Church, only one, the “Biography of Pope John Paul II,” could be considered “laudatory.” The others, “Brides of Christ,” “Behind the Veil,” “Sex and the Church: A House Divided,” and now “The Boys of St. Vincent” could be called “unfavorable,” at best.

Clearly, a pattern seems to be emerging at A&E. The League posed a scenario to both Ms. Johnson and the media in a release sent out prior to the airing of “The Boys of St.

Vincent.” It read: “Consider this: a network airs successive programs about homosexuals that cast them in a bad light. It then airs a program that puts gays in a good light, only to be followed by another negative portrayal. Would you think there was reason in the gay community to wonder what was going on? More important, do you think any network-including A&E-would dare offend gays in such a manner?”

Where you can write:

Arts & Entertainment Network
235 East 45th St.
New York, NY 10017

Major Television Media Outlets I

Capital Cities/ABC Inc.

77 West 66th Street New York, NY 10023-6298 (212) 456-7777

CBS Inc.

51 West 52nd Street, 34th floor New York, NY 10019-6188 (212)
975-4321

Cable News Network (CNN)

Five Pennsylvania Plaza New York, NY 10001-1878 (212) 714-7800

FOX Television Network

1200 Sixth Avenue New York, NY 10036 (212) 556-2400

National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC)

Thirty Rockefeller Plaza New York, NY 10112-0035 (212)
664-4444

Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)

1320 Braddock Place Alexandria, VA 22314-1698 (703) 739-5000

(Include the program name on the front of the envelope when registering a complaint.)