

MARK LEVIN WAS RIPPED OFF

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Bill Donohue has long admired the erudition and courage of Mark Levin, the influential author and Fox News host. But his recent show featuring a so-called victims' advocate was a disaster. Quite frankly, he was ripped off.

On his August 24 show, Mark had as his guest Joey Piscitelli. He was identified as a leader for 20 years with Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP). He alleges that when Kamala Harris was the San Francisco district attorney she did not prosecute priests who were accused of sexually abusing minors (he claims to have been a victim).

He further contends that the district attorney whom she beat "in early 2004," Terence Hallinan (he is wrong—she beat him in 2003 and took over in 2004), was hot on the trail of the Archdiocese of San Francisco but Harris never followed up. He attributes her inaction to Archbishop William Levada, "the most powerful bishop in the United States."

Having closely followed this issue for decades, and having assisted in effectively busting SNAP (it is a shell of its former self, and even then it was not an organization), and having authored a book on this subject, [The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes](#), Bill Donohue is in a position to checkmate Piscitelli's account.

If Harris showed favoritism to the Catholic Church, we would need to know if she prosecuted other professionals who interact with minors. For example, did she prosecute public school teachers, or members of the clergy from other religions? This is important because most of the offenses

committed by priests occurred in the last century (mostly between 1965 and 1985). In education, the problem is ongoing. If Harris did not pursue teachers, why should she have pursued priests?

From Donohue's own research on this issue, subsequent to the publication of his book, he learned that Hallinan was able to secure Church documents on 40 former or current priests. It is important to note that in June 2003, approximately six months before Harris took over as D.A., the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a California law from 1994 that retroactively eliminated the statute of limitations for crimes involving the sexual abuse of minors.

Instead of asking why Harris did not pursue criminal cases against molesting priests—when the high court said such offenses were time barred—perhaps we should ask why Hallinan was so aggressive in singling out priests for prosecution, even using a grand jury to bring indictments. He was on a tear, seeking 75 years of Church documents.

Why would a D.A. want to spend his resources seeking to obtain the files on priests extending back to the 1920s? The *San Francisco Chronicle*, not exactly a Catholic-friendly source, labeled Hallinan's pursuit "a fishing expedition."

Where did Hallinan get the documents on the 40 priests? The archdiocese *voluntarily* turned them over in May 2002. By the way, lay employees were among the 40, and most of the priests were no doubt dead or out of ministry.

There is no question that San Francisco Archbishop Levada was seeking to protect the anonymity of accused priests. In doing so, he was doing what the leaders of every religious and secular institution do in these situations. Do the media open their books to the authorities on sexual abuse allegations? Do school administrators? Does Hollywood? In short, Levada was not an outlier, as Piscitelli suggests.

While serving as San Francisco District Attorney, Harris was asked why she would not make public those documents she possessed on priests. Linda Klee, her chief of administration and spokeswoman, told a reporter, "If we did it for you, we would have to do it for everybody. Where do you stop, and where do you start?"

Elliot Beckelman is a former prosecutor in the San Francisco District Attorney's Office who dealt with clergy sexual abuse cases.

He defends Harris' decision not to release Church documents. "I don't think a district attorney should float that out there if a person can't defend themselves. It's a very serious charge, a sex crime. The Catholics, like other minorities, feel picked upon, and I thought for the integrity of the investigation that we don't have running press conferences to make out that the Catholics are worse than the Jews—which I am—or worse than the Hindus. There's always a balance that comes to sexual assault investigations."

Beckelman does not exaggerate. SNAP has smeared the Catholic Church for decades. Its longtime leader, David Clohessy, was deposed in 2012 and shown to be a fraud. Five years later, after he was sued by an employee for accepting financial kickbacks and funneling money to SNAP via dummy organizations, he resigned. He was also shown to have more interest in sticking it to the Catholic Church than in doing anything constructive to help victims.

Clohessy admitted that there never was a SNAP office—he "worked" from home. It still has no office: its "staff" consists of persons with emails and a cell number.

Those who victimize minors are despicable. Ditto for those who exploit this issue for ideological and financial profit.