

MASTERS OF INTOLERANCE

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

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Why is it that the same people who boast of their open-mindedness tend to be the most close-minded of all? Do they not see how utterly hypocritical they are? My experience with those who work in places where liberals dominate—the artistic community, Hollywood, the media, education, and publishing—lead me to believe that they are the masters of intolerance. If I had any doubts, they were fully erased after recently encountering major players in the arts and Hollywood.

In 1989, Andres Serrano displayed a photo he had taken two years earlier of crucifix in a jar of his urine. For this magnificent contribution to “art,” he received \$15,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts. Which means you paid for it. When I learned that “Piss Christ” was coming to New York at the end of September for one month, I decided to stage a press conference outside the Edward Tyler Nahem gallery. I might have ignored it were it not for two things: the venue and the timing.

The gallery is located on 57th Street between 5th and 6th Avenues. For those not acquainted with New York, this is the most expensive rent district in the city, just two blocks from the Plaza Hotel, Central Park, and the high-end jewelry stores. In other words, this was not some dump in SoHo: it was the artistic establishment of New York sticking it to Christians. Cheering for them, of course, were other segments of the cultural elite, e.g., the *New York Times* fawned over it.

It was the political elites who made the timing of the exhibit so offensive. President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton were busy condemning an anti-Islam video that

they (erroneously) said sparked Muslim riots in the Middle East. When Todd Starnes of Fox News called the White House asking if there would be a statement condemning Serrano's anti-Christian art, he got no response.

So when Muslim sensibilities are offended, the cultural elites *and* the political elites are ever so sensitive: the former refuse to show any images that might offend Muslims, and the latter condemn them. But when it comes to anti-Christian fare, the cultural elites celebrate it and the political elites refuse to condemn it. Indeed, in an article that described the anti-Islam video, the *New York Times* did not show a still from the film, but it did show a picture of the dung-on-the-Virgin Mary "art" that was shown at the Brooklyn Museum of Art in 1999! None of this is by accident.

Those who hailed the Serrano gimmick were not too pleased with my "art." At a press conference, I showed up with a bobblehead of Obama sitting in a jar of faux feces (it was actually brown Play-Doh); I even took my *magnum opus* on the Lou Dobbs show. Why? If Serrano got \$15,000 back in the 1980s for his "art," my contribution should be worth about \$50,000 today, correcting for inflation. I wanted to ask Serrano (he was present at the exhibit) if he would help me write a grant, but the gallery goons wouldn't let me in to see his masterpiece.

The gallery not only censored me, they lied about me. A spokeswoman for the gallery told Sharon Otterman of the *New York Times* that (a) the police showed up after they were summoned (b) 30 or so protesters barged into the building, and (c) Serrano confronted me to discuss the controversy but I balked. It was all a lie.

There were no police there. None. Otterman confirmed my account by calling the police: the only cops who showed up came *after* we left, and they did not come at the behest of the gallery (they came to check on things because we had contacted them a week before the press conference). Otterman spoke to

Serrano and he admitted that we never met. Finally, we taped what happened and the video shows no one barging into the building (we posted it on our website).

If this wasn't enough, we were then turned down by both *The Hollywood Reporter* and *Variety* after we sought to publish an ad I had written objecting to the FX anti-Catholic show, "American Horror Story: Asylum." As I've said many times before, Hollywood hates Catholicism, and these three incidents offer more proof. First, a TV series portrays evil nuns and other Catholics as sadists, and then we are stopped from criticizing it by the two most prominent Hollywood magazines. We didn't give up, of course (we never do): we did an end-run around them all by blasting Hollywood on Los Angeles radio stations.

Keep in mind that while Hollywood continues to smear Catholics, it never stops offering a positive portrayal of homosexual characters on TV. Those who say, "relax, it's just TV," need to explain why Catholics are not the ones depicted as the good guys.

The cultural elites on the West Coast proved to be just as intolerant as their colleagues on the East Coast. Bigotry and censorship are hallmarks of intolerance, and this is what the artistic community in New York City and the Hollywood community in Los Angeles have in common. That they receive at least tacit support from political elites in Washington, D.C. makes the story even sicker.