

MS. MAGAZINE'S BIGOTED SCREED

[Bill Donohue](#)

The reason I wrote [*The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*](#) was to debunk all the distortions and outright lies about this issue. I am proud that not one critic has been able to show where I misstated anything (it contains over 800 endnotes).

Yet there are those who continue to parrot the conventional moonshine on this issue. The latest to do so is Carrie N. Baker, a Smith College professor.

Baker wrote her screed for *Ms.* magazine, where she is a contributing editor. She states her conclusion right at the start. "The Catholic Church's clergy sexual abuse scandals, combined with its efforts to control women's reproductive choices by banning abortion and attacking contraception, expose a troubling pattern of sexual sociopathology."

She is to be commended for putting her cards on the table. Now we know exactly where she is coming from.

Baker offers as evidence three items: the 2006 documentary *Deliver Us From Evil*; the movie *Spotlight*; and the 2018 Pennsylvania grand jury report. Also, she wants us to believe that clergy sexual abuse is ongoing and that a victims' group, SNAP, is courageously fighting back.

When *Deliver Us From Evil* debuted, I said that if the writer-director, Amy Berg, had confined herself to the offenses of one predatory priest, Oliver O'Grady, she would have distanced herself from the criticism she rightly received for making sweeping generalizations about priests. That's called bigotry. As it turned out, her real target was not O'Grady, it was the Catholic Church.

To her credit, Berg subsequently decided to expose the way Hollywood predators manipulated, intimidated and raped aspiring child actors. But her documentary, *An Open Secret*, was turned down by one Hollywood studio after another. Surprise, surprise. Years later it opened in a few cities.

Spotlight was the story of the *Boston Globe's* team that won a Pulitzer Prize for exposing the sexual abuse scandal in the Boston archdiocese. When the newspaper's series was published in 2002, I said that "The *Boston Globe*, the *Boston Herald*, and the *New York Times* covered the story with professionalism." I was quoted on the front page of the *Times* saying, "I am not the church's water boy. I am not here to defend the indefensible."

Nine years later I said it was apparent there were two scandals related to this issue. Scandal I was internal—"the church-driven scandal." Scandal II was external—"the result of indefensible cherry-picking of old cases by rapacious lawyers and vindictive victims' groups. They were aided and abetted by activists, the media, and Hollywood."

The movie, *Spotlight*, which won an Oscar for best picture, was an example of Scandal II. It was not the film that was objectionable, it was the incredibly vicious comments made about the Catholic Church by producers, script writers and actors.

What made their remarks so outrageous was the fact that nine of those associated with the movie had worked for Harvey Weinstein, yet when his sexual misconduct was made public, eight said nothing about his sexual abuse and all nine refused to indict Hollywood the way they did the Catholic Church.

In another example of hypocrisy, after the *Boston Globe* did a story in 2018 on bishops who allegedly failed to deal adequately with clergy abuse, I spent several weeks exchanging email correspondence with the editor and his staff asking to

see the evidence. I was denied. Denied by the same people who condemned the bishops for lacking transparency.

The Pennsylvania grand jury report was a PR stunt pulled by the state's attorney general (and now governor), Josh Shapiro. Almost all of the accused priests he named were either dead or thrown out of the priesthood. No wonder Shapiro was able to prosecute only two of them. None of the living was allowed to testify in court about his case, but I succeeded in hiring lawyers to defend eleven of the priests who had their reputations ruined. We sued and won, 6-1, in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

The latest data on clergy sexual abuse, released last year, showed that .013 percent of the clergy had a substantiated allegation made against him by a minor for offenses in the past year. In short, the scandal has been over for about a half century; the timeline was the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. Most of the abusers (8-in-10) were homosexuals, not pedophiles, and 149 priests were responsible for 26% of the allegations.

Finally, SNAP has long been moribund. It died after its chief was raked over the coals by prosecutors in 2017—David Clohessy was shown to be a fraud. After he was outed as a rogue by a transgender employee, Gretchen Rachel Hammond, he quit. Hammond verified everything I had been saying about SNAP for years.

All that is left of SNAP is a website. It is a shell group comprised of a few people with a phone number and an email address—it has no office address.

Baker failed to lay a glove on the Catholic Church. Quite frankly, she is out of her league on this subject.

Contact her: cbaker@msmagazine.com