

# NBC'S "LAW AND ORDER" HITS CATHOLICS AGAIN

In the October 17 episode of the NBC show, "Law and Order: Criminal Intent," there was a bizarre portrayal of a priest that clearly went over the line.

The story revolves around a sexton who is murdered by a junkie. The junkie, who works at the parish, is then killed by another priest. The killer priest is also guilty of embezzling church funds. Adding to the craziness of the plot, the priest tells the police that the junkie was his lover. Later in the show we discover that the priest was lying: the junkie is actually the priest's son. It is now clear that the real motive for killing the junkie was to protect the young boy's mother—the woman the killer priest had an affair with 20 years earlier.

In our complaint to NBC, we detailed previous problems we have had with this show. For example, in 1995, there was an episode on "Law and Order" about a priest involved in sexual misconduct (his superiors conspired to cover it up). There was another episode that year about a "devout Catholic" woman who kills her baby, confesses her crime to a priest in the confessional, and learns from the priest that it was God's will that she murder her child. Furthermore, the sacrament of reconciliation was ridiculed by a detective when he said, "How many Hail Marys would one be assigned for this crime?"

In 1997, we learned of a "devout Catholic" mother who, according to her son, "held a rosary in one hand and beat the crap out of me with the other." In 1999, we met a "very orthodox nun" who murders a young woman after a botched exorcism. Another episode that year (this time on "Law and Order: Special Victims Unit") featured a woman who is raped on a Catholic college campus where all school officials appear

weak and disinterested. And then on October 17, viewers were introduced to a priest who is guilty of lying, embezzlement, womanizing and the murder of his son.

In a statement to the press, William Donohue commented as follows: "One wonders what those at 'Law and Order' have been inhaling that alters their thinking. More likely is the possibility that they like anti-Catholicism. All of which is quite revealing. Every day there are reports that in the wake of September 11, Hollywood is rewriting scripts and changing scenes so as not to rattle the sensibilities of the public or to show disrespect to Muslims. But when it comes to bashing Catholics, it's business as usual. They never miss a step."

We are asking members to write to Dick Wolfe, executive producer, "Law and Order: Criminal Intent," P.O. Box 62, Hudson River and West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, New York, New York 10011 and to Robert Wright, CEO, NBC Television Network, 30 Rockefeller Center, New York, New York 10122.

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