

NICE TO KNOW WHAT OFFENDS HOLLYWOOD

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Mel Gibson got drunk, got behind the wheel and was arrested. What he did was irresponsible. He then blurted out anti-Semitic comments to the arresting officer, who happened to be Jewish. That was indefensible. Next he apologized—twice—without qualification. Which is what he should have done. Case closed? Not on your life: Mel's biggest critics smelled blood in the water and went for the jugular.

The Catholic League has never failed to accept the apology of anyone who has offended us. And this includes recidivists, the repeat offenders. When asked by reporters why we do so, I simply say "we have no other choice." In other words, because Catholicism puts a premium on forgiveness, we must accept any apology that appears to be sincere. It's too bad the rest of the nation isn't more Catholic.

The Mel Gibson who I know is a great guy. We became friends, of course, because of the controversy surrounding "The Passion of the Christ." The movie is a classic and nothing Mel did can detract from its excellence. What disappointed me, among other things, was the reluctance of those Catholic and Protestant leaders who had rallied to his side in defense of the film but were nowhere to be found once Mel fell. Isn't it the duty of Christians to extend a helping hand to those who have fallen, especially those whom we have come to embrace?

If many of Mel's friends abandoned him, it had the opposite effect on his biggest critics—they came crawling out of the woodwork. The gall of Christopher Hitchens to get worked up about Mel's remarks. This is the same man who likes to brag about his anti-Catholicism. Here is what he said when I

debated him in 2000: "I might have to admit for debate purposes that when religion is attacked in this country that the Catholic Church comes in for little more than its fair share. I may say that I probably contributed somewhat to that *and I am not ashamed of my part in it.*" (My emphasis.)

Hitchens found out a while back that he is part Jewish and ever since he has become a watchdog for anti-Semitism. But not anti-Catholicism—that he likes. That he has paid no price for his bigotry tells us much about his friends on the right who welcome his anti-Islamofascist stance.

No one gets into any trouble saying Harlem is dominated by blacks or Chinatown is dominated by the Chinese, but to say Hollywood is dominated by Jews is somehow regarded as bigoted. But not always: it came in handy to make such a reference when bashing Mel.

On July 31, Keith Olbermann interviewed Hollywood reporter Tom O'Neil on his MSNBC show, "Countdown." Tom wondered aloud whether Mel could come back from this incident, saying, "I don't know how Mel rallies from this, especially in Jewish Hollywood." Olbermann, ever quick to sense an odor, replied, "And let's clarify so nobody puts you on that list of folks who said things. When you said Jewish Hollywood, you meant the Jewish community in Hollywood, not 'Jewish Hollywood.'" O'Neil answered, "Oh yes, exactly. Yes, absolutely."

For the record, in my limited experience dealing with O'Neil, he does not strike me as any kind of bigot. My point is simply that when liberals say Hollywood is Jewish, it is understood as being descriptive; when people like myself say the same thing, we're branded as anti-Semitic.

On the same day as O'Neil's admission, the *Los Angeles Times* ran an article about the controversy wherein it was noted that "many of the town's senior executives are Jewish and Hollywood has a long history of supporting Israel and

Jewish causes....” The next day, in the same newspaper, it was said that “Hollywood was largely founded by, and the studios are still chiefly run by, Jewish executives....” A week later, Ruth Marcus wrote an article in the *Washington Post* in which she commented, “By Hollywood I mean the entertainment industry, which—Gibson’s paranoid rant...notwithstanding, is in fact dominated by Jews.”

On the same day Mel got into trouble, a Muslim went into a Jewish institution in Seattle and opened fire on six Jewish woman, killing one of them. Unlike Mel’s behavior, his was premeditated and committed while sober. And unlike Mel, his behavior led to no public outcry. That’s because Mel was cast as the terrorist, not the Muslim maniac. Want proof? According to Arianna Huffington, Mel’s remarks make him “psychological soul mates with the leaders of Hezbollah.” That’s what she said when I debated her on August 1 on CNN’s “Showbiz Tonight.” I denounced her for making a “despicable, obscene analogy,” but there is no way to shame this lady.

In 2003, Roman Polanski, the convicted child rapist, received a standing ovation when he won an Oscar for “The Pianist.” So nice to know what offends the Hollywood crowd. Good thing the pervert didn’t say in his film that Hollywood is run by the Jews.