

PARANOIA GRIPS ESQUIRE'S PIERCE

Bill Donohue comments on an online piece by Charles P. Pierce:

At one time I used to subscribe to *Esquire*. It was a well written, often provocative and entertaining magazine, one that covered a wide range of subjects. But it lost its way in recent years, evolving into a series of screeds. Its nuttiest writer is Charles P. Pierce, a man whose fondness for all matters Catholic is, well, not so kind.

Pierce is paranoid about Stephen K. Bannon, President Trump's strategist and confidant. He is also paranoid about Cardinal Raymond Burke, a loyal son of the Catholic Church. He calls Bannon a "political thug," and Burke a "theological thug."

Pierce began his day today, as I did, reading a front-page story in the *New York Times* about these two Catholics. I was unimpressed. I told the staff it was not a news story, much less a front-page one; it read like an op-ed. The author of this misplaced hit job is Jason Horowitz, a reporter who is capable of doing better. No matter, it fed the paranoia of Pierce, giving him much to chew on.

Bannon is a lay Catholic who shares the concerns of many regarding the secularization of the West and the threat posed by radical Islam. Burke is a courageous defender of the faith, one who has bumped heads with the Vatican, including Pope Francis. Yes, they are both orthodox and determined men, but neither is a threat to democracy or the Catholic Church.

Pierce wrote a piece right after the election branding Bannon as Trump's David Duke. Just last week he repeated his charge that Bannon is a white supremacist. Now he says he is taking over the world. I do not exaggerate.

Here is what Pierce wrote about Bannon today. "He wants to establish himself as the head of a new, worldwide authoritarian elite that will reach into every institution and will demolish any of those institutions that stand in the way of what he wants." I knew Bannon was tough, but not this tough.

As for Burke, Pierce says he is on the verge of creating "an army" to force his way into power, one who commands a mean sword. Mean stuff.

Pierce has much competition these days, but for my money no one merits the title Paranoid-in-Chief more than he does.

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