

# SALACIOUS SHAPIRO'S PA GRAND JURY PLOY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the grand jury report on six dioceses in Pennsylvania:

It's one of the greatest scams in recent memory: the soon-to-be released grand jury report on *accused* priests in Pennsylvania. The Attorney General, Josh Shapiro, knows he can do nothing to restore justice: some of the priests are innocent and have had no opportunity to defend themselves; many are dead; and the rest of them involve cases which exceed the statute of limitations.

Last week, one of the six dioceses mentioned in the grand jury report, the Diocese of Harrisburg, released the names of the accused extending back to the 1940s. Here is what we know.

To begin with, *no effort was made to determine their innocence or guilt*. Not all were priests: some were deacons and some were seminarians. Many were never accused of an offense while serving in the diocese. Of the 71 named, 42 are dead, 25 are alive, and there is no information about four of them. In the Diocese of Pittsburgh, 90 percent of the cases of *alleged* abuse took place before 1990.

So what is driving Shapiro? It certainly has nothing to do with justice.

If justice were the issue, Shapiro would be holding court over the release of grand jury reports on every institution in the state where adults interact with minors. But he isn't—only priests have been subjected to a probe.

So if no one can be prosecuted, and there is no investigation of the clergy from other religions, to say nothing of the widespread sexual abuse of minors in the public schools, why

is Shapiro presiding over the grand jury report on priests? It's not exactly hard to figure out: he wants to stick it to the Catholic Church.

The goal is obvious: the release of the most graphic accounts of molestation is being done to embarrass the Church. Why? So it will weaken its moral authority. That is what Salacious Shapiro wants to do.

When stories of celebrities accused of sexual misconduct surface, the nature of the conduct is described, but there is little in the way of explicit detail. The grand jury report on priests will leave nothing to the imagination. Salacious Shapiro has seen to that.

If there is one noticeable exception to the way stories of sexual abuse have been covered—where the accused was treated the way priests are being treated in the grand jury report—it is the report by Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr on President Bill Clinton. That report of the president's affair with Monica Lewinsky was uncharacteristically graphic, causing many in the media and the Congress to complain. They condemned the salaciousness of the stories.

- Columbia University professor Alan Brinkley, a prominent presidential historian, said, "Other than salacious details, the Starr report appears to add very little to what most of us have known for months."
- *New York Times* columnist Frank Rich wrote, "Without salacious details, this Clinton scandal would have no more legs with the public than Whitewater, Lippogate, Filegate or Travelgate."
- *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis described Starr as evincing a "relentless desire to destroy President and Mrs. Clinton," saying, he has "filed a report to the House with irrelevant salacious detail in order to humiliate his target."
- Author and circuit court judge Richard Posner defended

most of the report but reprimanded Starr for “the amount of salacious detail included in his report to Congress.”

- *Washington Post* columnist Robert Kaiser hammered the media for the way they covered the report, saying it “pounced on the Monica Lewinsky story with energy and an eagerness for its salacious details that would have been unthinkable in years gone by.”
- *Washington Post* columnist David Broder wrote, “Like many others, when I read the Starr report I could not believe the endless, repetitious, salacious detail was necessary to disprove the president’s denial of sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky.”
- Representative (and now senator) Charles Schumer said that Starr “knew that if this case was only about sex and lying about sex, that it would not be found impeachable by Congress. So he made allegations that simply could not be supported in a court but allowed him to release a salacious report. This casts doubt about his impartiality.”
- John Conyers said of the report that “It is sexually explicit, it is offensive, it is obscene, it does not build up any kind of case one way or the other.”

Moreover, Democrats worked to remove many passages from the Starr report that pertained to salacious details.

Priests, however, have no such advocates in the media or in public office. There will be no columnist like Robert Kaiser ripping the media for running stories loaded with salacious details, and no public figure like Chuck Schumer taking aim at Salacious Shapiro for compromising his partiality.

This is not just a scam, it is an expression of bigotry—the Catholic Church has been cherry picked for the purpose of shaming it. A grand jury report on sexual misconduct in any institution could also serve the prurient interests of the public, but it will never be done. In a just world, Shaming Salacious Shapiro would be a priority, but the media have no

interest in doing so.