

SONY BENDS FOR N.F.L. — NOT CATHOLICS

“Concussion,” which stars Will Smith, opened on Christmas Day, and while it may not put the N.F.L. in the best light, officials at Sony made every effort not to bash the football industry. They never afforded Catholics similar treatment.

We know from a revealing story in the *New York Times* last September that Sony “found itself softening some points it might have made against the multibillion-dollar sports enterprise that controls the nation’s most-watched game.” Indeed, “dozens of emails” show how Sony executives, the film’s director, and representatives for Mr. Smith “discussed how to avoid antagonizing the N.F.L. by altering the script and marketing the film more as a whistle-blower story, rather than a condemnation of football or the league.”

By contrast, when Sony released “The Da Vinci Code” in 2006, and “Angels & Demons” in 2009, it refused pleas to post a disclaimer admitting that these films are fictitious.

When Bill Donohue asked director Ron Howard to put a disclaimer in “The Da Vinci Code,” he was denounced for infringing on the artistic rights of Sony. Yet when Sony released “The Merchant of Venice,” the movie opened with a disclaimer noting the prevalence of anti-Semitism in 16th-century Venice. In “A Beautiful Mind,” a Ron Howard film, the movie ended with a disclaimer noting that it differs from the account afforded by the book of that name.

When “Angels & Demons” came out, it debuted in India with a disclaimer noting that the movie is a work of fiction (the request was made by the government). Donohue’s request that the same disclaimer be posted in U.S. theaters was turned down.