

SONY OKAYS “DA VINCI CODE” DISCLAIMERS

When “The Da Vinci Code” opened in India, the film opened with a disclaimer. So much for the argument that Sony couldn’t accede to the Catholic League’s request to put a disclaimer in the movie without jeopardizing its artistic integrity.

The movie’s opening was delayed in India for one week due to negotiations between Sony Pictures and the nation’s censorship board. At issue was the propriety of inserting a disclaimer. Sony finally agreed to put the following statement before and after the movie: “The characters and incidents portrayed and the names herein are fictitious, and any similarity to the name, character or history of any person is entirely coincidental and unintentional.”

The week before caving into these demands, Sony agreed with Thailand’s censorship board to put a disclaimer at the beginning and end of the film saying its content is fictional.

Bill Donohue was amused and issued the following news release:

“Some people will do anything for a buck. Having run up against a brick wall in India and Thailand, Sony caved and delivered on the disclaimer they said wasn’t necessary. It was either buckle to the demand or lose money, and Sony did what everyone knew they would do.

“I wrote to Ron Howard on March 18, 2005 asking for a disclaimer. I also wrote a *New York Times* op-ed page ad that was run on March 6 this year asking for a disclaimer. All I ever heard in response was that such requests would compromise the artistic integrity of those associated with the movie, and that it wasn’t needed because it was just a spy thriller. But neither argument holds water: many movies offer disclaimers and ‘The Da Vinci Code’ is anything but a thriller.

“How ironic it is that in the U.S. and Europe, which are predominantly Christian, no disclaimer is afforded, but in nations that are three percent (India) and one percent (Thailand) Christian, a disclaimer is given. It shouldn’t take the presence of a censorship board to persuade Sony to do the right thing—ethics alone should dictate.”