

# ABC'S "THE PRACTICE" CONTINUES TO BAIT CATHOLICS

In the November 28 episode of the ABC show, "The Practice," an attorney, Jimmy, informed a judge, Roberta, that he is breaking up with her. She told him that he'll be coming back and then explained why: "Because of your mother and father. You were raised as a strict Catholic, you grew up sexually repressed, and what you're going to be looking for in a woman more than anything else is a woman who liberates you sexually, who makes you feel sexual."

In the November 7 episode, there was a scene that featured a Catholic male objecting to his fiancée's wedding dress. The woman, who was not Catholic, remarked that if she had to eat Communion, he had to put up with her dress.

Catholic League president William Donohue issued the following statement today:

"We've had our share of problems with ABC, and with the executive producer of 'The Practice,' David E. Kelley. Now they're at it again. The wholly unnecessary digs that were made at Catholicism in the November 7 and November 28 episodes demonstrate Kelley's continued fixation on the Roman Catholic Church. Kelley needs no excuse to find a way to stick it to Catholics—he is a master of the gratuitous shot.

"The correspondence that I've had with Kelley in the past gave me reason to believe that he might change his ways. But apparently he has no intentions of doing so. If 'The Practice' continues like this, the Catholic League will take a more confrontational approach."

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# **“END OF DAYS” IS TORTUOUS**

“End of Days,” which stars Arnold Schwarzenegger, opened in theaters today. Reviewing it for the Catholic League was research analyst Dennis Nilsen. Here are his comments:

“The gory scenes of violence and torture are sickening, but what is most troubling is the crass misappropriation of Catholic themes and imagery. Moreover, several priests are brutalized—even to the point where a would-be killer priest is crucified on a ceiling by Satan. There is a vacuous pope, pathetic-looking cardinals, lay Catholic thugs in rebellion against the Vatican, Satanic worshippers, etc. Suffice it to say that the film is tortuous in more ways than one.”

Catholic League president William Donohue offered his thoughts on a related matter:

“The Nilsen-rating that I was given is pretty lousy, but I have a different bone to pick with ‘End of Days.’

“The film’s director, Peter Hyams, classifies his movie as ‘pro-religious.’ This, of course, is exactly what advocates for Andres Serrano have been saying for years about his ‘Piss Christ’ contribution. It is what the fans of Terence McNally have said when challenged about the playwright’s ‘Corpus Christi.’ It is what the supporters of the Brooklyn Museum of Art exhibition, ‘Sensation,’ have been saying for weeks about Chris Ofili’s ‘The Holy Virgin Mary.’ And it is precisely what Kevin Smith offers when questioned about ‘Dogma.’

“This dishonesty suggests that it is better to be labeled a con-man than a bigot. Why they don’t come out of the closet and expose themselves for what they are is distressing. Perhaps the Catholic League should stage a coming-out party

for these guys. The problem is we'd probably have to rent the Los Angeles Coliseum."

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## "ALL ABOUT MY MOTHER" RIPS NUNS

The nun that is featured in the new movie, "All About My Mother," is pregnant. She's also HIV-positive. It opens Friday in select theaters.

"All About My Mother" was described by one reviewer as "a loose homage to 'All About Eve' populated by an outrageous (as usual) assortment of drag queens, transvestite hookers and pregnant nuns." The *Sunday Times* of London said that the Pedro Almodovar film was "a blend of his favourite elements—delirium, drugs, sexual deviation, arresting visuals and, most of all, the solidarity and sacrifices of women." Almodovar won the Director prize this year at Cannes.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on this subject today:

"Almodovar is known as the 'Spanish king of kitsch' and 'the punk prince of sex comedy.' For twenty years he has been bashing Catholicism, previously giving us such gems as 'Dark Habits,' a movie about drug-addicted nuns who wrestle tigers. His contributions to the cinema also include 'a film about men and their genitalia' (those are his words), explicit rape scenes, sadomasochism, and shots of women urinating on each other. Almodovar is a devout homosexual.

"The *Village Voice* did not exaggerate when it said of Almodovar that he is 'the only Spanish director who can make a

bigger joke of Catholicism than Luis Buñuel, it is generally conceded, made some of the most viciously anti-Catholic movies in history.

“Those who like Catholic-bashing movies can now pick this weekend to see either ‘All About My Mother’ or ‘Dogma.’ Those interested in bigoted films that attack other religions will, as usual, be disappointed. But things may change: once a culture gets used to kicking one religion, history shows it isn’t long before others get kicked, too.”

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## **“DOGMA” GETS AN “F”**

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, and Patrick Scully, the league’s director of communications, saw “Dogma” today. Here are Donohue’s comments on the movie:

“The most extensive laughter was when the sarcastically-written disclaimer appeared on the screen. Once the film began, that was just about it. Never in my life have I attended a ‘comedy’ that received less laughs than ‘Dogma’; it is no wonder that the woman next to me literally fell asleep. However, those who like Columbine-type violence will not be disappointed, nor will adolescents who get excited upon hearing the F-word.

“That film critics like the *New York Times* reviewer, Janet Maslin, and *Time* magazine’s Richard Corliss, thought it a gas means either that they will laugh at anything, or they can’t resist giving high marks to any movie that insults Catholicism. The only way to find out for sure is for someone in Hollywood to make a stupid comedy that insults Protestants or Jews (preferably both), and then run it by the likes of Maslin and Corliss.

“Discussing his career as a writer, Kevin Smith recently said that he plans to bail out the minute he runs out of things to say. Someone should tell him the clock has already run out. ‘Dogma’ gets an ‘F.’”

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# **BILL MAHER SAVAGES CATHOLICISM**

On the November 11 edition of the ABC show, “Politically Incorrect,” host Bill Maher interviewed “Dogma” director Kevin Smith. In doing so, Maher blasted Catholics: “Catholics practice what they want to practice. They go to see the Pope ‘cause he’s a big celebrity, but they go home and they masturbate, they practice birth control...well they do.”

When someone remarked that a lot of people are not attending churches or synagogues these days, Maher stepped up his attack on Catholicism: “But if I may pause to correct something, you shouldn’t, I don’t think, lump in the synagogue with the Church. They’ve operated very differently, OK. The synagogue—and I’m not Jewish, but I was raised Catholic—was never as corrupt as the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church, which is people, not God running it, OK, hugely corrupt, did horrible things through history, maybe OK because they were that powerful.”

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, issued the following statement on this matter:

“This is not the first time that Bill Maher has proven to be an anti-Catholic bigot. Not surprisingly, the audience laughed at his comments, showing how utterly acceptable anti-Catholicism is these days. Indeed, Maher’s remarks prove that

it is anything but politically incorrect to bash Catholics on 'Politically Incorrect.'

"If ABC had as low a tolerance for Catholic bashing as it does other expressions of bigotry, it would terminate Maher immediately. At the very least, the Catholic League wants an apology. We await the network's response."

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## **SEX SURVEY OF KANSAS CITY STAR STAFF BEGINS**

The *Kansas City Star* has commenced a sex survey of Roman Catholic priests, and now the Catholic League has decided to follow suit by issuing its own survey of the newspaper's staff. On October 15, Mark Zieman, editor and vice president of the *Kansas City Star*, sent a letter to Roman Catholic priests, all of whom were randomly selected from the 1999 Kenedy Official Catholic Directory, explaining the nature of the confidential survey; the survey only addresses HIV and AIDS. Our survey, personally addressed to each staff person, was sent to managing editor Steve Shirk for distribution.

"We have come to understand that the disease also had a devastating impact on groups whose members are unable to speak up about the difficulties they have endured," wrote Zieman. The Catholic League fully agrees and this explains our interest in exploring the sex lives of Zieman's staff.

William Donohue, Catholic League president, commented as follows:

"I knew my doctorate in sociology would come in handy in this job some day, and today certainly is that day. Being

journalists, the reporters and editors at the *Kansas City Star* know nothing about objectivity, and that is why no control group was used in their survey. We have provided one by drawing on the journalists who work at the newspaper; this is also indicative of our commitment to inclusiveness.

“The language we used is almost identical to the newspaper’s survey. But there were some changes. For example, instead of asking, ‘Do you know priests with HIV or AIDS?’, we asked, ‘Do you know any journalist who doesn’t have HIV or AIDS?’ And so on. Our objective was also stated somewhat differently: ‘Our objective is to undermine your efforts at Peeping-Tom journalism. By getting our survey out first, we hope to submarine your newspaper’s voyeuristic invasion of the privacy of Roman Catholic priests.’ Alas, we hope the newspaper appreciates our inquiry.”

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## **PETER VALLONE’S MISGUIDED PRIORITIES**

In a letter dated November 1, Peter F. Vallone, Speaker of the New York City Council, wrote to “Friends of the Arts” celebrating the preliminary injunction that the courts granted against Mayor Rudolph Giuliani’s attempt to stop funding of the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

Vallone ended his letter this way: “We must continue to work together to ensure that the freedom of expression, which allows New York’s great cultural institutions to flourish and which makes this City the world’s center for the arts, remains unimpeded by actual or threatened government coercion, while at the same time acting responsibly to foster respect and

understanding for all viewpoints.”

Catholic League president William Donohue commented on Vallone’s statement as follows:

“It is so nice to know that Peter Vallone has such a chummy relationship with his ‘Friends of the Arts.’ Perhaps some day he’ll get around to addressing his fellow Catholics; we’re dying to know how he feels about public funding of artistic bigotry aimed at his own religion.

“Vallone’s much-vaunted commitment to freedom of expression is suspect: if he were sincere, he would necessarily have condemned the way museum officials thwarted the truth about the incestuous relationship that exists between museum officials and those who are financing the exhibition. Or doesn’t the fact that museum officials literally lied to the press about the role of the exhibition’s art collector, Charles Saatchi, have any impact on Vallone’s understanding of free speech?

“When Vallone says he wants ‘to foster respect and understanding of all viewpoints,’ he can’t be taken seriously, not by Catholics anyway. Does he believe that ‘Sensation’ fosters ‘respect’ about Catholicism? It’s time Peter took a cue from Rudy and started paying attention to home base, instead of currying favor with his ‘Friends of the Arts.’”

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## **300,000 SIGN PETITION TO MICHAEL EISNER**

Over the past few months, a Catholic League petition demanding that Disney dump Miramax secured approximately 300,000



signatures. Last April, the Catholic League was delighted when Disney told Miramax not to release the Catholic-bashing movie, "Dogma," but we were disconcerted when Miramax chiefs Bob and Harvey Weinstein decided to invest \$14 million of their own money to keep the film alive. Accordingly, the league embarked on a petition drive asking Disney to sever all relationships with Miramax.

Catholic League president William Donohue offered the following comment today:

"Today we are sending Disney head Michael Eisner boxes full of petitions asking that he drop all association with Miramax. In 1995, in response to the Miramax-released movie, 'Priest,' we were the first organization in the nation to call for a boycott of Disney. Four years later, we note with pride that the original family-friendly industry repaired to its moorings by dissociating itself from another anti-Catholic film, 'Dogma.' Now it is time to cut the chord with Miramax once and for all.

"Eisner has nothing to gain by allowing the Weinsteins to abuse their relationship with Disney. They have proven to be morally bankrupt and represent the very antithesis of what Walt Disney worked so hard to accomplish. The time has come for Disney to distinguish itself again and that is why we appeal to Michael Eisner to recapture the Snow White image of his company by giving Miramax the heave-ho. The Weinsteins have certainly shown no loyalty to him."

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**DIRECTOR OF BROOKLYN MUSEUM**

# OF ART MUST GO

Over the past few days, the *New York Times* has revealed that unethical practices have colored the “Sensation” exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. The director of the museum, Arnold L. Lehman, pressed both Charles Saatchi, the owner of the art, and Christie’s, the prestigious auction house, for financing (the latter was given perks for doing so). Indeed, museum officials also raised money from art dealers who represent several of the artists in the exhibition. As a result, hundreds of thousands of dollars exchanged hands.

Catholic League president William Donohue called for Mr. Lehman’s dismissal today:

“Arnold L. Lehman should be terminated for violating the public trust. Not only did he give the green light to a gross exhibition that featured a frontal assault on Roman Catholicism, he engineered a boatload of money from those who stood to personally profit from this venture. Like all cabals, this one reeks with corruption, making it impossible for the public to have confidence in Mr. Lehman’s leadership.

“The fact that museum officials literally lied to the press about the role of Charles Saatchi is the icing on the cake. Moreover, Saatchi was no dupe: he forked over \$160,000 to the museum and then tried to conceal his ‘philanthropy’ from the public. But had ‘Charlie Hustle’ been a pimp for the Church—by sponsoring reverential art—everyone who is now willing to turn his head would instead be calling for Charlie’s head.

“We will write to the trustees of the museum requesting that they issue Mr. Lehman a pink slip. If this doesn’t work, we will explore other avenues.”