

UNIV. OF OREGON EXCUSES HATE SPEECH

After University of Oregon president Dave Frohnmayer offered a weak response to an obscene anti-Christian assault in the March edition of the *Insurgent*, a campus newspaper, Catholic League president Bill Donohue wrote a letter of protest to state lawmakers, the state's three bishops and others; he also sent copies of the offensive graphics. Students of Faith, a group formed in response to the incident, subsequently filed a grievance against the *Insurgent*; they learned yesterday that their grievance was rejected by the Associated Students of the University of Oregon (ASUO).

Bill Donohue responded as follows:

"The grievance reads, 'Students of Faith v. ASUO Student Insurgent.' In other words, the offending newspaper and the panel which heard the grievance are in bed together. In other parts of the world, this kind of incestuous relationship is called a kangaroo court. What else would we expect from ASUO: after all, on April 21, they ruled against a grievance filed by a youth minister, but not before securing the advice of the university's counsel.

"In the ruling, the ASUO ruled that 'there are no grounds for demanding an apology from the Student Insurgent.' In other words, there are no ethical grounds upon which an apology should be granted. Furthermore, the ruling said that the newspaper contributes 'to the cultural and physical development of the university community,' even when it features an obscene depiction of Jesus. Are we to believe that if during Black History Month, the *Insurgent* showed a naked graphic of the Rev. Martin Luther King kissing another man, both sporting erections, the same rationale would appear in a grievance filed by black students?

“ASUO is a corrupt body. In 2003, its president, Rachel Pilliod, went berserk when she received anti-Semitic mail. Today, the ASUO Women’s Center tolerates no defamation against gays and lesbians. And three years ago, ASUO demanded that the university radio station, KUGN, distance itself from the Michael Savage show (which was dumped). It all depends on whose ox is being gored.”

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IT’S SHOW TIME FOR RON HOWARD

“Da Vinci Code” director Ron Howard has been quoted as saying there will be no disclaimer in the film. Here is Catholic League president Bill Donohue’s response:

“The book which the film is based on begins with three ‘facts,’ all of which are malicious lies, yet Ron Howard says no disclaimer is needed because ‘this is a work of fiction.’ He is disingenuous. The following got a disclaimer about a fictionalized TV show or film:

▪ Asians:	“Year of the Dragon”
▪ Blacks:	“Birth of the Nation”
▪ Gays:	“Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back”
▪ Jews:	“Merchant of Venice”
▪ Mormons:	“Big Love”
▪ Muslims:	“True Lies”
▪ Native Americans:	“Pocahontas II”
▪ Nearsighted:	“Mr. Magoo”
▪ Wolves:	“White Fang”

“That’s right—even wolves merited a disclaimer: Disney put a

disclaimer in 'White Fang' saying there is no evidence of a healthy pack of wolves attacking a human in North America. Forget about wolves, if Howard were as sensitive to Catholics as those responsible for 'La Vita E Bella' were to Jews, he would have acceded to our request to inject a disclaimer. That 1998 film—a dark comedy about the Holocaust—opened with a voice-over saying it is a fable. So is 'The Da Vinci Code.'

"John Calley, a co-producer of 'Da Vinci Code,' has admitted that the film is anti-Catholic. As I said in our *New York Times* op-ed page ad on March 6, 'if the film is remembered for the vicious lies it tells about Catholicism, it will not be John Calley's reputation that will be sullied.' Apparently, Ron Howard is more of a gambler than I thought. Had he done what other directors have done before him and put in a disclaimer, the risks to his reputation would have been minimal. Now it's show time for Mr. Howard, and not just his movie."

COLORADO ABUSE BILLS RIDDLED WITH POLITICS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on yesterday's decision by Colorado lawmakers to scratch a controversial section of a child sex abuse bill that was under consideration:

"House representatives in the Colorado legislature rejected a proposal yesterday that would have allowed a one-year window for alleged victims of child sexual molestation to sue for cases dating back to 1971. It was a victory for justice, led by Archbishop Charles Chaput, Bishop Michael Sheridan and

Bishop Arthur Tafoya. And special thanks must also be given to those cocky lawmakers who thought that by extending the law to cover public institutions, it would force the Catholic side to retreat.

“What has been happening in Colorado will go down in history as one of most egregious examples of anti-Catholicism ever launched by state lawmakers. It began when three bills were introduced earlier this year that sought to single out the Catholic Church for punitive measures: the bills were aimed at either removing or modifying statutes of limitation in cases of child sexual abuse committed by those who work for private institutions; it was conceded by everyone that the bills were targeted at the Catholic Church. When the Catholic bishops rightfully objected to these discriminatory measures, the bills were amended to blanket public institutions. This relieved the immediate concerns of the bishops, though as later amendments were introduced, they registered principled objections to some provisions.

“The public school establishment’s insurance agents started sweating bullets once they learned that their clients could be sued, and it was their resistance that proved crucial in killing the bill. In other words, those who feigned interest in protecting the kids proved to be far more interested in protecting their pocket books. How revealing.

“A new bill that would hold churches and nonprofits liable for up to \$732,500 in these lawsuits is now being entertained. The amount of damages for public schools, however, is capped at \$150,000. We’d love to see what would happen if the figures were reversed.”

“DA VINCI CODE” SHROUDED IN SECRECY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented today on the secretive nature of “The Da Vinci Code”:

“The Associated Press recently observed that Dan Brown ‘has given few interviews,’ something the New York *Daily News* explains by calling him a ‘reclusive author.’ But if Brown is naturally reticent, the same is not true of those working on the film version of Brown’s book: their silence is a calculated and well-coordinated decision.

“In May 2005, *Variety* tried to squeeze some juice from the movie’s director and producers. They didn’t get a squirt. ‘We’ve made a pact...where we have numbered scripts and everything is extremely confidential,’ admitted co-producer Brian Grazer. So what about Father Richard McBrien, the Notre Dame theologian who was given a copy of the screenplay? McBrien said he was under contractual obligations not to talk. By August 2005, the *New York Times* would write that ‘Sony has dropped a scrim of secrecy’ over the film. Indeed, the *Times* reported that ‘The script has been closely controlled. Outsiders have been banned from the set. And those associated with the film have had to sign confidentiality agreements.’

“As we get closer to the film’s premiere, the secrecy continues. *Time* recently noted that critics expected to see the movie in April, but have since learned that they’re being shut out. *Entertainment Weekly* adds that ‘Virtually everything about [the movie]...has been kept double top secret from the public.’ Indeed, even the room where the final editing is taking place is marked ‘DENTAL RECORDS,’ further proof of how mysterious everything is.

“And they say the Catholic Church is secretive? But who could be more secretive than everyone associated with the ‘Da Vinci Code’ enterprise? Not Opus Dei—the latest issue of *People* gets it right when it refers to the lay organization as a ‘once-secret group.’ How ironic it is that the most uptight persons involved in this whole affair are the laid-back types in Hollywood? By contrast, the Catholic Church is an open book.”