

# 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.

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# DEATH PENALTY RULING EXCITES LEFT CATHOLICS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the reaction to the pope's ruling that the death penalty is always wrong:

"If the Pope were to deny that the death penalty could be an exercise of retributive justice, he would be overthrowing the tradition of two millennia of Catholic thought, denying the teaching of several previous popes, and contradicting the teaching of Scripture (notably Genesis 9:5-6 and Romans 13:1-4)."

Those are the words of Cardinal Avery Dulles, one of the most brilliant and esteemed members of the Catholic hierarchy in the past century.

"Not all moral issues have the same moral weight as abortion and euthanasia...There may be a legitimate diversity of opinion even among Catholics about waging war and applying the death penalty, but not however with regard to abortion and euthanasia."

Those are the words of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, before he became Pope Benedict XVI.

Pope Francis has changed all that, declaring the death penalty to be always wrong, even in cases involving national security. He ordered the Catholic Catechism to reflect his ruling.

Some in the media, as well as Catholic activists, are saying

this now puts Catholics in public life who support the death penalty in a real jam. But does it?

The front-page story in the *New York Times* on this subject opens with the following: "Pope Francis has declared the death penalty wrong in all cases, a definitive change in church teaching that is likely to challenge Catholic politicians, judges and officials who have argued that the church was not entirely opposed to capital punishment."

This seriously misunderstands the difference between the three branches of government. The only ones who are directly affected are lawmakers, not executives or judges.

A lawmaker is free to weave his religious values into any law he wishes to write, and if the voters do not agree with his bill, they can vote him out of office. An executive is obliged to enforce the laws passed by the legislature, regardless of whether they are in accord with the teachings of his religion. A judge is obliged to interpret the laws as passed by the legislature, and is not permitted to weave his religious values into his decision.

The *Times* story quotes John Gehring, an official at Faith in Public Life, saying, "If you're a Catholic governor who thinks the state has the right to end human life, you need to be comfortable saying you're disregarding orthodox church teaching." That shouldn't be difficult—all he needs to do is ask New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo how he manages to be comfortable denying the Church's teaching on abortion.

Gehring is not exactly a credible voice. He is employed by an outlet that is funded by the atheist, anti-Catholic, pro-abortion, billionaire George Soros. Furthermore, Gehring was condemned by the bishops in 2012 for smearing them in public. To be exact, he told the media about the "inflammatory and irresponsible" rhetoric of "several bishops," and he tutored reporters on how to handle the Church hierarchy.

Gehring, and those on the Catholic left, have always defended pro-abortion Catholics like the Kennedys, and they have gone to the mat for Nancy Pelosi, that great Catholic champion of abortion. So it is a little late in the game to lecture pro-death penalty Catholics to get on board now that things have changed.

I would like to make the Catholic left an offer: If you condemn pro-abortion Catholic politicians, conservative Catholics will condemn pro-death penalty Catholic politicians.

I have a feeling no one has the guts to take me up on this, because if they did, it would put them in a much bigger jam than conservative Catholics. Defending abortion rights means much more to them than condemning the death penalty means to conservatives.

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## **MEDIA BOW TO CBS OVER MOONVES**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on how reporters are reacting to the CBS scandal:

Why are those in the media so defiant with President Trump and so deferential to CBS? Where are the Jim Acostas when it comes to the CBS scandal?

CBS held a press conference yesterday about its second-quarter financial results. The speaker, CBS chief Les Moonves, is under investigation for sexually harassing female employees. No one asked him a single question about the investigation—they were forbidden from doing so.

“The scope of today’s call and any questions will be limited to the quarterly results of the company.” Those were the

ground rules laid down by Adam Townsend, a spokesman for the CBS Corporation. Eight reporters were allowed to ask questions, and all of them dutifully complied; Moonves was never asked whether he is a sexual predator.

In the Catholic Church, those accused of sexual misconduct must step aside pending an investigation. At CBS, when the CEO is charged with sexual misconduct, he is allowed to continue working, pending an investigation.

If a bishop does not answer questions from reporters about an accused priest, he is raked over the coals. When the head of CBS doesn't answer any questions from reporters about his alleged sexual misconduct—because none are permitted—it is a non-story.

And the media wonder why so many Americans have nothing but contempt for them.

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## **BISHOPS START NOVENA FOR KAVANAUGH HEARINGS**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a decision by the bishops regarding the upcoming hearings on Brett Kavanaugh for the Supreme Court:

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops begins a nine-week novena today on behalf of Senate confirmation hearings on Judge Brett Kavanaugh's nomination to the Supreme Court.

This initiative, which will occur every Friday until September 28, is being launched because of the furor over the fate of

legalized abortion. While no one knows whether *Roe v. Wade* will be overturned, even if Kavanaugh is approved, the possibility that it might be has set off the alarms among pro-abortion activists. They are prepared to wage war on Kavanaugh, and they will stop at nothing to keep abortion legal.

Greg Schleppenbach, an associate director of the bishops' Pro-Life Secretariat, cited recent polls on abortion that are misleading as an example of the concerns that the bishops have. They're right.

[As I recently pointed out](#), abortion surveys taken in light of Kavanaugh's nomination have been manifestly dishonest. Asking respondents if *Roe* should be legal does not get to the central issue: The majority of Americans are opposed to legal abortion for any reason and at any time of pregnancy, effectively putting them at odds with *Roe*.

We commend the bishops for their steadfast opposition to abortion. Their nine-week novena regarding the Kavanaugh hearings is much needed and much appreciated.

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## BOYCOTT BURGER KING

Catholic League president Bill Donohue is calling for a boycott of Burger King:

Over the past several weeks, we have asked Catholics to contact some of the sponsors of Samantha Bee's TBS show, "Full Frontal," asking them to discontinue advertising. Our objections are grounded in her relentless assaults on Catholics and her use of the "c-word" to describe the president's daughter.



The following companies honored our request: Verizon, Procter and Gamble, Wendy's, Ashley HomeStore, and the Wonderful Company.

Burger King is the first company not to accede to our request: It ran ads on July 25th and again on August 1. On July 26, I wrote to Burger King CEO Daniel Schwartz asking him to withdraw advertising on her show; we also provided his email address to our news release list.

Any company that financially underwrites such a show does not deserve to be patronized. That is why I am calling for a boycott of Burger King.

Wendy's would be a good alternative for those accustomed to going to Burger King—it acted honorably by pulling its ads.

Contact Burger King CEO Daniel Schwartz: [dschwartz@whopper.com](mailto:dschwartz@whopper.com)

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## **NO “ZERO TOLERANCE” POLICY FOR MOONVES**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the way CBS is handling the controversy over its CEO, Les Moonves:

The day after allegations of sexual misconduct were made against CBS anchor Charlie Rose last year, he was fired. Last week, allegations of sexual misconduct were made against CBS Chairman and CEO Les Moonves, and he is still on the job, pending an investigation.

The authorities in Southern California have decided not to prosecute Moonves because the statute of limitations has expired. A woman who said she was sexually abused by him in

the 1980s was seeking redress for his criminal conduct, but prosecutors said it was too late to do so.

If an American Catholic priest is accused of sexually abusing a minor, he is subjected to the Church's "zero tolerance" policy and must immediately step aside pending an investigation. All that is needed to trigger the probe is a determination that a "credible accusation" was made, a condition which the late Cardinal Avery Dulles labeled as "manifestly groundless."

If a priest is accused of sexually abusing an adult, his bishop must decide how to proceed. Some have gone beyond "zero tolerance" and have forced priests who were once involved in a consensual relationship with a woman out of ministry *immediately* upon being notified.

Who was treated unfairly—Rose or Moonves? Would it have been fair if California lawmakers had passed a law suspending the statute of limitations for all sexual abuse crimes, thus allowing them to prosecute Moonves? Is "zero tolerance" a fair policy for priests, and if so, should it be adopted by CBS and everyone else?

Sexual abuse should never be tolerated, and it is particularly pernicious when it involves minors. "Throw the book at him" is a just policy, providing, of course, we are as certain as we can be that the accused is guilty. Unfortunately, in today's hysterical #MeToo climate, due process means little, setting the stage for gross injustice.

So who was treated unfairly, Rose or Moonves? Rose. He was never afforded the chance to rebut the charges, as Moonves has.

Should the statute of limitations apply to all crimes of a sexual nature? Yes. There is a very good civil liberties principle involved here: we must be reasonably confident that the accounts are accurate (memories do fade), and that the

witnesses are still alive. These conditions can be a real problem when trying to adjudicate old cases.

Are “zero tolerance” policies fair? No. To remove someone from his job based on a very thin standard of proof is unjust. Rev. Msgr. Thomas G. Guarino, professor of systematic theology at Seton Hall University, has accurately concluded that the “credible accusation” rule has come to mean “not entirely impossible.”

This defense of due process does not exculpate CBS. Like others in the media, they insist on “zero tolerance” for priests, but not for themselves.

This includes media outlets such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, both of which have been highly critical of the Catholic Church for the way it has dealt with the case of Cardinal Theodore McCarrick. Yet neither paper has editorialized against CBS for its slow-walk treatment of Moonves.

What is at stake today is the erosion of the “innocent until proven guilty” code of justice and a selective interest in due process. These are too important to be sacrificed in our pursuit of punishing the guilty.