

“THE REAL O’NEALS” FALTERS; DAN SAVAGE GOES MUTE

ABC is in a jam and they know it. “The Real O’Neals” is not only stupid and offensive, it is in deep trouble trying to find an audience. The numbers don’t lie: its ratings always trail the competition on CBS and NBC.

A story posted by E! Online in mid-March said that the jury is out on whether “The Real O’Neals” will be renewed next season: no decision has been made. But things don’t look good. The other family shows on ABC, “The Goldbergs,” “Modern Family,” “Black-ish,” and “Fresh Off the Boat” have already been renewed; the latter made its debut this year. More important, “The Voice” on NBC is killing “The Real O’Neals,” and CBS has announced that “NCIS” has been renewed for two more seasons.

The biggest problem facing ABC is the hit that Disney-ABC is taking to its reputation for airing a show based on the life of a bigot, Dan Savage. The man is an unrepentant anti-Catholic, which is why the Catholic League blasted Disney-ABC in the *New York Times* for embracing him (to see the ad that was printed, click [here](#), and for the original one that was rejected, click [here](#)).

It is obvious that Savage has been told by the corporate boys that when it comes to the Catholic League’s criticisms, he had better shut his mouth. We say this because it is not as though he is keeping quiet about all matters.

For example, he recently lashed out at Hillary Clinton for citing Nancy Reagan’s effort to bring the AIDS crisis to the attention of the American people. As usual, he resorted to an obscenity. But when it comes to the Catholic League, he goes mute. This takes on greater currency when we consider that Savage and Bill Donohue have no use for each other.

Savage is not the only person associated with the show who has a troubled past. Martha Plimpton, who plays the mother, is now touting her two real-life abortions. Indeed, she is bragging how her abortions “made it possible for me to live out my dream and do what I really wanted to do with my life.” Too bad her babies weren’t given the same chance.

If ABC has any brains, they will can this show. One thing is for sure: we aren’t going away—we will hound them until they ax it. It should never have been made in the first place.

We encourage all members to write to the top official who oversees this show. Write to Ben Sherwood, President, Disney-ABC TV, 47 W. 66th St., NY NY 10023. Ask him how Disney-ABC can justify basing a show on an anti-Catholic bigot. You might want to tell him that the time has come to dump it.

LOUISIANA VICTORY

In 2014, the Catholic League signed an amicus brief in support of a Louisiana priest who refused to disclose to the authorities a conversation he had in the confessional. After losing in the State Supreme Court, the State District Court declared that Louisiana law could not force a priest to violate the seal of confession. Kudos to Catholic Action for Faith and Family, lead counsel in the case, for doing such a great job.

The case began in 2008 when a 14-year-old girl alleged that she told her parish priest that she was abused by a now-deceased lay member of the parish. She said the disclosure came during the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Her parents sued the priest, Fr. Jeff Bayhi, and the Diocese of Baton Rouge, for failing to report the alleged abuse.

Louisiana law requires the clergy to report sexual abuse, but it is inconsistent with regards to the confessional. On the one hand, it grants an exception to what is learned in the confessional, but other parts of the state code contradict this provision.

At issue is a critical First Amendment right: if priests violate the seal of confession, they face excommunication. Fr. Bayhi said he would not testify and would take the risk of going to prison. The diocese stood by him. "We're just always happy when the court upholds religious liberty," Fr. Bayhi said.

We hope courts throughout the nation take note of this important ruling.

THE NEED TO BE ENTERTAINED

William A. Donohue

Virtually everyone I know is sick and tired of the presidential debates, and it matters not a whit whether the person is a Republican or a Democrat. The general consensus is that the debates have become a circus, a nasty set of exchanges that do little to inform. But, boy, do they entertain. That, unfortunately, is the problem.

We are so bored. Ennui is everywhere, begging for relief from our listlessness. Constantly in need of being entertained, our tolerance for serious fare has declined markedly, leaving us impatient with settled conditions. So we reach for a button that will light up our senses with an audio or video experience that will send us into orbit. It works for a while, but it never lasts: the drudgery of daily living always

returns, setting in motion the need for the next tonic.

What does this have to do with the presidential debates? Plenty. If we really wanted to have serious debates, there would be no live audience; just the candidates and the moderators. Take away the live audience and much of the problem would be solved: the candidates would have no one to gin up, and there would be no screaming fans or foes chiming in. A serious debate would also insist that as soon as someone interrupted another candidate, he or she would be asked to leave the stage.

With the theatrics eliminated, the circus element would vanish. But who would watch? Absent the entertainment factor, we'd be stuck listening to some pretty boring people speaking about some pretty boring things. This is not a matter of conjecture: before and after "Super Tuesday" there were some really heated Republican debates—things got out of hand. Then came the pivot: the next debate, hosted by CNN, was so sober that the media said it was boring. The people agreed.

We want to be entertained. Just ask priests or teachers. Priests have a hard time reaching the faithful these days because our attention span is so short. Consequently, those who do not know how to give a homily often wind up telling jokes or walking down the aisle asking parishioners sophomoric questions. Teachers who can't teach show movies, have guest lectures, arrange day trips, or ask students to make presentations. That way they avoid being labeled a bore on student evaluations. The faithful and students may be entertained, but that is all.

We are so bored that sporting events can no longer stand by themselves. We have fireworks at ballparks, scoreboards that light up the sky, computer graphics that make us dizzy, loudspeakers that tell us when to shout, and concerts in the middle of the Super Bowl. The games just aren't enough to satisfy anymore.

Pick up almost any newspaper and what you find is a big celebrity section, a big movie and TV section, and a big sports section; only the news section has shrunk. Take away the puzzles and cartoons (more entertainment), and not much is left.

Come to think of it, the newspaper example isn't very good. People don't read much anymore—that takes work, and work is not entertaining.

When I was a kid, everyone read a newspaper on the Long Island Railroad; now few do. Today they are texting their friends (which is better than listening to their inane conversations on their cell phones). Or they are watching a TV show on their phones. Some are playing games. Others are listening to music. Still others are sending pictures of their baby or dog. They are all being entertained.

Matters get worse when passengers get to their destination. People are increasingly oblivious to their surroundings, so wrapped up are they with their phones. With headsets in place, they set off on foot looking down at their phones—God forbid they might miss a message—never watching where they are going. So they crash into others. It's not just an urban problem: young people have been known to walk directly onto train tracks in rural areas, not hearing or seeing an oncoming train. One that I read about survived; the other did not.

Drivers do the same. How many times have you sat at an intersection waiting for the car in front of you to go when the light turns green and it doesn't. Invariably, the driver is too busy checking his emails to notice that the light has changed. Self-absorbed, these dopes tie up traffic and then resent it when you blow your horn. My horn is about worn out.

In the past, when friends and family members went to a restaurant, they actually spoke to each other. Now no one speaks—they are texting someone who is equally bored with his

company. It has gotten so bad that I have had to tell the boys at my local pub to leave their bloody phones at home. A bar is supposed to be about camaraderie and conviviality, not talking to an invisible man.

It is not going to be easy getting through this presidential season. But if you get bored, reach for something other than your phone. Bend your elbow.

Will Wilder and Me: The Quest For Literacy

Raymond Arroyo

You could say that the Will Wilder series, my first foray into fiction, started as a “soap opera.”

When they were younger, my children, during bath time would demand original stories for entertainment. To get them to advance to the next step in the bathing process, I would indulge the kids desire for new stories night after night. Most were slapstick tales about an impetuous, rule-breaking kid with a good heart and lousy judgment. Though I can't recall many of those yarns now, the head-strong boy and his family I had created never left my imagination. Over the years I made several attempts to situate those characters in a coherent storyline, but nothing really satisfied me.

Then while in Ireland on a trip with my sons, I stumbled across an article that changed everything. Irish media reported that a treasured relic from the thirteenth century, the heart of St. Laurence O'Toole, had been stolen from Christ Church Cathedral. O'Toole is apparently the patron saint of

Dublin. The relic had been locked in a cage on a wall of the cathedral for more than 700 years. "With gold, and silver artifacts everywhere, why would anyone want to steal an ancient relic?" I thought.

Then it hit me: What if a 12-year-old boy—the one I had been telling my children about for years—snatched a relic of rare power? And what if that relic had been rescued and hidden away by his great-grandfather? I finally had a solid concept to drive my story. Over several years, I refined the narrative, expanded it and unearthed the supernatural, slapstick thriller that I suppose had been waiting for me all along.

In *Will Wilder: The Relic of Perilous Falls*, 12-year-old Will hurts his brother in a backyard accident and is punished for weeks. While on yard duty he learns that his great-grandfather, the founder of the town of Perilous Falls and an avid collector of antiquities, has hidden a special relic away. It is credited with holding back the town's floodwaters and is believed to possess healing abilities. Will figures he'll borrow the relic, touch it to his injured brother, get out of his punishment, and return it before anyone is the wiser. But once he snatches the relic, floodwaters begin to rise and Will unwittingly unleashes an ancient foe that will change his life and those around him, forever.

There are frights and fun galore in the series, as well as some characteristics unique to middle-grade fiction. While Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson* series has Greek mythology at its center and Ms. Rowling uses wizardry to propel *Harry Potter*, my story turns on sacred antiquities; historical items capable of summoning divine power. Many early readers have loved that most of the relics and items mentioned in the book can actually be found in museums, churches and libraries all over the world. I wanted to draw young people to the wonder of these touchstones and to help them experience the thrill of discovering them in person, no matter where they might live. The conversations that the book has already instigated among

young and old are beyond gratifying.

This is also a rare children's book that features an intact, if imperfect, family. Think about it, most children's literature centers around an orphaned or abandoned child making his or her way in the world. It has become such a cliché that I guess I unintentionally sought to avoid it. What I ended up with was a rich family saga about how the past can profoundly shape our future and how the cherished touchstones of our ancestors can light our way forward. It also speaks to our unique gifts and how it is incumbent upon each of us—especially parents—to nurture those gifts in the young.

More than an entertaining series (which I hope it is), Will Wilder is part of a larger mission for me. It is an effort to encourage literacy in the young. Through conversations with librarians and educators, I became sensitized to the scourge of illiteracy facing our country. The numbers are staggering. 21 million Americans can't read at all. According to the Department of Justice, one-fifth of high school graduates cannot read their own diplomas! 67% of all US fourth graders scored below proficient in reading. 67%! When you begin to understand the correlation between low fourth grade reading scores and incarceration later in life, the picture is very dire indeed. So I decided to do something about it. Last year I launched a literacy initiative.

We call it *Storyented* because I believe stories orient us in the world and help us discover our place in it as we grow. Our tag line explains it all: *Find your story. Find your way.* So once a month on TV, radio, and the internet we host a *Storyentation*: a chance for readers to connect with their favorite authors, live. I interview a best-selling author for a half hour about their career and newest work, then readers call in with their own questions. It's sort of a large scale, real-time, book club and it has been very well received. There are few places for authors to discuss their work in a big way, and few things are more important than putting young people in

touch with good authors and good books. In addition to the reader/author engagement, Story-ented also provides families with literacy strategies to get their kids reading. We're at [www. Storyented.com](http://www.Storyented.com) and I hope you'll join us for a Storyentation sometime soon.

Ray Bradbury ominously said: "You don't have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them." There are a lot of reluctant readers out there today—especially boys. My hope is that the Will Wilder books will furnish boys and girls with intriguing tales they'll want to read.

Following a visit to a Catholic school in New Orleans last week I received the most wonderful letter from the principal. She wrote in part:

You had an impact on my students that can't be described. I watched my middle schoolers, BOYS, walk into school this morning holding your book. I saw students reading in morning care... I was floored. I don't know how you did it, but you got my kids to read. Thank you. Thank you.! Thank you !!!

I created Will to transport kids to places they might never have a chance to go and in an amazing turn, he has taken me to places I would never have gone—and together we have touched those we never expected to meet. Like Will, I suppose I have my own daring quest: to insure that kids find other epic, funny, moving, uplifting, and even scary books that will excite them enough to lose themselves in the art of reading. Our very future depends on it.

Raymond Arroyo is the New York Times Bestselling author of Will Wilder: The Relic of Perilous Falls, managing editor and lead anchor at EWTN, host of the network's "The World Over" and a Catholic League Board member. For more information on his book and a trailer visit www.raymondarroyo.com.

“THE REAL O’NEALS” WILL DIE

“The Real O’Neals,” based on the life of a foul-mouthed, raging anti-Catholic bigot, Dan Savage, is blackening up Disney’s Snow White image and tarnishing the reputation of its ABC network as well. Now the corporate boys and girls have a new problem: the show’s ratings.

During the March 8 episode of “The Real O’Neals” time slot, its competitors on CBS and NBC kicked butt:

- “The Voice” (NBC) drew an audience of 13.53 million
- “NCIS: New Orleans” (CBS) drew 8.48 million
- “The Real O’Neals” (ABC) drew 3.99 million

Independent of the offensive fare, the ratings spell big trouble.

This recent episode was replete with the kinds of jokes that we would expect from the show’s immature writers. Here’s a sample line from mom O’Neal: “Remember grandma’s picture book full of tortured and bleeding saints that used to give you nightmares?”

Following a commercial break, Kenny, the confused homosexual teenager, is seen standing by a toilet spraying cologne in front of a statue of Our Blessed Mother. He then informed us that “Confession is confidential so even if I kill someone he [the priest] can’t tell you.”

The theme was Lent and that, of course, yielded discourse on the horrors of being “judgmental” (bashing Catholics, Bill Donohue guesses, is not being “judgmental”). Another keeper was the mom saying, “Well, who is to say Satan wasn’t Irish?” Indeed, viewers were treated to a St. Patrick’s Day Parade

float featuring Satan.

This show is pure rot, from beginning to end. Look for an early death.

PREVIEWS OF “THE REAL O’NEALS” BOMB

Bill Donohue comments on the preview episodes of “The Real O’Neals,” which aired last night:

“The Real O’Neals,” Disney-ABC’s portrayal of an Irish-Catholic family that was inspired by anti-Catholic bigot Dan Savage, kicked off with two previews last night; it officially debuted March 8. While more sophomoric than in-your-face offensive, the episodes were, predictably, filled with anti-Catholic stereotypes. Seemingly the “perfect” Catholic family, the O’Neals’ dysfunctions were revealed over these two episodes:

- An overzealous mother who abuses statues of the Virgin Mary: one is used to stop her son from having sex; another is placed above the toilet as a reminder to put down the seat
- The hypocrisy and destructiveness of her religious zealotry, which is pushing her and her husband into divorce and “screwing up our kids”
- A middle son who comes out as gay and flushes his girlfriend’s unused condoms down the toilet under the watchful eye of one of those Virgin Mary statues; a daughter who is stealing the money she is supposed to be collecting for charity, and who uses her Catholic school science project to deny the existence of God; and an

older son who is anorexic—until Mom makes him pancakes shaped like the face of Jesus

We also met a parish priest who owned a Lexus but invoked his “vow of poverty” when asked to make a charitable donation; “judging nuns” who casted “dirty looks” at the O’Neals once the family’s dysfunctions have been discovered; and a woman parishioner who, competing with Mrs. O’Neal for standing in the parish, delights at the downfall of the family’s reputation.

In short, “The Real O’Neals” is an artistic and moral flop. Just like Dan Savage and the show’s writers.

IRISH CENTRAL DEFENDS ANTI-CATHOLICISM

Anyone who is vaguely familiar with Irish Central knows it is a pro-Irish, anti-Catholic, website. It regularly trashes the Catholic Church’s teachings on sexuality, and is the leading force seeking to rip the Catholic roots from the St. Patrick’s Day Parade. It recently defended anti-Catholicism.

Dan Savage is a raging anti-Catholic bigot, something we pointed out a couple of weeks ago in the *New York Times*. But to Irish Central, he is a poor, misunderstood, gay activist. Though he uses words so vulgar that no respectable media outlet would print them, his gutter-talk was defended by Irish Central: it said he is a “satirist” who is “rightfully mad as hell” at the Church. Importantly, Savage’s filthy mouth is not directed at just anyone: he savages the Eucharist, the Virgin Mary, popes, cardinals, and priests in the most vile terms imaginable.

Irish Central is so hate-filled that it even justified Savage's attempt to infect an innocent person with his sick bodily fluids by licking the doorknobs in the office of his victim. "Donohue conveniently neglects to mention anything about the flu," it says, "only referring to Savage's 'sick bodily fluids.'" Poor Savage got the flu. Guess that changes everything.

To read the truth about Savage, see our *New York Times* ad and the one that it refused to print on pages 10 through 13.

Bill Donohue was glad Irish Central printed this article—it made his case better than he ever could.

POPE, TRUMP, AND IMMIGRATION

Recently, Bill Donohue commented on how the media liked to ask Donald Trump to opine about the pope's position on immigration, but no one wanted to ask Hillary Clinton about the pope's position on abortion. Soon after, the pope was asked about Trump's position on immigration. The pope made headlines everywhere for saying, "Trump is not a Christian." But there is much more to this story than what was being reported.

First, the question to the pope inaccurately reflected Trump's views. Quite frankly, the pope was set up. The reporter told the pope that Trump "wants to deport 11 million illegal immigrants, thus separating families." That is patently false. On August 16, 2015, Chuck Todd, on "Meet the Press," asked Trump, "You're going to split up families. You're going to deport children?" To which Trump said, "Chuck—no, no. No, we're going to keep the families together. We have to keep the families together." When asked where they would go, Trump

said, "We will work with them." So the pope was misled.

Second, after misrepresenting what Trump said, the reporter asked the pope "if an American Catholic can vote for someone like this." This is rather amazing: Do some in the media now want the pope to tell Catholics who to vote for!

Third, the pope, unlike the media, was totally fair to Trump. He said, "A person who thinks *only* about building walls, wherever they may be, and not building bridges, is not Christian." (Donohue's italic.) He added that "I say only that this man is not Christian if he has said things like that...and in this *I give the benefit of the doubt*." (Donohue's italics.)

In fact, Trump's official position on immigration lists three principles: "A nation without borders is not a nation"; "A nation without laws is not a nation"; "A nation that does not serve its own citizens is not a nation." The last two principles are never mentioned by the media, thus do they distort Trump's thinking. The bias, which is as strong on the right as it is on the left, is astounding.

NEW YORK TIMES LIES AGAIN

The *New York Times* not only covered up for gay activists gone mad, it lied to its readers. Bill Donohue said "lied" because the Catholic League corrected the record in January, notifying its public editor, Maggie Sullivan, about it.

In January, reporter James Barron recounted the events that led up to gay protests of the St. Patrick's Day Parade. "The controversy began in December 1989 when thousands demonstrated outside St. Patrick's Cathedral over statements made by Cardinal John J. O'Connor on abortion, homosexuality and

AIDS.”

Here is what Marc Santora and William Neuman wrote on March 18: “The controversy began in December 1989. With New York City in the midst of the AIDS epidemic, thousands demonstrated outside St. Patrick’s Cathedral to protest statements by Cardinal John J. O’Connor of the New York Archdiocese on abortion, homosexuality and AIDS.”

Both versions are incorrect: The protesters invaded the Cathedral. Here is what Donohue wrote on January 11, the day the original piece was printed:

“The *Times* editorial of December 12, 1989 describes how demonstrators ‘stormed St. Patrick’s Cathedral.’ It notes that ‘They entered the cathedral and repeatedly interrupted the service. They lay down in the aisles, chained themselves to pews and sought to shout down Cardinal O’Connor as he said mass. One protester is reported to have disrupted even the administering of communion with an act of desecration that deeply offended worshippers.’

“The act of desecration was spitting the Eucharist on the floor. No wonder Mayor Ed Koch, who was there, said he was shocked by the ‘fascist tactics’ of the protesters.”

ANN COULTER’S CATHOLIC PROBLEM

Four years ago, Ann Coulter flashed her political IQ by concluding that Mitt Romney was the most conservative candidate in the race. Her new hero is Donald Trump. That’s fine, but what is not okay is her nasty tendency to rant

against Catholicism.

When the dustup between Trump and Pope Francis recently erupted, Coulter swung into action. She started out with a few throw-away lines about the pope's authority, questioning his free speech rights and the Church's tax-exempt status. Then she really got into the gutter: "Quick Quiz: Btwn Trump & the Pope, which one runs a huge multinational that protects subordinates when they rape little boys?"

Vintage Coulter. Not only does she know nothing about the First Amendment, she cannot contain her bigotry.

The real problem with Coulter is her unmanliness: whenever she smears someone, or makes bigoted comments, she runs, defensively saying that we don't get her jokes. But she is not joking. Nor is her buddy Bill Maher when he lashes out at the Catholic Church. They are serious, and as such they should be held accountable. The comedic facade doesn't work anymore.

If Trump were wise, he would sever all ties with this bigot. He doesn't need to be tied to her Catholic problem.