

SNAP HONCHO IN A SNIT

Just as we entered the new year, the director of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), David Clohessy, was deposed in St. Louis regarding allegations that he issued news releases based on information contained in legal documents from attorney Rebecca Randles; those documents were subjected to a gag order last August by Jackson County, Missouri Circuit Court Judge Ann Mesle.

Lawyers for Rev. Michael Tierney and the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph sought internal documents and correspondence from SNAP; Clohessy may have to turn over 23 years worth of such information. Judge Mesle ordered Clohessy to comply with her ruling because he “almost certainly has knowledge concerning issues relevant to this litigation.” An appeal by SNAP to the Missouri Supreme Court failed, thus forcing Clohessy to testify.

This is just the beginning. The Catholic League has long charged that there is an incestuous relationship between SNAP and attorneys like Rebecca Randles; she is a protégé of Jeffrey Anderson, and both have been feeding and greasing SNAP for decades. It’s now time to blow the lid off this scam and get to the bottom of it.

Clohessy never tires of lecturing the Catholic Church on the need for transparency, yet when he was placed in the hot seat, he rebelled. That is why he held a press conference in St. Louis blaming the Catholic Church for playing hardball. We’re delighted the Church is taking a tougher stance. The anti-Catholic activists at SNAP were so shaken by these events that one of its staffers accused the Missouri Supreme Court of “an unprecedented, bullying maneuver” for simply enforcing the law.

Talk about turning the tables! This was a great way to start

the new year.

SNAP HAS SNAPPED

After SNAP director David Clohessy was deposed, it appeared that he and SNAP outreach director, Barbara Dorris were cracking up. Indeed they both justified dual standards of justice.

“We believe that there are two standards of transparency,” Clohessy said. He maintained there is one standard for “institutions that have enabled thousands of pedophiles,” and another for “organizations that enable kids to be safer and expose heinous crimes.” In other words, there should be one standard of justice for the Catholic Church, and another for SNAP.

A defense lawyer seized the moment. He noted that Clohessy wants bishops to suspend accused priests “the minute they are sued for abuse.” Accordingly, he then asked, does this mean SNAP should close its doors immediately if it is sued for defamation or libel? Clohessy flatly said, “No.” Interestingly, Clohessy refused to answer many questions during his deposition, complaining that “Church defense lawyers will likely ask that we be found in contempt of court and possibly fined or possibly jailed.” Reporters described him as looking “shaken and teary-eyed.”

Barbara Dorris is so contemptuous of priestly rights that she scoffed at the idea that an accused priest “has the same legal rights as any citizen.” She plainly said, “But of course, he doesn’t.” She then made the inane comment that a priest cannot marry or work at an abortion clinic (as if the civil law prevented him from doing so). But we know what she meant.

Looks like SNAP has snapped.

SNAP PROTECTS CHILD MOLESTERS

The weekly St. Louis alternative newspaper, *Riverfront Times*, recently published an exchange between a reporter and SNAP director David Clohessy.

Clohessy was quoted as saying the following about St. Louis Archbishop Robert Carlson: “Archbishop Carlson and his brother Catholic bishops have hired, hidden, transferred, defended and enabled child molesters. SNAP hasn’t. Carlson and his colleagues have ignored and concealed their crimes. SNAP hasn’t.”

We left it to Archbishop Carlson’s lawyers to respond to Clohessy, but we couldn’t allow Clohessy to lie about his own personal involvement in the cover-up of a known child molester.

In the 1990s, David Clohessy knew about his brother Kevin’s sexually predatory behavior and never called the cops. Yet he had the audacity to condemn others for not doing what he manifestly refused to do when he learned that Kevin, a priest, was abusing young men. The SNAP director said at the time, “he’s my brother; he’s an abuser. Do I treat him like my brother?” Well, Mr. Clean, accused priests are the brothers of their bishop, so what would you say to both parties?

Dr. Steve Taylor is a psychiatrist who is sitting in prison for downloading child pornography from his computer. He is well known to SNAP—he was one of their go-to shrinks for years. Indeed, the convict is so well loved by SNAP that the founder of the organization, Barbara Blaine, intervened on his

behalf and wrote to the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners pleading with them to cut Taylor some slack.

In other words, SNAP has hired, hidden, defended, enabled, ignored, and concealed the crimes of child molesters.

VICTIMS' LOBBY MEETS IN BOSTON

The professional victims' lobby met in Boston over a January weekend for the "10th Anniversary Celebration & Conference." Shamelessly, they "celebrated" the 10th anniversary of media reports on the Boston clergy sexual abuse scandal. The speakers had quite a resume. We know from past experience what drives them.

Before the event we told the media what they should expect at this conference:

- Actors and artists would set the tone with melodramatic precision
- Activists from SNAP, along with a suspended priest, would discuss their conspiracy theories about the "evil institution"
- Two psychiatrists and a psychologist would entertain the crowd with their fully discredited notions about "repressed memory"
- Bigoted lawyers would delight the audience by drawing analogies between Islamic terrorists and the Vatican
- Reporters and columnists who are so full of hate that they can't see straight would recount their paranoid stories.

We were right on the money. Prior to the conference, one of the speakers, Kathy Dwyer, gave priests, brothers and nuns a “heads up.” These are her exact words: “PLEASE NOTE: We are asking any clerics (male or female) who may be planning on attending the conference to, out of respect for survivors, wear street clothes only.” But the only ones who were likely to attend didn’t need to be told this anyway.

The event ended on a Sunday at Boston’s Holy Cross Cathedral. But not for the purpose of going to Mass. Fittingly, they held a demonstration. What they were demonstrating about no one really knew—the homosexual scandal effectively ended in the mid-1980s—but no doubt they still found a way to bash the Catholic Church. It’s what they do.

BOSTON VICTIMS BASK IN MISERY

Leading up to the meeting of the professional victims’ lobby in Boston, the *Boston Globe* ran a front-page story on the conference “celebrating” the tenth anniversary of the *Globe*’s series on the scandal in the Boston Archdiocese.

Many Catholics, including the clergy, have grown weary of those who claim they were victimized by a priest decades ago and are still not satisfied with the Church’s response. No matter what the Church does—doling out millions, providing counseling and therapy, mandating training sessions for every employee to guard against abuse—it’s never enough. It’s time for some straight talk: these people don’t want to move on, and that’s because they have too much invested in maintaining their victim status.

Consider the remarks printed in the *Globe* by alleged victims.

- “The church has failed miserably, miserably, miserably”
- “I’m very underwhelmed”
- “I don’t think it’s anything [the reforms] to brag about”
- “If anything, it’s worse than we ever thought”

Evidently, facts don’t count to these people, but for the rest of us, they do. Here are two worth pondering:

- Most of the abuse took place over a quarter-century ago, from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s
- No institution, secular or religious, has a better record combating sexual abuse today than the Catholic Church

Many of our friends, Catholic and non-Catholic, agree with us on this but are afraid of voicing their sentiments in public for fear of being branded insensitive. However, there is nothing noble about allowing intimidation to skew the truth. It won’t happen at the Catholic League. Indeed, we are more emboldened than ever to get the truth out.

BOSTON VICTIMS’ SUMMIT BOMBS

The day after the “10th Anniversary Celebration & Conference” in Boston, we called the event a complete bomb.

You know it’s a bomb when a whopping total of 75 people turned out for the conference, 25 of whom were the speakers. Not only is it a bomb, it is nothing short of embarrassing. It’s clear that the professional victims’ lobby is spent. Everyone else has moved on, but those who have an ideological, emotional or financial interest in continuing this saga cannot let go. What a pitiful bunch of malcontents.

We saw this as a good sign. Instead of harping on decades-old cases of sex abuse, Catholics were talking about the announcement of the elevation of Archbishop Timothy Dolan and Archbishop Edwin O'Brien to cardinals. Catholics have showed that they are not interested in wallowing in negativity.

BOGUS CHARGES AGAINST PRIESTS ABOUND

Rev. Michael P. Orsi

***Catholic Priests Falsely Accused: The Facts, The Fraud, The Stories* by David F. Pierre, Jr., Mattapoisett, Massachusetts:
www.TheMediaReport.com**

David Pierre is one of the country's leading observers of the Catholic Church abuse narrative. In *Catholic Priests Falsely Accused: The Facts, the Fraud, the Stories*, he presents case studies backed by hard data which clearly demonstrates some of the injustices foisted on Catholic priests and the Church.

The Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) is identified by Pierre as a major culprit in advancing the destruction of innocent priests. He outlines the methods used by the group to manipulate clergy abuse charges and how they play the media. The organization, he says, provides talking points and staging tips for accusers and their attorneys at the workshops they hold at their yearly conference. SNAP's tactics, he says, have grossly exaggerated the clergy abuse problem in the Church. He contends, that with data garnered by expert crime investigators, it is not unreasonable for an observer to deduce that "approximately *one third*" of all accusations against Catholic priests are entirely false or

greatly exaggerated.

It is important for Church officials to challenge and, if need be, litigate every accusation. The results of these investigations should be publicized. And, if the allegations prove to be false, the name of the accuser, if an adult, should be made public. Not to do so lets the lies live on and continue to undermine the Body of Christ. "According to a sworn declaration submitted to the Los Angeles County Superior Court in November of 2010," Pierre writes, "attorney Donald Steier claimed, 'One retired F.B.I. agent who worked with me to investigate many claims in the Clergy Cases told me, in his opinion, about ONE-Half of the claims made in the Clergy Cases were either entirely false [or] greatly exaggerated.'"

Other culprits identified by Pierre adding to the abuse frenzy are plaintiffs' attorneys and Church insurance carriers. Attorney fees, which are usually up to forty percent on a settlement have made pursuing allegations, even false ones, very lucrative for this new breed of ambulance chasers. These attorneys realize that many claims will be settled out of court because insurers and the Church would rather pay out "large scale blanket settlements" than go to trial where litigation costs will be exorbitant. They also fear losing a case due to a jury prejudiced against the Church or sympathetic to those claiming victim status. This may, in fact, incur greater putative and compensatory damages.

Dubious claims of the widely discredited psychological theory of "repressed memories," have been used to put priests at a significant disadvantage in obtaining justice. In these cases, individuals claim that a priest molested them years earlier and assert that they repressed the memory due to the trauma. The alleged incident is often recalled, Pierre says, "through the suggestive questioning of an unprincipled therapist and, often under hypnosis." Naturally, hypnosis leaves people open to the power of suggestion. Many experts believe that repressed memory is simply bogus. Dr. James McGaugh, from the

University of California, Irvine, an expert in the area of memory, states, "I do not believe there is such a thing as a repressed memory... And there's absolutely no proof that it can happen. Zero. None. Niente." Dr. Richard J. McNally, Director of Clinical Training in the Department of Psychology at Harvard University claims, repressed memory therapy is "the worst catastrophe to befall the mental health field since the lobotomy era."

Regarding Diocesan Review Boards, Pierre says, "they are very often composed of individuals who have profound sympathy for victims of abuse. These panels consist of child welfare advocates, social workers, therapists, child psychologists," as well as "individuals who were actual victims of clergy abuse." Perhaps this is why these boards tend to be less than sympathetic to accused priests. Another reason for these review boards' bias may be the "credible" evidence standard that they use when determining whether a priest should be put on Administrative Leave. "When an accuser comes forward to allege abuse from decades earlier," Pierre writes, "one can deem the accusation 'credible' simply because the accuser can show that he or she lived at a given time in the same general geographical area of a priest."

Media bias needs to be met with the facts. For example, Pierre says, a book by Marci A. Hamilton—a professor at the Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University, in New York City—entitled, *Justice Denied: What America Must do to Protect Its Children* (2008), excoriates the Catholic Church for its handling of the abuse crisis and accuses the Catholic leaders of orchestrating the sexual abuse of children. Yet, according to legal experts, the book contains "a number of outright falsehoods and misleading passages." For instance, when attorney L. Martin Nussbaum and his wife, Melissa, reviewed Hamilton's book for *First Things* in an article entitled, "MarciWorld" they noted that "Hamilton claimed, that in some states, a child abused at age seven would have only until the

age of nine to sue the abuser. That is simply false in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.”

Pierre notes that, “Hamilton has represented SNAP and has done extensive legal work for the organization.” She is also, according to Pierre, closely associated with the Philadelphia district Attorney’s Office, which Pierre shows to have a particular animus toward the Church. He says, “the Philadelphia D.A.’s Office has not targeted any other organization for its past abuses with the same prosecutorial zeal.” Pierre then cites statistics that show public school teachers have a much higher rate of abuse than Catholic priests. Yet, they have escaped the same kind of scrutiny by Hamilton.

Hamilton is a strong advocate of dropping the “statute of limitations” for private institutions under the auspice of “protecting children.” However, Pierre claims, “Hamilton has made it her crusade to lobby state legislatures to remove the statute of limitations in order to inflict maximum financial and institutional damage to the Catholic Church.” Alarmingly, Pierre points out that, “public schools have a special immunity from being sued.” As a government entity, they are shielded by the doctrine of “sovereign immunity,” which only allows an accuser a limited window to make an accusation and limits lawsuit damages, making claims less profitable for attorneys and their clients.

It is important, Pierre believes, to aggressively market the fact that the Catholic Church now has the safest environment in the world for protecting children. Data collected from The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) indicates allegations of abuse of minors to be on average less than 10 per year since 2005 nationwide. The Church’s safeguards and accomplishments need to be widely disseminated by Her authorities and related organizations.

The most troublesome accusations are those leveled against

dead priests. Pierre reports that, according to CARA, 43% of all priests accused of abuse in 2010 were deceased. How can the dead defend themselves? The simple solution in many cases for a diocese is to simply pay out. And, unfortunately in some dioceses, the deceased priest's name is added to a diocesan website listing him as a pedophile or accused of being one. The intangible losses in doing this far exceed the monetary costs. The ruination of a priest's reputation along with the sorrow that it causes to his family and those whom he had served who have fond memories of him— giving them their First Holy Communion, presiding over their marriage, or offering them advice and consolation in times of need— is a source of great discouragement among the faithful.

There is an old cliché, "the best defense is a good offense." Church officials have been too reluctant to expose the lies about priests, the obvious anti-Catholic bias in the media, the greed and the anti-Catholicism of some in public office which feeds the abuse crisis. This has caused a decline in clergy morale and vocations to the priesthood. Large monetary settlements have hindered Catholic evangelization and charitable work and have led to the bankruptcy of some dioceses. But, worst of all, it has also caused a loss of confidence by many Catholics in the institutional Church.

A sure way to ameliorate the injustices perpetrated against priests and to rehabilitate the reputation of the Church would be to re-examine the cases of those priests found guilty due to false or dubious abuse claims filed against them. The widely reported case of Fr. Gordon MacRae, of the Diocese of Manchester, New Hampshire, would be a good place to start. Pierre outlines it in his book. It is quite obvious that Fr. MacRae did not receive a fair trial according to the facts cited in a piece published in *The Wall Street Journal*. MacRae's accuser, a fifteen year old boy, had a lengthy juvenile record and presented doubtful evidence in trial testimony. The judge even went so far as to order the jury to

“disregard inconsistencies in Mr. Grover’s (his accuser) testimony.” Father MacRae, protesting his innocence, refused a plea bargain deal of two years in prison. Now he is serving a 67 year sentence. His own, now retired, bishop believes him to be innocent. What a moral boost this would be for the nation’s priests and for the Catholic laity if the Church in New Hampshire began a petition drive to have this case reopened!

In a chapter entitled, “Kathy Told a Story,” Pierre chronicles the tale of an Irish woman, Kathy O’Beirne, who wrote of the abuse she sustained at one of Ireland’s institutions that cared for young women, the Magdalene Home. She reports being severely abused by nuns and having been raped by a priest. “Her chronicle,” says Pierre, “enthralled readers.” It received rave reviews and achieved bestseller status. Except, the woman’s siblings claim “Our sister was not in the Magdalene Home... Our sister has a self-admitted psychiatric and criminal history, and her perception of reality has always been flawed.” A further investigation revealed Kathy’s book to be a fraud. Nevertheless, this book continues to secure five star reviews in Amazon.com’s U.K. site and has respectable sales in England and Ireland.

If the late Paul Harvey were able to comment on this book, he would have certainly said, “And now the rest of the story.” This book is concise, easy to read, filled with verifiable data, and points out the problems with both the ecclesiastical and civil responses to the clergy abuse crisis.

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