

“NIGHTLINE” GUILTY OF INJUSTICE AND HYPOCRISY

On the April 16 edition of ABC’s “Nightline,” there was a segment on the sex abuse scandal in the Catholic Church that focused on Chicago Archbishop Francis Cardinal George. The segment took him to task for the way he handled a case dealing with Rev. Daniel McCormack. We blasted “Nightline” for its failure to deliver the whole story and ABC for its glaring hypocrisy.

In the segment, “Nightline” focused on the decision of Cardinal George to allow Rev. McCormack back into the ministry after the police investigated abuse allegations and found him innocent. This is what happens every day in America—those found not guilty resume their jobs. Cardinal George’s decision was the logical consequence of innocent until proven guilty. The fact that McCormack was later guilty of groping a male doesn’t change what’s at stake. Moreover, “Nightline” failed to tell the whole story.

In the initial case, the police and Cook County prosecutors did not find any credible allegations against Father McCormack. Interestingly, the Department of Children and Family Services concluded that McCormack may have been guilty but never notified the archdiocese or the school where the priest was working that it was conducting an investigation. To top it off, the agency didn’t even bother to tell them after it suspected he might be guilty.

What was really mind-blowing was ABC’s hypocrisy. In 2003, Steve Bartelstein, the New York anchor at WABC-TV, was accused of sexually harassing and stalking a male writer and producer at the station. WABC launched an investigation and concluded there was no evidence to remove Bartelstein and allowed him to keep his job; he was fired in 2007 for another matter. And

last year in Miami, ABC reporter Jeff Weinsier at WPLG was arrested for carrying a loaded gun on school property while investigating school violence. He kept his job, too. If ABC had subjected them to their Cardinal George standard, they would have been canned immediately. Does ABC have any shame?

We called on ABC to make an apology to Cardinal George and all priests.

APOLOGY OR DEBATE DEMANDED FROM DOBBS

*****BREAKING NEWS!!! DOBBS PRAISES POPE!!! SEE JUNE CATALYST*****

On April 17, after addressing the Catholic Church's failure to act responsibly in handling the sex abuse scandal, Pope Benedict XVI addressed the social context in which the scandal took place, asking, "What does it mean to speak of child protection when pornography and violence can be viewed in so many homes through media widely available today?" CNN's Lou Dobbs took issue with the pope's words and blasted him on two separate occasions. Following Dobbs' outburst, Bill Donohue challenged him to a debate. Here is what Dobbs said on April 17:

- "The idea that the pope would come here and criticize the United States this way is, I think, first of all bad manners. I don't care if you're *infallible* [sarcastically]."
- "It is absolutely out of all proportion with the world scale. The most welcoming nation, the most generous nation on the face of the earth. And for the pope to have this attitude and to make these comments is, in my opinion, absolutely

repugnant.”

- “It seems to me that if one is going to reach to the level that he did, you have to have some moral standing for it. And what has been happening to this Church... seems to leave open his standing, cleaning up his own house.”

On April 19, Dobbs bashed the pope again:

- “Well, he’s in America, partner. And you know what, when we’re in Rome, we’ll do as Rome does. But when Rome comes to America, how about a little salute and stay out of our politics.”

- “I don’t care if he listens or not, but I’m going to send him the message [of staying out of politics] because I really don’t appreciate the bad manners of a guest telling me in this country and my fellow citizens what to do.”

What Dobbs didn’t mention was that magazine (the flagship publication of Time Warner—the parent company of CNN) ran a cover story entitled “Why the Pope Loves America.” During a speech at the White House (given before Dobbs’ outbursts) the pope praised Americans for their charity saying, “America has traditionally shown herself generous in meeting immediate human needs, fostering development and offering relief to the victims of natural catastrophes.” If the pope was so accusatory of the United States, how does Dobbs explain this?

Furthermore, what the transcripts of Dobbs’ remarks don’t reveal is the sarcastic and insulting tone he delivered them in. In a news release Donohue said, “Dobbs can either apologize for his offensive remarks, or he can invite me on his show to debate him.”

USAFA VICTORY WAS SWEET

During the week of April 7, we learned that some faculty and cadets were mandated to attend an April 9 seminar at the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA); the seminar featured footage from the virulently anti-Catholic movie, "Constantine's Sword." We issued two news releases lambasting the academy for playing host to the film. Because of our relentless effort, the USAFA brass came to their senses and pulled the plug on the film before the event began.

It all started when we caught wind of an article in the *Colorado Springs Gazette* stating that the USAFA would host an event titled, "USA's War on Terror: Not a Battle Between Christianity and Islam." The seminar featured three speakers representing the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF), an advocacy group for the separation of church and state. The speakers scheduled for the event were former U.S. Ambassador Joseph Wilson; author Reza Aslan and MRFF president Mikey Weinstein. The seminar was made mandatory for hundreds of cadets and faculty whose coursework intersected with the topic discussed.

The seminar was billed as an event on the war on terror and to counter speeches that were given at the USAFA in February by three "former terrorists" who allegedly "demonized" Islam. The event was also meant to combat the alleged heavy-handed evangelical Christian proselytizing that occurred on the campus. Weinstein argued that the current war on terror "is not a war of fundamentalist Christianity against fundamentalist Islam," but rather it's "a war that involves providing for the national defense of the American people pursuant to an armed forces that is governed by the U.S. Constitution."

The *Gazette* also reported that during the seminar, those attending would watch clips from the controversial film,

"Constantine's Sword." The seminar, which was intended to combat the war on terror and religious intolerance, only fanned the flames of bigotry.

The movie is based on a book of the same title, written by disgruntled ex-priest James Carroll. The book version says that the Gospels are inherently anti-Semitic and that unless the New Testament is gutted to the point where the messiahship of Jesus is rejected, Christian anti-Semitism will not end. Carroll's book was discredited by the *New York Review of Books* saying of the author, "He is not a historian; everything he has to say on the subject of anti-Semitism is borrowed from other writers, and much of what he offers as fact is in reality highly contentious."

The movie version of "Constantine's Sword" goes a step further. The movie's director, Oren Jacoby, asked the following question on the movie's website: "Is there something in the DNA of Christianity—the majority religion in our country—that demonizes 'the other' and is inclined toward violence?" Although the USAFA announced that the clips of the film that were to be shown didn't contain anti-Catholic content, how did they justify showing the clips at all? Would they show clips of a film that suggested blacks or Jews to be inherently violent, even though the clips would not portray that message? Of course the answer is no.

On April 8, we sent copies of books by noted authors to the Academy's library. These books refuted the propaganda that was on display in the film. We also contacted the officials of the U.S. House and Senate who oversee the military academies. On April 9, we applied more pressure. We wrote to the Board of Visitors of the USAFA and asked them to launch a probe of what was occurring; we copied their letters to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees.

We felt the added pressure was necessary, especially after USAFA director of communications, Johnny Whitaker, placed a

phone call to his counterpart at the Catholic League, Kiera McCaffrey. Whitaker admitted that he had seen the entire film and that it was indeed anti-Catholic but that those clips wouldn't be shown. He also told us that Weinstein wanted to include some inflammatory clips, but that the USAFA denied that request.

The event went on as planned on April 9, but one thing was removed from the agenda—the officials at the USAFA decided to cancel showing the clips from “Constantine’s Sword.” Indeed, we were delighted at this result. We were pleased that the USAFA made the right decision not to provide a platform for such a bigoted film.

On April 10, Lt. Gen. John F. Regni, the superintendent of the USAFA, called Bill Donohue and had an honest and fruitful exchange. Donohue commended him for his intervention that proved to be decisive. We are glad that Lt. Gen. Regni recognized that this film did not contribute to the overall aim of the seminar and omitted it from the event.

We issued a news release later that day stating: “We know that there have been accusations of religious bias on the campus, and if that is true, it needs to be rooted out. What can never be tolerated is to slam one religion while purportedly addressing religious intolerance expressed toward another religion.”

Because the clips were cancelled, we considered the matter closed. And in fairness, we wrote to all of the public officials we had previously wrote to asking them to ignore our request for an investigation. We thank all of those who helped us achieve this victory.

USAFA TIMELINE

HERE'S HOW THINGS STARTED...

The following is the April 8 letter from Bill Donohue to the USAFA superintendent, John Regni:

Dear Lt. Gen. Regni:

By now I'm sure you know how furious many Catholics are for allowing Mikey Weinstein to run roughshod over them. In the event you are truly interested in having a real debate about the Catholic Church and anti-Semitism, perhaps you will direct faculty and cadets to the books I've sent to your librarian (one of which is enclosed). If you would like many more copies, please let me know. And there are plenty of other books I can send as well, if you would like.

I can assure you that we are going to monitor all future events that touch on matters Catholic. Weinstein isn't the only one who is prepared to deal with this issue.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

HERE'S HOW THEY DEVELOPED...

The following is a list of all the officials we contacted about this outrageous assault on Catholicism:

Senate Armed Services Committee: Daniel K. Akaka, Evan Bayh, Saxby Chambliss, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Susan Collins, John Cornyn, Elizabeth Dole, Lindsey Graham, James Inhofe, Ted Kennedy, Carl Levin, Joe Lieberman, Mel Martinez, John McCain, Claire McCaskill, Bill Nelson, E. Benjamin Nelson, Mark Pryor, Jack Reed, Jeff Sessions, John Thune, John Warner, Jim Webb, Roger F. Wicker; **House Armed Services Committee:** Ike Skelton, John Spratt, Solomon Ortiz, Gene Taylor, Neil Abercrombie,

Silvestre Reyes, Vic Snyder, Adam Smith, Loretta Sanchez, Mike McIntyre, Ellen Tauscher, Robert Brady, Robert Andrews, Susan Davis, Rick Larson, Rick Cooper, Jim Marshall, Madeleine Bordallo, Mark Udall, Dan Boren, Brad Ellsworth, Nancy Boyda, Patrick Murphy, Hank Johnson, Carol Shea-Porter, Joe Courtney, Dave Loebsack, Kirsten Gillibrand, Joe Sestak, Gabrielle Giffords, Niki Tsongas, Elijah Cummings, Kendrick Meek, Kathy Castor, Duncan Hunter, Jim Saxton, John M. McHugh, Terry Everett, Roscoe Bartlett, Buck McKeon, Mac Thornberry, Walter B. Jones, Robin Hayes, Todd Akin, J. Randy Forbes, Jeff Miller, Joe Wilson, Frank A. LoBiondo, Tom Cole, Rob Bishop, Michael Turner, John Kline, Phil Gingrey, Mike Rogers, Trent Franks, Bill Shuster, Thelma Drake, Cathy McMorris-Rodgers, Michael Conaway, Geoff Davis, Rob Wittman; **Board of Visitors:** Ms. Sue C. Ross, Mr. Charles P. Garcia, Dr. Gail A. Jaquish, Ph.D., Mr. A. J. Scribante, State Senator Jackie Winters, Mr. H. Gary Morse, Senator Bob Bennett, Mr. Terry C. Isaacson, Congressman Doug Lamborn, Congressman Peter DeFazio, Senator Wayne Allard; **Secretary of the Air Force:** Michael W. Wynne; **Secretary of Defense:** Dr. Robert M. Gates

HERE'S HOW IT ENDED...

The following is the April 10 letter from Bill Donohue calling off the investigation and putting the issue to rest:

As the enclosed news release indicates, the United States Air Force Academy cancelled yesterday's planned airing of clips from the documentary "Constantine's Sword." The change in yesterday's presentation on the war on terror came about after protests from the Catholic League.

I spoke with Lt. Gen. John F. Regni, Superintendent of the Academy, and commended him for his decision not to subject cadets to this anti-Catholic film. As I told him, we consider this matter closed, and are withdrawing our request for a formal investigation by the Board of Visitors into events on the campus.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.