

TAKING ON THE CULTURAL ELITE

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The cultural elite reek of hypocrisy so bad it's nauseous. In this issue of *Catalyst* alone, there are three huge examples of just how bad this duplicity is; they involve Hollywood, CBS and the *New York Times*. In each instance, there was a confrontation with the Catholic League, and in each case we won.

On January 22, the movie "Hounddog" premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in Utah. There was nothing anti-Catholic about the movie, but it was troubling on several fronts nonetheless. Here was a film starring a 12-year-old girl, Dakota Fanning, playing a 9-year-old who gets raped. Moreover, her father gets into bed with her naked, and she dances around in a suggestive fashion in her underwear.

This is sick. What is even sicker is that the same Hollywood gang that loves to beat up on Catholics, and is quick to damn the few priests who have molested minors, is celebrating child rape as entertainment. That's why I unloaded.

The reaction of the Hollywood gang to the Catholic League's criticism of the movie was astounding. It was as if we had no right to comment. What really drove them nuts was our decision to contact the Feds. I wrote to the Justice Department division that deals with these matters asking for an investigation. Specifically, I wanted to know if the federal child pornography laws had been violated. The Justice Department turned the case over to the FBI.

The movie's producer went bonkers. In typical Hollywood form, she lashed out at me making anti-Catholic remarks. With her back to the wall, she tried to spin the issue by saying the film was a good educational tonic on the subject of sexual abuse. But as I said on TV, the movie was never billed as

"Health 101." In any event, we won: no distributor picked up the movie. So as it stands now, it will never make it to be big screen.

On another issue, when we learned that the Eternal Gospel Church was marketing more of its anti-Catholic junk, we immediately inquired into which company owned the billboards (we have known the sect was anti-Catholic for years). What a surprise it was to learn that CBS Outdoor, a division of CBS, was the owner. The strategy we outlined proved successful.

I asked Kiera McCaffrey, our director of communications, to call CBS Outdoor and let them know of our interest in placing an ad on one of their billboards along I-65 in Indiana (near Kentucky) where the anti-Catholic messages were posted. The agent was very happy to get our business and said he would mail us pictures of some billboards in the area so as to facilitate our decision where we wanted our statement to appear. He said the cost was \$4,000 for one month, and \$6,000 for two months. He even said he would get his graphic designer to work up our ad for us. Kiera expressed delight. He then asked, "What do you want the billboard to say?" Kiera replied, "CBS Sponsors Anti-Catholicism."

The poor agent was aghast. He said he'd have to get back with us. The next day he told us that our request had been denied: CBS has a policy that does not allow anything defamatory to be said about CBS on its billboards. How convenient. But, as we reasoned, they obviously don't have a problem regarding statements that are defamatory about Catholicism.

In the news release on this subject, we listed the e-mail address of Wally Kelly, the CEO of CBS Outdoor in Phoenix, Arizona. He was inundated with letters of protest, so much so that only a few hours later the agent called to say the anti-Catholic signs were coming down.

We had planned to run an ad in the *New York Times* about the

John Edwards matter, but just as we were about to go to press we had to pull it: that's because the two offensive employees had just resigned. You can see the ad we planned on p. 5. Interestingly, it was originally rejected because it allegedly violated the newspaper's policy on obscenity. So I rewrote the first part and resubmitted it. Here is what it said.

"This ad was to begin with two vile anti-Christian quotes penned by two women who work for John Edwards. Though neither contained obscene words spelled in full, the *New York Times* said it violated their policy and therefore rejected them. The first quote was a reference to the Virgin Mary being injected with semen by the Lord. The second used a patently vulgar term to describe religious conservatives. The first part of the word is 'mother.' To read what was actually said, please see the Catholic League website."

Guess what happened? A few minutes later we got a call back saying the *New York Times* had reconsidered its objections and decided that our original submission was okay. What obviously entered their minds was the prospect of having the big free speech guys look rather prudish when compared to the Catholics over at the Catholic League.