

APPENDIX I
 INGRAM'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE EDITOR LETTER

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Witch Hunt in the Heartland

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The story that follows has taken place in and around Kansas City. But it could have unfolded in any city in which a stealthily leftist publication has a near monopoly on the production and distribution of news -- in other words, just about every city in America.

"Monsignor backed the four altar boys up against the wall, "shoulder to shoulder." writes Judy Thomas of the *Kansas City Star*. "Then he forced them to perform sexual acts on each other and on him."

"If you ever tell," the monsignor reportedly warned the boys, "you'll be kicked out of the Catholic Church, your parents will disown you, and you'll die and go to hell."

So begins Thomas's ultra-Gothic, front-page series, "The Altar Boys' Secret," served up by the *Star* just in time for Christmas.

Although the Catholic League has accused Thomas of "anti-Catholic bigotry," the accusation is too narrow. A local evangelical leader has more precisely identified the *Star*'s larger goal, namely the "the destruction of the Christian pillars that have stabilized the country for more than two centuries."

The above incident allegedly took place thirty years ago. Moved by the *Star*'s inflammatory coverage of a current story--that of a fetishist priest who took pictures of little girls-- a local plumber Jon David Couzens recently filed suit against the monsignor in question, the now 85 year-old Thomas O'Brien. Judy Thomas picked it up from there.

She claims that her series was based on the "sources' recollections" -- plural. The problem is that Couzens was the only source. Two of the boys have since died, a fact that Thomas shamelessly exploits, and the fourth boy and the monsignor both deny that the incident ever took place.

"This is all 30 years ago," O'Brien told the *Kansas City Star*. "There's just no truth to any of these things. Is there any end to this? It's just killing me."

If O'Brien has an obvious reason to reject the story, the fourth participant, unnamed by Thomas, does not. He rejects it anyhow. "I don't remember anything like that," said the man. "That just doesn't sound right." Thomas quotes this fellow for the first time deep into the third part of this three-part series.

This fourth man is not likely "repressing" an unpleasant memory. Some years back, I wrote and directed the documentary *The Holocaust Through Our Own Eyes*. As I saw up close, the 45 or so survivors we interviewed could not repress the horrors they experienced even if they wanted to.

Couzens was a sixth-grader at the time. The other boys were all older. Having been one, I know how Catholic adolescents think. That a Monsignor would recklessly assault four of them minutes before Mass and that the four would quietly submit strikes me as beyond the belief of all but the most devoted Dan Brown fans. To be sure, O'Brien may not be innocent of all the accusations against him, but it takes a deep institutional bias to run so incredible a story on so little evidence.

The *Star* has that bias in spades, and it informs the paper's reporting on all things conservative. This I have learned the hard way. In 1998, I had lunch with its then editor, Mark Ziemann, and encouraged him to cover the American Heritage Festival in Carthage, Missouri. "3 days of family oriented festivities"--that some friends of mine were organizing.

Note to self: be careful what you ask for. Ziemann sent Thomas, who found one booth selling conspiracy literature and promptly alchemized this innocuous patriotic gathering into a re-staging of the Nuremberg rally, ruining my friends' business and their reputations along the way. The organizers would sue Thomas for her "wanton, willful, and reckless disregard for the truth."

The following year, Thomas and James Risen, now of the *New York Times*, co-authored, *Wrath of Angels*. According to one typical review, the book documented a phenomenon many of us had not noticed, namely the pro-life movement's "dizzying descent into violence."

In 2000, Thomas culminated four years of research with a purple prose exposé on AIDS in the priesthood. For the record, priests die of AIDS much less frequently than the one meaningful control group, other single men. No matter. Thomas had an agenda, and she was sticking to it.

As Thomas saw it, this apocryphal crisis struck the priesthood because the Church considered homosexual relations "a sin" and failed to instruct avowedly celibate men in the "practice of 'safe sex.'" Figure that one out. By the way, although Thomas alleges engagements between priests and "teenage boys" in the altar boys series, she nowhere uses the words "gay" or "homosexual."

In 2007, Thomas shifted her attention from Catholics to evangelicals. Of the hundreds of pastors in the area, she somehow chose to probe the finances of the one pastor who most prominently defended the life cause in the Kansas City area, Jerry Johnston of the First Family Church in Kansas.

Wrote the church's board chairman of Thomas's evidence-free front-page series, "Doubt is the author's poison. Doubt is a toxin that overwhelms reason, pollutes trust, and invidiously propagates dissension. The result, destruction of a major local impediment to the sacred causes of the radical left." So relentless was the series that it did ultimately succeed in undoing First Family Church.

Were the *Star* consistently opposed to the sexual abuse of minors and the concealment of the same, one might be more tolerant of its excesses. But such is not the case. In 2002, I offered Arthur Brisbane, then the *Star* publisher and now the public editor of the *New York Times*, an exclusive on a story generated by my friends at Life Dynamics of Texas.

A young woman, impersonating a 13 year-old, legally recorded her calls to more than

800 abortion clinics. She was seeking advice on how to abort the fictional love child spawned by her and an imagined 22-year-old beau. In almost all states abortion clinics are subject to mandatory reporting laws. Nevertheless, 91 percent of the clinics volunteered to help the girl destroy the evidence of statutory rape. One of those clinics was Planned Parenthood's in suburban Kansas City. Despite the local angle, Brisbane had no interest.

This criminal mischief was more than theoretical. In the years 2002 and 2003, 166 girls 14-and-under had abortions at Kansas clinics. According to the state laws, the clinics should have referred all these cases to the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services. Of the 166 abortions, however, the clinics reported only two.

When then Attorney General Phill Kline tried to expose the abortion clinics' ongoing cover-up, *Star* editors fought his efforts with such zeal that in 2006 Planned Parenthood bestowed its top national editorial honor on the paper. Oblivious to the hypocrisy of it all, the *Star* continues to resist attempts to make the clinics report child rape.

The editors have instead turned their perverse righteousness on Kansas City Bishop Robert Finn. Sent to the dioceses six years ago to clean up decades of liberal abuse, Finn now finds himself indicted on charges of covering up for a pornographer priest.

Only an ambitious prosecutor in a thoroughly Democratic county inflamed by years of Catholic-bashing would have dared to bring such flimsy charges against a sitting bishop. The charges will not stand, but the devil could not have done a better job than the *Star* has of demoralizing local Catholics and stoking the flames of anti-Catholic hysteria.

At the end of the day, Bishop Finn may find himself quoting Reagan's falsely indicted Labor Secretary Ray Donovan, "Which office do I go to to get my reputation back?" Barring divine intervention, those will not be the offices of the *Kansas City Star*.