

... Eternal City  
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September 3, 1992

## Claims Cardinal Was Pressured To Abandon Call For Film Code

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This letter of support, incidentally, was forwarded to Jarrard through Cardinal Mahony's office. That same month, Dr. Jarrard arranged for Cardinal Mahony to endorse an updated code as a seminar in Hollywood sponsored by the Hollywood anti-Pornography Coalition and the Southern California Knights of Columbus. Also speaking at the seminar were Dr. Backe of the Christian Film and Television Commission and Alan Sears, executive director of the U.S. Attorney General's Commission on Pornography.

Backe's new code would forbid "detached and protracted acts of brutality, cruelty, physical violence, torture and abuse," "indecent or undue exposure of the human body," and "obscene speech, gestures, or movements."

It also stated that "adultery and illicit sex, sometimes necessary plot material, must not be explicitly treated or justified or presented attractively," and that "movies should not infer that homosexual relationships are the accepted or common thing."

The cardinal's speech, delivered Feb. 15, gained national attention. Cardinal Mahony "deplored the 'moral breakdown,' the society, and said that there is a direct link between rising immorality and violence and the entertainment industry."

"While many factors have contributed to the breakdown of our social fabric, it is evident that the entertainment media and the values they preach to our young people play a significant role in this steady decline," the cardinal said at the time.

"Regrettably, the distinction between what is real and what is fantasy and deplored."

### Immediate Reticence

Although the cardinal stopped just short of mandating such a code for Hollywood, saying a code could be "one response to the current absence of moral standards in the production and distribution of films and television productions, a chorus of critics from the film and entertainment industry immediately jumped on the cardinal, accusing him of censorship, establishing an inquisition, and imposing his brand of morality."

Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, the Hollywood agency that rates movies, strongly denounced the proposed code. "A group of people is wise enough or directly inspired to make value judgments for other people," he said. "What they're trying to do is go back to the dark ages, when they had an iron fist on people who wanted to tell their stories through film."

Arthur Kropp, president of People for the American Way, charged that the cardinal was joining the fanatics of the religious right. "He has launched an effort to return to the days when individual religious exercised greater control over what all Americans could see on television and in theaters."

And Jack Shea, vice president of the Directors' Guild and an adviser to the United States Catholic Conference, contacted Mahony to express his opposition.

On local radio and television talk shows for a straight week, the cardinal was ridiculed by announcers and listeners, and savaged by the Los Angeles press. But then there was also a great deal of support from those who Dr. Jarrard calls "the good people — our side, those who believe in the Judeo-Christian code."

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Among them, backing the cardinal were Lewis film critic Mike Medved and numerous Catholic and Protestant publications. "It seemed as if Hollywood were ready to do it," said Jarrard, "and then something got in the way."

And the cardinal backed out. Three days after the cardinal's remarks, Dr. Jarrard was informed by the cardinal in a letter that the commission he had served on for six years was being reorganized.

On Feb. 20th as a way to increase public support for the current film code, the Christian Film and Television Commission, based in Atlanta, sent out a press release stating "Vatican Backs Revised Motion Picture and Television Code."

Chairman Ted Backe, who drafted the code, Mahony came forward with the support of the Vatican and Cardinal Family, says. "The message of our two efforts will be very effective in bringing the Motion Picture Code into existence."

The day after this press release was sent out, Dr. Jarrard was faced with Cardinal Mahony's explanation as to why he had changed his mind.

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### What's The Real Reason?

Archdiocesan spokesman Bill Rivers said The Wanderer that the release of the Trinitis letter "was the final straw" that led to Jarrard's firing. "But for several months prior the cardinal had been concerned that Jarrard was using the commission for his own agenda — was taking positions never cleared by the archbishop," and was losing effectiveness.

Rivers also said that the cardinal was embarrassed by Jarrard's proposal of a new movie code, a proposal the cardinal did not back.

Jarrard responds, however, by stating that he had been working on gathering support from Catholic bishops around the world "for months and months" and that the cardinal was aware of his work.

"What happened," Jarrard explained, "was that Cardinal Mahony thought the movie code was a good idea, because he didn't know everything that was involved. But once his cabinet and Hollywood friends began informing him that such a code would prohibit movies from glorifying homosexual relationships, from promoting abortion, and he had to back down."

"Mahony was making me the fall guy for only trying to do the public good, when he put the pressure on him as well."

Sensitively Even after several months, the proposed movie code was shelved. It was not until late last year that the archdiocese began a campaign distancing Mahony from the idea.

On April 7th, at his annual Mass and liturgy for the Entertainment Industry, the cardinal announced that bringing back the decency code "is the last thing I wish to do."

In May, The Tidings, the archdiocesan newspaper, carried an article by editor Alfred Dublin, headlined, "No Movie Code: Spread the Word." Complaining that many Catholics still do not "grasp that the cardinal does not want, or endorse, any kind of pre-production movie code."

It seems a sad commentary on media and religion reporting that several months after the original proposal to have the code, yet another statement about a code. It is even sadder that as of The Tidings press time, the cardinal's remarks have not been picked up by any other news media.

"Apparently, the cardinal's clear, concise, and realistic message is not the message the media want to hear. A hysterical and strident Church makes for better copy —

has constantly exhibited a sensitivity to the needs and rights of a free creative artistic community. (Shortly after the editorial appeared, Dublin left The Tidings, and is now a singer at a homosexual restaurant in West Hollywood.)

Leaking Documents In June, the furor over the cardinal's remarks at the February seminar had not died down, so someone in the chancery leaked to The Los Angeles Times a copy of the letter Mahony wrote to Jarrard.

The Times article provided Mahony the chance to explain that he never intended to support the idea of a code. "It is as the wrong end of the process," Mahony told the Times. "Ratings and codes only come into play when the production is done. We have to get to the creative end, to the beginning of the process — where you have the writers and directors."

The Times also quoted an official from an annual anti-pornography group, who spoke on the conference of anonymity. The official said that Jarrard fell in line because of pressure from film industry leaders, who were appalled at Mahony's association with Backe's fundamentalist group and his support for the strict movie code.

It is well-known throughout the Archdiocese of Los Angeles that producer Lew Wasserman, whose blasphemous *Law of Man* of Christ outraged both Catholics and Protestants, is a very close personal friend of Mahony, and a major financial supporter of the archdiocese.

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Fired Anti-Porn Chairman . . .

## Claims Cardinal Was Pressured To Abandon Call For Film Code

By PAUL LIKOUDES

LOS ANGELES — There was one paragraph in the Vatican's recent instruction to bishops on local communications that few journalists, secular or Catholic, noticed.

In that passage, the document reminded Catholics who work in the media — even in sales and distribution — that they have a "proper and particular responsibility" to promote only those products that support Catholic faith and morals. Furthermore, they must not cooperate in the distribution of works that offend faith and morals.

The Vatican instruction exhorted bishops not only to reign in their diocesan theologians, but to be aware of all that is going on in the world of culture in their dioceses, and to offer some guidance to Catholics working in the communications field, which would include the entertainment industry.

But the document serves as a time when the archbishop of Los Angeles, Roger Cardinal Mahony, is publicly — and covertly — continuing to back off from a proposal he made in February for a revised film code to restrain the immorality and violence in entertainment, and find a Catholic in his chancery who tried to bring Catholic principles to an interview with The Wanderer, the former chairman of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles' Commission on Obscenity and Pornography revealed how Cardinal Mahony tried to pressure from the

new code that would compel Hollywood producers to clean up their movies.

Until he was fired in February, Dr. Dennis Jarrard had served for six years as chairman of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles' Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, a position he held, he says, without — that they have a "proper and particular responsibility" to promote only those products that support Catholic faith and morals.

Among the most effective speeches Jarrard wrote for the cardinal was one delivered five years ago to a gathering of more than 200 law enforcement officials in Los Angeles and the U.S. Attorney, Department's Task Force on Obscenity and Pornography.

"We know what to do and what to say," Jarrard told The Wanderer, "and we got Cardinal Mahony's speeches covered by all the major newspapers in the United States and around the world. We made the archdiocesan commission extremely effective."

"We worked with all the major organizations — Morality in Media, the American Family Association, the Knights of Columbus, local officials," Jarrard said, "and we were repeatedly recognized for our contributions."

Jarrard also takes credit for Saari's "dropping of the Playboy label in its underwear and pornography putting its ads from Playboy magazine."

As chairman of the Christian Film and Television Commission, prepared this code.

The Hays Code, adopted in 1930 under pressure by the American bishops following a massive campaign in the Catholic press led by Dr. Sunday Visitor, prevented Hollywood from depicting scenes of immorality, indecency, gratuitous violence, and attacks on religion.

In Jan. 10th, 1992 letter to Jarrard, Alfonso Cardinal Trujillo, president of the Pontifical Council for the Family, endorsed the idea of a revised code, suggesting even that it be "extended to the production of TV shows and videos."

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A national meeting on pornography in Washington, D.C. in October, 1989," Jarrard recalled, "I asked Cardinal Bernardini why the association took no stand on the two popular skin magazines, and Bernardini answered by gaveling the meeting to a close."

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