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Hand of God

Grim stuff

By: NINA MACLAUGHLIN
9/13/2006 6:32:24 PM



Paul Cultrera was molested and raped by his family's priest, Father Joseph Birmingham, in Salem in the mid '60s, and he kept the secret into his 40s. Joe Cultrera, Paul's younger brother, looks at the clergy sex-abuse scandal in a way that is both poised and impassioned, examining how the role of the Church changed — and didn't — for the Italian-American family. Paul, a warm and engaging natural-foods-co-op manager, recounts the abuse, his denial, and his eventual confrontation with the event. Grim stuff, emphasized by the director's use of old photos of the monstrous Birmingham. Grimmer still is what Paul unearths in trying to come to terms with what happened, with the numbers of victims, with the cover-ups and the reassignments of priests even after abuse allegations were made. The outrage is apparent, but Joe Cultrera manages to rise above an irrational and indignant damning of the Church, in part by showing its continued importance in the lives of his parents.



On the Web

Hand of God's official Web site: <http://www.handofgodfilm.com/>

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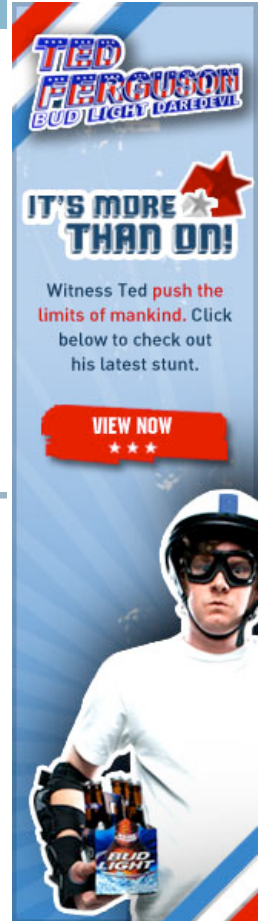
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