

Are Tennessee (and Many Other) Public Libraries 'Grooming' Our Children?



Children's books containing transgender and homosexual content on display at the library in Columbia, Tennessee.

by Roger L. Simon

Public libraries are intended to be taxpayer-sponsored facilities for the education of our citizens—children as well as adults: a place for reflection and for gaining knowledge.

At least, that's the way they were when I was growing up.

Maybe not so much anymore. Lately, they seem to have been commandeered for other purposes.

That was the conclusion I drew from an email I received from Aaron Miller of Columbia, Tennessee, a city of about 40,000

people that's slightly over an hour south of Nashville.

It's largely farm country and would seem to be in the American heartland, where traditional values reign. But Miller—a county commissioner (Columbia is the seat of Maury County) and an Air Force veteran who served in Afghanistan—was telling me something quite the contrary.

The recent Pride Month at Columbia's [library](#) was used for purposes that were anything but traditional for the children of that community.

Twenty-four books were put on display at the library's front desk, the very first thing anyone would see should they enter, whether they are age 5 or 55. In other words, they were clearly the library's featured books.

Some of the titles were "This Book Is Gay," "Beyond the Gender Binary," "Out!," "Rainbow Revolutionaries," "Were I Not a Girl," and so forth. Others hid behind the completely overt, with titles such as "And Tango Makes Three," although the essence was the same.

As the author of 13 books—and working on my 14th—I am quite aware of the value of library and bookstore placement. Indeed, publishers pay bookstores to have their books out front for a reason.

Unfortunately, in the case of the Maury County main branch, every one of the 24 books on prominent display was a children's book—at a height that would easily attract a child—replete with "friendly" hearts, and containing highly sexualized content tilting strongly gay.

The sexualization of many of these children's books was extreme. Some gave actual Kinsey-type advice on erogenous zones, evidently for young teenagers or even 12-year-olds—almost all of that boy-on-boy or girl-on-girl.

“Grooming” anyone?

These books weren't just over-sexualized. They used sex to push heavily left-wing agendas—anti-capitalism, critical race theory, critical queer theory, critical theory in general, as well as the rest of that crypto-communist mumbo-jumbo we are propagandized with daily in our biased educational system and media.

In this case, however, it was pitched directly at young children, many of whom before they even had heard of the founding documents of our country and its principles.

But they would learn they could choose their own gender, whatever that ends up being. First things first—or something.

As an author, I am pretty close to a free speech absolutist with the usual caveats (fire in a crowded theater, etc.) but I do—old fogey that I am—believe there is such a thing as age appropriateness.

Books shouldn't be given or offered to you until you have at least a modicum of the maturity necessary to understand them and their implications. That's difficult enough for adults.

Hollywood, whatever you think of it, has its rating system. The Columbia library, given the placement of this so-called children's literature (the books are, thankfully, back on the shelves for now and not in everyone's face), hasn't understood the necessity for that—nor have numerous libraries across the country.

So, it was with some interest that I accepted Miller's invitation to motor down to Columbia for a protest he and his new group—the Foundation for Liberty and Freedom—wished to lodge at a monthly meeting of the library board.

When I arrived at the appointed address, I found a group of perhaps 15 concerned citizens gathered with Miller. It didn't

seem overwhelming. But after I accompanied them on a short march to the library, everything changed.

What seemed like well over 100 people were there, plus all those already using the functioning facility. This was far more than could fit in the 30-seat meeting room.

And it wasn't just those protesting the promulgation of the controversial books in attendance. A gay rights group was there as well, many dressed in matching red outfits, some with the traditional rainbow bandanas.

That atmosphere was tense, as was the man in charge of the meeting, Joel Friddell, the library board chair, who kept saying he had never seen a turnout like that and kept nervously thanking everybody for their "interest." (The man in full actual control of book selection and placement, Director of Libraries Zachary Fox, wasn't there.)

Friddell quickly tried to arrange for a postponement so there would be "more room," but the audience wasn't having it. A compromise was then decided on with three speakers from each side.

Cordiality was advised and adhered to, except for one irate woman who, while speaking out of turn, accused the gays present of Satanism and stomped off. It wasn't a great look, no matter how you view homosexuality. Nobody present appeared to approve.

Then, a bearded man from the rainbow group made an impassioned but now-conventional speech demanding understanding for his group and referencing his own suicide attempt in the process. Sad, yes, but it seemed a bit like special pleading, considering the number of gays who had come out in recent years with little or no opposition. The man was only 30.

He was followed by a couple of statements on each side, then Miller spoke with what I thought were well-prepared words that

addressed the crux of the matter. He also called for the resignation of Fox, although, as noted, the director wasn't in attendance.

Here's a telling excerpt:

"As a father, my line in the sand was crossed when Columbia library exhibited a bright, colorful display of no less than 28 books for this past Pride Month, all of which were written and marketed specifically for minors, especially young children. It is also important to keep in mind that the American Library Association and similar governing bodies categorize 'young adults' to as young as 12, so any of these books were AT BEST, available to 12-year-olds.

"This, of course, assumes that NO child younger than 12 has ever picked up a book outside of their recommended age bracket, just as no 12-year-old has ever watched a PG-13 movie on Netflix.

"Among these books included content written by a boy that started dressing in drag and removing his clothing for money at the age of 11, and has (according to the book), founded the first QUOTE 'drag house for drag kids.' It included books encouraging the young reader to discover what their QUOTE 'sexual pleasure looks like,' depictions of masturbation, instructions on how to pursue life-altering bodily mutilation like double mastectomies and castration, and encouraged chemical treatments that result in lifelong infertility, higher rates of cancer, and other side effects that we are only now learning more about."

Miller also said he had no opposition to gays and no interest, like much of today's America, in what consenting adults do in the privacy of their homes.

I drove home trying to understand why so many in the "progressive" gay movement want our children to be gay or transgendered these days, instead of just accepting the

victory of the gay rights movement.

I know many gay conservatives who have no interest in “grooming” and, indeed, oppose it. Some are good friends.

The only way I can think of to stop all this is for parents to stand up. To do so, however, they will have to confront, among others, the librarians, a group of people who are heavily indoctrinated on the way to their professional accreditation as Masters in Library Science.

But at least the parents are making an effort in Columbia. Bravo to them!

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