

# Howard Stern gets Librarian Fired?

Imagine getting fired for doing your job.

That's exactly what happened to a librarian we'll call "Ms. D," in Weslaco, Texas, when she ordered Howard Stern's latest autobiography *Private Parts* for the library in which she works.

That is part of her job. Giving customers information, shelving, stocking, as well as the other duties you see in a librarian's do. Part of Ms. D's job was also to order books from *The New York Times* best-seller list for the library. Upon seeing Stern's book on the list, she ordered it.

Well, all books hit the fan. Even though *Parts* was put on reserve (reader had to request it at desk), one of the regular patrons began to complain vigorously, claiming the book contained vulgar material, and should not be in Weslaco's fine library (information is from Friday, Sept. 30 "Donahue," 4 p.m., local CBS channel 8).

Somehow the complaint got



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back to Ms. D's supervisor, who decided that she had been irresponsible in her duties, which ultimately lead to her termination. In addition to losing her job, Ms. D. was given a hard time. When Ms. D. began receiving death threats, it was the last straw. She packed up her belongings and fled, all the way to Indiana, where she has since moved in with her daughter.

And all she ever wanted to be was a librarian.

Well, as you can guess, Stern had a field day with the people that fired her (a city councilman and attorney, representatives for Weslaco, were guests on "Donahue"). Stern couldn't believe the audacity they had for firing this woman, merely for the ordering of his, or any other book.

When Stern asked "what about the many people who would want to read his book," the panel declined to answer, except to say that they considered *Parts* too unsuitable and offensive for their

readers, due to its explicit content (I believe the passage in question had to do with oral sex, or as Howard put it "tonguing").

Stern pointed out, with about as much restraint as possible, that their library did, in fact, have books with explicit sexual details, and cited a book on clitoral circumcision, which describes, in detail, the painful, surgical ritual that is still observed in many African cultures. When he asked the panel why it would be allowed and his book wouldn't be, they couldn't give an intelligent answer, and began to deny that Ms. D. had even been fired, but rather had resigned of her own free will.

Although most of you know Howard Stern is as far away from convention as clitoral circumcisions are, the point is how or what convention convinced this misguided board they could fire someone for ordering a book that would only be read if people chose to read it. (Hint: If you don't like something, you have a choice not to look at, think about or support it.)

We have a piece of paper that,

in very specific terms, tells us what we, the people have a right to do and not do. It's called The Constitution, and it guarantees everyone the freedom of speech, which means that if Howard Stern writes a book, we, the people, have the right to read or not to read it.

How could someone be so confused to think that choice was for them and not for "we the people" to make?

Stern said something to the same effect. He said he would help Ms. D. fight the supervisor's decision to fire her, even help her get another job. All she wants is her job back. She doesn't want to get rich, or make a political statement, or anything else.

All she ever wanted to be was a librarian.

Even though this doesn't directly affect this school or our lives, it is a dangerous situation. If someone who does not represent all of the people's interests is allowed to censor material in a public library, just because they feel it is offensive, it violates the people's rights, the people the

library is intended to serve in the first place.

It makes sense that a university library might not carry publications of the science fiction or romance novel sort. I can almost understand them not ordering autobiographies of certain media personnel.

What I cannot understand is how anyone would think that Stern's autobiography wasn't appropriate for the public library.

And besides, it's not what I think about it that counts. It's the fact that all of us have a choice to read what we want, and if that choice is threatened, it should not be tolerated in any form.

So the next time anyone attempts to make a choice for you, just say **no thank you!** I can decide for myself. After all, it is my choice to make, and you don't want me infringing on your right to choose now, do you?

—Jan Williams is an opinion columnist at The Rebel Yell.

# Marion Barry's Victory a Hollow One for D.C.

To the surprise, embarrassment and even horror of thousands of us here in the nation's capital, Marion Barry scored a remarkable primary victory that almost certainly guarantees him four more years as mayor of this city.

After his tragic and disgraceful previous 12 years as mayor, people here who did not vote for Barry are now saying that: "Many D.C. public schools could not open on time because of fire hazards and other long-neglected problems. Barry will never get the estimated half-billion dollars needed to bring the

Guest Commentary  
**CARL ROWAN**

public schools up to acceptable standards for fire codes, leaky roofs, clean toilets, etc.

•Barry is so despised by most members of Congress that he will never be able to

get funds to reduce the huge overall budget deficit that cripples almost every positive enterprise in this city.

•Barry corrupted the police force during his last years as mayor—even getting them to help conceal his cocaine habit. The District will never get all the funds it is due from the new crime bill, nor the trusting cooperation from other law enforce-

ment agencies that is essential to reducing an atrocious rate of major crime.

The horror predictions of the costs of electing Barry must not blind millions of leaders of a thousand American cities to the fact that there is a lesson for them in Barry's triumph.

We must acknowledge the force, however destructive, of black rage, minority alienation, and of poor people's anger and class hatred in America.

Barry won, because a veritable army of blacks aged 18 to 26, manned the political ramparts for him. Most were too young to know about the excesses, failures and outrages of his previ-

ous terms as mayor. But they knew a lot about how hard it is now for black Americans their age to find jobs—or hope—in our cities. They were driven by the rush of both white Democrats and Republicans to find space for them in costly, new prisons, even as no meaningful force was put behind efforts to give them learning, work and self-respect.

The danger is that Barry will betray these youths again, which will lift to more dangerous levels their hatred for the American system.

I am now resigned to watching my Washington, D.C. go through four more years of economic distress, official corruption and in-

competence, and abuse of power by Barry and the police whom he will make his cronies and partners in crime.

What I wish for the nation is a campaign, led by the president, by governors, by newspaper editors and publishers, and by business and civic leaders, to reduce the racial bigotry and class discrimination that make politicians like Barry so potent at the polls.

We either get this inspired new leadership or we all will pay a price that will bind us in conflict and shame for at least a generation.

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## Crime

continued from 5 report, and, finally, the SHC would advise the student to go to SPS (Student Psychological Services), who would also make a report.

If any on-campus agency were to attempt to gather statistics on this crime, this incident could be counted four times, because no one can compare their records.

We haven't even considered the possibility that the student may talk to a couple of friends, who might mention it to a professor. The trail is long and confusing.

We need solutions to campus crime. We need better information and education. Administrators may be the only ones who can help us with that.

Students also have responsibilities in this area. We need to demand more information. We need to remind administrators that this issue matters to us. In the meantime, we also need to be aware of crime and to educate ourselves about how not to be a victim.

The Clery's and other families of crime victims should not be the only ones concerned about crime. All student's need to be concerned.

If not, the problem will just grow.

—Nichole Davis is an opinion columnist at The Rebel Yell.

