

No Surprise Here: It Was Racism All Along

At the December 2020 meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control, board member Stephanie Armbruster referenced a letter received by the library (and forwarded to the board at their November meeting) as the reason for her request that there be speakers from "opposing sides" to offer "differing perspectives" on the proposed upcoming LEH grant-funded speaker series on voting rights.

LPL did get council approval to apply for a \$2700 Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities grant to fund expenses with a book discussion. Information on this grant was included in packets.

Denoting a letter received last month, Stephanie Armbruster requested that this program and the library remain apolitical and neutral. To bolster the image of LPL and garner community support, she suggested two speakers from opposing sides to offer differing perspectives.

At the board meeting on January 25, 2021, Armbruster insisted that her aim was not to cancel the program (though she would momentarily vote to do so), but to represent what she felt was the majority of Lafayette Parish constituents.

her that they could offer both sides. Armbruster stated that a mild search into the two speakers chosen showed them both as extremely far-left leaning, and could not represent both sides. The Library Board is trying to restore the image of the Library to the public. She stated that the majority of Lafayette Parish is conservative, and these constituents should be represented, presenting both sides.

Days later, on January 30, in a text message uncovered by the Supporters of LPL, Armbruster once again references the complaint letter which moved her so deeply to lead the charge against the Voting Rights Series:

The letter mentioned in the minutes above refers to a library owner (tax payer) complaint regarding a book selection for a book club: *New Jim Crow Laws* (Director defended it as a "classic").

Armbruster refers to the letter writer as a "library owner (tax payer)," and the specifics of the complaint: that it was in regards to the book selection for LPL's Beyond Black History Month Book Club for November, 2020. The book in question was *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander. Originally published in 2010, it has been lauded by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* as one of the best scholarly books of the last decade.

So what could possibly be the complaint about such a well-regarded, highly-researched, and oft-quoted book? What part of this letter from a "library owner" could have prompted Stephanie Armbruster to take up arms in defense of "the other side" of voting rights?

See for yourself:

From

COPY

To: Lafayette Public Library.
P. O. Box 3427
Attn: Teresa Elbersen, Director
Lafayette, LA 70502

Date: 20 October 2020

Subject: Book selection for Beyond Black History Month Book Club November 24, 2020:
"The New Jim Crow" by Michelle Alexander.

Lafayette Public Library Book synopsis: "In this incisive critique, former litigator-turned-legal-scholar Michelle Alexander provocatively argues that we have not ended racial castes in America: we have simply redesigned it. Alexander shows that, by targeting black men and decimating communities of color, the U. S. criminal justice system functions as a contemporary system of racial control, even as it formally adheres to the principle of color-blindness. The New Jim Crow challenges the civil rights community -and all of us - to place mass incarceration at the forefront of a new movement for racial justice in America."

Ms. Alexander's book is based on false information. Using false data, she extrapolated her extreme racial bias to generate a premise that is bogus, malicious, dishonest, disloyal, -one that incites civil unrest, community riots, and demands society become 'racist' in their views. Fiction such as "The New Jim Crow" was written to incite racial animosity, murder of innocent policemen and destruction of our country's laws, values, culture.

Factual statistics for all crime show that Blacks who represent 13% of our population commit 40% of all Crimes. This information supports searches by law-enforcement because policemen want to locate criminals, stop crimes, protect citizens. If blacks do not want to be searched, stop committing 40% of all crimes. Policemen are the "Good Guys;" they are not the "Bad-Guys." Every morning policemen wake and for very small wages work tirelessly to keep us safe from those criminals who would rape, rob and kill us. Constantly, society yields to public demands for limits on 'police brutality.' -But no limits are set on the criminal's daily savage, vicious deadly attacks on policemen when attempting to arrest the criminal for their crime.


Responsibility belongs to Blacks to stop committing 40% of all crimes in America. If black communities are 'decimated,' blacks need to look to themselves and re-think their behaviors to stop committing 40% of all crimes. For more than 50 years specifically in support of success for blacks, America has enacted numerous laws, and yet, Blacks continue to demand 87% Americans change our laws and our lives to suit Blacks' 13% capricious, racist demands. It is not up to the rest of America (87%) to change our society's values to accommodate those of blacks (13%) who continue to commit crimes and refuse to take responsibility for themselves. Blacks demand respect -but they give none. Black-parents must teach their children to act in honest, trustworthy ways; black-parents must teach their children to respect law enforcement, to do exactly what policemen tell them to do, and never to run away. Guilty persons run away; innocent folks do not run away. It is time for Blacks to begin to appreciate and value America -the same as other Americans do - like the Asians, the Europeans, the Hispanics, the Chinese, the Indians who have few of the many benefits routinely provided for blacks.

The fact that 13% of our population-Blacks commit 40% of all crimes needs to under-pin all research and printed matter -but 95% of liberals, 'fake-media' and blacks purposefully omit these facts in order to promote their False Narrative of racial bias and discrimination in America. The ultimate goal of these ANTIFA inspired authors is to eliminate all law-enforcement and to destroy America. Having traveled throughout the world, lived and worked many years in the countries of Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Iceland, I know as fact that America is the least racist country in the

Lafayette Public Library should always research the material, information, literature that is promoted under their aegis and never promote any person, organization, agenda that incites racial animosity or undermines public opinion by promoting false narratives based on bogus information with the aim to divide Americans and destroy American values.

As one of the primary, major Community Services used by thousands of residents, the Lafayette Public Library has a duty to the public to allow only those persons without radical political agenda the use of the Public Library platform to teach and influence their subscribers. The Lafayette Public Library should never support or promote this fraudulent, deceptive book designed to generate racial bias.

In order to prevent the incitement of racial animosity in our Community, I respectfully request that the Lafayette Public Library deny permission for the radical, false, "The New Jim Crow" narrative to be read and discussed on their premises at the Beyond Black History Month Book Club on 24 November 2020.



The letter, like the text, was obtained through a public records request by the Supporters of LPL. It shows, in no uncertain terms, the awful, sickening, racist beliefs this person holds, beliefs Stephanie Armbruster responded to, not with horror and outrage, but with a campaign to make sure this "other side" was represented during the LEH Voting Rights speaker series.

Director Elberson responded as diplomatically as possible, considering:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I received your letter dated October 20 and discussed it with the Library Board of Control.

The New Jim Crow title is not a new title, but one that was published ten years ago in 2010. It was reissued in 2020. The book club meeting where the title will be discussed is not an in-person meeting at the library, but an online Zoom meeting. Book clubs are not meeting in person at this time. Typically, this book club has 4-9 people attending to have an open discussion on the title. You are welcomed to attend the Zoom meeting and express your views to a larger audience.

To join the meeting on November 24 at 6:00, the link is as follows:

<https://lafayettela.libcal.com/event/7220803>

Sincerely,



Teresa Elberson
Library Director

Stephanie, however, seemed delighted, and jumped right in the morning after the December board meeting to follow up with Director Elberson:

Good morning,

Since it didn't come up last night, please tell me how the follow up to the lady who submitted the opposition letter regarding the selection for the book club went? I have another recommendation regarding contacting her again in hopes of resolving that specific situation.

Also, please forward to me the Bayouland Consortium Agreement.

Also, please send me the recording of the minutes from the meeting where you presented the information on Gayle Analytics. I believe it was the October meeting.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Stephanie

And later that same day, she was insistent on reaching out to this tax-paying "library owner."

Teresa,

I understood you would be calling her actually, to verify receipt of her letter, but maybe she didn't offer her number. I don't recall. Please provide me a copy of the letter and whatever contact information you have. I may want to follow up with her.

Thank you for the other info being sent.

Sincerely,
Stephanie

Besides the fact that it is absolutely unheard of for library board members to be involved in responding to complaints, which is clearly a job for library staff members, Stephanie's tying of this racist, bigoted complaint letter about an unrelated matter to the LEH Voting Rights grant is telling. In her mind, these issues were related; the letter represented the views of the library's true "owners" and so those views had a right to be paraded front and center at any and all library programs with any connection to issues of race and equality. That the letter is so obviously and flagrantly vile should leave no doubt in the minds of our community members just how much jeopardy our library is now in.

Time and time again, members of Supporters of Lafayette Public Libraries, as well as other concerned members of our communities have asked Stephanie Armbruster, Landon Boudreaux, and the other board members who voted to cancel this program who, exactly, they felt would represent the "other side" of voting rights. They obfuscated, avoided answering, and pushed the blame onto former Director Elberson.

Stephanie knew, though. She knew the entire time who that "other side" was. She not only knew, she championed that "other side," going so far as to vote, along with Landon Boudreaux, Doug Palombo, Hilda Edmond, and Adele Blue, to cancel the program.

The other side was racism.

It was racism all along.