From: Ivie Szalai [redacted]
Subject: May Book Complaints
To: community.comments@beaufort.k12.sc.us <community.comments@beaufort.k12.sc.us>
Sent: May 27, 2025 6:34 PM (UTC-04:00)
Attached: Sold by Patricia McCormick.pdf, Thirteen Reasons Why.pdf, The Lovely Bones (1).pdf, The Black Flamingo.pdf, The Art of Racing in the Rain .pdf

WARNING: This email originated from outside of Beaufort County School District's email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Please find the 5 attached book complaints for the month of May.
Please respond to this email so that I know they were received.
Thanks, Ivie Szalai
--

Ivie Szalai

South Carolina Instructional Materials
Uniform Parent Complaint Form

Your Name: Elizabeth Szalai

Title & Author of Contested Material *(one per form)*:
Sold by Patricia McCormick

School Where Contested Material is Located: Please see list below

Location of Contested Material *(library, classroom, etc...)*: Library

Contested Material is *(select one)*: ☑ **Printed** ☐ **Audio/Visual** ☐ **Online Resource**
☐ **Other** *(please describe)*: _____

I request that this Contested Material be *(choose one of the following)*:

☑ Removed from all schools/facilities in this District.
☐ Restricted to the following grade levels in this District: _____.
☐ Restricted to a student whose parent/legal guardian provides consent and is enrolled in the following grade levels in this District: _____.

Describe Your Reason for Contesting This Material *(attach additional pages as needed)*:

Available at the following schools:
Battery Creek High School
Beaufort High School
Bluffton High School
Hilton Head Island High School
Hilton Head Island Middle School
May River High School
Whale Branch Early College High School

Please see reasons below.

I, Elizabeth Szalai *(insert your name)*, **hereby certify that:**

- I am a parent or legal guardian of a student who attends a school within this District.
- I have read, watched, or otherwise reviewed the material I am contesting.
- I have made a good faith effort to address my concerns with School or District staff.
- I have not filed more than five (5) instructional material complaints (including this complaint) in this calendar month.
- I believe that this Contested Material is not suitable for use, availability, and/or unrestricted access in this District, pursuant to the requirements and definitions in Regulation 43-170, which are summarized on the following instruction page.

Signature: _____ **Date:** 5/27/25

This form is produced by the South Carolina Department of Education in compliance with Regulation 43-170 and may not be altered by any other party. It is effective beginning August 1, 2024 until further notice.

Sold
by Patricia McCormick

Available at the following schools:
Battery Creek High School
Beaufort High School
Bluffton High School
Hilton Head Island High School
Hilton Head Island Middle School
May River High School
Whale Branch Early College High School

Summary of Concerns:
This book contains explicit sexual activities including rape of a minor, prostitution, and explicit violence.

Page 102
(Violates the Regulation for educational suitability and age appropriateness.)
"Are you ready to work?" she says in my language.
I nod and say yes, then nod again, although I do not understand how these city people do their chores in such fine clothes and uncomfortable shoes.
I follow Mumtaz down the hallway lined with tiny rooms. We pass by girls sitting cross-legged on the floor. Girls drawing on tiger eyes. Girls spraying themselves with flower water. Some of them stare at me. Some take no notice.
We go up some stairs, down another hallway, then into a room where an old man is lying on a bed. His skin is yellow and he has tufts of hair poking out from his ears. Mumtaz speaks kindly to him and I wonder if he is sick.
Across the hall, in another room, where a red cloth is hung across the doorway, I hear the sound of grunting. It is a strange, animal sound that makes me shudder.
Mumtaz points to me and says something to the old man. He licks his palm and smooths down his hair. They do not seem to notice the grunting.
Then it stops. The red cloth is pulled back. And a man stands in the hallway zipping his pants.
I look down at my red-painted nails and my new shoes. Something is not right here. I don't know what is going on, but it is not right, not right at all.
Mumtaz pats the edge of the bed and tells me to come closer. The old man makes a clucking sound.
"Don't be afraid," she says. "Come her, now."
I don't move.
Her voice turns hard. "Get over here, you ignorant girl." She says.

Still, I don't move.
Then Mumtaz flies at me. She grabs me by the hair and drags me across the room. She flings me onto the bed next to the old man. And then he is on top of me, holding me down with the strength of ten men. He kisses me with lips that are slack and wet and taste of onions. He teeth dig into my lower lip.
Underneath the weight of him, I cannot see or move or breathe. He fumbles with his pants, forces my legs apart, and I can feel him pushing himself between my thighs. I gasp for air and kick and squirm. He thrusts his tongue into my mouth. And I bite down with all my might.
He cries out "Aghh!" and I am running. Running down the hall, past the other girls, losing my fancy city shoes along the way, until I am back in the room where I started, pulling my old clothes out of my bundle.

Page 120
(Violates the Regulation with description of rape.)
A man with lips like a fish comes into my room and says, "You're lucky to be with Habib." He is squeezing my breast with his hand, like someone shopping for a melon. I try to push him away, but my arm, stone-heavy from the lassi, doesn't move.
"You're lucky," he says, "that Habib is your first one."
I close my eyes. The room pitches this way and that.
"You can tell the others that it was Habib," he says.
I open my eyes, watch him squeeze my other breast, and wonder: Who is this Habib he keeps talking about?
"If this is really your first time," he says. "Old Mumtaz is a tricky one."
He unbuckles his belt. "Once before, she sold Habib used goods."
The fish-lips man removes my dress.
I wait for myself to protest. But nothing happens.
"Habib," he says. "Habib is good with the ladies."
Then he is on top of me, and something hot and insistent is between my legs.
He grunts and struggles, trying to fit himself inside me.
With a sudden thrust I am torn in two.
"Oh, yes," he says, panting. "Habib is good in bed."
I hear, coming from a distance,
a steady thud,
thud,
thud,
and register that this is the sound of a headboard hitting a wall.
After a while,
I don't know how long,
Another sound interrupts the rhythmic thud of the headboard.

I know this noise from somewhere.
I work very hard to make it out.
Finally. I identify it.
It is the muffled sound of sobbing.
Habib rolls off me.
Then I understand: I was the person crying.

Page 123
(Violates the Regulation with description of rape.)
In between, men come.
They crush my bones with their weight.
They split me open.
Then they disappear.
I cannot tell which of the things they do to me are real, and which are nightmares.
I decide to think that it is all a nightmare.
Because if what is happening is real,
it is unbearable.

Page 125
(Violates the Regulation with description of bleeding from where victim has been repeatedly raped.)
I hurt.
I am torn and bleeding where the men have been.
I pray to the gods to make the hurting go away.
To make the burning and the aching and the bleeding stop.

Page 133
(Violates the Regulation with mention of placing something inappropriate into the character's vagina.)
I haven't cried, not one tear, since that first night with the fish-lips man.
But now tears surge up in my eyes.
I blink them back and lift my chin.
"But what?" she says. She pulls the leather strap out from under her skirt and slaps it against her open palm.
I bow my head.
"From now on," Mumtaz says, "you will join the other girls downstairs each night. You will share a bedroom and be free to walk the house."
I stare straight ahead.
Mumtaz comes close and takes my chin in her hand.
"But if you try to run away," she says, "I will grind hot chilies and put them in your private parts."

Page 141
(Not age appropriate)
Before, when you were in the locked room, Shahanna says, Mumtaz sent the customers to you. Now, if you want to pay off your debt, you must do what it takes to make them choose you.
Tell the customers that you are twelve, she says. Or Mumtaz will beat you senseless.
Do whatever the customer asks of you, Shahanna says.
Otherwise he will beat you senseless.
Then he will do whatever he likes and leave without paying.
Always wash yourself with a wet rag after the man is finished, Pushpa says. This will keep you from getting a disease.

Page 145
(Not age appropriate)
The younger ones, like Jeena, are given special medicine so they can sleep under the bed while their mothers are with customers.

Page 228
(Not age appropriate)
I have a regular customer now.
He makes me do a nasty thing, but he gives my 10 rupees extra.

Page 254
(Not age appropriate)
I learned ways to be with men. I learned how to forget what was happening to me even as it was happening.
But ever since the pink-skinned man came here, with his pictures of the clean place, I cannot remember those ways.
Now, while I wait for the American to return, and the men come to my bed,
I clench the sheets in my hands, for fear that I will pound them to death with my fists.
I grit my teeth, for fear that I will bite through their skin to their very bones.
I squeeze my eyes closed tight, for fear that I will see what has actually happened to me.

Page 257
(Violates the Regulation with mention of placing something inappropriate into the character's vagina.)
It is a simple kitchen sound, the grinding of spices with a wooden pestle.
Sometimes it means nothing more than spicy stew for supper. But sometimes it

means that the cook is readying the hot chili punishment for one of us. And then it is a sound that turns even the hardest woman here into a whimpering child. Because it means that someone has crossed Mumtaz, that Mumtaz will smear the chili on a stick and put it inside the girl, and that all of us will be awake throughout the night, listening to the girl moan.

South Carolina Instructional Materials
Uniform Parent Complaint Form

Your Name: Elizabeth Szalai

Title & Author of Contested Material *(one per form)*:
Thirteen Reasons Whyby Jay Asher

School Where Contested Material is Located: Please see list below

Location of Contested Material *(library, classroom, etc...)*: Library

Contested Material is *(select one)*: ☑ **Printed** ☐ **Audio/Visual** ☐ **Online Resource**
☐ **Other** *(please describe)*: _____

I request that this Contested Material be *(choose one of the following)*:

☑ Removed from all schools/facilities in this District.

☐ Restricted to the following grade levels in this District: _____.

☐ Restricted to a student whose parent/legal guardian provides consent and is enrolled in the following grade levels in this District: _____.

Describe Your Reason for Contesting This Material *(attach additional pages as needed)*:

Available at the following schools:
Beaufort High School
Bluffton High School
Bluffton Middle School
H E McCracken Middle School
Hilton Head Island High School
Hilton Head Island Middle School
May River High School
Whale Branch Early College High School
Spanish Version:
Bluffton High School
May River High School

Please see reasons below.

I, Elizabeth Szalai *(insert your name)*, **hereby certify that:**

- I am a parent or legal guardian of a student who attends a school within this District.
- I have read, watched, or otherwise reviewed the material I am contesting.
- I have made a good faith effort to address my concerns with School or District staff.
- I have not filed more than five (5) instructional material complaints (including this complaint) in this calendar month.
- I believe that this Contested Material is not suitable for use, availability, and/or unrestricted access in this District, pursuant to the requirements and definitions in Regulation 43-170, which are summarized on the following instruction page.

Signature: _____ **Date:** 5/27/25

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Thirteen Reasons Why
by Jay Asher

Available at the following schools:
Beaufort High School
Bluffton High School
Bluffton Middle School
H E McCracken Middle School
Hilton Head Island High School
Hilton Head Island Middle School
May River High School
Whale Branch Early College High School
Spanish Version:
Bluffton High School
May River High School

Summary of Concerns:
This book contains suicidal ideations, nudity, and sexual activities.

Please note that research Confirms Psychological Risks from the adaptation of the movie from this book. Logic would dictate that similar risk could potentially result from the book as well. Although the sexually explicit content of this book is minor, the psychological risk could be major; therefore, I do not feel that this book is educationally suitable nor age appropriate for minors in our public school system.

The Netflix show "13 Reasons Why" was associated with a 28.9% increase in suicide rates among U.S. youth ages 10-17 in the month (April 2017) following the show's release, after accounting for ongoing trends in suicide rates, according to a study published in Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. The findings highlight the necessity of using best practices when portraying suicide in popular entertainment and in the media. The study was conducted by researchers at several universities, hospitals, and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), part of the National Institutes of Health. NIMH also funded the study.

The number of deaths by suicide recorded in April 2017 was greater than the number seen in any single month during the five-year period examined by the researchers. When researchers analyzed the data by sex, they found the increase in the suicide rate was primarily driven by significant increases in suicide in young males. While suicide rates for females increased after the show's release, the increase was not statistically significant.

The researchers examined whether the rates of suicide for the period after the release of "13 Reasons Why" were greater than would be expected based on suicide counts and trends observed in previous years. The researchers found that the rates of suicide for 10- to 17- year-olds was significantly higher in the months of April, June, and December 2017 than were expected based on past data. This increase translated into an additional estimated 195 suicide deaths between April 1, 2017, and Dec. 31, 2017. The observed suicide rate for March 2017 — the month prior to the release of "13 Reasons Why" — was also higher than forecast. The researchers note that the show was highly promoted during the month of March, exposing audiences to the show's premise and content through trailers. The researchers did not find any significant trends in suicide rates in people 18- to 64 years of age.[1]

Page 27

(Violates the Regulation with description of turgid penis.)

She came over to my table at lunch, whispered the proposition in my ear, and I had a hard-on for the rest of the day.

Page 254

(The talk of suicide and ways to achieve it could be triggeing to some. It is not educationally suitable without guidance.)

Okay, I'll say it. I thought about suicide.
...I thought about suicide .
...I wish I would die.
...What about hanging? Well, what would I use? Where would I do it? And even if I knew what and where, I could never get beyond the visual of someone finding me- swinging- inches from the floor.
...You took pills. That, we all know. Some say you passed out and drowned in a bathtub full of water.
It came down to two lines of thinking. If I wanted people to think it was an accident, I'd drive my car off the road. Someplace where there's no chance of survival. And there are so many places to do that on the outskirts of town. I've probably driven by each of them a dozen times in the past couple of weeks.
Others say you drew the bathwater, but fell asleep on your bed while it was filling. Your mom and dad came home, found the bathroom flooded, and called your name. But there was no answer.
Then there are these tapes.
...So I've decided on the least painful way possible.

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[1] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2019, April 29). Release of "13 reasons why" associated with increase in youth suicide rates. National Institute of Mental Health. https://www.nimh.nih.gov/news/science-updates/2019/release-of-13-reasons-why-associated-with-increase-in-youth-suicide-rates

Pills.
My stomach pulls in, wanting to rid my body of everything. Food. Thoughts. Emotions.
But what kinds of pills? And how many? I'm not sure. And I don't have much time to figure it out because tomorrow…I'm going to do it.
Wow.
…I won't be around anymore…tomorrow.

Page 264
(Violates the Regulation with the touching of breasts.)
Your fingers made their way under my bra. But you didn't grab me. Testing the boundaries, I guess. Sliding your thumb along the underside of my breasts.
"Weren't you on that list?" you said. "Best ass in the freshman class."
Bryce, you had to see my jaw clench. You had to see my tears. Does that kind of shit turn you on?
Bryce? Yes. It does.
"It's true," you said.

Page 265
(Violates the Regulation with description of performing masturbation on another person.)
As if letting him finger me was going to cure all my problems.
But in the end, I never told you to get away…and you didn't.
You stopped rubbing circles on my stomach. Instead, you rubbed back and forth, gently, along my waist. Your pinky made its way under the top of my panties and rolled back and forth, from hip to hip. Then another finger slipped below, pushing your pinky further down, brushing it through my hair.
And that's all you needed, Bryce. You started kissing my shoulder, my neck, sliding your fingers in and out. And then you kept going. You didn't stop there.
I'm sorry. Is this getting too graphic for some of you? Too bad.

South Carolina Instructional Materials
Uniform Parent Complaint Form

Your Name: Elizabeth Szalai

Title & Author of Contested Material *(one per form)*:
The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold

School Where Contested Material is Located: Please see list below

Location of Contested Material *(library, classroom, etc...)*: Library

Contested Material is *(select one)*: ☑ **Printed** ☐ **Audio/Visual** ☐ **Online Resource**
☐ **Other** *(please describe)*: _____

I request that this Contested Material be *(choose one of the following)*:

☑ Removed from all schools/facilities in this District.
☐ Restricted to the following grade levels in this District: _____.
☐ Restricted to a student whose parent/legal guardian provides consent and is enrolled in the following grade levels in this District: _____.

Describe Your Reason for Contesting This Material *(attach additional pages as needed)*:

Available at the following schools:
Beaufort High School
*Beaufort Middle School
Bluffton High School
Hilton Head Island High School

Please see reasons below.

I, Elizabeth Szalai *(insert your name)*, **hereby certify that:**

- I am a parent or legal guardian of a student who attends a school within this District.
- I have read, watched, or otherwise reviewed the material I am contesting.
- I have made a good faith effort to address my concerns with School or District staff.
- I have not filed more than five (5) instructional material complaints (including this complaint) in this calendar month.
- I believe that this Contested Material is not suitable for use, availability, and/or unrestricted access in this District, pursuant to the requirements and definitions in Regulation 43-170, which are summarized on the following instruction page.

Signature: _____ **Date:** 5/27/25

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The Lovely Bones
by Alice Sebold

Available at the following schools:
Beaufort High School
Beaufort Middle School
Bluffton High School
Hilton Head Island High School

Summary of Concerns:
This book contains sexual activities including sexual assault.

Page 13
(Violates the Regulation with description of a child being raped.)
After this he said, "You're very pretty, Susie."
"Thanks," I said, even though he gave me what my friend Clarissa and I had dubbed the skeevies.
"Do you have a boyfriend?"
"No, Mr. Harvey," I said. I swallowed the rest of my Coke, which was a lot, and said, "I got to go, Mr. Harvey. This is a cool place, but I have to go."
He stood up and undid his hunchback number by the six dug-in steps that let to the world. "I don't know why you think you're leaving."
I talked so that I would not have to take in this knowledge: Mr. Harvey was no character. He made me feel skeevy and icky now that he was blocking the door.
"Mr. Harvey, I really have to get home."
"Take off your clothes."
"What?"
"Take your clothes off," Mr. Harvey said. "I want to check that you're still a virgin."
"I am, Mr. Harvey," I said.
"I want to make sure. Your parents will thank me."
"My parents?"
"They only want good girls," he said.
"Mr. Harvey," I said, "please let me leave."
"You aren't leaving, Susie. You're mine now."
...I fought hard. I fought as hard as I could not to let Mr. Harvey hurt me, but my hard-as-I-could was not hard enough, not even close, and I was soon lying down on the ground, in the ground, with him on top of me panting and sweating, having lost his glasses in the struggle.
...I thought it was the worst thing in the world to be lying flat on my back with a sweating man on top of me. To be trapped inside the earth and have no one know where I was.

...Mr. Harvey started to press his lips against mine. They were blubbery and wet and I wanted to scream but I was too afraid and too exhausted from the fight. I had been kissed once by someone I liked. His name was Ray and he was Indian. ...He kissed me by my locker the day before we turned in our photos for the yearbook.

..."Don't, Mr. Harvey," I managed, and I kept saying that one word a lot. Don't. And I said please a lot too. Franny told me that almost everyone begged "please" before dying.

"I want you, Susie," he said.

"Please," I said. "Don't," I said. Sometimes I combined them. "Please don't" or "Don't please." It was like insisting that a key works when it doesn't or yelling "I've got it, I've got it, I've got it" as a softball goes sailing over you into the stands. "Please don't."

But he grew tired of hearing me plead. He reached into the pocket of my parka and balled up the hat my mother had made me, smashing it into my mouth. The only sound I made after that was the weak tinkling of bells.

As he kissed his wet lips down my face and neck and then began to shove his hands up under my shirt, I wept. I began to leave my body; I began to inhabit the air and the silence. I wept and struggled so I would not feel. He ripped open my pants, not having found the invisible zipper my mother had artfully sewn into their side.

"Big white panties," he said.

I felt huge and bloated. I felt like a sea in which he stood and pissed and shat. I felt the corners of my body were turning in on themselves and out, like in cat's cradle, which I played with Lindsey just to make her happy. He started working himself over me.

"Susie! Susie!" I heard my mother calling. "Dinner is ready."

He was inside me. He was grunting.

"We're having string beans and lamb."

I was the mortar, he was the pestle.

"Your brother has a new finger painting, and I made apple crumb cake."

...Mr. Harvey made me lie still underneath him and listen to the beating of his heart and the beating of mine. How mine skipped like a rabbit, and how his thudded, a hammer against cloth. We lay there with our bodies touching, and, as I shook, a powerful knowledge took hold. He had done this thing to me and I had Lived.

Page 16

I knew he was going to kill me. I did not realize then that I was an animal already dying.

"Why don't you get up?" Mr. Harvey said as he rolled to the side and then

crouched over me.
His voice was gentle, encouraging, a lover's voice on a late morning. A suggestion, not a command.
I could not move. I could not get up.
When I would not—was it only that, only that I would not follow his suggestion?—he leaned to the side and felt, over his head, across the ledge where his razor and shaving cream sat. He brought back a knife.
Unsheathed, it smiled at me, curving up in a grin.
He took the hat from my mouth.
"Tell me you love me," he said.
Gently, I did.
The end came anyway.

Page 69
Using a blue ballpoint pen, Brian Nelson had made an obscene hole where her legs were crossed.
...how subversive Ruth was then, not because she drew pictures of nude women that got misused by her peers,...

Page 104
No counselor could say he had flashed a light under the denser shrubbery by the boy's dorm and found Salmon and Heckler going at it.
...She thought of sex as the Star Trek transport.

Page 111
(Violates the Regulation with description of a turgid penis.)
Their breath began to heat the small space beneath the boat, and he could not stop it- his penis stiffened inside his jeans.
Lindsey reached her hand over.
"I'm sorry..." he began.
"I'm ready," my sister said.
At fourteen, my sister sailed away from me into a place I'd never been. In the walls of my sex there was horror and blood, in the walls of hers there were windows.

Page 134
(Violates the Regulation with touching of breast.)
She took his hand and placed it on her breast. She whispered in his ear. I knew what was happening. Her rage, her loss, her despair. The whole life lost tumbling out in an arc on that roof, clogging up her being. She needed Len to drive the dead daughter out.

He pushed her back into the stucco surface of the wall as they kissed, and my mother held on to him as if on the other side of his kiss there could be a new life.

Page 138
Clarissa, giggly with both fear and lust, had unlocked her privates and slept with Brian.

Page 152
A young girl being led through the streets. She was taken to a pyre where she was wound in a sheet and placed up on a platform built from sticks. The bright fire that consumed her brought my mother into that deep, light, dreamlike bliss. This girl was being burned alive, but, first, there had been her body, clean and whole.

Page 159
(Not age appropriate)
She was waiting for her father outside a bar. He raped her in the bushes and then strangled her. That time, as he grew conscious, coming up out of the stupor that often clung on, he heard noises. He turned the dead girl's face toward his, and as the voices grew closer he bit down on her ear. "Sorry, man," he heard two drunk men say as they walked into the nearby bushes to take a leak.

Page 175
...it was now full of nudes she'd copied out of Playboy, scaling various parts up or down and adding hair and wrinkles where they had been airbrushed out- "but at least I'm not a per for charcoal."

Page 253
(Not age appropriate)
He had made a certain kind of love to my mother before she went away. Sex as an act of willful forgetting. It was the kind he made more and more in the rooms above the barbershop.
...The edges of Mr. Harvey seemed oddly blurred. For years he had kept at bay the memories of the women he killed, but now, one by one, they were coming back. The first girl he'd hurt was by accident. He got mad and couldn't stop himself, or that was how he began to weave it into sense. She stopped going to the high school that they were both enrolled in, but this didn't seem strange to him. By that time he had moved so many times that he assumed that was what the girl had done. He had regretted it, this quiet, muffed rape of a school friend, but he didn't see it as something that would stay with either one of them. It was as if something outside him had resulted in the collision of their two bodies one afternoon. For a second afterward, she'd stared. It was bottomless. Then she put

on her torn underpants, tucking them into her skirt's waistband to keep them in place. They didn't speak, and she left. He cut himself with his penknife along the back of his hand. When his father asked about the blood, there would be a plausible explanation. "See," he could say, and point to the place on his hand. "It was an accident."

Page 267

(Violates the Regulation with touching of breast/nipple and penis.)

Ray drew back the curtain. I turned to face him and opened my eyes. I felt a marvelous draft on the inside of my thighs.

"It's okay," I said.

He stepped slowly into the tub. At first he did not touch me, but then, tentatively, he traced a small scar along my side. We watched together as his finger moved down the ribbony wound.

"Ruth's volleyball incident, nineteen seventy-five," I said. I shivered again.

"You're not Ruth," he said, his face full of wonder.

I took the hand that had reached the end of the cut and placed it under my left breast.

"I've watched you both for years," I said. "I want you to make love to me."

His lips parted to speak, but what was on his lips now was too strange to say out loud. He brushed my nipple with his thumb, and I pulled his head toward me. We kissed. The water came down between our bodies and wet the sparse hair along his chest and stomach. I kissed him because I wanted to see Ruth and I wanted to see Holly and I wanted to know if they could see me. In the shower I could cry and Ray could kiss my tears, never knowing exactly why I shed them.

I touched every part of him and held it in my hands. I cupped his elbow in my palm. I dragged his pubic hair out straight between my fingers. I held that part of him that Mr. Harvey had forced inside me. Inside my head I said the word gentle, and then I said the word man.

Page 268

We made love then. We made love in the shower and in the bedroom and under the lights and fake glow-in-the-dark stars. While he rested, I kissed him across the line of his backbone and blessed each knot of muscle, each mole and blemish.

South Carolina Instructional Materials
Uniform Parent Complaint Form

Your Name: Elizabeth Szalai

Title & Author of Contested Material *(one per form)*: The Black Flamingo by Dean Atta

School Where Contested Material is Located: Please see list below

Location of Contested Material *(library, classroom, etc...)*: Library

Contested Material is *(select one)*: ☑ **Printed** ☐ **Audio/Visual** ☐ **Online Resource**

☐ **Other** *(please describe)*: _____

I request that this Contested Material be *(choose one of the following)*:

- ☐ Removed from all schools/facilities in this District.
- ☐ Restricted to the following grade levels in this District: _____.
- ☑ Restricted to a student whose parent/legal guardian provides consent and is enrolled in the following grade levels in this District: 11th and 12th grades only.

Describe Your Reason for Contesting This Material *(attach additional pages as needed)*:

Available at the following schools:
Beaufort Middle School
Bluffton High School

Please see reasons below.

I, Elizabeth Szalai *(insert your name)*, **hereby certify that:**

- I am a parent or legal guardian of a student who attends a school within this District.
- I have read, watched, or otherwise reviewed the material I am contesting.
- I have made a good faith effort to address my concerns with School or District staff.
- I have not filed more than five (5) instructional material complaints (including this complaint) in this calendar month.
- I believe that this Contested Material is not suitable for use, availability, and/or unrestricted access in this District, pursuant to the requirements and definitions in Regulation 43-170, which are summarized on the following instruction page.

Signature: _____ **Date:** 5/27/25

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The Black Flamingo
by Dean Atta

Requesting parental consent 11th and 12th grades

Available at the following schools:
Beaufort Middle School
Bluffton High School

Summary of Concerns:
This book contains inexplicit sexual nudity, sexual activities, and controversial racial commentary.

Page 124
(Not age appropriate)
"Batty bwoy!" Meaning less-than-man who is penetrated by or penetrates anther less-than-man. I realize this phrase is sexual. This phrase is about sex. It's like shouting out, "You have bum sex!" I've heard it in music, in songs from Jamaica that call for gay men to be killed.

Page 129
(Not age appropriate especially talking about meeting a stranger on an app.)
I'm nervous taking the condoms in case someone sees them. I download an app that allows me to talk to gay guys in the area. I arrange to meet a guy called Alex after school.

Page 130
(Not age appropriate)
We're kneeling on a patch of grass between two graves, kissing with tongues, our mouths dry from the spliff we just smoked. My first spliff, my first proper kiss.
.....He stops. "Do you do poppers?"
.....I'm high on weed, about to lose my virginity in a graveyard. He hands me a small glass bottle full of liquid. I unscrew the top. "Do I drink it?"
"No, you hold it under your nose, like this and inhale; it helps you to relax."
I follow his instructions. A chemical explosion in my brain, streamers burst forth into a tangled rainbow, then all fades to black.

Page 207
(Not age appropriate)
I don't tell him I'm excited and nervous about meeting guys, having sex, maybe a

relationship. I tell him I'm excited to have my freedom.

Page 209

(Violates the Budget Proviso 1.79 known as Partisanship Curriculum: (2) an individual, by virtue of his race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously)

"…This isn't what I wanted for your moving day but this is what it's like to be black in this country or anywhere in the world. They interrupt our joy. Our history. Our progress. They know they can't kill us all, so you're living your life and suddenly interrupted by white fear or suspicion. They fear sharing anything. Our success is a threat."

Page 222

(Not age appropriate and not biologically correct.)

I go to the LGBT Society. We sit in a circle and go round saying our names and pronouns: he/him, she/her, they/them.
How do you want other people to refer to you?
A trans man called Seth, with the pronouns he/him, wishes his trans identity wasn't questioned with regard to his body. "I wish people would understand, some men have vaginas."
My turn: "I'm Mike, he/him."
Some Men Have Vaginas
He said he was a gay man with a vagina and I, penis heavy and light of foot, wondered if gay meant the same to him as it did to me, wondered if man was in mind or body. Because I wear my man, strip down bare to my man. In the mirror, there, I am. For me, man has merely been a matter of circumstance, not a journey or discovery. I rarely had to fight for it, rarely want to fight against it, never wanted to shed skin to reveal somebody else. I never questioned it until he said, "Some men have vaginas." I understood it to be true but it left me feeling nothing more than a tool, who knew nothing about being a man outside his own body.

Page 226

DRAG SOCIETY
In capital letters with a date and time and a room number.
Why have I not noticed this poster before now?
There's a photo of a group of people of many shapes, colors, and gender expressions in costume and makeup.
I make up my mind, I'm going to do that, whatever it is, whatever that means.

Page 230
If you didn't know why we were here, you couldn't tell what brought us together. No one person looks similar to the other. We're not just here because we're "queer"; we're here to create a show together, but first we must get to know each other.
"Here at Drag Soc," begins the president, "we use our drag names and pronouns of our drag character. I'm Mzz Behavior, em-zed-zed. You can call me Mzz B and my pronouns are 'they' and 'them."

Page 232
(Not age appropriate)
I don't want to assume, I feel too shy to ask, but when I saw that poster I simply knew that Drag Soc was something I had to do.
I didn't realize I would need to decide my character as I stepped through the door. Only one name comes to mind. It's like I've said it before: "I am The Black Flamingo and my pronouns are he and him," I declare. I'm sure of this for the first time ever.
….."I'm just a man and I want to wear a dress and makeup onstage. I want to know how it feels to publicly express a side of me I've only felt privately when playing with my Barbie as a boy. It was only at home that I'd play with that toy; I knew Mum loved me more than anyone else and with her I could be myself. I didn't think boys could do ballet, certainly not a black boy and definitely not me. I was already suspicious that people were nice to me despite me being different. I never wanted to take my difference too far." I continue, "Before I came here I didn't want to wear a dress, I didn't want to be that stereotype. I know that's wrong, my thinking was wrong; the different ones are often the most strong. I know trans and gender-nonconforming people started our movements, won our freedoms. I'm a man and I want to be a free one. I'm a man and I want to put a dress on."

Page 298
(Violates the Budget Proviso 1.79 known as Partisanship Curriculum: (2) an individual, by virtue of his race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously)
"You both need to understand the black woman, black man, black trans person is always last to be thought of as attractive in this white supremacist society…"

Page 367
Know that your audience makes assumptions about you, your gender presentation, and the gender you were assigned at birth. Your gender is not what

this is about. Remember that this is a character, it's gender play but not necessarily about your gender.

Page 371
(Not age appropriate)
What It's Like to be a Black Drag Artist (for those of you who aren't)
It's knowing when you step onstage, people will expect you to represent all black people.
.....It's worrying if a white performer will do a blackface act. It's worrying your act is too black, not universal enough.
.....It's doing what feels true. It's knowing that doing drag and being trans are not the same. It's gender nonconforming. It's gender bending. It's gender ascending.
It's a performance. It's not letting anyone else tell you what your drag means. It's not really for the audience. It's for your liberation. It's knowing that after this nothing will be the same for you. It's a rebirth.
It's giving birth to yourself. It's giving yourself a new name. It's giving yourself a new narrative. It's not letting anyone forget your name.
.....It's Afrofuturism. It's Afrocentrism. It's black, black, blackity-black. It's batty bwoy, sissy. It's queer, gay, and faggy. It's yours and it's yours.

Page 380
(Not age appropriate)
Next comes my burlesque routine. I perform a strip tease with my lip sync to "Back to Black" sung by Beyonce. I suggestively open and close the pink faux fur coat before I let it drop to the floor. I snatch off the pink wig and throw it into the audience. I shimmy with the feather boa, then wrap it around a smiling stranger in the front row. I slip out of the tutu and kick it away. The crowd goes wild for it. For me!
I stand triumphant in a leotard and heels, a full face of makeup and a beard, and say my final piece.

South Carolina Instructional Materials
Uniform Parent Complaint Form

Your Name: Elizabeth Szalai

Title & Author of Contested Material *(one per form)*:
The Art of Racing in the Rain by Garth Stein

School Where Contested Material is Located: Please see list below

Location of Contested Material *(library, classroom, etc...)*: Library

Contested Material is *(select one)*: ☑ **Printed** ☐ **Audio/Visual** ☐ **Online Resource**
☐ **Other** *(please describe)*: _____

I request that this Contested Material be *(choose one of the following)*:

- ☐ Removed from all schools/facilities in this District.
- ☐ Restricted to the following grade levels in this District: _____.
- ☑ Restricted to a student whose parent/legal guardian provides consent and is enrolled in the following grade levels in this District: 11th and 12th grades only.

Describe Your Reason for Contesting This Material *(attach additional pages as needed)*:

Available at the following schools:
Beaufort High School
Bluffton High School
Bluffton Middle School

Please see reasons below.

I, Elizabeth Szalai *(insert your name)*, **hereby certify that:**

- I am a parent or legal guardian of a student who attends a school within this District.
- I have read, watched, or otherwise reviewed the material I am contesting.
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The Art of Racing in the Rain
by Garth Stein

Requesting Parental Consent in 11th and 12th grades

Available at the following schools:
Beaufort High School
Bluffton High School
Bluffton Middle School
May River High School

Summary of Concerns:
This book contains sexual activities.

Page 17
(Possible violation of the Regulation with description of sex.)
They fell onto the bed and he mounted her and she said, "The field is fertile-beware!" And he said, "I embrace the fertility." And he plowed the field until it grasped the sheets in its fists, arched its back, and cried out with joy.

Page 18
(Possible violation of the Regulation as it seems as if this is in reference to giving a blow job.)
Of course, she had the advantage of her tongue and her thumbs, and when I watched her kiss and fondle him sometimes she would glance at me and wink as if to gloat: Look at my thumbs! See what they can do!

Page 52
(Not age appropriate)
And one evening after dinner, which was a special one, though I don't remember if it was a birthday or an anniversary, Denny suddenly appeared naked in the bedroom and Eve was naked on the bed.
It seemed so odd to me because they hadn't mounted or even played with each other in such a long time. But there they were. He positioned himself over her and she said to him, "The field is fertile."
..."I embrace the fertility," he said. But their exchange seemed weak and unenthusiastic. She made noise, but she was pretending, I could tell, because in the middle of it she looked at me and shook her head and waved me off.

Page 71

(The insinuation of using a turkey baster to inseminate is not age appropriate.)

"We could use a turkey baster," Denny said, and Eve laughed hard, harder than I'd seen her laugh in a long time. "I could leave you with a cupful of potential babies in the refrigerator," he said, and she laughed even harder. I didn't get the joke, but Eve thought it was hysterical.

She got up and went into the house, reappearing a moment later with the turkey baster from the kitchen. She scrutinized it with a devious smile, ran her fingers along its length.

"Hmm," she said. "Maybe."

Page 100

(Not age appropriate, a minor trying to seduce an older man.)

She was a teenager who had a full set of breasts for milking and hips wide enough for childbirth and so was, for all intents and purposes, an adult, but who still acted like a child, always asking permission to do things.

106 She shrugged off her robe and stood naked, her large breasts with their brown nipples pointing at him, he was unconscious. Asleep.

She reached down and slipped her small hands into the band of his sweatpants. She pulled his pants down to his knees.

"Don't," he muttered, his eyes still closed.

He had driven for more than ten hours across a harrowing course of snow and ice and flooding. He had nothing left with which to fend off an attack.

She pulled his pants down to his ankles, then lifted one foot and then the other to remove them completely. She looked at me.

...I growled, I snapped, and Denny suddenly awakened; his eyes popped open, and he saw the naked girl and he leapt away from her.

..."Where are my pants?" Denny asked frantically, standing on the bed. "What were you doing?"

"I love you so much," she said.

"I'm married!"

"It's not like it's having sex," she said.

And she crawled onto the bed, reaching for him, so I barked again.

"Make the dog go away," she said.

"Annika, stop!"

Denny grabbed her wrists; she squirmed playfully.

"Stop!" he shouted, jumping off the bed, grabbing his sweatpants from the floor, and pulling them on quickly.

"I thought you liked me," Annika said, her mood abruptly darkening.

"Annika-"

"I thought you wanted me."
"Annika, put this on," he said, holding out her robe. "I can't talk to a fifteen-year-old nude woman. It's not legal. You shouldn't be here. I'll take you home."

...He wanted to console her, but whenever he moved closer, she dropped her hands, which were clutching the crumpled robe to her chest, and suddenly her massive breasts, heaving with grief, were exposed to him and he had to retreat. This happened several times, like a funny toy, a monkey with cymbals or something. He approached to comfort her, she dropped her hands, her breasts shot out at him, and he flew back. It's possible I was witnessing a living interpretation of an antique pornographic penny bank, similar to one I saw in a movie called The Stunt Man, which depicted a bear copulating with a girl on a Swing.

Page 138
"I didn't get the details. But they're uniformed SPD and they didn't look like male strippers and today isn't your birthday anyway, so I don't think it's a prank."

Page 140
"Rape of a child in the third degree," Denny said.
"Felony rape," one of the cops clarified.
"But I didn't rape anyone," Denny said to the cop.
..."The one you raped," the cop replied simply.

Page 141
Much of what happened to Denny regarding the custody suit concerning Zoe as well as the criminal charges of rape of a child in the third degree was not witnessed by me.

Page 144
"She's lying."
"Is she? Did you have intercourse with this girl?"
"No."
"Did you penetrate any of her orifices with your genitals or any other object?"
..."A pedophile. A sex offender. A statutory rapist. A child molester. Do these terms fit anywhere in the concept of 'the best interest of a child'?"

Page 164
"He forced himself on a young girl! That's rape!"
...And if he's stupid enough to get caught with his pants down and his pecker in his fist, you're going to be damn sure I'm going to seize the moment.

...Then imagine having her parents attack you mercilessly in order to gain custody of your daughter. Imagine that they exploit allegations of sexual molestation.

Page 200
How I hated this young girl who attacked my Denny with her unrestrained sexuality and then blamed him for the attack.

Profanity	**Count**
Ass	3
Bitch	2
Fuck	10
Shit	6