

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

IN RE: ALL BOYS AREN'T BLUE BY
GEORGE JOHNSON

**FINAL ORDER AND
OPINION REGARDING
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL**

No. 2025-0004

SUMMARY OF ACTION REQUIRED

This Order of the South Carolina State Board of Education (“State Board”) is the final agency decision regarding the following Instructional Material (the “Subject Material”).

Title of Instructional Material:
Author:

All Boys Aren’t Blue
George Johnson

As explained more fully below, the Subject Material includes descriptions of “sexual conduct” as that term is defined in Regulation 43-170 and South Carolina Code Section 16-15-305(C)(1). Accordingly, the Subject Material is not Age and Developmentally Appropriate and must be removed from all public-school classrooms, libraries, media centers, programs, reading lists, and school-controlled extracurricular activities in South Carolina. **All public schools, public school districts, public-school employees, and district boards in this State shall take immediate action to comply with this Order by removing the Subject Material. Additionally, public schools, public school districts, and district boards shall not acquire, obtain, or purchase the Subject Material, nor shall any public-school employee acquire, obtain, or purchase the Subject Material for use in or with any public-school program, classroom, activity, or instruction.**

BACKGROUND AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

This matter was addressed in the first instance by the State Board’s Instructional Material Review Committee (“IMRC”) and later by the full State Board. The Subject Material was reviewed by the IMRC “of its own volition and on its own initiative” to “make determinations regarding the educational suitability or the Age or Developmental Appropriateness of specific Instructional Materials pursuant to the criteria and requirements of” Regulation 43-170(VI)(B). The IMRC took this step because a Complainant filed the Notice of Appeal Form with the State Board on December 16, 2024. (Exhibit A). Subsequently, the Chairman of the Beaufort School District Board of Education (“District”) submitted a letter requesting that the State Board take these materials up for consideration because the District’s board had previously reviewed this material in 2023, prior to the enactment of Regulation 43-170. (Exhibit B). Accordingly, the IMRC and, later, the State Board, exercised its authority to review the Subject Material in the first instance consistent with the District’s request and the State Board’s authority.

On January 3, 2025, the South Carolina Department of Education (Department) notified the public of its upcoming review of the Subject Material by posting the IMRC hearing information and hearing agenda on its website. Consistent with governing requirements, the public was invited to sign up in advance of the hearing to provide comment regarding the Subject Material. At 1:00 PM on January 9, 2025, the IMRC's hearing of this matter occurred via Microsoft Teams and was conducted in accordance with Procedures for Review of Instructional Material, State Board Rule of Governance IFC, last revised October 1, 2024, and the South Carolina Administrative Procedures Act, S.C. Code Sec. 1-23-310, et seq. During this hearing, the IMRC received public comment regarding the Subject Material and the Department provided analysis and recommended removing the Subject Material entirely from South Carolina's public schools.

The IMRC reviewed and considered the Subject Material, excerpts from same, all public comments (written and in-person), and all documentation and testimony provided by the Department. Based on that review and consideration, the IMRC unanimously found that the Subject Material includes descriptions of "sexual conduct" as that term is defined by S.C. Code § 16-15-305(C)(1). Therefore, the IMRC found the Subject Material is not Age and Developmentally Appropriate as defined by S.C. Code Reg. 43-170 and recommended it be removed entirely from all public schools in South Carolina. On January 31, 2025, the IMRC issued a Report and Recommendation (attached as Exhibit C and incorporated by reference herein), which was provided to all members of the State Board and subsequently placed on State Board's website and made available to the public.

On January 28, 2025, the Department notified the public that this matter would come before the full State Board by posting the State Board's agenda and hearing information on its website. At 1:00 PM on February 4, 2025, the State Board held its regularly scheduled meeting, received public comment, and received reports from its various committees, including the IMRC. This matter is properly before the State Board pursuant to S.C. Code Reg. § 43-170.

Based on a review of all public comments (in person and written), the Subject Material, all documentation provided by the Department and interested parties, the IMRC's written Report and Recommendation, the IMRC Chair's Report, and the Department's report, we make the following findings of fact and conclusions of law.¹

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Subject Material was challenged by a parent or legal guardian of a student in the District. The Chairman of the District board submitted a letter requesting that the State Board take these materials up for consideration.
2. The Subject Material is available to students in public schools in South Carolina.

¹ Excerpts from and an explanation of the applicable sections and definitions of Regulation 43-170 are found in the IMRC's Report and Recommendation, which is attached as Exhibit C, and, for the sake of space, will not be duplicated herein.

3. The Subject Material contains the content listed and described in Exhibit A of the IMRC's Report and Recommendation.²

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The Constitution, South Carolina law, and precedent uniformly permit the State Board to review and determine the appropriateness of books and other instructional materials for use or availability in public schools. *See* SBE Final Order and Opinion No. 2024-0001 (In re: *Damsel* by Elena Arnold) at page 3 (collecting and citing statutes and cases). That authority arises, at least in part, from the fact that the selection, curation, purchase, use, and management of public-school curricula and library materials is government speech that the Free Speech Clause does not regulate. *See id.* at 3-4 (citing cases). The state's authority in this context is particularly robust when, as here, the state seeks to shield minors from access to or use of inappropriate sexual content. *See id.* at 3-4 (citing *United States v. Am. Library Ass'n*, 539 U.S. 194 (2003)).

Under Regulation 43-170, "Instructional Material is not 'Age and Developmentally Appropriate' for any age or age group of children if it includes descriptions or visual depictions of 'sexual conduct,' as that term is defined by Section 16-15-305(C)(1)." S.C. Code Reg. 43-170(I)(A).

The IMRC's Report and Recommendation includes passages from the Subject Material. The excerpts from the Subject Material, which are included in Exhibit C, constitute clear violations of Regulation 43-170 by presenting plainly before the reader express, detailed descriptions of "sexual conduct" as specifically defined in Code sections 16-15-305 (C)(1).

Having carefully considered the Subject Material, all public comments (in person and written), all documentation provided by the Department and interested parties, the IMRC's written Report and Recommendation, the IMRC Chair's Report, and the Department's report, we find that the Subject Material includes descriptions of "sexual conduct" as that term is defined by S.C. Code § 16-15-305(C)(1). While our review of the Subject Material is not limited to the excerpts provided by the Department, those excerpts establish a clear violation of the regulation. Therefore, the Subject Material is not Age and Developmentally Appropriate as defined by S.C. Code Reg. 43-170 and must be removed immediately from all public-school classrooms, libraries, media centers, programs, reading lists, and school-controlled extracurricular activities in South Carolina.

s/Rita Allison

Rita Allison

Chair

South Carolina State Board of Education

April 3, 2025

² Exhibit A to the Report and Recommendation, which is attached to this Final Order and Opinion for ease of reference, contains excerpts which are representative of questionable or violative material contained in the Subject Material. The State Board's review and Order is not limited to the excerpts contained therein.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL
REVIEW COMMITTEE

IN RE: ALL BOYS AREN'T BLUE BY
GEORGE M. JOHNSON

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

This is a matter in which Instructional Material is being addressed by the Instructional Material Review Committee ("IMRC") of the S.C. State Board of Education ("State Board") pursuant to S.C. Code Reg. 43-170. The hearing of this matter occurred via Microsoft Teams on January 9th, 2025 at 1:00 PM.

Title of Instructional Material:
Author:

All Boys Aren't Blue
George Johnson

BACKGROUND AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The "Subject Material" listed above is reviewed by the IMRC "of its own volition and on its own initiative" in order to "make determinations regarding the educational suitability or the Age or Developmental Appropriateness of specific Instructional Materials pursuant to the criteria and requirements of" Reg. 43-170(VI)(B). As further described below, this Regulation authorizes the STATE BOARD to take certain actions related to Instructional Material. The Complainant requested that the State Board remove the Subject Material entirely from South Carolina's public schools.

The Department notified the public of this matter via posting hearing information and the hearing agenda on its website on January 3rd, 2025. Consistent with governing requirements, the public was invited to sign up in advance of the hearing in order to provide comment regarding the Subject Material. The Hearing was conducted in accordance with Procedures for Review of Instructional Material, State Board Rule of Governance IFC, last revised October 1, 2024, and the South Carolina Administrative Procedures Act, S. C. Code Section 1-23-310 et. seq. The State Board's Rule of Governance was designed and adopted to provide a full and fair process for Instructional Material reviews under Reg. 43-170.

Based on a review of all public comments (in person and written), the Subject Material, all documentation provided by the Complainant and interested parties, the IMRC makes the following findings of fact and conclusions of law.

APPEARANCES

Complainant providing testimony in favor of removing the Subject Material:

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Elizabeth "Ivie" Szalai

Providing public comment in favor of removing the Subject Material:
David Cook

Providing public comment in favor of retaining the Subject Material:
Laura Eggers
Rebecca Ervin

On Behalf of South Carolina Department of Education:
Robert D. Cathcart, III, Esq., Policy and Legal Advisor

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Subject Material was challenged by the Complainant in the Beaufort County School District on August 26th, 2024.
2. On August 30th, 2024, Beaufort County School District Officials informed Complainant that the Board had previously considered the Subject Material and returned the material to its shelves. The Officials asked that the Complainant submit an appeal to the State Board of Education.
3. The Complainant reiterated her request that the Beaufort School Board hear her complaint pursuant to the standards outlined in Regulation 43-170. The Complainant continued to request additional information from the District, asking whether the statements given by the District constituted the Board's final decision. The Complainant did not receive the information until December 6th, after the 90-day period of review elapsed.
4. The Complainant submitted an appeal to the State Board of Education on November 24th, 2024, 90 days after the complaint was first submitted to the Beaufort County School District.
5. The Subject Material is available to students in the Beaufort County School District.
6. The Subject Material contains the content listed and described in Exhibit A¹.

APPLICABLE LAW

1. Regulation 43-170 authorizes the State Board to take certain actions related to Instructional Material. The State Board can (1) remove the Subject Material entirely, (2) discontinue use of the Subject Material for any grade level or age group for which such use is inappropriate or unsuitable, (3) limit the Subject Material's availability to a student where the school district has received the consent of the student's parent, or (4) permit the continued use of the Subject Material for all grade levels or age groups.

2. Regulation 43-170 defines "Instructional Material(s)":

"Instructional Material(s)" means materials used in a South Carolina K-12 public school classroom, made available in a public school library/media center, or included on a public school's reading list, whether adopted and/or purchased from the state-

¹ Exhibit A contains excerpts which are representative of questionable or violative material contained in the Subject Material. The IMRC's review, report, and recommendation is not limited to the excerpts listed on Exhibit A.

Report and Recommendation
All Boys Aren't Blue

adopted instructional materials list, adopted and/or purchased through a district instructional materials program, or otherwise purchased, donated to the school, or made available to students through other means, including but not limited to digital platforms. See S.C. Code Ann. Section 59–19–10. The term “Instructional Materials” as used herein includes any collection of books or materials purchased, acquired, or kept on public school grounds by any teacher or other public-school employee and made available to students, regardless of how or by whom such materials are acquired or purchased.

Reg. 43-170(I)(A).

3. Regulation 43-170 defines “Age and Developmentally Appropriate”:

“Age and Developmentally Appropriate” means topics, messages, materials, and teaching methods suitable to particular ages or age groups of children and adolescents, based on developing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral capacity typical for the age or age group. Instructional Material is not “Age and Developmentally Appropriate” for any age or age group of children if it includes descriptions or visual depictions of “sexual conduct,” as that term is defined by Section 16–15–305(C)(1).

4. Regulation 43-170 authorizes the State Board to establish “a committee comprised of at least five of the State Board’s members... [and to] conduct a public meeting” consistent with the Regulation’s requirements. Reg. 43-170(IV)(E). Furthermore, it requires the committee to “provide a report and recommendation to the full State Board to be considered and either adopted or rejected by the State Board at its next regularly scheduled meeting.” *Id.*
5. Regulation 43-170 authorizes the State Board to review material “of its own volition and on its own initiative” in order to “make determinations regarding the educational suitability or the Age or Developmental Appropriateness of specific Instructional Materials pursuant to the criteria and requirements of” Reg. 43-170(VI)(B).

RECOMMENDATION

Having carefully considered all public comments (in person and written), the Subject Material and/or excerpts in question from the Subject Material, all documentation provided by the Department, and all comments made by those appearing before the IMRC, we unanimously find that the Subject Material includes descriptions of “sexual conduct” as that term is defined by S.C. Code § 16-15-305(C)(1). While the IMRC’s review of the Subject Material is not limited to Exhibit A, the excerpts contained therein establish a clear violation of the regulation. Therefore, the Subject Material is not Age and Developmentally Appropriate as defined by S.C. Code Reg. 43-170 and must be removed entirely from all public schools in South Carolina.

The IMRC recommends that, considering all the circumstances *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George Johnson be removed entirely from all public schools in South Carolina, beginning on the date of the signing of the Suspension Order by the South Carolina State Board of Education.

Report and Recommendation
All Boys Aren't Blue

Christian T. Hanley, Jr.
Chairman
Instructional Material Review
Committee January 31, 2025



**South Carolina Instructional Materials
Uniform Parent Complaint Form**

Your Name: Ivie Szalai
 Title & Author of Contested Material (one per form): All Boys Aren't Blue by George M. Johnson
 School Where Contested Material is Located: Hilton Head Island HS
 Location of Contested Material (library, classroom, etc.): Library, possibly DISCUS
 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):

This book is a clear violation of Regulation 43-170. This book contains descriptions of anal/oral sex, molestation, and other things defined in SC Code 16-15-305(c)(1). I will include pictures of the excerpts to include chapter and page number. I read excerpts from this book at the October 27, 2023 board meeting.
 August Book 4 of 5

I, Ivie 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: [Signature] Date: 8/24/24

SC CODE OF LAWS

CHAPTER 15

Offenses Against Morality and Decency

ARTICLE 3

Obscenity, Material Harmful to Minors, Child Exploitation, and Child Prostitution

SECTION 16-15-305(C)(1)

(C) As used in this article:

(1) "sexual conduct" means:

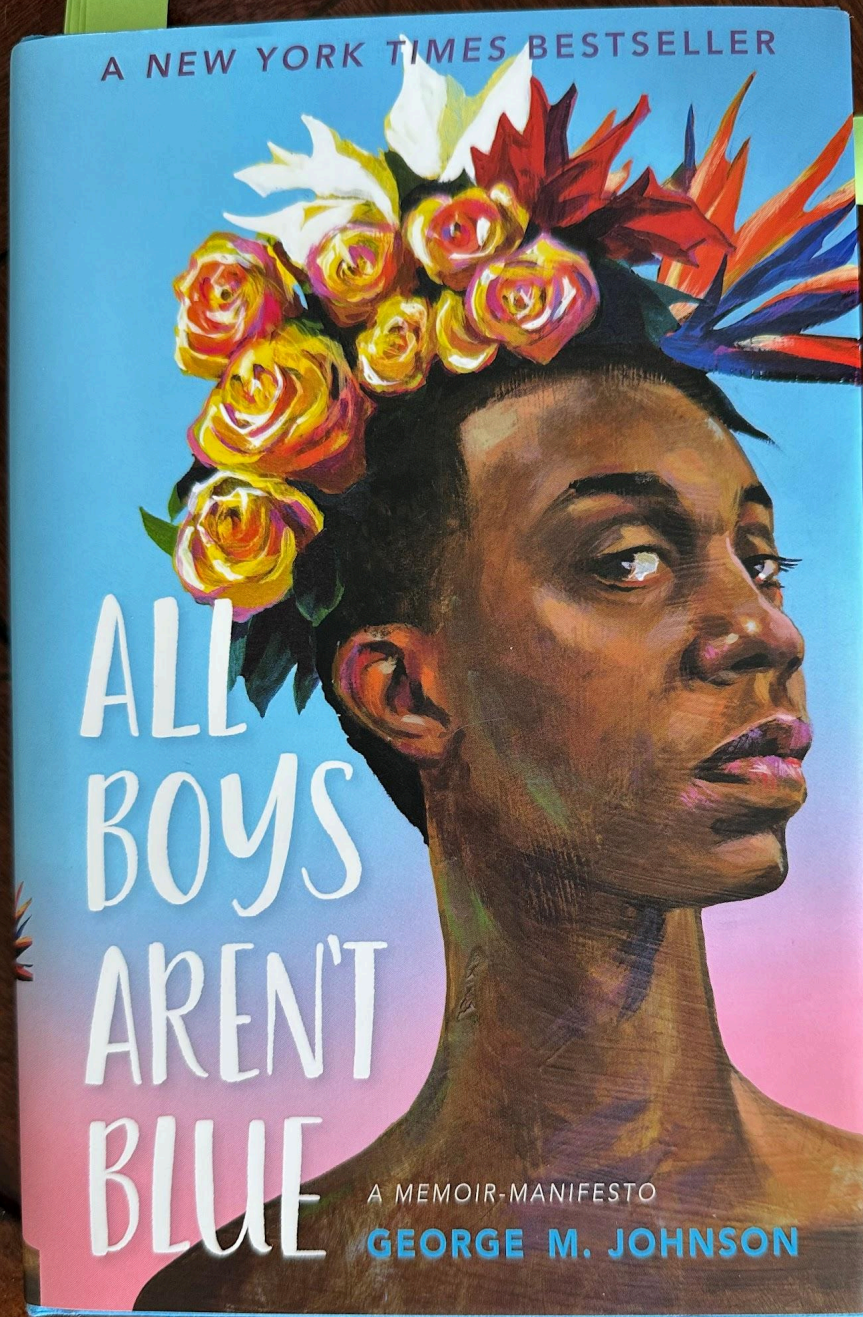
(a) vaginal, anal, or oral intercourse, whether actual or simulated, normal or perverted, whether between human beings, animals, or a combination thereof;

(b) masturbation, excretory functions, or lewd exhibition, actual or simulated, of the genitals, pubic hair, anus, vulva, or female breast nipples including male or female genitals in a state of sexual stimulation or arousal or covered male genitals in a discernably turgid state;

(c) an act or condition that depicts actual or simulated bestiality, sado-masochistic abuse, meaning flagellation or torture by or upon a person who is nude or clad in undergarments or in a costume which reveals the pubic hair, anus, vulva, genitals, or female breast nipples, or the condition of being fettered, bound, or otherwise physically restrained on the part of the one so clothed;

(d) an act or condition that depicts actual or simulated touching, caressing, or fondling of, or other similar physical contact with, the covered or exposed genitals, pubic or anal regions, or female breast nipple, whether alone or between humans, animals, or a human and an animal, of the same or opposite sex, in an act of actual or apparent sexual stimulation or gratification; or

(e) an act or condition that depicts the insertion of any part of a person's body, other than the male sexual organ, or of any object into another person's anus or vagina, except when done as part of a recognized medical procedure.



And you going, "Shut up and go to bed!" And we all laughed.

You waited a few more minutes before asking me again, "Matt. You awake?"

This time I whispered back, "Yes."

You then spoke a little louder and said, "Garrett. Garrett!"

G didn't respond. It didn't take much for Garrett to go to sleep, and when he did fall asleep, he slept like a rock. You then asked me, "Do you feel that?"

"Yeah." But I laughed and said, "Get your hand off my butt."

You giggled. "That's not my hand."

"You're lying," I said. You then placed both hands on my hips, as we lay side by side. There was still something poking me.

You were fully erect at this point. I was nervous. "We gonna get in trouble."

"You can't tell anybody, okay?" you said. "You promise that you not gonna tell anyone?"

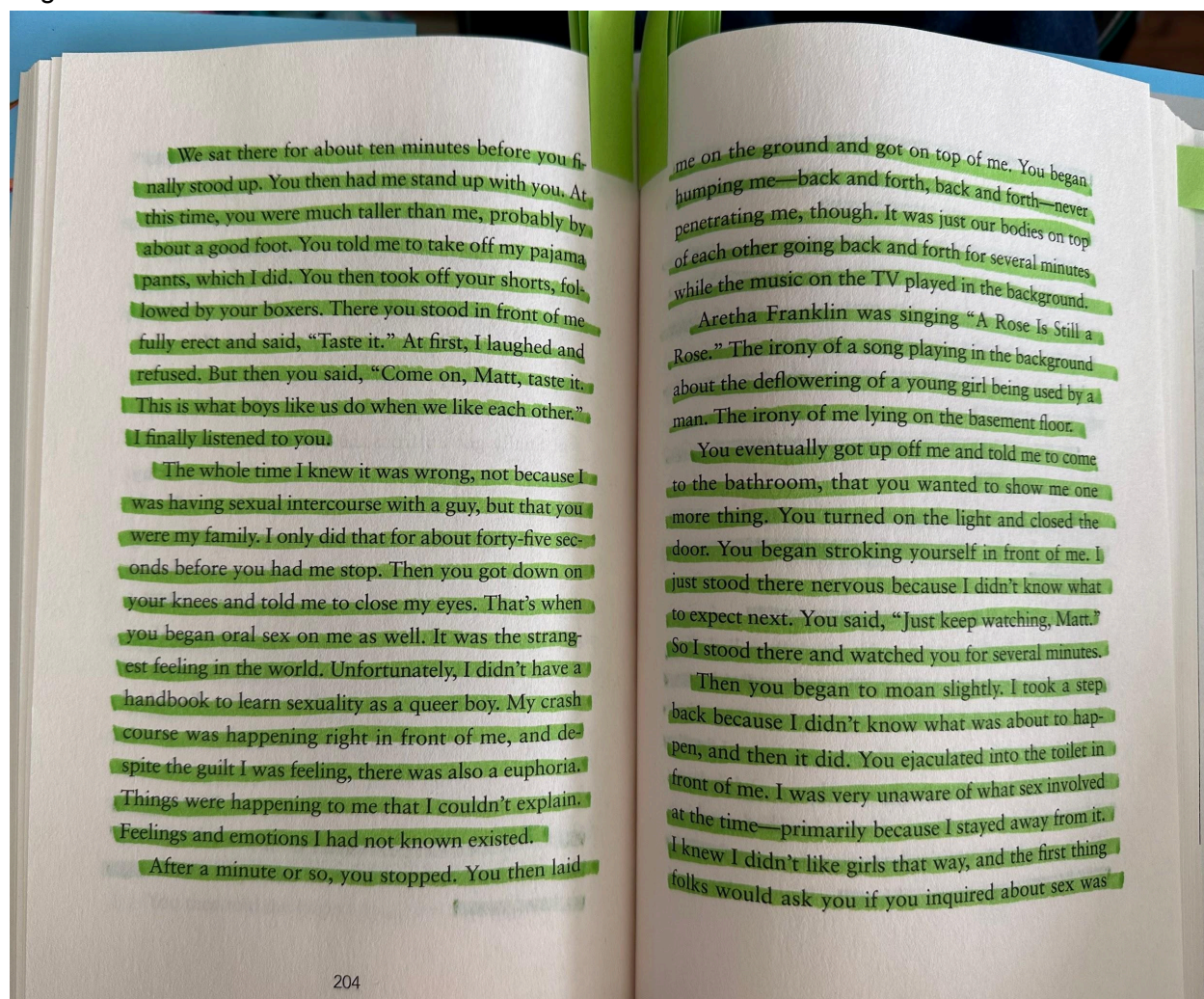
I promised. You then grabbed my hand and made me touch it. It was the first time I had ever touched a penis that wasn't my own. I knew what was happening wasn't supposed to happen. Cousins weren't

supposed to do these things with cousins. But my body didn't react that way. My body on the inside was doing something, too.

It was that same feeling I had as a seven-year-old who knew he was different. The ten-year-old who wanted to double Dutch instead of play football. Puberty had arrived, and with it these feelings I had always feared, yet always dreamed of having. At the time, I knew that relations and relationships could only be between a boy and girl. I never even imagined a day would come when I would be able to explore what I had always felt inside. And even when I day-dreamed about it, you definitely weren't the person I thought I was going to explore with.

By now we were both touching each other. I tried my best not to enjoy it, because you were my cousin. We were crossing a line that family should never cross. But it felt so right for a boy who always felt that he was wrong. To know someone else was having those same feelings validated everything going on inside of me. I knew it wasn't fake. But the fact that we were doing it in secret also told me this wasn't something anyone would accept. Especially your girlfriend.

You then told me to get up and be very quiet—that



whether "you were fucking or not." And I wasn't. We also had the bare minimum of sex education in school, so I was unaware of a lot of things.

Watching you ejaculate was shocking. I remember you telling me, "It's semen. One day when nobody is around, you should do this until you get this feeling you never felt before and bust."

I looked at you and said, "I can't do that, I'm not old enough yet."

You laughed. "Matt, you are old enough. Go ahead and try it."

By this point, fear had overcome me and so many lines had been crossed that I finally said, "I don't want to do it."

"That's cool. Come on, let's go to bed."

We went back upstairs and both went to bed. You rolled over to face the wall, and I sat there. For hours. I sat there until the sun came up, not knowing what to do or say or how I would face my parents. I finally fell asleep in the early morning. I woke up a while later, after you. You were still in bed behind me but watching TV. I rolled over and looked at you, and you said, "Remember our promise, Matt?"

"I won't tell anyone." And I didn't. That night stayed our secret.

The secrecy of the sex seemed to become my normal. Two weeks after that night, I masturbated for the first time, and you were right. I was old enough to experience that feeling of what I would later learn is called an orgasm. Despite knowing that what happened with you was wrong, I now knew that I was definitely attracted to boys. I also knew that with puberty setting in, I would have to do my best to suppress these feelings even further. I was soon a high school freshman, with sexually active teens all around me.

So, suppress is what I did. I was still me, the effeminate boy who could play sports, talk shit, and deal with mild bullying at that time. But folks could tell I wasn't into girls, no matter how hard I faked it. But I still faked it, and I was okay with being a virgin. I wasn't ready for sex, and my crash course introduction made me feel guilty rather than ready to try it with someone I didn't know.

Unfortunately, my trust would once again be broken and my will tested. This time in a high school

bathroom. I remember it was about one p.m. and I had asked the teacher if I could use the restroom, just as I would any other time. I walked up the hallway to the nearest one. Because it was during class time, I was the only one in the bathroom, or so I thought.

I unzipped my pants and began to pee in the stand-up urinal in the corner. I was there for about ten seconds before I felt someone come up behind me. At first, I froze because I didn't know what was happening. He put both his hands around me and then moved down to touch my genitals. I could feel every nerve in my body start to tingle. I didn't know who was behind me, but I knew that I was being violated.

I immediately stopped peeing, turned around, and pushed him off me. It was a boy I will refer to as Evan. Although we weren't friends, I knew who he was. We were in the same grade and had taken classes together before.

I zipped up my pants and yelled, "What the fuck are you doing?"

"Yo, I'm just playing. Chill out," Evan yelled back.

"I don't play like that," I said.

"Don't tell anybody, okay?"

"I won't. Just get out of here."

Interestingly enough, this was a boy who fit in with the popular kids, even though most people used to whisper about him being gay. Other classmates even teased him one time about his sexuality, but he laughed it off and still was "one of the guys." This experience officially let me know that he was definitely not "one of the guys" and was likely someone suppressing his identity, as I was. Yet he was an assaulter. Furthermore, I realized that there were more people like me hiding in plain sight. And despite our antics to hide it, we could all see each other. Our mannerisms, our talk, just our beings were exuding something that we all knew to be different from the "norm." But we each walked around in secrecy and silence.

That experience in the bathroom completely shut me down from the idea of wanting to have sex with anyone else. It would be years before I even contemplated the idea of being vulnerable with someone. A vulnerability that I now realize was shared with you, Thomas. I originally was going to write about you from how I interpreted that night. From the guilty place. The place that felt like my innocence had been

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sexual education in a very archaic way. The whole “birds and the bees” conversation, which never really made sense to me because who the hell cared about how birds and bees were mating? Sex education was an absolute joke—and the fact that we were in Catholic school didn’t help. We discussed abstinence as being the best method for contraception, of course. There were diagrams and charts and that damn banana they used to show you how to put on a condom properly.

We learned the basics about sex. What an erection was, what sperm did and how it traveled to an egg to create a baby. We learned about STIs like chlamydia, gonorrhea, and HIV. But again, surface-level information. Nothing about how these infections harm one community more than the other—especially HIV in the Black community.

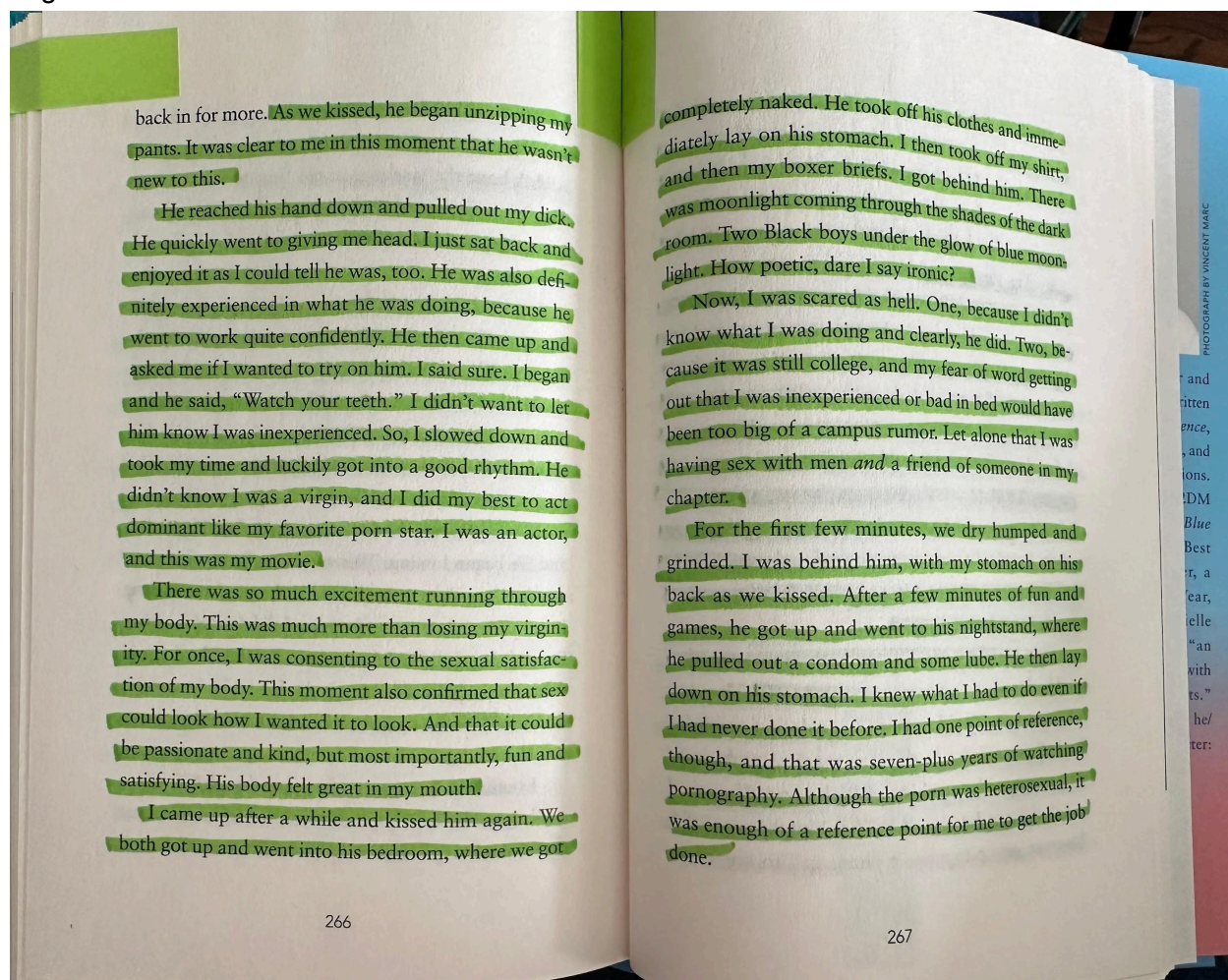
We also didn’t learn about sex between two men. I focused on masturbation instead of sex, primarily because I still could not imagine myself having sex with anyone else. The feelings I had were for boys, but the only encounters I’d had with boys—Thomas and Evan—weren’t the same as what I had seen in love stories or pornography. Those were mostly between men and women, and they were excited and confident with

each other. The porn stories were so romanticized, but the passion was there. Even the corny storylines were better than my lived experience—which consisted of no romantic love at all. So, sex with myself was going to have to suffice until I had the ability to trust myself with someone else.

That moment for me didn't come until my junior year of college. I remained a virgin until I was almost twenty-one years old, something unheard of in my family. It had been a daunting task to lie about having sex (and with a girl) to all of my heterosexual cousins. I had never seen a vagina other than in the movies, and had no desire to.

Being a member of a Greek Letter Organization has a way of shining a spotlight on you in college, opening you up to a whole population of people who may not have known you existed. One boy in particular took a liking to me and asked for my phone number. At first, I thought his interest was platonic. He was the friend of someone in my chapter, so I believed he was just being social.

As we began texting one another, it quickly escalated from a friendly conversation to an X-rated one. This was fine for me, except I wasn't quite sure who



I remember the condom was blue and flavored like cotton candy. I put some lube on and got him up on his knees, and I began to slide into him from behind. I tried not to force it because I imagined that it would be painful; I didn't want this moment to be painful. So I eased in, slowly, until I heard him moan.

As we moved, I could tell he was excited—I was, too, but the pride in me told me not to show it. I felt like I was in control and proud of myself for getting it right on the first try—all the while still being nervous. I wanted to stay dominant in that moment. We went at it for about fifteen minutes before I started to get that feeling. Weakness in the legs, numbness in the waist. I finally came and let out a loud moan—to the point where he asked me to quiet down for the neighbors. I pulled out of him and kissed him while he masturbated. Then, he also came.

That night was glorious. I had conquered a fear and had sex with a man on my own terms. The years of suppressing my identity and not dating or kissing had all come down to this one magical night in an apartment on the outskirts of Richmond, Virginia. I didn't want to leave, and he didn't make me. I did, however, get up to make a phone call to one of my

line brothers. I left him a voicemail saying that I had finally had sex.

I then went back into his bedroom and climbed under the sheets. We both lay naked in each other's arms that night. For him, I was just a conquest of a cute frat boy on campus. For me, I was finally on my journey of sexual exploration and couldn't wait to do it again.

He and I had sex a second time two weeks later, before school let out for the summer. He went home, and I stayed in Richmond. That entire summer, however, I didn't do it again. I had several sexual encounters that involved mutual masturbation and kissing and fooling around, but I just couldn't bring myself to have penetrative sex again.

I was hesitant because I still had a lot of questions. As much as I enjoyed being on top, I wasn't sure if I always wanted to be the dominant person in the bedroom. I was still a novice at sex, and even more at gay culture and sexual positions. I wasn't sure if because I "topped" him, that meant I always had to be the top. I also wanted to try the bottom position, which I associated with being the more submissive person. (Though if you know me, that ain't ever been me.) I just needed

time to reflect, and figure out if sex for me was going to be the casual hookup thing or if I was ready to now seek something more.

That next semester, I entered my senior year of college. I was promoted to be the fraternity president, becoming one of the more well-known students on campus. It was a great start to what would be a great year. By that time, I was using a dating app online called Black Gay Chat.

One night, I got a message from another boy who went to school with me. He said that he had always had a crush on me and wanted to meet up. It was the night before I headed to Jersey for my birthday, so I agreed to meet up with him as an early birthday present to myself. I got to his apartment and we both began drinking while watching TV. This lasted all of ten minutes before we started kissing and undressing each other.

He then stood up and grabbed me by the hands and led me into his bedroom. We took each other's clothes off, fast but deliberate. After, he told me to lie down on the bed. He asked me to "turn over" while he slipped a condom on himself.

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My heart immediately started to race. Nervously, I asked him what he was doing, and he said, "You." I laughed at first but then told him that I had never been the bottom. He looked at me and said, "Well, that's about to change tonight."

I was extremely nervous. There is a fear, as with most things that you are doing for the first time. But this was my ass, and I was struggling to imagine someone inside me. And he was . . . large. But, I was gonna try.

I had previously topped someone who clearly enjoyed it, but he had been enjoying anal sex before I ever came along. He knew what to expect. I didn't. As an avid porn watcher, the only thing I knew about anal sex previously was that it was painful, or at least played up as such on the cameras.

Nervous and drunk, I listened and got on my stomach. He got on top and slowly inserted himself into me. It was the worst pain I think I had ever felt in my life. He then added more lube and tried again, which felt better but not by much. He began his stroking motion. Eventually, I felt a mix of pleasure with the pain.

I can't say that I didn't enjoy it, because I did. But it was painful for sure. In those few minutes though,

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I can say that he was gentle. His aim wasn't to hurt me, and my aim was for him to be pleased, too. He didn't last long inside of me, thankfully. He gave me a kiss before he pulled out. I didn't stay long, nor did I masturbate after. I was in a state of shock. I just wanted to get back home.

That next morning, me and my line brothers were planning to travel to Jersey for my birthday and I had to drive. But, I was in pain. I told them what I had done and before getting on the road, they picked up some Tylenol for me and explained, "It will take some time to get used to it." They were proud, though. I had earned another gay badge of honor like it was the Boy Scouts or something.

I was in pain for nearly three weeks following that encounter and too afraid to go to the doctor for help because I would have had to tell them I had been having anal sex. So, like most other trauma in my life, I sucked it up and dealt with the pain until my body healed. I didn't have sex for several months following that encounter.

But after a while, I got the courage to try it again, but this time I went into it much more prepared. With each time, I learned more about my body and the

power to say, "No, that hurts." Sex should be pleasurable. And there are safe ways to ensure that. Like they say, *Practice makes perfect*, and I eventually got a lot of practice.

I often imagine what my first sexual experiences would have been like had I been given the ability to learn about what queer sex was when all my straight friends and classmates got to learn about what it looked like for them. My queer sexuality was one big, risky crash course, much like the other aspects of my queer existence.

There is so much danger in not providing proper education about sex to kids, especially for those who are having sex outside of the heteronormative boxes. Sure, we learned about HIV, but in a school full of white kids, it wasn't a priority. Despite the fact that Black queer people fall into the highest risk category for it, learning sex education through a white lens made me think I was just as invincible as my white classmates.

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**South Carolina Instructional Materials
Uniform Parent Complaint Form**

Your Name: Ivie Szalai
 Title & Author of Contested Material (one per form): All Boys Aren't Blue by George M. Johnson
 School Where Contested Material is Located: Hilton Head Island HS
 Location of Contested Material (library, classroom, etc.): Library, possibly DISCUS
 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):

This book is a clear violation of Regulation 43-170. This book contains descriptions of anal/oral sex, molestation, and other things defined in SC Code 16-15-305(c)(1). I will include pictures of the excerpts to include chapter and page number. I read excerpts from this book at the October 27, 2023 board meeting.
 August Book 4 of 5

I, Ivie 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: 8/24/24

SC CODE OF LAWS

CHAPTER 15

Offenses Against Morality and Decency

ARTICLE 3

Obscenity, Material Harmful to Minors, Child Exploitation, and Child Prostitution

SECTION 16-15-305(C)(1)

(C) As used in this article:

(1) "sexual conduct" means:

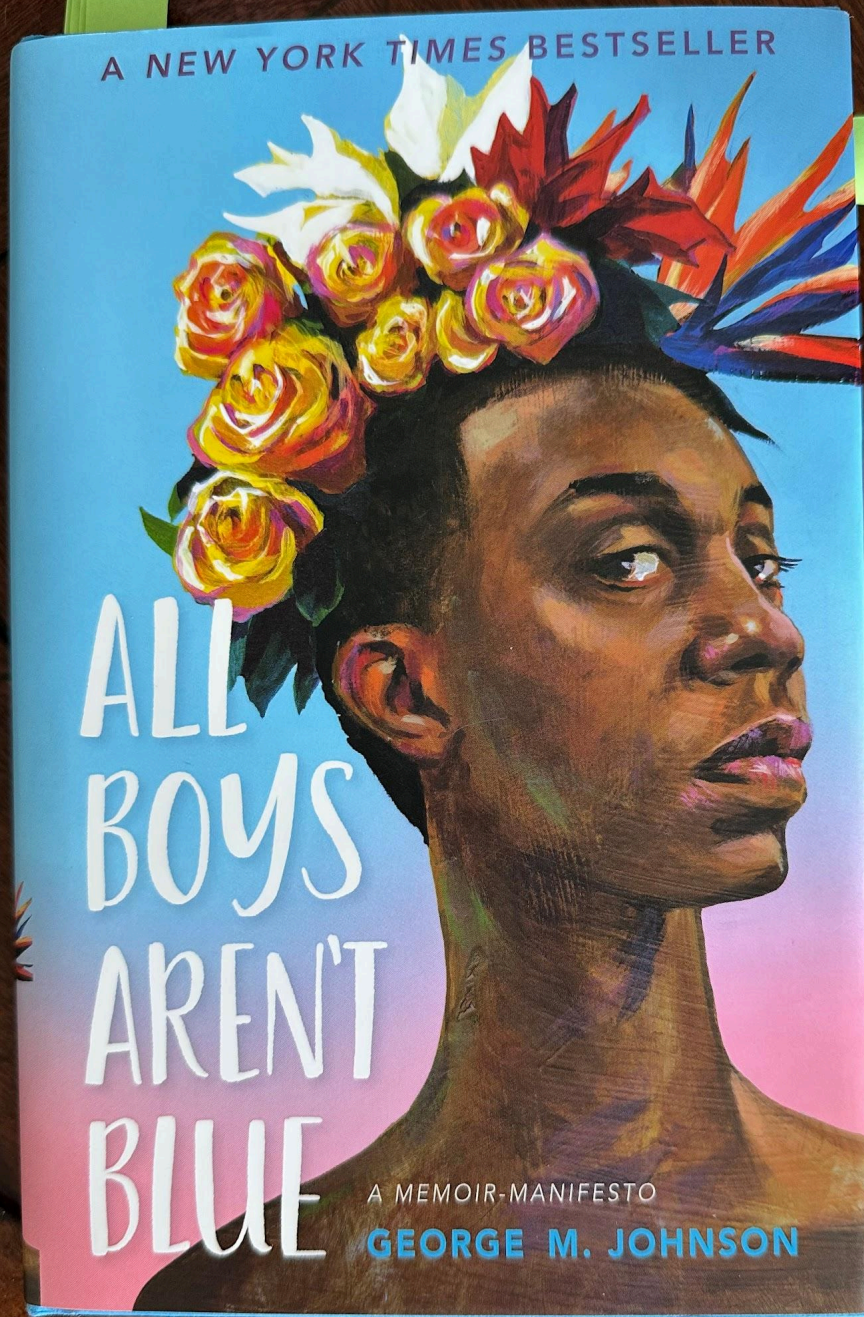
(a) vaginal, anal, or oral intercourse, whether actual or simulated, normal or perverted, whether between human beings, animals, or a combination thereof;

(b) masturbation, excretory functions, or lewd exhibition, actual or simulated, of the genitals, pubic hair, anus, vulva, or female breast nipples including male or female genitals in a state of sexual stimulation or arousal or covered male genitals in a discernably turgid state;

(c) an act or condition that depicts actual or simulated bestiality, sado-masochistic abuse, meaning flagellation or torture by or upon a person who is nude or clad in undergarments or in a costume which reveals the pubic hair, anus, vulva, genitals, or female breast nipples, or the condition of being fettered, bound, or otherwise physically restrained on the part of the one so clothed;

(d) an act or condition that depicts actual or simulated touching, caressing, or fondling of, or other similar physical contact with, the covered or exposed genitals, pubic or anal regions, or female breast nipple, whether alone or between humans, animals, or a human and an animal, of the same or opposite sex, in an act of actual or apparent sexual stimulation or gratification; or

(e) an act or condition that depicts the insertion of any part of a person's body, other than the male sexual organ, or of any object into another person's anus or vagina, except when done as part of a recognized medical procedure.



And you going, "Shut up and go to bed!" And we all laughed.

You waited a few more minutes before asking me again, "Matt. You awake?"

This time I whispered back, "Yes."

You then spoke a little louder and said, "Garrett. Garrett!"

G didn't respond. It didn't take much for Garrett to go to sleep, and when he did fall asleep, he slept like a rock. You then asked me, "Do you feel that?"

"Yeah." But I laughed and said, "Get your hand off my butt."

You giggled. "That's not my hand."

"You're lying," I said. You then placed both hands on my hips, as we lay side by side. There was still something poking me.

You were fully erect at this point. I was nervous. "We gonna get in trouble."

"You can't tell anybody, okay?" you said. "You promise that you not gonna tell anyone?"

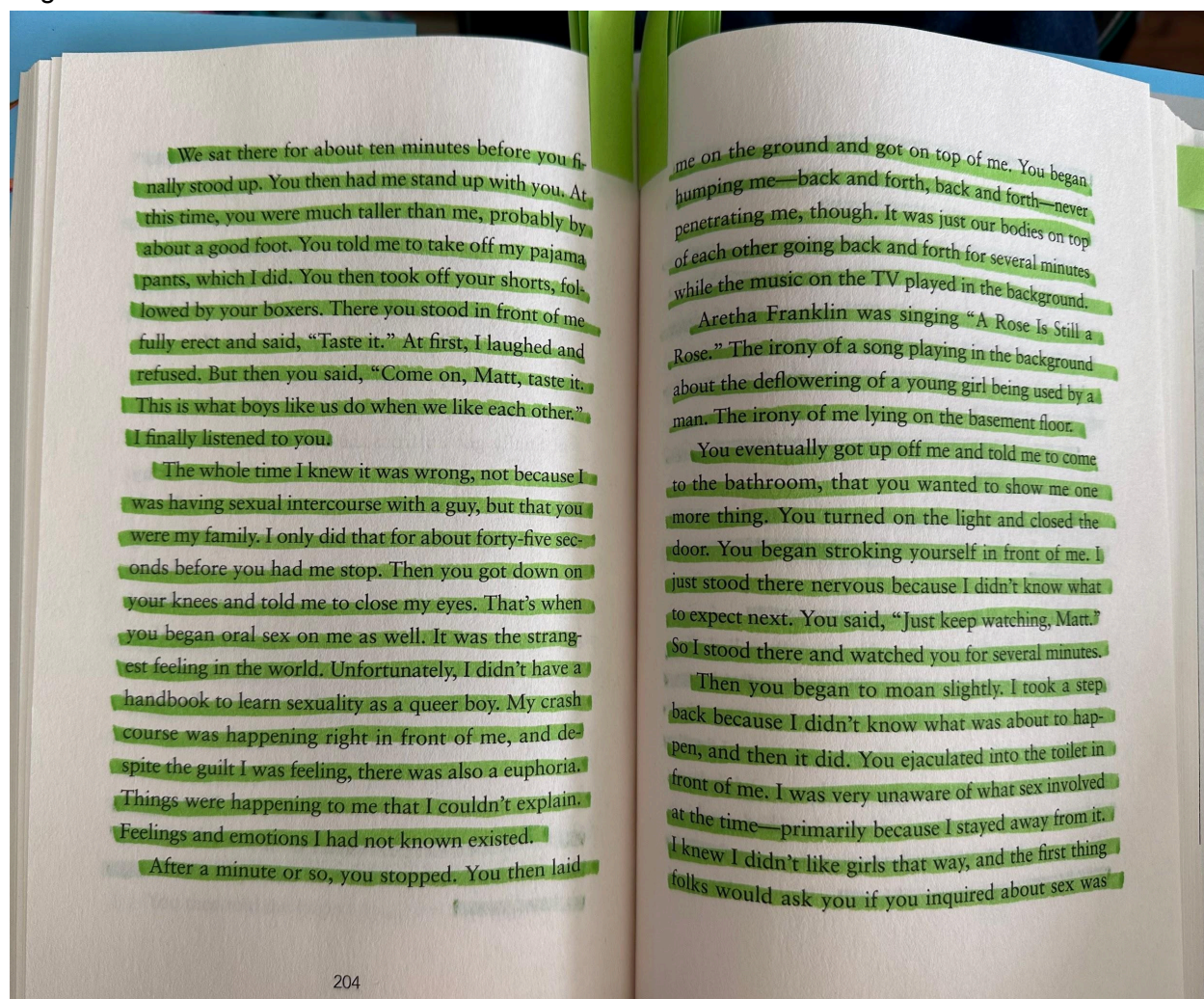
I promised. You then grabbed my hand and made me touch it. It was the first time I had ever touched a penis that wasn't my own. I knew what was happening wasn't supposed to happen. Cousins weren't

supposed to do these things with cousins. But my body didn't react that way. My body on the inside was doing something, too.

It was that same feeling I had as a seven-year-old who knew he was different. The ten-year-old who wanted to double Dutch instead of play football. Puberty had arrived, and with it these feelings I had always feared, yet always dreamed of having. At the time, I knew that relations and relationships could only be between a boy and girl. I never even imagined a day would come when I would be able to explore what I had always felt inside. And even when I day-dreamed about it, you definitely weren't the person I thought I was going to explore with.

By now we were both touching each other. I tried my best not to enjoy it, because you were my cousin. We were crossing a line that family should never cross. But it felt so right for a boy who always felt that he was wrong. To know someone else was having those same feelings validated everything going on inside of me. I knew it wasn't fake. But the fact that we were doing it in secret also told me this wasn't something anyone would accept. Especially your girlfriend.

You then told me to get up and be very quiet—that



whether "you were fucking or not." And I wasn't. We also had the bare minimum of sex education in school, so I was unaware of a lot of things.

Watching you ejaculate was shocking. I remember you telling me, "It's semen. One day when nobody is around, you should do this until you get this feeling you never felt before and bust."

I looked at you and said, "I can't do that, I'm not old enough yet."

You laughed. "Matt, you are old enough. Go ahead and try it."

By this point, fear had overcome me and so many lines had been crossed that I finally said, "I don't want to do it."

"That's cool. Come on, let's go to bed."

We went back upstairs and both went to bed. You rolled over to face the wall, and I sat there. For hours. I sat there until the sun came up, not knowing what to do or say or how I would face my parents. I finally fell asleep in the early morning. I woke up a while later, after you. You were still in bed behind me but watching TV. I rolled over and looked at you, and you said, "Remember our promise, Matt?"

"I won't tell anyone." And I didn't. That night stayed our secret.

The secrecy of the sex seemed to become my normal. Two weeks after that night, I masturbated for the first time, and you were right. I was old enough to experience that feeling of what I would later learn is called an orgasm. Despite knowing that what happened with you was wrong, I now knew that I was definitely attracted to boys. I also knew that with puberty setting in, I would have to do my best to suppress these feelings even further. I was soon a high school freshman, with sexually active teens all around me.

So, suppress is what I did. I was still me, the effeminate boy who could play sports, talk shit, and deal with mild bullying at that time. But folks could tell I wasn't into girls, no matter how hard I faked it. But I still faked it, and I was okay with being a virgin. I wasn't ready for sex, and my crash course introduction made me feel guilty rather than ready to try it with someone I didn't know.

Unfortunately, my trust would once again be broken and my will tested. This time in a high school

bathroom. I remember it was about one p.m. and I had asked the teacher if I could use the restroom, just as I would any other time. I walked up the hallway to the nearest one. Because it was during class time, I was the only one in the bathroom, or so I thought.

I unzipped my pants and began to pee in the stand-up urinal in the corner. I was there for about ten seconds before I felt someone come up behind me. At first, I froze because I didn't know what was happening. He put both his hands around me and then moved down to touch my genitals. I could feel every nerve in my body start to tingle. I didn't know who was behind me, but I knew that I was being violated.

I immediately stopped peeing, turned around, and pushed him off me. It was a boy I will refer to as Evan. Although we weren't friends, I knew who he was. We were in the same grade and had taken classes together before.

I zipped up my pants and yelled, "What the fuck are you doing?"

"Yo, I'm just playing. Chill out," Evan yelled back.

"I don't play like that," I said.

"Don't tell anybody, okay?"

"I won't. Just get out of here."

Interestingly enough, this was a boy who fit in with the popular kids, even though most people used to whisper about him being gay. Other classmates even teased him one time about his sexuality, but he laughed it off and still was "one of the guys." This experience officially let me know that he was definitely not "one of the guys" and was likely someone suppressing his identity, as I was. Yet he was an assaulter. Furthermore, I realized that there were more people like me hiding in plain sight. And despite our antics to hide it, we could all see each other. Our mannerisms, our talk, just our beings were exuding something that we all knew to be different from the "norm." But we each walked around in secrecy and silence.

That experience in the bathroom completely shut me down from the idea of wanting to have sex with anyone else. It would be years before I even contemplated the idea of being vulnerable with someone. A vulnerability that I now realize was shared with you, Thomas. I originally was going to write about you from how I interpreted that night. From the guilty place. The place that felt like my innocence had been

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sexual education in a very archaic way. The whole “birds and the bees” conversation, which never really made sense to me because who the hell cared about how birds and bees were mating? Sex education was an absolute joke—and the fact that we were in Catholic school didn’t help. We discussed abstinence as being the best method for contraception, of course. There were diagrams and charts and that damn banana they used to show you how to put on a condom properly.

We learned the basics about sex. What an erection was, what sperm did and how it traveled to an egg to create a baby. We learned about STIs like chlamydia, gonorrhea, and HIV. But again, surface-level information. Nothing about how these infections harm one community more than the other—especially HIV in the Black community.

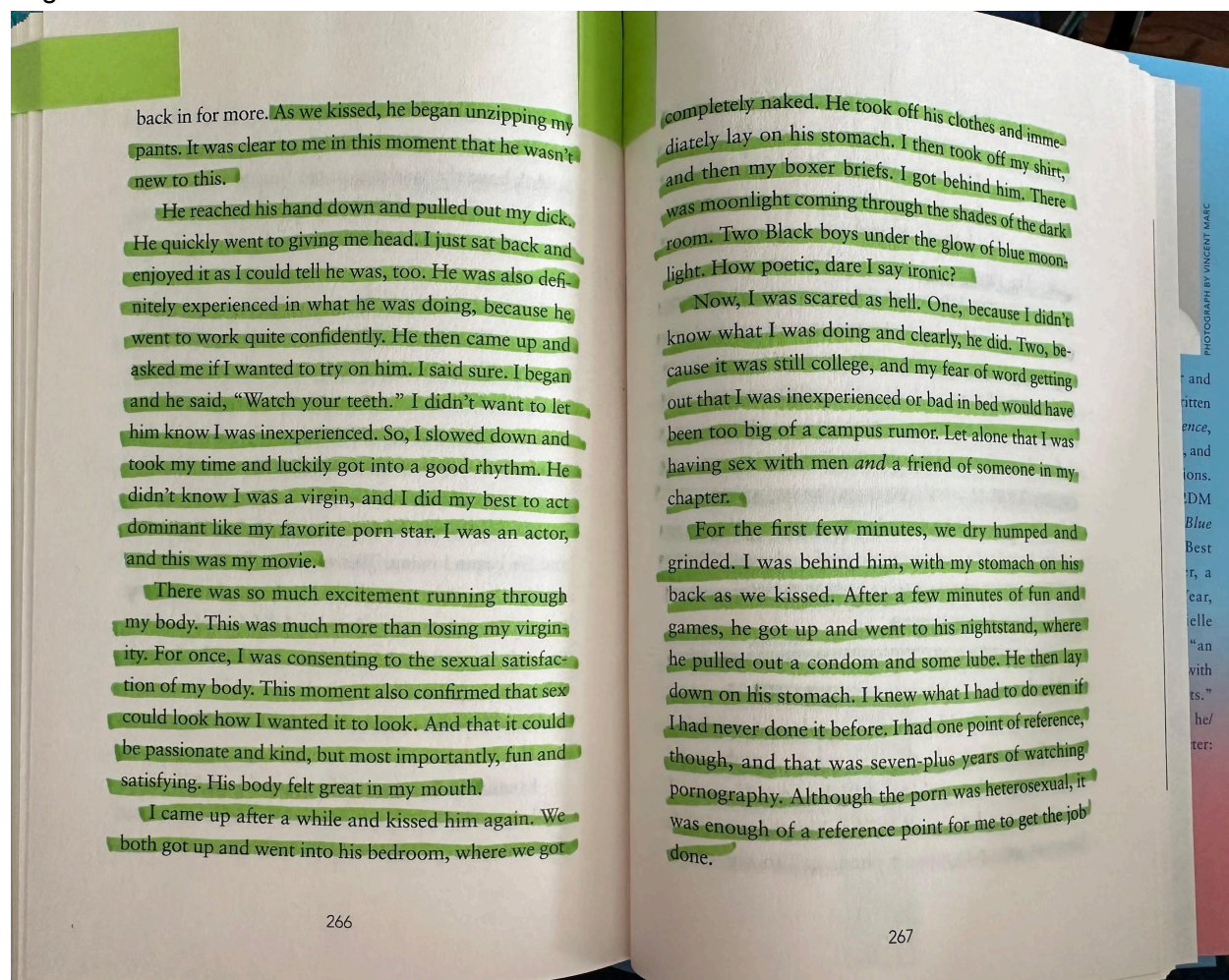
We also didn’t learn about sex between two men. I focused on masturbation instead of sex, primarily because I still could not imagine myself having sex with anyone else. The feelings I had were for boys, but the only encounters I’d had with boys—Thomas and Evan—weren’t the same as what I had seen in love stories or pornography. Those were mostly between men and women, and they were excited and confident with

each other. The porn stories were so romanticized, but the passion was there. Even the corny storylines were better than my lived experience—which consisted of no romantic love at all. So, sex with myself was going to have to suffice until I had the ability to trust myself with someone else.

That moment for me didn't come until my junior year of college. I remained a virgin until I was almost twenty-one years old, something unheard of in my family. It had been a daunting task to lie about having sex (and with a girl) to all of my heterosexual cousins. I had never seen a vagina other than in the movies, and had no desire to.

Being a member of a Greek Letter Organization has a way of shining a spotlight on you in college, opening you up to a whole population of people who may not have known you existed. One boy in particular took a liking to me and asked for my phone number. At first, I thought his interest was platonic. He was the friend of someone in my chapter, so I believed he was just being social.

As we began texting one another, it quickly escalated from a friendly conversation to an X-rated one. This was fine for me, except I wasn't quite sure who



I remember the condom was blue and flavored like cotton candy. I put some lube on and got him up on his knees, and I began to slide into him from behind. I tried not to force it because I imagined that it would be painful; I didn't want this moment to be painful. So I eased in, slowly, until I heard him moan.

As we moved, I could tell he was excited—I was, too, but the pride in me told me not to show it. I felt like I was in control and proud of myself for getting it right on the first try—all the while still being nervous. I wanted to stay dominant in that moment. We went at it for about fifteen minutes before I started to get that feeling. Weakness in the legs, numbness in the waist. I finally came and let out a loud moan—to the point where he asked me to quiet down for the neighbors. I pulled out of him and kissed him while he masturbated. Then, he also came.

That night was glorious. I had conquered a fear and had sex with a man on my own terms. The years of suppressing my identity and not dating or kissing had all come down to this one magical night in an apartment on the outskirts of Richmond, Virginia. I didn't want to leave, and he didn't make me. I did, however, get up to make a phone call to one of my

line brothers. I left him a voicemail saying that I had finally had sex.

I then went back into his bedroom and climbed under the sheets. We both lay naked in each other's arms that night. For him, I was just a conquest of a cute frat boy on campus. For me, I was finally on my journey of sexual exploration and couldn't wait to do it again.

He and I had sex a second time two weeks later, before school let out for the summer. He went home, and I stayed in Richmond. That entire summer, however, I didn't do it again. I had several sexual encounters that involved mutual masturbation and kissing and fooling around, but I just couldn't bring myself to have penetrative sex again.

I was hesitant because I still had a lot of questions. As much as I enjoyed being on top, I wasn't sure if I always wanted to be the dominant person in the bedroom. I was still a novice at sex, and even more at gay culture and sexual positions. I wasn't sure if because I "topped" him, that meant I always had to be the top. I also wanted to try the bottom position, which I associated with being the more submissive person. (Though if you know me, that ain't ever been me.) I just needed

time to reflect, and figure out if sex for me was going to be the casual hookup thing or if I was ready to now seek something more.

That next semester, I entered my senior year of college. I was promoted to be the fraternity president, becoming one of the more well-known students on campus. It was a great start to what would be a great year. By that time, I was using a dating app online called Black Gay Chat.

One night, I got a message from another boy who went to school with me. He said that he had always had a crush on me and wanted to meet up. It was the night before I headed to Jersey for my birthday, so I agreed to meet up with him as an early birthday present to myself. I got to his apartment and we both began drinking while watching TV. This lasted all of ten minutes before we started kissing and undressing each other.

He then stood up and grabbed me by the hands and led me into his bedroom. We took each other's clothes off, fast but deliberate. After, he told me to lie down on the bed. He asked me to "turn over" while he slipped a condom on himself.

My heart immediately started to race. Nervously, I asked him what he was doing, and he said, "You." I laughed at first but then told him that I had never been the bottom. He looked at me and said, "Well, that's about to change tonight."

I was extremely nervous. There is a fear, as with most things that you are doing for the first time. But this was my ass, and I was struggling to imagine someone inside me. And he was . . . large. But, I was gonna try.

I had previously topped someone who clearly enjoyed it, but he had been enjoying anal sex before I ever came along. He knew what to expect. I didn't. As an avid porn watcher, the only thing I knew about anal sex previously was that it was painful, or at least played up as such on the cameras.

Nervous and drunk, I listened and got on my stomach. He got on top and slowly inserted himself into me. It was the worst pain I think I had ever felt in my life. He then added more lube and tried again, which felt better but not by much. He began his stroking motion. Eventually, I felt a mix of pleasure with the pain.

I can't say that I didn't enjoy it, because I did. But it was painful for sure. In those few minutes though,

I can say that he was gentle. His aim wasn't to hurt me, and my aim was for him to be pleased, too. He didn't last long inside of me, thankfully. He gave me a kiss before he pulled out. I didn't stay long, nor did I masturbate after. I was in a state of shock. I just wanted to get back home.

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