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Shut Up!: The Bizarre War That One Public Library Waged Against The First Amendment



Synopsis

What bad things could possibly be happening in your local public library? In SHUT UP! The Bizarre War that One Public Library Waged Against the First Amendment, citizen sleuths Megan Fox and Kevin DuJan expose the pattern of censorship, intimidation, harassment, bullying, and retaliation that the Orland Park Public Library engaged in (with help from the American Library Association (ALA), the Orland Park Police, and the Village of Orland Park) to chill free speech, trample civil rights, destroy a safe space, stifle debate, and frighten away critics. This one wayward public library in the affluent Chicago suburbs had for years willfully covered up dangers to children and unreported crimes and its staff and library board trustees used every dirty trick they could think of (including weaponizing the police and engaging in lawfare with a SLAPP suit) to silence parents and patrons who complained about sexual activity, a hostile work environment, and rampant spending waste in a spare-no-expense public building with all the bells and whistles (but little accountability for public employees who blatantly ignored Illinois state library and transparency laws). The library committed itself to shutting up Fox & DuJan at all costs, in what became a war of proxy between the lobbyists of the ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom and the rights of citizens to petition government bodies for change and redress of grievances. A public library that insisted men have a First Amendment right to sexually arouse themselves in a building full of children became obsessed with eradicating the public's First Amendment right to address and correct dangers to children in the one place that everyone always assumed was safe for kids: the local public library. This is the story of how a suburban Chicago scandal became so outrageous that it made national headlines (and even ended up on Saturday Night Live).

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Customer Reviews

Having been through a similar experience with a hostile and corrupt public body, I was interested in reading this book, and the authors very kindly provided me with a free copy of the paperback. Where to begin? First, I must tell prospective readers to ignore the one star reviews on this book. They were obviously posted by people who were angered at Fox and DuJan for bringing to light the crime and waste that were concealed by the Orland Park Public Library, located in a suburb of Chicago. The book is well edited, with beautiful interior formatting. It is also well written from the alternating viewpoints of Fox and DuJan, who each have their own distinct voices. Plenty of humorous anecdotes were included, which made the book a fast read and also made the subject matter seem less disturbing. In addition to funny tales of talking trashcans and a crazed librarian who shrieked at this mother of two in front of her own children, there are numerous references to American pop culture, like Star Wars, Ghostbusters, Howard Stern and others. Now for the sad part. Shut Up! is the story of a mom who discovered that porn was being accessed by men in a section of the Orland Park Public Library, directly in view of the reference section where teens did research for school projects and papers. The men who hung out in the library all day were exposing themselves right out in the open, and doing things that are against the law. There was even a case of child pornography being accessed at the library, and nobody who worked there cared. Though Fox and DuJan obtained evidence through the Freedom of Information Act, they were stymied at every turn by the Library Board of Directors. Newspapers printed false stories about them.

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