



WaPo, NYT Give Glowing Reviews to New Play Sympathetic to Pedophiles

Description

Acceptance, tolerance, political correctness, and advocacy for fringe lifestyles, begin in the arts and academia, and then spread out into culture and society at large. Now the arts world has taken up the fight with a new play sympathizing with convicted pedophiles with *Downstate*—the latest offering from New York’s Playwrights Horizons.

Downstate, a new play by Bruce Norris that premiered at Chicago’s Steppenwolf, is now running off-Broadway at New York’s legendary Playwrights Horizons. The play got rave reviews from the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and *New York Post*.

Academics and universities have been backing pedophilia acceptance, publishing books about the need to bring pedophiles back into the realm of respectability, or to understand their predilection as an innate sexual orientation or an affliction, and to separate the crimes from those who perpetrate them by saying that the criminals, essentially, can’t help themselves.

Academia and the arts are where these ideas begin, but where they end up as mainstream talking points, held aloft by pundits and politicians. This is the pipeline to mainstreaming pedophilia acceptance in contemporary American culture.

The Washington Post discusses the bold position that Norris takes, “that the punishments inflicted on some pedophiles are so harsh and unrelenting as to be inhumane.” Reviewer Peter Marks notes that Norris asks viewers to begin “questioning what degree of compassion should society fairly hold out to those who have served their time for sexual abuse, assault or rape.”

The story is about men living together at a group home after having served time in prison for sexual abuse of minors. They are all in various stages of decrepitude after their respective stints behind bars, and age has caught up with them. Painted with sympathetic strokes, as is necessary to draw a viewer in to caring about the characters as the story is told on stage, the pedophiles “are depicted not as monsters but rather as complicated, troubled souls,” Marks writes.

In fact, the character in the play who is the “most disagreeable character” is a victim of one of the men, now grown, who comes to confront his abuser. The man is portrayed as successful, and Marks, as was

intended by Norris, finds him “irritating.”

The New York Post’s Johnny Oleksinski calls Norris “fearless,” and claims that anyone who thinks convicted sex offenders should not be the subject of a play “are dead wrong.” In defense of this supposition, Oleksinski says that “If the world was perfectly fine with a glossy TV series about Jeffrey Dahmer, a prolific serial killer and cannibal, then it can also handle a brilliant, risky, in-your-face, far-better drama about another of society’s shadowed taboos.”

Laura Collins-Hughes, writing her review for *The New York Times*, makes the play her “critic’s pick,” and implores viewers to watch the play, even if their immediate impulse is to recoil from content that peddles acceptance for pedophiles. Of Downstate, she writes “this deep, dark tragicomedy pokes and prods at our compassion, checks the pulse on our sense of justice, taps our reflex response to charm.”

The focus of Collins-Hughes review is on the interaction between the adult victim of the aging pedophile, and the downtrodden old man himself. “You will never be deserving of sympathy, or forgiveness,” she quotes the victim as telling the older man. In response, the pedophiles explain how hard their life is in the group home, where they are targets of rock-throwing due to their past crimes, and field death threats and vandalism.

The audience is again made to feel sympathy for these men when law enforcement comes for a check-in, telling them that the areas of the city in which they can roam free have again been limited due to increased regulations on those convicted of sex crimes against minors.

Collins-Hughes heartstrings were successfully tugged by Downstate. She asks, in the pages of the same outlet that condemned Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh, that denounced Covington high school student Nick Sandman for smiling as he was berated by a Native American man at a pro-life protest, that engaged in a full-throated defense of the #MeToo movement that saw men lose jobs, career, and families over false accusations with no due process, “How much retribution is enough? And what quantity of compassion — bestowed on whom — is too much?”

The New York Times, which fired the opinion editor of the op ed page for having the audacity to publish an article by a sitting US Senator calling for National Guard intervention in riots that swept violently across the nation in the summer of 2020, calls for sympathy, compassion, and forgiveness for pedophiles.

And it’s no mistake that they are.

Downstate was commissioned by one of the major producers of new theatrical works in the nation, Steppenwolf, the legendary theater that produced John Malkovich and so many other American greats. This means that right from the idea phase, when Norris broached the idea of a play questioning the acceptance of repentant pedophiles back into society after they have been made decrepit by the penal system, major donors saw fit to back this play over others.

“Downstate was co-commissioned and its world premiere was presented by Steppenwolf Theatre Company (Anna Shapiro, Artistic Director; David Schmitz, Executive Director) and The National Theatre, London (Rufus Norris, Artistic Director; Lisa Burger, Executive Director),” Steppenwolf proudly reports. “This production has received generous support from the Roy Cockrum Foundation and the Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation.”

The Roy Cockrum foundation, founded by a lotto winner, gives money to non-profit theaters across the country. The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation also funded Lincoln Center’s revival of *My Fair Lady*. In other words, these are not fringe foundations intent on facilitating pedophile acceptance, they are mainstream foundations funding new works in theater.

In the not-for-profit world, Prostatea stands out as an IRS-designated charity that markets itself as a children’s rights group, while advocating for social acceptance of pedophiles and a destigmatization of pedophiles and their predilections. This group has pushed to replace the term “pedophile with “MAP,” which stands for “minor attracted person.” This has gained traction in some intellectual circles.

Former communications director for the group and *NBC* contributor Noah Berlatsky has written about legitimizing “trans children.” He has conducted interviews about the positive impact of pornography on kids and how the best way to help children who are trafficked into the sex trade is to “decriminalize the sex industry.” The group also launched a “MAP Support Club,” which “is a peer support chat for minor attracted people who are fundamentally against child sexual abuse and committed to never harm children, and is a safe space to have peer support in times of trouble.”

Non-binary advocate for pedophile destigmatization Allyn Walker wrote a book in service to her ideas, which, when made public, caused her to lose her position at Old Dominion. Walker was later hired by Johns Hopkins to work at the Moore Center for Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse. *The New York Post* said Walker’s work redefining pedophilia “could help offenders demand rights.”

SUNY Fredonia professor Stephen Kershner argued that pedophilia may not be as wrong as society deems it. “Imagine that an adult male wants to have sex with a 12-year-old girl. Imagine that she’s a willing participant. A very standard, very widely held view is that there’s something deeply wrong about this. It’s wrong independent of it being criminalized,” Kershner said.

“It’s not obvious to me that it’s in fact wrong,” he continued. “I think this is a mistake. And I think exploring that why it’s a mistake will tell us not only things about adult/sex and statutory rape and also fundamental principles of morality.”

“There’s a couple of things to say here,” he continued. “One is even if you are looking for a threshold. Let’s say there’s a threshold. I’m making this number up, but let’s say it’s at age 8. Still, that tells you that some adult/sex is permissible. Second, the notion that it’s wrong even with a one-year-old is not quite obvious to me.”

A Norwegian [professor](#) has said that AI-generated images of child exploitation should be made legal, and that pedophilia is an “innate sexuality that requires destigmatization.” In 2015, this professor wrote a paper called “The Ethics of Pedophilia,” which asked “Pedophilia is bad. But how bad is it? And in what ways, and for what reasons, is it bad?”

A doctoral student did his [thesis](#) on masturbating to fantasy images of child exploitation. "I wanted to understand how my research participants experience sexual pleasure when reading shota, a Japanese genre of self-published erotic comics that features young boy characters," the student said of his research paper.

And in consumer culture, images of child exploitation are big business. A judge ruled that [Visa](#) had helped Pornhub distribute images of child exploitation. High fashion brand [Balenciaga](#) came under fire for ad campaign that sexualized children and appeared to advocate for child pornography.

American culture is awash in those advocating to normalize pedophilia and child exploitation. Universities support research and advocacy for pedophiles. Not-for-profits, under the guise of being charities, support it too. And now, arts funders and arts organizations are pushing this veiled activism as entertainment on the American public. Once sympathy for pedophiles and their actions is being pushed in the American theater, it won't be too long before this is standard content in films and on streaming platforms.

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