

# Forum

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## 'SOMETHING WORSE THAN CENSORSHIP'

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I APPRECIATE my January 1993 best-selling book, *Gays: In or Out? The U.S. Military and Homosexuals A Sourcebook*, being finally mentioned in my hometown newspaper, but I was disappointed to have David Hawpe mischaracterize the book as smutty in his column on censorship (The Forum, Nov. 26). Hawpe's comparison of me and my book to E. Lynn Harris and his pornographic novels is seriously misleading. Hawpe warmly described Harris as a prominent gay novelist whose books are still on the library shelves at Central High

School, but his novels are not characterized as smutty, though Harris writes explicit gay erotica targeted at black youth and pagan spirituality and ritual.

Just to set the record straight in my hometown, *Gays: In or Out?* was published by Brassys U.S., Macmillan's internationally prominent military and diplomatic division, and was written for military and political leadership — in short, adults. On three of 220 pages, *Gays: In or Out?* lists explicit behaviors practiced by those whose identity is drawn from the sodomies. The other 217 pages present medical, military, politi-

cal, historical and moral facts and standards relative to the acceptance of sodomy — illegal as adultery is under the UCMJ — into the services.

Hawpe presented no excerpt from Harris' books, which raised a stir at Central High School. A typical passage from Harris' novel *Invisible Life* reads as follows: "All of a sudden I felt Kelvin's hands touch my sex and then, with a single motion, his hands unzipped my jeans, releasing my throbbing penis." Concerned Central High School parents, teachers and city leaders challenged Harris' pornographic gay fantasy being promoted and accessible to impression-

able youth in the school's library.

If *Gays: In or Out?* was censored in a Louisiana school library, then it is because, unlike E. Lynn Harris novels, my book was not written for youth. If *Gays: In or Out?* has been ignored by *The Courier-Journal* for seven years, is it because it does not advocate for legalizing sodomy or extending civil rights to those who practice it? For I know, as do others who have voiced concerns over the *Courier's* censorship of the darker aspects of the gay life, there is something worse than censorship: The smear.

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