

Smarm Man Nicholas Sparks Didn't Want a Club for Gay Students at His Private Prep School

 jezebel.com/smarm-man-nicholas-sparks-didnt-want-a-club-for-gay-stu-1835480903

New details from a lawsuit against sentimental movie machine and smarm golem Nicholas Sparks are emerging, and suffice it to say, he does not come off very well. For instance, at the cushy private school he co-founded, he was firmly opposed to the idea of a club for LGBT students, and he also wanted to ban student protests, reportedly in response to a plan by two lesbian students.

When he isn't churning out books featuring distraught white North Carolinians in love, specially calibrated to make you cry and also to adapt into films, Nicholas Sparks is also involved with the Epiphany School, a private prep school he co-founded. But in 2014, former headmaster Saul Benjamin filed suit against Sparks, insisting he was forced out for his efforts to diversify the school. "Sparks and members of the Board unapologetically marginalized, bullied, and harassed members of the School community, whose religious views and/or identities did not conform to their religiously driven, bigoted preconceptions," according to the complaint.

Now The Daily Beast has gotten their hands on emails in which Sparks simultaneously scolds former headmaster Saul Benjamin for his nefarious agenda of making "homosexuality open and accepted" and also insists that they've had tons of gay students and never had any problems before!

In one stern message, Sparks chastised the former headmaster for "what some perceive as an agenda that strives to make homosexuality open and accepted." In another, he put forward a motion to ban student protest at the school, an impulse that came directly in response to two lesbian girls planning to announce their orientation during chapel. In a third, while listing complaints against Benjamin, he cites "misplaced priorities at the school level (GLBT, diversity, the beauty of other religions, as opposed to academic/curricular/global issues, Christian traditions, etc.)."

In the correspondence, Sparks insisted that the lack of diversity at Epiphany had nothing to do with the school, what the school has or hasn't done, racism, or the long shadow of Jim Crow.

And also, they've had gay students! Loads of gay students! No problems with the gay students, okay???

Later in the letter, Sparks wrote: “Regarding diversity, I’ve now told you half a dozen times that our lack of diversity has NOTHING to do with the school or anyone at the school. It’s not because of what we as a school has or hasn’t done. It has nothing to do with racism or vestiges of Jim Crow. It comes down to 1) Money and 2) Culture.”

In a message sent the following morning, Sparks echoed the same points, defending his decision to ban the LGBT group (“not allowing them to have a club is NOT discrimination”), and denying the school had any problem with gay students. “Remember, we’ve had gay students before, many of them,” Sparks wrote. “[The former headmaster] handled it quietly and wonderfully... I expect you to do the same.”

Does Nicholas Sparks think everybody just fell off the chicken truck? Because I sure didn’t.

At any rate, allow me to take this opportunity to remind everyone that Nicholas Sparks insists that he does NOT write romance novels. He writes “love stories.” Romance novels are about “taming a man,” he says; “love stories” can be more bittersweet, hence his famously death-oriented endings. He said as USA Today followed him around a bookstore for a 2010 profile: “‘*A Farewell to Arms*, by Hemingway. Good stuff. That’s what I write,’ he says, putting it back. ‘That’s what I write.’” Just so we’re all clear!