

FEE Stories

CNN Slams Libertarian Children's Books—Causing Sales to Surge

Outlets such as CNN may be opposed to libertarian content, but their opposition is good for business.

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Kerry McDonald

Last week, CNN published an opinion piece arguing that the “right-wing children’s entertainment complex is upon us.” Prominently featured as a case in point were the *Tuttle Twins* children’s books, created by Connor Boyack to offset the progressive propaganda that many children now confront in classrooms across the country.

The books, which have sold more than 3.5 million copies, weave in libertarian themes related to individual freedom, limited government, free markets, and entrepreneurship, and frequently highlight the work of great thinkers such as Frederic Bastiat, F.A. Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, and FEE founder, Leonard Read.

“The goal is to seal conservatives’ children off from a broader culture, to protect them from supposed liberal indoctrination by getting a head start on conservative indoctrination,” wrote Nicole Hemmer, a researcher at Columbia University with the Obama Presidency Oral History Project, in her CNN article.

Boyack laughed when he read that. “I find it humorous that those in the left-dominated media are wringing their hands about a few of us doing what they have long been doing,” he told me this week. “The progressive mob has long been infiltrating and leveraging pop culture, the school system, and entertainment outlets—and suddenly they’re outraged when we’re providing a counter message to their myopic, woke worldview? They’re clearly crocodile tears—faux outrage over something the ‘left’ has long been up to.”

But Boyack welcomes more criticism from left-leaning media sites because it boosts his sales. Parents, it turns out, are clamoring for learning materials that offer different viewpoints and perspectives than what their children receive in their schools and throughout the broader culture.

When the progressive magazine, *Current Affairs*, published a similar critique of the *Tuttle Twins* in the fall of 2020, Boyack’s sales soared. He sold more than 12,000 books from that piece alone, using a special promotion code to track sales.

As of Monday, Boyack said the CNN article was directly responsible for helping to sell more than 23,000 books in just a few days, nearly doubling the amount of sales generated by the *Current Affairs* article.

“These efforts to criticize our work only encourage fence-sitters and curious onlookers to take action, buy the books, and see for themselves what all the fuss is about,” Boyack told me. “Our haters make for the greatest sales force I've ever found. If anyone else wants to attack our work and criticize the *Tuttle Twins* books, I'd really appreciate it.”

Indoctrination of young people into a left-leaning political worldview has become increasingly noticeable, especially as both curriculum and corporations have become overtly political in recent years. But it's hardly a new phenomenon. “This is a multi-faceted problem that's been festering and growing for decades,” Bonnie Kerrigan Snyder told me in our recent LiberatED podcast conversation. She is the author of the book, *Undoctrinate: How Politicized Classrooms Harm Kids and Ruin Our Schools—and What We Can Do About It*.

Kerrigan Snyder argues that students are increasingly having to self-censor and self-silence in both their K-12 and college classrooms if they happen to disagree with the dominant progressive cultural narrative. She adds that teacher education programs are similarly skewed, often tying a student-teacher's academic achievement to left-leaning political activism.

Books like the *Tuttle Twins*, as well as Boyack's entire suite of learning materials geared toward young people of all ages, offer a cultural counterweight. They help children and teens learn about different perspectives and a different societal vision.

“Parents need to recognize that we're in an ideological war, and that our children's minds are ground zero for today's battle,” Boyack told me. “And if parents don't recognize that this war is happening, they by default are going to lose.”

He continued:

“Once we're engaged in the fight, it's not enough to simply play defense—to screen the content our kids watch, shelter them from the crazies, put parental blocks on their devices, and hope for the best. We have to go on the offense. We have to be intentional about exposing our children to sound ideas, true facts, and a worldview grounded in reality and principle. That's how we win. That's why the *Tuttle Twins* books and cartoon series exist—to help parents give their kids a foundational understanding of the ideas of a free society.”

As more parents realize the ideas their children are continually exposed to, and how they are often antithetical to the principles of a free society, they are eager to consume content that offers an alternative perspective. Outlets such as CNN may be opposed to such content, but their opposition is good for business.

“Thanks, CNN!” said Boyack.

Kerry McDonald is a Senior Education Fellow at FEE and host of the weekly LiberatED podcast. She is also the author of Unschooled: Raising Curious, Well-Educated Children Outside the Conventional Classroom (Chicago Review Press, 2019), an adjunct scholar at the Cato Institute, and a regular Forbes contributor. Kerry has a B.A. in economics from Bowdoin College and an M.Ed. in education policy from Harvard University. She lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts with her husband and four children. You can sign up for her weekly newsletter on parenting and education here.