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Supreme Court parting shots at trans concerns



Photo via Adobe Firefly.

By Lisa Keen
 Keen News Service

As if the closing days of the U.S. Supreme Court's 2024-25 session were not bad enough for transgender people, the Court announced Thursday (July 3) that it would decide next session whether states can ban trans-

gender females from participating in sports events for women.

The Court ruled last month (June 18), in a 6 to 3 decision, that states may ban gender dysphoria treatment for minors, even when their parents want the treatment for their child.

see **SCOTUS**, page 3

LGBTQ+ Health Care Providers Face Major Funding Cuts

Local organizations scramble for alternative funding as federal grants slashed

By Bay Windows Staff

The Trump Administration has cut over \$1 billion in research grants nationwide, with LGBTQ+ health care providers bearing a significant impact. Local organizations are now turning to private donors and other funding sources to continue their work.

Local Impact

Boston's Fenway Health, which

see **FENWAY**, page 2



Photo via Adobe.



The Supreme Court Is Afraid of Queer Joy

Let's Show Them How Powerful It Is

by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com
 contributing writer



Photo via Adobe.

The U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision saying that parents have the right to opt out their children before LGBTQ+-inclusive books are read in public school classrooms is awful for many reasons. I want to focus here,

though, on one that may feel amorphous but that should be at the heart of our response: its attack on queer joy.

The case, *Mahmoud v. Taylor*, began

see **MOMBIAN**, page 4



The Summer Of Our Discontent

Raising voices and votes against tyranny

by Richard J. Rosendall | rrosendall@starpower.net
 contributing writer

"I have seen a summer day that slowly opens like a rose," begins the 1981 song "An American Hymn" by composer Lee Holdridge and lyricist Molly-Ann Leikin.

I hold onto that image even as President Trump's signing of his cruel and fiscally reckless megabill on America's 249th birthday makes me wonder if we'll make it to the 250th.

His assaults on public health, science, institutions of higher learning, the free press, the rule of law, and democracy itself are relentless. He undermines our standing abroad by withdrawing medical and nutritional



Photo via Adobe.

see **ROSENDALL**, page 5

The Official Guide to
NEW ENGLAND
LGBTQ+
 pride
 2025

Boston Pride 2025. Photo by Sage Orville (www.sageorville.com).

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"We're so alike. Neither of us is that attractive."

- Barbara Walters' comment to Katie Couric, as revealed in the Hulu documentary, "Barbara Walters—Tell Me Everything."

more in Billy Masters on page 6!

Photo by Rubenstein, via Wikimedia Commons.

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Fenway

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serves over 30,000 patients annually from 40 states, has lost \$2.6 million from 17 canceled federal grants. The 50-year-old organization provides specialized LGBTQ+ health care and conducts important research through its Fenway Institute.

"We are really seeing an unprecedented attack on the LGBTQ community," Dallas Ducar, Executive Vice President at Fenway Health, told NBC10 Boston. The organization now sees increasing numbers of out-of-state patients seeking care as services become less available elsewhere.

Statewide Numbers

Massachusetts has been hit hardest by the cuts, losing more than \$1.2 billion in research

funding according to the Association of American Medical Colleges.

An analysis by the science journal Nature found that nearly one-third of the terminated grants supported HIV/AIDS research, while about a quarter focused on transgender health care.

Looking Forward

With federal funding uncertain, providers like Fenway are diversifying their funding sources through private donations and philanthropic support.

"We don't believe that the federal government will be a reliable source of funding for LGBTQ research or AIDS and HIV research right now," Ducar explained.

The cuts come alongside executive orders affecting transgender care access, raising concerns about the availability of what providers call "life-saving health care" for LGBTQ+ individuals.

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SCOTUS

Continued from page 1

That decision, *U.S. v. Skrmetti*, involved a ban in Tennessee and treatment for young people under 18.

On June 30, it granted petitions from four other states (Idaho, North Carolina, Oklahoma, West Virginia) essentially extending its *Skrmetti* decision beyond the confines of hormones and minors. All four were sent back to the lower courts for reconsideration under the dictates of *Skrmetti*.

In *Idaho v. M.H. and T.D.*, the state sought to defend its exclusion of Medicaid coverage for sex-reassignment surgery. The patients in this case were 20 years old.

In *North Carolina v. Kadel*, the state sought to protect its decision to exclude from state health insurance coverage for teachers and other state employees "treatments leading to or in connection with sex changes or modifications and related care."

The *West Virginia v. Anderson* petition asked the court to protect the state's decision to exclude coverage under Medicaid expenses "for certain surgeries that treat gender dysphoria."

The *Oklahoma v. Fowler* case asked whether a state could refuse to "alter its official certificate documenting a person's sex at birth to represent that person's current gender identity."

Also on June 30, the Supreme Court denied the petitions of transgender youth and their parents in two states (Tennessee and Kentucky) seeking the right to receive the treatment. The *Tennessee* case, *Williams v. Tennessee*, was the appeal brought by the patient-parent plaintiffs in the *Skrmetti* case. But instead of taking the plaintiffs appeal, the Court took the state's appeal. The *Doe v. Kentucky* case was appealed by the ACLU and the National Center for Lesbian Rights on behalf of seven minors and their parents.

The transgender cases accepted July 3 for review in the 2025-26 session, which begins in October, involve states seeking to overturn rulings that banning transgender females from female sports violates the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of equal protection of the law.

The cases are from Idaho and West Virginia. *Idaho v. Hecox* asks, "Whether laws that seek to protect women's and girls' sports by limiting participation to women and girls based on sex violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment." It involves athletes at the

college level.

West Virginia v. Jackson asks, "Whether the Equal Protection Clause prevents a state from offering separate boys' and girls' sports teams based on biological sex determined at birth." It also asks, "Whether Title IX prevents a state from consistently designating girls' and boys' sports teams based on biological sex determined at birth." The *West Virginia* case involves a 14-year-old trans female athlete at the middle school level, and one who has taken puberty blockers to avoid developing the larger muscles associated with male athletes.

Idaho passed the first "Fairness in Women's Sports Act," in 2020, even though there were no trans females seeking to play sports at the time. It bars trans females from participating at any age, primary school through college, both intramural and elite competitions. It allows any individual to challenge the sex of any opposing student athlete and requires the challenged athlete to submit intrusive medical procedures, including gynecological exams, to verify her sex.

Lindsay Hecox began hormone treatment before her first year at Boise State University and filed a lawsuit against the state when it enacted its ban on trans female athletes. She tried out for the college women's running team but did not make it but has since been playing for club teams for running and soccer.

In *West Virginia v. Jackson*, the ACLU and Lambda are representing a 14-year-old trans female who has been taking hormone treatment, "meaning that she has never experienced the effects of testosterone on her body that cisgender boys typically experience," according to the groups' brief.


Meanwhile, the Supreme Court in March accepted *Chiles v. Colorado* for review, an appeal from a Christian therapist challenging Colorado's ban on "conversion therapy" for young people. The therapist, Kaley Chiles, said she works only "with voluntary clients who determine the goals that they have for themselves."

"If clients are content with their sexual orientation or gender identity, Chiles does not 'try to help [them] change their attractions, behavior, or identity' but instead helps them develop other therapeutic goals," says her petition, written by the Alliance Defending Freedom. Colorado's brief opposing the appeal notes that the state ban is based on "overwhelming evidence that efforts to change a child's sexual orientation or gender identity are unsafe and ineffective."


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Mombian

Continued from page 1

after Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) in Maryland added several optional LGBTQ+-inclusive picture books to its supplemental curriculum in 2022. A group of parents brought a lawsuit against MCPS in 2023, claiming that it violated their religious freedom by not giving them the chance to opt out their children from classroom readings of the books.

Justice Samuel Alito, writing the decision for the 6-3 court, said that the nine picture books in the case "are unmistakably normative. They are clearly designed to present certain values and beliefs as things to be celebrated and certain contrary values and beliefs as things to be rejected." This is enough, he said, to unconstitutionally undermine "the religious beliefs and practices that the parents wish to instill."

As an example, Alito cited "Uncle Bobby's Wedding," by Sarah Brannen. The story involves a girl worried that her favorite uncle won't have time for her after he gets married. Alito wrote, "It is significant that this book does not simply refer to same-sex marriage as an existing practice. Instead, it presents acceptance of same-sex marriage as a perspective that should be celebrated." Similarly, he said that "Prince & Knight," by Daniel Haack, "clearly conveys the message that same-sex marriage should be accepted by all as a cause for celebration." He is off-base in that neither book is celebrating the "acceptance of same-sex marriage" per se, but rather the particular characters' marriages—but regardless, he concluded that young children will likely see the celebrations as a "good thing," which undermines their parents' religious freedom.

As Katherine Locke, author of another book in the case ("What Are Your Words?") wondered after the ruling, would Alito have allowed a book "depicting everyone sad and despondent at a same-sex marriage"? (Huffington Post, June 30, 2025).

Alito's bias against queer joy appears, too, in his discussion of "Born Ready: The True Story of a Boy Named Penelope," by Jodie Patterson, about a transgender boy socially transitioning with the support of his family. Alito's concern is that the book views gender transition in a positive light and "present[s] a contrary view as something to be reprimanded." His example is a scene where the main character's brother says, "You can't become a boy. You have to be born one," and the mother replies, "Not everything needs to make sense. This is about love." As I read it, though, that's hardly a "reprimand" (the book in fact says the mom whispers it, suggesting a gentle tone), but simply a mother's

attempt to nurture love.

Alito, however, said these books of celebration and love "impose upon children a set of values and beliefs that are 'hostile' to their parents' religious beliefs." By his logic, then, I as a Jewish parent should be allowed to opt-out my son from a classroom reading of "Green Eggs and Ham," by Dr. Seuss, which ends with the protagonist joyfully consuming the titular eggs and (non-kosher) ham. That seems ridiculous.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote similarly in her dissent, noting that if the majority says the books' "normative" messages should be allowed as reasons for parental opt-outs, "then it is hard to say what will not." She asked, "How many children's books, after all, end with a joyous wedding and the couple living happily ever after?" And she astutely noted, "LGBTQ people exist... Eliminating books depicting LGBTQ individuals as happily accepted by their families will not eliminate student exposure to that concept."

At least two authors of books in the case have also noted the majority's attack on queer joy, including Locke and Charlotte Sullivan Wild, author of "Love, Violet." Wild wrote after the ruling, "Justice Alito deems our books 'coercive' because of their joy... A joyful gay wedding must be offensive if one believes that happiness is only for people in heterosexual marriages. But children come from many kinds of families and deserve books about all of them" (Once Upon a Ban, June 30, 2025).

Joy also points the way forward. As Locke wrote, the queer joy in these books

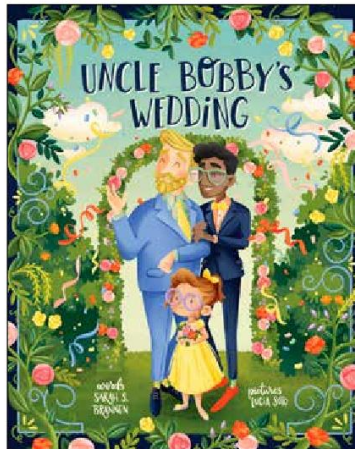
"These books are joyous, yes, and joy is powerful. That's why close-minded people fear it so much. Joy is nectar. Joy is life. And joy will keep the light burning, even in these dark times."

- KATHERINE LOCKE
AUTHOR

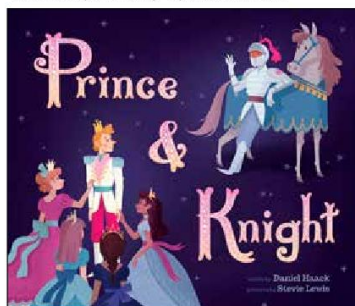
"is also what's getting us authors and illustrators through this moment—and what keeps us galvanized in the fight ahead of us." The stories help kids to see themselves and their classmates, they explained, asserting, "These books are joyous, yes, and joy is powerful. That's why close-minded people fear it so much. Joy is nectar. Joy is life. And joy will keep the light burning, even in these dark times."

Joy can motivate and guide the rest of us, too, as we create joyful spaces for LGBTQ+ youth and those with LGBTQ+ parents and family members, seek out and share the many children's books of queer joy and celebration, tell local educators and elected officials the real-life stories of how the books have brought joy to young people, and join or build joyful communities with others doing this work. Joy alone is not enough to create the world we want to see—but joy can fuel our efforts and remind us of a key goal: to give every child a life of celebration, joy, and love.

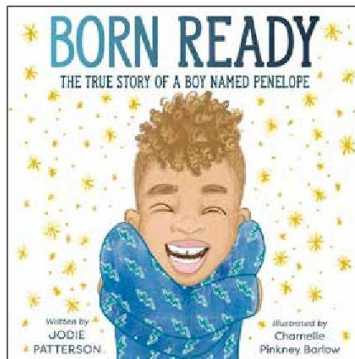
Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a two-time GLAAD Media Award-winning blog for LGBTQ+ parents plus a searchable database of 1,800+ LGBTQ+ family books.



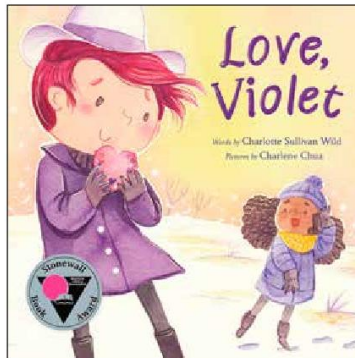
"Uncle Bobby's Wedding," by Sarah Brannen.



"Prince & Knight," by Daniel Haack.



"Born Ready: The True Story of a Boy Named Penelope," by Jodie Patterson.



"Love, Violet." By Charlotte Sullivan Wild.

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Rosendall

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aid that saved millions of lives and built goodwill towards America, and embraces dictators while berating our democratic allies. He profiteers from his office. All but a few Republicans in Congress fell in line even after criticizing his big ugly bill.

The good news is that Democrats continue to fight for the interests of working Americans. Innumerable court challenges and massive demonstrations across the country have shown widespread opposition to his bullying. Millions are making it clear that we will have no king.

Trump's signature legislation is built on the reverse-Robinhood notion that the wealthiest don't have enough, while the poorest have too much.

This glorification of selfish excess was illustrated by the lavish \$50 million wedding celebration of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos and Lauren Sanchez in Venice. One associated event, fittingly, was a Great Gatsby-themed party. The smash-up awaits.

Another tech billionaire who attended Trump's second inauguration, Elon Musk, is being threatened with deportation for criticizing Trump's megabill for adding trillions to the national debt. Musk may lose his government contracts. Deportation without due process would be illegal; but so was Musk's slashing of federal agencies as head of an agency Trump made up without congressional action.

Republicans have long pushed the myth of the undeserving poor, despite the poor working harder and being paid less. It remains shocking that millions face loss of their healthcare, and poor children face loss of school nutrition programs.

How can a nation founded on egalitarian principles allow a new age of robber barons while peddling the stale lie of trickle-down economics? The answer is an amalgam of Republican pals not wanting to lose their jobs, social media drenched in culture wars, and voters swallowing the lie of both-sidesism and staying home on election day.

The threat our nation faces is overwhelmingly caused by Republicans knuckling under to the grifter-in-chief. Every Democrat in Congress voted against Trump's bill. House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries

gave the longest speech in House history denouncing it.

One feature of the bill is a massive increase in funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Trump already threatens to arrest and deport Zohran Mamdani, the winner of the Democratic primary for mayor of New York City. Count on Trump to send swarms of ICE police to Manhattan to create chaos to justify lawless interference with the decision of New York voters.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem previously pledged in Los Angeles, "We are staying here to

liberate the city from the socialists and the burdensome leadership that this governor and that this mayor have placed on this country and what they have tried to insert into the city."

Is there a clearer way of saying elections don't count?

Trump's MAGA mob essentially demands that rose petals be strewn in his path despite his open criminality while fuming over the imagined crimes of others.

Trump exploits the military to build his strongman image—

holding a military parade on his birthday and having a flyover featuring B-2 bombers for his megabill signing—despite his own history of disrespecting military service. Some service members talk of refusing unlawful orders, exemplified by Trump's use of Marines to quell domestic political protests in Los Angeles.

Such refusal can lead to prison and loss of benefits, though "just obeying orders" is no defense in a criminal trial. It is a risk true patriots consider when they see their nation's values being undermined by a would-be dictator who avoids consequences for his crimes.

Republicans preach Christianity but do not practice it. Matthew 25:49 says, "In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

We must call out hypocrisy by performative patriots. We must lend our time and resources to the fight.

Luke 12:48 says, "Of those to whom much is given, much shall be required." Let sources of wisdom that steered our forebears remind us of our own strength in the summer of our discontent.

Richard Rosendall is a writer and activist who can be reached at rrosendall@mc.com.

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Trump's signature legislation is built on the reverse-Robinhood notion that the wealthiest don't have enough, while the poorest have too much.

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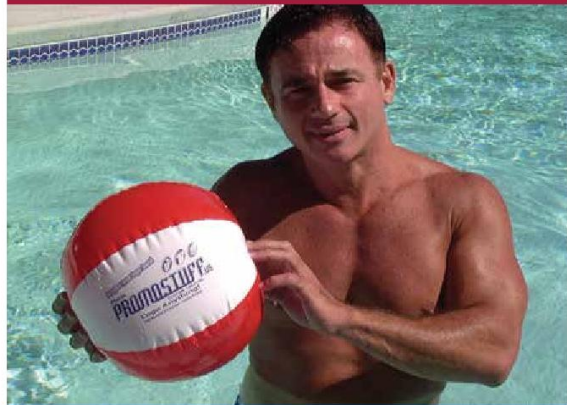
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Lies, Lies, Lies. No, this doesn't have anything to do with that bill (which sullies the name of Bill for us all). It's not even political. It's about those nefarious folks who run CVS. Sure, it's great to pick up a prescription allegedly 24 hours a day, 7 days a week—in theory. But when I showed up at one such branch to pick up some medication for my ailing father, do you know what I was told? “Come back in a half hour—we always close the pharmacy for lunch!” So, I looked on Google, on their app, even on the sign at the desk. You know what it didn't say? Closed for lunch! It said 24/7, not 23.5 hours a day. In fact, the app said, “Open Now”. LIARS!

A dear friend claims that **Meryl Streep** has what he called a “Golden Rule”—she doesn't do sequels. But has she actually ever said that? Because I can't find any evidence of it. She did say she isn't particularly interested in sequels because she likes to create new characters. That was clearly before she did the “Mamma Mia!” sequel. In that instance, she claims to have done it because she loved the people and “it was so much fun”. Maybe that's why she's filming “The Devil Wears Prada 2”. Shooting began last week in New York. We hear that Miranda needs ad revenue for the flailing “Runway”, and Emily is now heading a luxury ad agency. Will Andy help broker a deal? How is Miranda's latest marriage to **Kenneth Branagh**? And who exactly is Nigel sleeping with? Stay tuned.

Proving anything is possible, **Vin Diesel** claims that the next “Fast and the Furious” flick will not only be the last in the franchise, it will also star **Paul Walker**! **Paul Walker**, who died in 2013 (at the peak of his gorgeousness)? We're told he'll come back courtesy of CGI. If that's the case, CGI me in the audience, 'cause I'm not going.

We've all heard there will be another “Fockers” flick—but don't count on Barbra showing up. While she's amused that **Ariana Grande** has been cast, Streisand was pretty blunt when asked about it by the condescending **Marc Malkin**: “They'd have to pay me a lot of money because I didn't get paid what the other people got paid and so I'm pissed off. I was in the time when women were getting paid less than the men. The head of Universal was **Ron Meyer** at the time, and he actually sent me a bonus check. It was very sweet.” I find it hard to believe **Blythe** got more than Barbra!

Here's a reunion with a twist—literally. **Michelle Williams** and **Mike Faist** have been cast in an off-Broadway revival of “Anna Christie”. Now, follow this connection. Michelle Williams was in “Brokeback Mountain” with husband **Heath Ledger**. Heath's love interest was played by **Jake Gyllenhaal**. When “Brokeback” was mounted (so to speak) as a play in London, Jake's role of Jack Twist was played by...Mike Faist! Bing, bang, boom, Michelle's latest love interest is the love interest of her deceased husband. Kinda...

Since I'm a creature of habit, I took a quick drive down to Provincetown to see **Varla Jean Merman**'s latest offering, “The Drowsy Chappell Roan”. Fans of last year's “Errors Tour” will be tickled to find Varla has moved on from Taylor to seamlessly shaft a slew of sappy singers—from **Chappell** to people like **Sabrina Carpenter**, **Billie Eilish**, **Dua Lipa**, **Miley Cyrus**, and even **Trudie Styler** (Mrs. Sting to you). Trust me, nobody is spared—including R. Kelly, P. Diddy, and even people with two full names! The parodies are as sharp as ever, and the visuals are outstanding. The secret weapon? No, not Varla's dog **Jasper**. It's Merman's long-suffering assistant, Brian, who manages to top himself—a skill much in demand in Provincetown. What is a Varla show without a touching ending—and this one touched me in a very special place...or was that the waiter. It's a fast, frolicking, rip-roaring show with some outrageous costumes, clever insights, and a whole lotta laughs. She'll be at The Crown and Anchor (OnlyAtTheCrown.com) through September 20th. And then, she hits the road!

Speaking of touring, the **Jonas Brothers** planned their large-scale “Greetings From Your Hometown” tour this summer and fall. But demand hasn't exactly been what they anticipated, which led to some of the venues being...well, “downsized”. The show at LA's Dodger Stadium will now take place at the Intuit

Dome in Inglewood. The Philly show at Citizens Bank Park will now take place at the Freedom Mortgage Pavilion. Chicago's Wrigley Field has moved to Tinsley Park's Credit Union 1 Amphitheatre. And the DC show at Nationals Park will now slide into Jiffy Lube Live. Sometimes you can't go home again.

Last week, the new production of “Evita” opened in London. And, as long as you don't mind seeing the hit song sung on a video screen, I suppose it's fine. You'd be forgiven if you thought this was a rehash of “Sunset Blvd”—no sets, leads in underwear and blood. It just screams **Nicole Scherzinger**. Once Scherzy wraps up on Broadway, she's taking her show on the road—her solo show, that is. While details are as scant as her outfits, we know a few details. We already announced she's playing Carnegie Hall on October 8th at 8PM (something tells me there could be a midnight “adult-only” show). Typically, performers like to try out their material out of town. So Nicole will run through the show on October 6th...at the Royal Albert Hall in London! Then she hits Disney Hall in Los Angeles on October 30th. We're told talk of a Vegas residency is ongoing.

Last month, a live stage musical based on Disney's animated feature “Hercules” began previews at London's Drury Lane Theatre. Advanced word has been mixed, but certainly the titular Hercules does not disappoint. In fact, his titulars are in full view for most of the evening in costumes that appear to have come out of a vintage “International Male” catalogue. I am certainly the last one to say anything against a white mesh tank top. But I'm just not sure it has anything to do with Ancient Greece, or even the musical “Grease”. Actor **Luke Brady** looks good in what little garb he's wearing, but his preening and likeable smile seem straight out of an audition for a Pepsodent commercial! Still, he can sing, as you'll see on BillyMasters.com.

I can't help but think the producers missed the boat when it came to casting. Sexy **Zane Phillips** has actually coveted the role and was hoping to get a call. “I would love to do it. It's so funny like, I have a musical theater background. I've sung that song in a weird, random cabaret before. Yeah, I love that movie.” Needless to say, the song he's talking about is “Go the Distance”, and because we know you'll ask, you can see (and hear) Zane tackle the little ditty on BillyMasters.com.

Since we're discussing the UK (perfect for our post-Fourth of July column), we got the following “Ask Billy” question from Randy in London: “What do you think about the controversy regarding **Dermot O'Leary's** bulge?”

Dermot O'Leary is a popular British presenter and formerly hosted “The X Factor”. Once on “Loose Women” (a rip-off of “The View”), he was asked what he wore to bed. “Normally I'm a commando guy, but the last couple of weeks or so it's been so cold, I've got a nice little pair of lounge pants and a loose-fitting T-shirt. You'll note he didn't mention any undies, which brings us to the latest story. After hosting “This Morning” last week, the network got complaints from viewers who claimed they were seeing a bit too much of Dermot. They were divided regarding his choice of underwear. A large portion thought along these lines: “Dermot has definitely got Y-front/briefs on to get a bulge like that,” said one, while another said, “Very risky with such loose clothing.” On the other side, the comments were more like this: “Does Dermot not wear underwear? Lord, it's flapping about like a windsock,” and “OMG! Is Dermot O'Leary not wearing any underwear today? Something doesn't look right.” Looks perfectly fine to me, but you can decide for yourself when you see him on BillyMasters.com.

When we're picturing Luke and Zane going the distance...together, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Talk about fast and furious! I think “This Morning” should do a special spot promoting “Hercules”. That way, Dermot and Luke can discuss undergarments. To see your favorites in and out of undies, check out www.BillyMasters.com—the site that never fakes it. If you have a question, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Babs is CGIed into the next “Fockers” flick! Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.



Meryl Streep

Photo by Montclair Film, via Wikimedia Commons



Heath Ledger & Jake Gyllenhaal

Photo courtesy of Focus Features



Dermot O'Leary

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