

## Pink ribbon rip-off: corporations exploit cancer, extort cash from consumers

Corporations are milking breast cancer. Every fall, companies roll out pink-ribbon product lines that supposedly give the consumer a chance to support the fight against breast cancer.



**BY TY GOOCH**  
STAFF WRITER

"The pink ribbon has lost its effectiveness, becoming merely a marketing tool to sell stuff," said breast cancer activist Nancy Stordahl in a blog post on bcaction.com.

Everything comes in pink. From pink-ribbon staplers to pink-ribbon lipstick — even pink-ribbon Kentucky Fried Chicken — consumers are given the opportunity to "support" the fight against breast cancer with every purchase.

While I could rant for hours on end about the absurdity of a pink bucket of chicken, I'll assume you have the two brain cells it takes to realize the problem here: even Colonel Sanders knows that the last thing America needs is a new scheme to sell deep-fried breasts.

Speaking of breasts, how much are these companies really doing to protect our hoo-ha's?

While many companies do indeed donate a significant portion of their sales, I

say people need to do their research before they buy.

Reuters reported that the Komen Foundation, the most popular breast cancer charity and creator of the pink ribbon campaign, only spends 15 percent of its funds on cancer research. The remaining money is mainly spent on raising awareness, fundraising and administration costs, amongst other things.

How generous. I'm sure a cure is right around the corner, right?

Well, it's not. And I'm pissed off.

How dare these companies lie to our faces and say they're "fighting" breast cancer when they only spend 15 percent of their funds on cancer research? If the greedy business executive in charge of this wants to see a real fight, I'll show him one.

Don't worry, though; I'll be generous — I'll leave him 15 percent of his manhood.

But what about all the money being donated? I bet you won't be surprised when I tell you some corporations don't donate as

much as they want you to believe.

According to the Better Business Bureau, some companies report they donate a certain percentage of sales but put a cap on their donation. In other words, once donations reach a certain threshold, the money stops flowing and ends up in the pockets of the corporation.

All of that money you donated might actually be used by some fat cat executive to buy his bleach-blond daughter a new pair of implants. Let's just hope she doesn't lose them to breast cancer. Daddy wouldn't want that now, would he?

Certainly, I am not serious when I say I hope a poor girl gets breast cancer. But I'm not joking, either. I'm dead serious when I say corporations need to remove cancerous chemicals from their products that supposedly support the cause against cancer.

This contamination of products with carcinogens brings me back to my primary claim: that corporations are "milking" breast cancer.

"Corporations are making money off pink ribbons while women are paying with their lives," said Executive Director of Breast Cancer Action Karuna Jaggar in an article on bcaction.com.

According to Breast Cancer Action, the very same corporations selling these pink-ribbon products sell other products laced with rBGH, an artificial growth hormone linked to cancer.

"In addition to producing and selling breast cancer-linked rBGH, Eli Lilly manufactures Evista to 'prevent' breast cancer and Gemzar to treat it," wrote a spokesperson for Breast Cancer Action. "That's a highly lucrative profit cycle around breast cancer."

So, with every purchase you make in your attempt to support the fight against breast cancer, you are not only being lied to but are also one more purchase closer to cancer. If these companies really cared about ending breast cancer, they'd remove the carcinogens from their products.

But they don't care and aren't going to make changes anytime soon, because the money they make off cancer is, in their eyes, too much to pass up.

These fat cats put profits above their mothers' lives.

Corporations aren't curing cancer; they are causing it. And they're making a hell of a lot of money in the process.

**"Corporations are making money off pink ribbons while women are paying with their lives."**

**Karuna Jaggar, executive director of Breast Cancer Action**

## School board banning of 'Invisible Man' shows ignorance

"I am an invisible man ... I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me."

So begins Ralph Ellison's highly acclaimed, timeless novel: "Invisible Man."



**BY EMILY HAAKSMA**  
STAFF WRITER

young person."

Unfortunately, a force of great ignorance refused to see the literary value in this novel and threatened its crucial ability to impact the perspectives of students like me.

This powerhouse of uninformed prejudice is fueled by North Carolina's very own Randolph County Board of Education.

The board voted 5-2 on Sept. 16 to pull Ralph Ellison's 1952 literary classic from its schools' shelves.

This move was bred from a mixture of sheer stupidity and blindness on the part of the board, and I am enraged that anyone actually believes banning books is a constructive move.

While the overwhelmingly negative backlash against the board's decision actually caused the ban to be revoked, the issue still stands as pertinent and outrageous.

According to Asheboro's Courier Tribune, the board's decision was spurred by a complaint regarding the book from Kimiyutta Parson, mother of a Randolph High School 11th grader.

"I would suggest that that parent take a class," said Whitlow. I would suggest that Parson wake up and realize that destroying educational opportunities for kids is not commonly considered to be good parenting.

"If a parent has an objection to a book, that parent can get a

replacement for their child," said Visiting Instructor of English Caroline McAlister. "When that parent goes to the school board and tries to get (them) to ban the book so that no one can read it, then it's a problem because they're imposing their morality on everyone."

The imposing mindset of Randolph County is greatly concerning.

"Invisible Man" addresses the concepts of both institutionalized and internalized racism, and the statement this controversy makes is that the Randolph County School System doesn't care about these issues.

Although Parson claimed her complaint revolved around language and sexual content, more lies under the surface of these accusations.

"There is a covert and unannounced theme of racism in the opposition to books like 'Invisible Man,'" said McAlister.

And even if a book is considered inappropriate by administrators or parents, there are no grounds on which to ban it.

"People that support the banning of books don't understand that literature is supposed to be disturbing," said McAlister. "They think that literature is supposed to be happy and

pretty and reinforce the most obvious morals rather than raise questions."

Books are banned when they make people uncomfortable, which is all the more reason to read them.

"Books should be read," said Whitlow. "Books should be discussed. Books should be debated."

This discomfort stems from a recognition of inherent truth, particularly in the case of such a contentious novel. "Invisible Man" addresses the unfortunate yet universal theme of racism in America.

"A sense of alienation is a very common, maybe ubiquitous, American experience," said Howard Shepherd, the high school English teacher responsible for my admiration of "Invisible Man."

The underlying sentiment of societal estrangement is what makes "Invisible Man" the quintessential American novel.

"This book shines a light on a lot of very uncomfortable phenomenon in our culture," said Shepherd.

As students, we must continue to read quality books promoting discussion and the exchange of ideas. We must continue to fight against those who refuse to see the validity of books that make us think.



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