

## Comedians Making Political Picturebooks and Selling Children for Charity

Political comedians John Oliver and Stephen Colbert have each released a picturebook in response to the presidential regime. The first, *A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo*, is a parody of *A Day in the Life of the Vice President* by Charlotte and Karen Pence. While improving on the awful original, it is unremarkable in terms of children's book quality. The second, *Whose Boat Is This Boat?: Comments That Don't Help in the Aftermath of a Hurricane*, seems intended for adults and even maligns children with its joke (the president's childish words belong in a children's book). The charitable donations of sales add virtue signaling. The Pence's book donates to anti-human-trafficking and a children's hospital. Oliver's go to Trevor Project and AIDS United. Colbert's will go to several hurricane relief organizations since, as he says, "This way, Donald Trump's comments about that boat are helping in spite of him."

These comedians may be selling childhood in the name of doing good, but their parodies are making it uncomfortably clear to the average bystander just how callously children are often wielded in political battles. The Pence's publisher, Regnery, asked why "anyone would feel the need to ridicule an educational children's book and turn it into something controversial and partisan," demonstrating an unsurprising ignorance of the partisan nature of their original. This presentation will analyze these mock children's books as critical looks at using children's books for politics, including their popular reception.