

[Transcript] Letters from Sing Sing / Introducing Grapevine

Hi everyone, I'm Mike Hickson Ball, investigative reporter for NBC News and one of the hosts of the new six-part original podcast series, Grapevine.

Grapevine goes inside a Texas town where a religious movement's anti-LGBTQ culture war is dividing the community and school district.

It's a story of faith, power, and what it means to protect children in an American suburb.

You can stay right here and listen to a preview of Grapevine.

To listen to the first two episodes, go to the link in the description of this clip, or search Grapevine and follow the podcast.

We have an entire team of church coming together and worshipping right here.

Right here is the rotunda of the Texas State Capitol building in Austin.

There's nothing more important than we could be doing than this right here, worshipping and praying in the middle of the Capitol.

Two years after conservative activists turned critical race theory into a right-wing rallying cry, the fight has shifted.

They redefine marriage, they redefine sex, they redefine gender, and we cannot, cannot think straight.

A fringe Christian movement is on a mission to take control of what its followers call the Seven Mountains of American society.

And I don't care what it looks like right now, the United States of America will glorify God.

It's a revival of a long-simmering quest to remake the nation based on biblical teachings.

This was a kind of sleeping giant.

If they see this as a holy war that's going to usher in Jesus Christ again, then all bets are off.

And for some families in Texas, the rhetoric there is an evil agenda has become all too real.

We will start with public comment.

Last summer, in the midst of this political fight, a mom stood in front of her local school board and told a shocking story.

A younger teaching generation has been pushing that our kids can be any gender they want to be.

She said a high school English teacher had convinced her child to change genders.

They told him I rejected him because he wanted to be female.

This was so far from the truth.

But when the team behind the Peabody Award-winning Southlake podcast looked into this mom's allegation, the story she told is absolutely the truth upside down.

We found a transgender child just wanting to be heard.

I wish she would stop, but she doesn't listen.

A mother determined to put God first.

What she wrote me was, God made Rand the way God wanted Rand, and I answered back exactly.

And a 27-year-old teacher caught in the middle.

I broke down crying in the hallway, and I think it was tears not out of sadness, not out of being mad, just terrifying.

From NBC News Studios, this is Grapevine, a new six-part series about faith and power

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and what it means to protect children in an American suburb.

I broke down.

I cried because, because before that moment, there was hope.

First two episodes available now.

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