

⚡ COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND ⚡

# DEFENDER

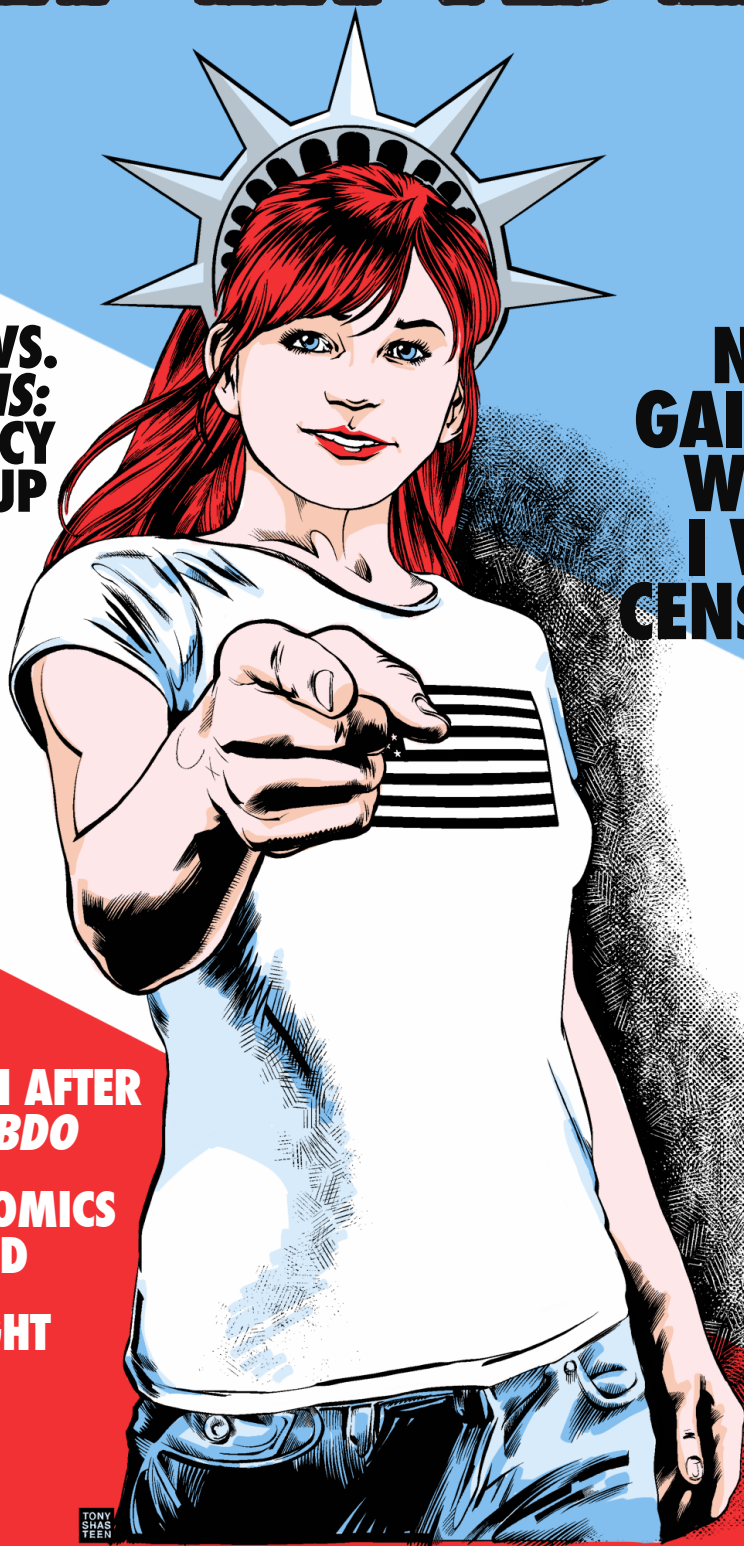
**CHICAGO VS.  
PERSEPOLIS:  
CONSPIRACY  
& COVER-UP**

**NEIL  
GAIMAN:  
WHEN  
I WAS  
CENSORED**

**FREE SPEECH AFTER  
CHARLIE HEBDO**

**THE YEAR COMICS  
ALMOST DIED**

**HOW TO FIGHT  
BOOK BANS**



TONY  
SHAW  
TEEN

Issue 1  
Spring 2015

## Director's Note

Welcome to *CBLDF Defender*, a new ongoing magazine reporting from the front lines of comics censorship! In each issue, we'll take you to the communities where comics are under attack, introduce you to the people who are fighting back, and give you the tools to support the fight. It's the latest weapon in the Fund's decades-long battle to protect the freedom to read comics!

In the first days of 2015, the massacre at *Charlie Hebdo* in France tragically proved that the battle for free expression is ongoing and that the stakes aren't abstract—they're life and death. We're proud to bring you eyewitness reporting from cartoonist Dylan Horrocks, showing the aftermath of the attacks in France following this year's Angoulême festival. Our editorial team also examines the fallout from the *Charlie Hebdo* murders and what they mean for free speech, starting on page 10.

Neil Gaiman, no stranger to censorship himself, made time to talk to us about his views on the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks and his concerns about how some public reactions to them could erode free expression. Neil also told us about his formative experience as a young writer, sharing the stage with members of U.K. Parliament who wanted his work banned. You'll find these comments and much more starting on page 6. You can also listen to the full interview in this month's CBLDF Podcast.

Gaiman's comics work is revolutionary in large part because it has helped reverse the decades-old stigma against comics. On page 8, we'll take you back to 1954, the year comics almost died, where you'll meet William Gaines and Fredric Wertham during the Senate Subcommittee Hearings that cast a pall of scorn against comics that lingers to this day.

But first we'll bring you to the very front lines: Public libraries and schools are constantly inundated with challenges to comics and graphic novels. In the first months of this year, CBLDF had to fight on behalf of *Palomar*, *This One Summer*, and *The Graveyard Book*. But nothing was more shocking than the recent discovery that Chicago Public Schools' disastrous attempt to ban *Persepolis* in 2013 was just the tip of an iceberg that involved lies, conspiracy, and cover up. Maren Williams takes you there on the next page.

The work CBLDF does to protect the right to read is ongoing and happens because of the support of people like you. Thank you for picking up this issue of *CBLDF Defender*. If you like what you read, please spread the word. Also, check out page 14 for some great premiums we've prepared to thank our donors and ways you can become a member and ensure that we can continue to protect comics!

—Charles Brownstein, Executive Director



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THINGS FROM ANOTHER WORLD



# LIES MY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION TOLD ME

One weekend in March 2013, top administrators at Chicago Public Schools had a problem. Somehow a book with “content that is inappropriate for children” had made its way into libraries and classrooms across the massive district. What sort of filthy, degenerate book could draw immediate demands for removal? In this case, it was Marjane Satrapi’s graphic novel memoir *Persepolis*.

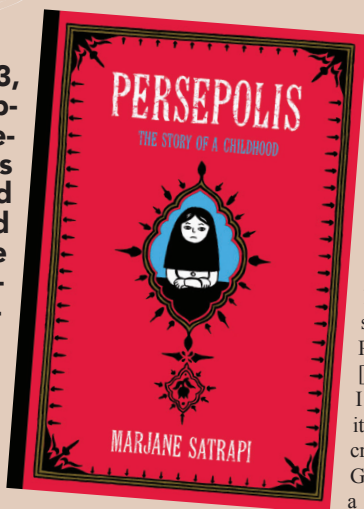
A graduate student’s research is throwing new light on CPS officials’ efforts to remove the book. Emails released in response to a Freedom of Information Act request from Jarrett Dapier, a student at the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library & Information Science, confirm what seemed incredible to observers at the time: that top administrators of the third-largest school district in the United States really did think they could remove a modern classic from schools without regard for their own policies, their teachers’ and librarians’ professional expertise, or even basic First Amendment principles. Interestingly, CPS failed to release these emails in response to a 2013 FOIA request from ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom and the Freedom to Read Foundation.

The internal communications began in the wee hours of Saturday, March 9, 2013, when Chandra James, the director of the Austin-North Lawndale network of elementary schools, emailed Annette Gurley, CPS Chief of Teaching and Learning. James attached two scans from *Persepolis* to the email and told Gurley: “In my opinion it is not appropriate at all. Please let me know if I can pull the book from my schools.” At the time, *Persepolis* was being taught in some seventh and eighth grade classes. Naturally, school libraries also held copies of the book.

Later that morning, Gurley told James to “by all means, pull them” and then emailed Director of Literacy Cynthia Green to ask which other schools had received copies of *Persepolis*. Gurley stressed that “we want the books pulled and taken to the network office so the chief can ensure the books are out off the classrooms [sic].” Green quickly responded that she had the book erased from the seventh grade curriculum framework as well.

By the next day, CPS CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett had been looped into the email chain and was asking who had approved *Persepolis* for the curriculum. Gurley passed the question on to Green, who said the curriculum framework was developed under a previous Director of Literacy. On Sunday evening, Byrd-Bennett replied that “someone is in jeopardy be if [sic] this. Need a name.”

Later that night, Gurley sent an email that was to be distributed to all schools. The message began: “It has come to our attention that the novel ‘Persepolis’ contains some graphic language and content that is inappropriate for children.” Although Gurley did not specifically say that library copies were banned along with classroom copies, she did say that “it is imperative that we remove the books from the classroom and from the school, to decrease the likelihood of the books getting into the hands of students.” Understandably, some principals got the impression that library copies were to be removed, and indeed it’s not clear whether Gurley and other administrators yet realized that they couldn’t give that order in accordance with district policy.



On Monday, a letter was released to all schools regarding what was now termed a “book recall.” Later, Gurley heard from Director of Education Policy and Procedures Tony Howard, who pointed out the steamrolling of the district’s library collection development policy. On Wednesday, the letter was revised to exempt library copies. Gurley also sent out a “clarification” email, saying that “we are pulling the book *Persepolis* from classroom collections [sic] only at this time, as the policy that I forwarded in the previous email makes it very clear that librarians have the discretion to purchase controversial texts.” Gurley seemed to think the library policy a temporary stumbling block and assured her colleagues that it “does not mean that

the texts cannot be removed” from libraries as well.

As the story broke publicly on March 14, Leslie Boozer, then a high school network chief, reported that she was “getting push-back from my schools.” She pointed out that *Persepolis* was used in several AP classes and warned that the removal plan “will become very newsworthy at my schools”—adding that her staff had already been approached by a student reporter. Gurley responded that it could remain in AP classes but was “developmentally inappropriate for many of our younger students.”

When we asked Dapier whether he thought CPS would have reacted as strongly to a few profanities in a prose novel, he said:

On one level, I think the “offensive” content would have been much harder to spot if it were rendered in prose-narrative form. On another level, the teaching of comics is still rare in CPS (though that is changing fast thanks to this incident, which raised the profile of comics and how great they can be and how much students love them), and so I think there still lingers this powerful Wertham-residue that leads certain administrators and even some teachers to consider comics as either the literary equivalent of Judas Priest albums (satanic, causes delinquency) or they expect them to be wholesome, like the Sunday comics.

We may never know why CPS withheld the emails in 2013 only to release them to Dapier two years later—but we’re certainly glad he kept digging!

Maren Williams

One of the “offending” pages turned in to CPS officials by Chandra James.





## Gilbert Hernandez's *Palomar* Challenged in New Mexico High School

The critically acclaimed comic collection *Palomar* by Gilbert Hernandez is being called “child porn” by the mother of a high school student in Rio Rancho, New Mexico. Sadly, unbiased details are difficult to come by, as the local news station that broke the story labeled the book “sexual, graphic, and not suitable for children.”

Catrenea Lopez’s 14-year-old son checked out *Palomar* from the Rio Rancho High School library because he likes manga and thought it looked similar. But when Lopez looked through it, she found, as she told local news station KOAT, “child pornography pictures and child abuse pictures.” But instead of simply returning the book to the library, Lopez decided that it should not go to anyone else’s house either. She brought it to the attention of Rio Rancho Public Schools officials, some of whom agreed with Lopez and KOAT that the book is “clearly inappropriate.” School officials say they’re now “investigating how it became a part of the library’s collection in the first place.”

KOAT is not helping matters with its egregiously biased coverage, during which reporter Royale Da’s voiceover informs viewers that “we can’t show you any of the images because they’re too sexual and very graphic.” Needless to say, *Palomar* is not actually a collection of child porn—*Publishers Weekly* called it “a superb introduction to the work of an extraordinary, eccentric and very literary cartoonist,” and it often draws comparisons to the magic realism of novelists such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez. The book collects Hernandez’s “Heartbreak Soup” stories, which focus on the interconnected lives of characters from one family in the

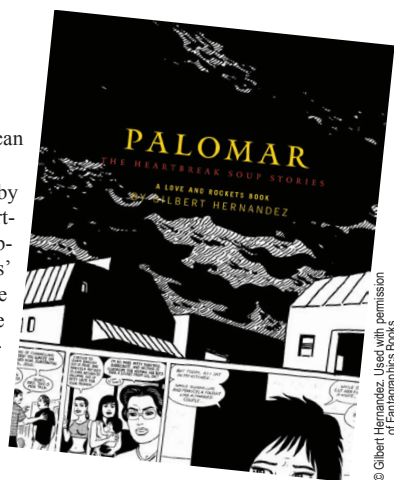
fictional South American town of Palomar.

Although filtered by KOAT’s biased reporting, Rio Rancho Public Schools officials’ characterization of the book as inappropriate is worrisome. Hopefully these unnamed officials are up to speed on the district’s policy on Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials, which says in part:

*Review of questioned (“challenged”) materials will be treated objectively, unemotionally, and as a routine matter. Criticisms of print and non-print materials must be submitted in writing on a Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form obtained from the librarian at the library/media center where the material is housed and submitted to the Superintendent of schools. The Request must be signed and include specific information as to author, title, publisher, and definite citation of objection.*

The policy also details the process of forming a review committee to decide whether the challenged material will remain in the library collection. Until that decision is made, the policy says the book is to remain in circulation “unless the Superintendent decides otherwise.” CBLDF rose to the book’s defense by developing a letter with the Kids’ Right to Read Project to defend the graphic novel and demand it remain on library shelves.

Maren Williams



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## CENSORSHIP SCORECARD

*CBLDF frequently joins coalition efforts to protect the freedom to read comics. Taking an active stand against all instances of censorship curbs precedent that could adversely affect the rights upon which comics readers depend. Here are a few of our latest cases...*

### Appoquinimink School District, Delaware

**WIN:** In Delaware’s Appoquinimink School District, administrators withdrew a proposal that would have “red-flagged” books according to arbitrary standards and would have required parents to give express permission for their children to read any assigned book that contained “areas of concern.” A separate proposal, also withdrawn, would have allowed parents to bar their children from checking out all such books from school libraries.

### Charlotte County, Florida

**WIN:** CBLDF joined a coalition led by the National Coalition Against Censorship to defend two history books used in 10th grade classrooms in Charlotte County, Florida. The school board convened to decide the fate of the books and voted unanimously to keep them in classrooms.

### Hanover County, Virginia

**LOSS:** The Hanover County School Board unanimously voted to implement a policy requiring teachers to notify parents before using materials the district deems “controversial.” The policy was proposed after students watched the documentary *Thomas L. Friedman Reporting: Searching for the Roots of 9/11*. Some parents claimed the film “expressed sympathy with terrorists.” The school board rejected the challenge to the documentary but

implemented the new policy. Free speech advocates warned that the policy may lead to censorship as teachers stick to “safe” materials rather than more challenging and thought-provoking ones.

### Highland Park Independent School District, Texas

**WIN:** After months of controversy that started when district superintendent Dawson Orr suspended seven books from the curriculum, the Highland Park Independent School District overhauled the process for approving books. Teachers are now required to submit each title for approval. If a book is considered controversial, it may be referred to a community feedback group for scrutiny. While the policy may increase the burden on teachers, many free speech advocates believe it provides greater protection for challenged books. Fortunately, all of the suspended books have been returned to the curriculum despite additional challenges.

### Indian River School District, Delaware

**WIN:** A subcommittee of the Indian River School Board recommended against censoring information on LGBT sexualities from the district’s new health curriculum, and the board member who previously said he had “issues [with] teaching it’s okay to be gay” seems to have changed his mind.

### Undisclosed Location

**WIN:** CBLDF has been confidentially involved in monitoring and assisting with challenges to *This One Summer* in various communities. In one case, a parent demanded the removal of the book from a middle school library due to profanity, but the review board kept the book on shelves without restriction.

## Graphic Novels Make Strong Showing in ALA Youth Media Awards and Children's Choice Book Awards

The American Library Association announced the 2015 honorees of its Youth Media Awards, and graphic novels scored big! In a pair of comic firsts, Cece Bell's *El Deafo* made the shortlist for the Newbery Medal, and *This One Summer* by Jillian Tamaki and Mariko Tamaki did the same for the Caldecott. *This One Summer* was also shortlisted for the young adult Printz Award. Finally, *Hidden: A Child's Story of the Holocaust*, written by Loic Dauvillier and Marc Lizano and illustrated by Greg Salsedo, was on the honor list for the Mildred L. Batchelder Award, which recognizes books that were originally published in a language other than English.

Every Child a Reader and the Children's Book Council announced the finalists for the Children's Choice Book Awards, and comics showed strongly, with CBLDF board member Jennifer L. Holm and friends of the Fund James Kochalka, Raina Telgemeier, Jimmy Gownley, Ben Hatke, and Cece Bell all earning nods. Young readers across the country will have the chance to vote online at [cbookawards.com](http://cbookawards.com) from March 17 to May 3, 2015, and the winners will be announced during the 96th annual Children's Book Week!

## CBLDF Joins Cato Institute Brief Urging U.S. Supreme Court to Protect First Amendment Right to Offend

CBLDF defended the First Amendment right to offensive speech by joining an amicus brief filed in the United States Supreme Court by the Cato Institute. The brief, filed in *Walker v. Texas Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans*, includes amici P.J. O'Rourke, Nat Hentoff, and Nadine Strossen and addresses whether Texas can deny an organization a spot in their specialty license plate program because their logo includes the Confederate flag.

The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles rejected a license plate design submitted by the Sons of Confederate Veterans on the grounds that it was potentially offensive to other community members. The Cato Institute's brief urges the Supreme Court to recognize the First Amendment implications of the case and that U.S. citizens' right to free speech includes allowing them to freely talk about and support a range of ideas and beliefs, including those which might be offensive to other people.

## Cartoonist Zunar Arrested for Twitter Criticism of Malaysian Government

Malaysian cartoonist Zunar has been arrested once again, this time for a tweet suggesting that the country's judiciary is corrupted by political or financial influence. Zunar was arrested on a sedition charge and held for three days despite his lawyer Melissa Sasidaran's protest that police could complete their questioning in one day. Zunar's wife Fazlina Rosley said he will certainly not be silenced now: "Of course this is a form of intimidation, with the purpose that society does not question the authorities. Zunar will not bow down to this intimidation. He will continue to criticise even if he remains in jail."

Zunar's latest detention is yet another instance of government harassment and intimidation, which has been directed not only at the cartoonist, but also at customers, employees, printers, and retailers who carry his books. Earlier this year, police raided Zunar's office without a warrant while he was out of the country, seizing about 150 books. The release of Zunar's latest collection of cartoons has been held up by the threat of yet another arrest.

Find out more about these stories and  
get the latest news every day at  
[www.cblddf.org](http://www.cblddf.org)!

## FREE COMIC BOOK DAY KICKS OFF 96TH ANNUAL CHILDREN'S BOOK WEEK!

**FREE  
COMIC  
BOOK  
-DAY-**

**1st SATURDAY  
IN MAY!**

**May 2, 2015**  
[www.freecomicbookday.com](http://www.freecomicbookday.com)

On May 2, comic book stores will kick off **Children's Book Week** (May 4–10, 2015), the annual celebration of books for young people and the joy of reading, by giving away more than two million comics to younger readers on Free Comic Book Day! With more than two dozen kid-friendly titles to choose from—including an all-ages edition of CBLDF's *Defend Comics*—there's a free comic book available to help every young reader get into the spirit of Children's Book Week!

Diamond Comic Distributors and CBLDF are partnering with Every Child a Reader and the Children's Book Council to bring greater focus to what comics offer kids. In addition to FCBD, the organizations will partner with authors, publishers, and comics specialty and book retailers to coordinate events spotlighting comics and the joy of reading at locations all over the United States!

Jennifer L. Holm, three-time Newbery Honoree and CBLDF board member says, "When I was a child, my love of reading started with comic books. Today, as a comics creator myself, and as a mom, I'm excited by how much extraordinary storytelling is happening for young people in comics. Children's Book Week is a wonderful time for people to come together and share the love of reading comics with kids everywhere!"

FCBD leads off the celebration of Children's Book Week with the participation of more than 2,000 comic book specialty stores, which will be giving away free kids comics from every major comics publisher. For a complete listing of FCBD titles for young readers and to find a participating store, visit [www.freecomicbookday.com](http://www.freecomicbookday.com).

Comic book shops, bookstores, libraries, and community groups will host events around the country, including storytime, author appearances, displays, and more! To get your event listed online, email [info@cblddf.org](mailto:info@cblddf.org) and [cbc.info@cbcbooks.org](mailto:cbc.info@cbcbooks.org).

In the weeks to come, Diamond and CBLDF will develop resources to support comic book retailers, so visit [www.cblddf.org](http://www.cblddf.org) for updates. To learn more about Children's Book Week and how you can join the fun, visit [www.bookweekonline.com](http://www.bookweekonline.com).





Neil Gaiman reflects on free speech, Charlie Hebdo, and the importance of CBLDF's mission

Shortly after the publication of his new book *Trigger Warning*, Neil Gaiman sat down with CBLDF Executive Director Charles Brownstein to discuss the state of free expression. You can hear the full, uncut audio recording of this interview on the CBLDF Podcast, available now at [www.cbl df.org](http://www.cbl df.org).

*Free expression opened the public dialogue in 2015 with the fallout from the controversy over Sony Pictures' The Interview and then the Charlie Hebdo massacre. So, let's start with your general thoughts on how those two events occurred and what you think they mean for free expression right now.*

The thing that fascinates me most about *Charlie Hebdo* in particular—which completely baffled me, took me by surprise—was it's the first time I have ever seen not just the “we're for free speech, but...” brigade coming out, but the “we're not for free speech” brigade coming out—the people who are like, “You know, yes, these people were massacred, but they were writing offensive things. They were drawing cartoons that people were offended by,” as if the correct response to being offended is to murder somebody.

For years, working with the CBLDF, my attitude was you have the right to say or to write something offensive, to draw an offensive cartoon. You have the right to upset people without going to prison, without being financially destroyed. That doesn't mean I have to like what you did. It means that I believe that in a healthy society, the remedy for finding what somebody does offensive, insulting, or just plain wrong is two-fold: You reply to it, or you ignore it.

And those, I think, have to be in a healthy society the way that you do things. You can argue back. You can say, “This is why what

you do upsets me and could upset other people.” You are so in your right to do that. I'm all for that. But what I'm not for is murder. What I'm not for is terror. What I'm not for is making people too scared to be controversial, too scared to have opinions, too scared of uttering, of offending, to speak. The moment that people are too scared to speak, you no longer have a free society. And I worry that we can find [ourselves] heading that way.

*You've done a substantial amount of work as a free expression activist and traveled to a lot of places in the world where free speech is restricted. What have you seen in your travels that exemplifies what people take for granted about free expression, that makes this “I'm for free speech, but...” sensibility so chilling?*

China. I love China. I think China is one of the coolest places on the planet, an amazing population of amazing people. But I remember a point when I was out in Xinjiang Province with the Uyghur people, and I wanted to have a conversation, the kind of conversation that when I'd been there a year before in the same place, it'd been really easy to have. And then a massacre had happened and the Chinese had moved in, there were army troops everywhere. The whole place had changed. The nature of what was going on had changed.

And I had a person there to whom I basically said, “Look, I really want to talk to you. You just have to tell me what it's like for your people. What are you thinking and what are you feeling?” And he made us drive out to the desert and then take our cell phones and then take the batteries out. Not just turn them off, but take the batteries out and disassemble them and leave them in the car and then walk a couple of hundred yards into the desert. And then, in incredibly guarded speech—terrified that I would quote him, terrified that he would get into trouble—he told me a little of how he thought and felt.

That is a place where you're going, “You know, free speech is a marvelous thing.” And the fact that anybody in America can talk about what they think and feel is huge. And that's not even talking



about things you can and can't print. That's taking free speech down to the basics of "Can you talk?"

*Many people confuse editorial edict with actual censorship—the actual government restriction on speech. In your early professional years, you were a first-hand participant in a government censorship battle involving work you did for Tony Bennett at Knockabout. Could you please tell me about that incident and the impression it left on you?*

I was 26 years old. I wrote a big chunk of *Outrageous Tales from the Old Testament*, which had a great all-star lineup. It was the first comic I'd written professionally. It came out, and we found ourselves under attack—headlines like "It's a Filthy Porno Bible." I found myself on the radio with members of Parliament explaining why this sort of thing should be banned.

[It] reached its nadir in Sweden some months later, when the Swedish publisher of *Outrageous Tales from the Old Testament* found himself under legal attack and in danger of being sent to prison. I think they only let it go because he was actually able to demonstrate that the material was all from the Bible. And there was sort of a level on which, well, if you were actually going to send someone to prison for illustrating a Bible story—and a violent Bible story—then you're going to have to think this thing through because there are paintings hanging in your galleries showing violence and horrible horrific acts.

*And that sequence of time I think influenced the work you have done with CBLDF, where you've been a guiding figure for the majority of our existence as a fundraiser, a board member, and now co-chair of our advisory board. What do you regard as the key challenges that the Fund has faced and some of the key accomplishments in your time with the organization?*

There's almost too many to list, and the truth is, the biggest accomplishments for me that the CBLDF has actually been doing in the 23, 24 years I've been working with them [are] invisible.

I'll give you a personal one because it's always more fun when it's personal: A police captain in Jacksonville, Florida, walking into a comic store and flipping through the stuff there, getting personally offended by the "Death Talks About Life" stuff in the back of *Death: The High Cost of Living* graphic novel, this little how-not-to-get-AIDS [story] (you know, "Use a condom"), and [he] goes up to the guy who owns the store and says, "I'm the chief of police, and if you are still selling this in a week, I will close down your store." And [the owner] called us and then the attorney, the wonderful Burton Joseph, wrote a nice letter explaining the concept of the First Amendment to the Jacksonville police department. And that was the last we heard of them.

It was amazing the amount of stuff that would just happen simply because the CBLDF existed and was in a position to say to somebody, "Don't do that."

*That remains true to this day. I'm still dozens of times a year fielding calls from people, and we make those cases go away with our legal team. The other area that's really been exploding in terms of First Amendment emergencies is the "Kids' Right to Read." There's a trend where we're seeing what kids are reading when they get home from school is being attacked. What are your thoughts on this censorship trend?*

I am absolutely, one hundred percent for a parent's right to say, "I do not want my child reading that." I am absolutely, one hundred percent against a parent saying, "I do not want my child reading this, and I do not want any other child in this school to read this." And those two things are very different.

The worst example of this that I've seen so far were the librarians. They weren't actually librarians, they were librarian assistants. Their job was shelving books. They even had been volunteers.

*continued on page 13*

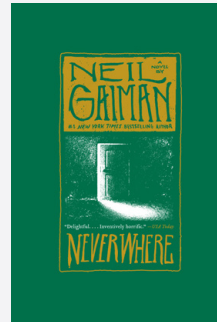
Neil Gaiman doesn't just advocate for free speech—his own work has been challenged in libraries and schools:



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## The Sandman

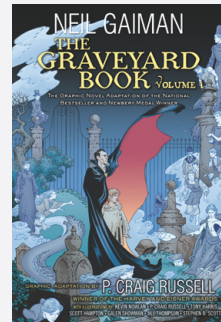
The Sandman series has been challenged and removed from libraries because of "anti-family themes," "offensive language," and for being "unsuited for age group." Most often, opposition to the series has arisen when it has been shelved in the young adult section of a library.



Cover illustration © by Houston Trueblood. Used with permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

## Neverwhere

Neil Gaiman's bestselling novel *Neverwhere* was removed from classrooms in Alamogordo, New Mexico, after a parent complained about "sexual innuendo" in the book, claiming that "this is rated R material." Upon review, the district deemed the material appropriate for high school students and returned it to classrooms.



Cover illustration © by P. Craig Russell. Used with permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

## The Graveyard Book

In February, CBLDF was confidentially involved the defense of the graphic novel edition of *The Graveyard Book*, which was challenged in a middle school library for violent imagery. The review committee voted to keep the book on library shelves.

# 1954: The Year Comics Almost Died

## Bill Gaines, Seduction of the Innocent, and the Comics Code Authority

by Charles Brownstein

### They told him not to do it.

But here he was, as David Hajdu wrote in *The Ten-Cent Plague*, “fighting to remain not only lucid, but awake,” as senators pelted him with damning questions.

His leg rattled under the table, and with the drugs wearing off, he started to feel the deleterious effects of so many late nights spent preparing for this moment. Sweat poured down his face, and he felt himself being backed into a corner.

They told him not to do it. Al Feldstein, his editor and trusted ally, had been especially adamant that William Gaines should not volunteer to testify before the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency when it turned its attention to comic books.

But he did.

He did it to set the record straight. He did it to defend the medium that had become his life's work. He did it to silence the critics, especially that publicity-seeking German quack who wrote a book slandering his profession, and who earlier that day said, “I think Hitler was a beginner compared to the comic book industry.”

So, here he was: an overweight 32-year-old man, nervous, fatigued, impaired by withdrawal from his diet pills, and angry in the most earnest but increasingly inarticulate way, defending his profession in front of the highest lawmakers in the land.

Who had him backed completely into a corner.

Senator Estes Kefauver, a presidential hopeful who'd mastered the optics of the televised hearing with his powerful investigation of organized crime four years earlier, held up a comic book. “Here is your May 22 issue,” he said with the air of a fighter about to deliver the knockout punch. “This seems to be a man with a bloody axe, holding a woman's head up which has been severed from her body. Do you think that is in good taste?”

Bill Gaines, the publisher of EC Comics, responded: “Yes, sir, I do, for the cover of a horror comic.”

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The newspapers weren't kind.

The following morning's *New York Times* ran the headline,

“No Harm in Horror, Comics Issuer Says.” From coast to coast, local papers recounted Gaines' testimony, morbidly lingering upon the now infamous “good taste” exchange. National magazines joined the chorus shortly after.

The media pile-on represented a boiling point in the moral panic that had been building against the comics medium for more than a decade. The enraged public stepped up efforts to get comics off the streets. In *Comic Book Comics*, Fred Van Lente writes: “The public backlash was swift and devastating. Catholic schools, Boy and Girl Scout troops, and various other civic organizations sponsored ‘book swaps’ in which kids were given free prose books in exchange for turning over their comic books. A prize was given to the child who turned in the most comics (typically 100+), and the confiscated books would be thrown on a public bonfire.”

In the immediate aftermath of the subcommittee hearings, it was clear that the entire future of comics was in peril.

Something had to be done.

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Every new form of popular media attracts criticism from groups that believe it has a harmful effect on the young. The arguments waged against video games today and previously brought against the Internet, rap, and heavy metal music have their roots in the 20th century campaign against comic books. Moral crusaders asserted that comics corrupted youth, hurt their ability to read and appreciate art, and even encouraged criminality.

The earliest widely read attack on the medium was Sterling North's “A National Disgrace,” published in the *Chicago Daily News*. North called upon parents and educators to shun comics in favor of wholesome children's books. He described comics as “Badly drawn, badly written and badly printed—a strain on young eyes and young nervous systems... Their crude blacks and reds spoil the child's natural sense of color; their hypodermic injection of sex and murder make the child impatient with better, though quieter, stories.” Within a year of North's first publication, the editorial would be reprinted in full or in part by 40 newspapers.

Despite the criticism leveled at the field, comics continued



to flourish. With the United States' entry into the second World War, a new audience of military personnel came to comics, which comprised a full quarter of the printed matter going to PXs during the conflict.

On the homefront, new genres continued to develop. In 1942, *Crime Does Not Pay* debuted. Developed by Charles Biro and Bob Wood for Lev Gleason Publications, *Crime Does Not Pay* marketed itself as "true crime" and focused on the lurid depiction of criminals and their deeds. The tawdry publication would be a tremendous success and inspire hosts of imitators.

Beyond crime, however, comics gave voice to a broad diversity of expression, ranging from humor to romance to suspense to heroic adventure. Comics offered many of the same kinds of stories that were found in pulps, radio, and motion pictures, but the bright and impactful images, limited only by the imagination and draftsmanship of its practitioners, made them seem like a much more volatile form of media.

The medium soon attracted the disapproval of the Catholic church and PTAs. John Francis Noll, the bishop of Ft. Wayne, Indiana, used his National Organization for Decent Literature and the Catholic publication *Our Sunday Visitor* as pulpits to speak out against immoral reading matter, including comics. Each month, NODL would issue a black list of "Publications Disapproved for Youth" in *The Acolyte*.

Comics were soon fingered as the cause of tragedy. *The Lewiston Daily Sun* ran an article under the headline, "Comics Blamed in Death of Youth, 12." The unfortunate child had hanged himself, and his mother tearfully explained that he must have been reenacting something he'd read in a comic book. The coroners' jury concurred. Headlines like this one stood alongside rising statistics in youth crime and a cultural concern about the increase in juvenile delinquency. The prevalence of crime comics became a target of widespread moral panic.

Dr. Fredric Wertham entered the fray in March 1948 with the symposium "The Psychopathology of Comic Books," which proposed that comics' depictions of violence had a direct causal impact on the rise of juvenile delinquency. Wertham's symposium was covered by the March 29 issue of *Time*, in an article entitled "Puddles of Blood," and in the March 27 issue of *Colliers*, which featured Judith Crist's "Horror in the Nursery."

By the end of 1948, law enforcement began to take an interest in comics. Detroit police commissioner Harry S. Toy made his city the first to crack down on the medium, his findings justifying an ordinance banning an initial 36 titles. Copy-cat bans would follow in nearby jurisdictions. In September 1948, Los Angeles county made it a misdemeanor for any adult "person, firm or corporation" to furnish or sell crime comics or magazines to minors, with a penalty of a \$500 fine or up to six months in jail. By March 1949, laws regulating comics prohibited sale to minors in 14 states. All told, more than 50 cities and towns had banned the sale of comic books either through legislation or censorship committees.

In an attempt to deflect public criticism, the Association of Comic Magazine Publishers was established. In 1948, they issued the Publishers Code, modeled on Hollywood's Hays Code. However, lack of uniform participation or standards for its use rendered the code ineffective.

The legislative and media activities condemning crime comics ultimately curbed their proliferation, with romance comics taking their place. By 1950, efforts towards more expansive

anti-comics legislation faltered since the primary target was now dwindling. The news media began to reconsider the case against comics as perhaps overstated. An early January edition of *Newsweek* covered a study of nearly 3,000 children in central Massachusetts. David Hajdu writes that the report's conclusions showed "no statistically significant effect of the comics upon the personalities of their young devotees."

It was in this climate that William Gaines and Fredric Wertham developed the legacy-defining works that would lead to their appointment with history.

...

Fate conspired to shove Bill Gaines into comics publishing.

His father Max developed what would become the comic book format. He went on to be a partner at All-American Publications, which introduced the characters Green Lantern and Wonder Woman. Max later established the company Educational Comics.

Bill didn't want any part of the family business. After a stint in the Army, he enrolled at NYU with the intention of becoming a high school chemistry teacher. When Bill called his mother in

August 1947 to tell her that he was seeking divorce from a marriage she had arranged, Max consoled his wife with a trip to Lake Placid. During that trip, Max was killed in a boating accident. At 25 years old, Bill Gaines was forced to take over his father's publishing company.

At first, Bill hated the business, which was perhaps most notable for publishing the title *Picture Stories from the Bible*. With Al Feldstein's arrival, Gaines found a kindred soul. A veteran of the early comics business, including a post in the Eisner and Iger shop, Feldstein came to EC in 1948 at the age of 22 and soon graduated from drawing interiors to writing and editing. Gaines and Feldstein explored almost any creative direction they wanted. In 1950, they introduced their "New Trend in Comic Books,"

which would launch titles such as *Tales From the Crypt* and *The Vault of Horror*. The New Trend was a hit, inspiring a host of imitators and rekindling the anxieties previously directed at crime comics.

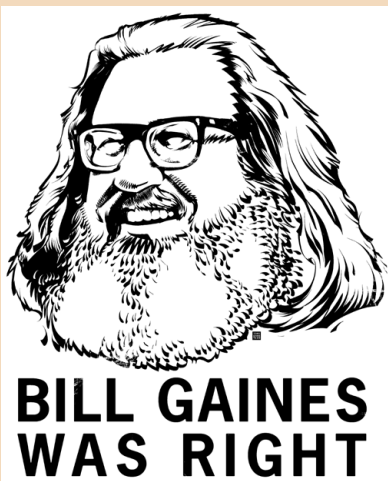
Simultaneously, Wertham had temporarily stepped back from the public eye to write *Seduction of the Innocent*. Hajdu notes that when the book was announced in 1953, it "rumbled out on a convoy of publicity unusual in its time for a work of social science and psychiatry." Teaser ads began appearing in newspapers to promote the excerpt that would appear in *Ladies' Home Journal*. The piece, entitled "What Parents Don't Know About Comic Books," presented Wertham's findings as the results of a 7-year scientific investigation.

The excerpt and the press attention it inspired made *Seduction of the Innocent* an instant bestseller. Ultimately, it was a work of junk science that vilified comics. Using incendiary language, Wertham asserted that comics were a corrupting influence on youth, filled with subliminal and unhealthy sexual images and a leading cause of juvenile delinquency. Wertham's so-called science was based on already at-risk youth, lacked a control, and lacked citations.

Despite specious science, however, Wertham's claims were taken seriously by critics for influential outlets, including *The New York Times Book Review*, *New York World-Telegram and Sun*, and *The New Yorker*.

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continued on page 13



Art by Tony Shasteen

# AFTER CHARLIE HEBDO

IRRESPONSIBLE MAGAZINE

On January 7, 2015, the world looked on in shock as we witnessed the aftermath of a terrorist attack on the offices of French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*. Twelve people were murdered, including five cartoonists. Outrage over the attack was immediate, as was the support for free expression. Many continue to mourn, particularly in Paris, France, where the attacks took place. Unfortunately, the attacks didn't stop violence or censorship—around the world, there have been additional attacks against cartoonists and retaliatory attacks against Muslims. Some cartoonists are more reluctant than ever to tackle some of the topics for which *Charlie Hebdo* was attacked.

## Still Defiant: January 14 Issue of *Charlie Hebdo* Sells Out

After the *Charlie Hebdo* attack left 12 people dead, including cartoonists Charb, Cabu, Wolinski, Tignous, and Honoré, the remaining staff members of *Charlie Hebdo* could have decided to close up shop. Instead, they maintained the defiant satire that has characterized the magazine and released an issue a week after the attacks. The magazine normally has a circulation of 60,000 copies, but anticipating widespread interest domestically and abroad, the print run was upped considerably. The January 14 issue sold out an initial print run of three million copies, and an additional two million copies were ordered for release the next day.

For some, the issue is a piece of history, but many recognized that buying the issue was also a show of support for free speech. That *Charlie Hebdo*'s staff overcame their personal grief over the

loss of their colleagues—and fear of further reprisals—to publish the issue is a testament to their dedication to exercising the right to free speech.

The newfound success of the magazine has been bittersweet. As of the end of February, the magazine has resumed its regular printing schedule, but the formerly struggling magazine has found itself flush with donations and new subscriptions. The *Charlie Hebdo* staff is still discussing how to allot the extra income, and some are concerned that the magazine might lose its satirical voice in the process. Laurent “Riss” Sourisseau has assumed editorial control of the magazine and has been adamant that the magazine will hold onto the irreverent spirit that has previously characterized it.

## Two Killed in Copenhagen Attacks

A little over a month after the *Charlie Hebdo* attack, a gunman opened fire on a Copenhagen cafe that was hosting a discussion on art, free speech, and blasphemy, killing one attendee and injuring three police officers. The apparent target of the attack, Swedish cartoonist Lars Vilks, was uninjured. The same gunman later killed a Jewish security guard outside a synagogue before being killed himself in a confrontation with police.

Vilks became a target of extremists in 2007 after producing a series of sketches that depicted the prophet Muhammad's head on a dog's body. Since that time, several people have been arrested for plotting to kill Vilks, he was physically assaulted during a lecture at a Swedish university, and he was included on the most-wanted list of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, the same group that trained the brothers who attacked *Charlie Hebdo*.

## The French Contradiction: Free Speech for Some But Not Others?

In the wake of the attack on *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris, many have been confused by the French government's seeming hypocrisy in dealing with controversial expression. How could officials support the right to caricature Muhammad and other religious figures, but then arrest people for speech judged to be anti-Semitic or supportive of terrorism?

The answer—not a very satisfying one for anyone approaching the question with a First Amendment mindset—lies in what French law considers to be protected speech under the country's founding documents. In the United States, there are only a few narrow categories of expression that do not fall under the First Amendment right to free speech: “obscenity, fighting words, fraudulent misrepresentation, advocacy of imminent lawless behavior, and defamation.” As we all know, that leaves a whole lot of room for speech that many people consider to be offensive.

In France, however, there are a few more categories of unprotected speech that have been written into law over the years. Holocaust denial is a crime, for instance, as is the act of provoking “discrimi-



### Paris Still Mourns

- (1) The spot where Muslim policeman Ahmed Merabet was killed, a short distance from the *Charlie Hebdo* offices. (2) The *Charlie Hebdo* offices, closed off behind police barriers. (3) People have left flowers, messages, drawings, and pencils outside.

Photos © Dylan Horrocks

# BEARING WITNESS TO THE AFTERMATH OF TRAGEDY

## Dylan Horrocks Reports from France

During a recent visit to France, comics creator Dylan Horrocks visited the site of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks. He shared his thoughts on the visit exclusively with CBLDF. What follows are Horrocks's own words about the experience.

In the English-speaking world, the *Charlie Hebdo* attack has largely been responded to in very abstract terms; op-eds and online discussion have revolved around questions of free speech and the limits of satire, almost as if this were merely a hypothetical scenario devised for the benefit of would-be political philosophers.

But here in France, the murders have been experienced in much more concrete terms. These were real people, some of them well known and widely respected, and the shock and horror of their deaths has powerfully affected many people. *Charlie Hebdo* is an institution in France—if you can call an anarchic collection of iconoclastic individualists an institution. “*Charlie* has always been there,” one friend told me, echoing what others have said. You could love them or hate them, agree with some things and argue with others, but they have been a familiar presence in French political commentary and cartooning for longer than most can remember. Many cartoonists have worked on *Charlie* (or its earlier

nation, hatred, or violence toward a person or group of persons because of their origin or belonging to a particular ethnicity, nation, race, or religion.” In recent weeks, authorities have mostly availed themselves of a 2012 law that criminalizes the “justification of or incitement to terrorism,” which carries stiffer penalties if the speech happens online.

In practice, this law has led to the arrest of Dieudonné M'bala M'bala, a French comedian of Cameroonian descent, over charges of anti-Semitism after he posted on Facebook that “I feel like Charlie Coulibaly”—a combination of *Charlie Hebdo* and the surname of the terrorist who attacked a kosher grocery store in conjunction with the *Charlie Hebdo* attack. A 16-year-old from Nantes was also arrested for sharing a parody of a notorious *Charlie Hebdo* cover on Facebook. Two men who verbally supported the attacks in separate incidents have already been tried and given prison sentences of six months and four years, respectively.

While French law obviously includes some rather broad exceptions in what is considered free speech, one form of speech that is protected in all cases is religious blasphemy. This protection has its roots in the revolution of 1789, when lawmakers embraced the absolute necessity of removing the Catholic church from politics in France. For centuries under the monarchy, dissidents and other individuals who inconvenienced the ruling class had frequently been imprisoned on spurious charges of blasphemy, and revolutionaries wanted to make sure that could never happen again in their new republic.

In combination with the law banning hate speech, though, this means that it is today legal in France to mock or otherwise criticize any religion or religious figure but often illegal to do the same against followers of that religion, which seems an impossibly fine distinction. Some American sources have tentatively suggested that France might consider restructuring its laws regarding both freedom of speech and freedom of religion to be more akin to the First Amendment, an idea that would doubtless be met with derision across much of the French political spectrum. But considering the ludicrous cases that have arisen under the newer provision banning speech that supports terrorism, we can at least hope that law might be reconsidered before it becomes equally ingrained and further complicates the question of what one can say in France.

incarnation, *Hara Kiri*), from Florence Cestac to Moebius. Among the murdered cartoonists, Wolinski and Cabu are especially important figures in French comics; Cabu even appeared for years on children's television shows, encouraging a generation of kids to draw.

Everywhere you go, there are “Je Suis Charlie” signs and badges, *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons are hung in windows and pasted on walls, and every comic shop and bookstore has a prominent display of books by the slain cartoonists. “The events” are on everyone's mind—reinforced by the frequent sight of soldiers standing guard outside Jewish schools, synagogues, mosques, and newspaper offices. Even my publisher here in France has had soldiers guarding their doors since mid-January, because they share the building with the publisher of Michel Houellebecq's controversial new novel (which, coincidentally, was the subject of *Charlie Hebdo*'s cover on the day of the attack).

It's all very strange for a visiting cartoonist from the other side of the world. But one thing is very clear: The brutal murder of these cartoonists has shocked the French comics scene to the core. And cartoonists and comics creators everywhere should be paying close attention.

Last night in Brussels, the home of Tintin, a comic shop owner (who once made a pilgrimage to Wally Wood's studio shortly before his death) solemnly took a badge from her sweater and silently presented it to me. It was a special (and hence collectible) badge from Angoulême, with the festival's Lewis Trondheim-designed mascot proudly holding a “Je Suis Charlie” sign. It was such a sweet, solemn, and very comics collectorish gesture. Needless to say, today I am wearing it with pride.

## Security Concern Leads to Self-Censorship at the Victoria and Albert Museum

In the wake of *Charlie Hebdo* attack, it is understandable that cartoonists, journalists, and even the general public would fear possible violent repercussion for expressing themselves, especially when it comes to talking about aspects of the Muslim religion. Caution is understandable for people whose day-to-day lives are being impacted, but it comes across as bizarre when a scholarly institution not only removes its own portrait of the prophet Muhammad, but then lies about its ownership when confronted. This is just what happened at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Out of fear of potential public outrage and violent backlash, the museum opted to quietly and discretely remove from public view a devotional image of the prophet Mohammad. The museum then denounced ownership when queried about the removal.

## Angoulême Honors Fallen *Charlie Hebdo* Staff

The aftermath of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks has left the comics world shaken, but it has also motivated cartoonists around the world to stand in solidarity with the victims and surviving members of the *Charlie Hebdo* staff. Cartoonists responded immediately with images of their own, and a poignant memorial took place during the 42nd annual Angoulême International Comics Festival in France.

Amidst the celebration of comics, one of the biggest highlights of this year's gathering was the inaugural Charlie Freedom of Speech award, as well as a special Grand Prix award. The awards were presented in honor of the cartoonists and editorial staff that lost their lives during the *Charlie Hebdo* attack. The comics festival also featured “Je Suis Charlie: The History of *Charlie Hebdo*,” an exhibition that showcased issues of the magazine for attendees. A memorial cartoon book incorporating many of the cartoons on display is planned for the near future. With the emphasis on *Charlie Hebdo*, the Angoulême festival also employed additional security to protect attendees and the exhibits.

Maren Williams, Caitlin McCabe, and Betsy Gomez contributed to this article.



# BREAKING BARRIERS

## Adding Graphic Novels to Your Library and Classroom Collections

The American Library Association recently announced the 2015 honorees of its Youth Media Awards, and graphic novels scored big! Graphic novel *This One Summer* by Jillian Tamaki and Mariko Tamaki broke boundaries by becoming the first graphic novel to make the short list for the Caldecott Medal. *This One Summer* was also shortlisted for the young adult Printz Award.

The recent announcement of the Newbery and Caldecott Medal winners and honorees has many people rushing to pick up the books for their library and classroom collections. Unfortunately, the Caldecott honor yielded an unforeseen negative outcome: Since the announcement of the Caldecott honor, CBLDF has been confidentially involved in monitoring challenges to *This One Summer* in various communities.

### How could an award cause trouble?

The Caldecott Medal and Honor are given to illustrators whose work is suitable for children up to 14 years of age. An examination of past Caldecott winners and honorees reveals that most of the recipients created books for the younger end of the age range. In the last ten years alone, *This One Summer* is the only honoree that is rated for age 12 and older—about 82% of Caldecott winners have been aimed at audiences age 8 and younger. As a result, many people have the expectation that Caldecott winners and honorees are meant for the youngest readers.

Comics broke new ground with the recognition of *This One Summer* by the Caldecott committee, and the book is absolutely eligible and deserving of the Caldecott honor. Unfortunately, problems arise when people order a book based on its award pedigree rather than familiarity with the subject matter and intended audience. A few people, believing the book is aimed at younger readers, have been shocked to find that *This One Summer* is intended for audiences age 12 and up, and they have raised concerns over mature themes and language. Regardless, the highly praised graphic novel would be an excellent addition to library and classroom collections provided it is shelved properly.

### How can I defend my decision to include *This One Summer*—or really, any graphic novel—in my collection?

Graphic novels are more popular than ever. Regrettably, they still encounter a few pockets of resistance from individuals who don't understand the format or who think that comics aren't literature. But you can prepare yourself to beat these misconceptions:

1. **Do your research.** An awards pedigree is a great way to justify adding a book to your collection, especially if you



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encounter resistance to graphic novels from administrators. But just because a graphic novel was recognized for a major award, that doesn't mean it will be a good fit for your library or classroom collection. Visit the publisher's website to find information about the book you're considering and to verify that the book's content and the publisher's suggested age group are compatible with your patrons or students. If the publisher doesn't cite a specific age group for the book, most major online retailers do so.

2. **Gather reviews and testimonials.** Most publishers maintain a list of critical praise and reviews for graphic novels on their websites. Online retailers also compile some of this information. Library and education journals are great places to get reviews. *School Library Journal*, *Kirkus*, *Booklist*, and *Publishers Weekly* are among the most popular and respected publications that review comics.
3. **Play the numbers game.** A dossier of awards and recognitions may not convince someone who operates best with numbers. So, take some time to gather some data about your audience's preferences. What percentage of your circulation is graphic novels? How frequently do your students borrow graphic novels from your collection in comparison to other literature? Use your data to convince your opposition that comics are worth the investment!
4. **Don't be afraid to ask for help.** Librarians and educators have been fighting to include comics in their collections for a very long time. Your peers can be an invaluable resource for helping you develop your own collection. CBLDF is also ready to assist. Visit the CBLDF website at [www.cblddf.org](http://www.cblddf.org) for resources for librarians and educators. If you can't find what you're looking for, drop us a line at [info@cblddf.org](mailto:info@cblddf.org)—we can help!

### What should I do if a graphic novel is challenged?

Don't panic! Most challenges to comics come from well-meaning individuals, frequently parents, who find something they believe is objectionable in their local public or school library or classroom. These challenges are often difficult and stressful for the staff who must manage them, but there are resources to help in the process.

CBLDF can help by providing assistance with locating review resources, writing letters of support, and facilitating access to experts and resources. Call 800-99-CBLDF or email [info@cblddf.org](mailto:info@cblddf.org) at the first sign of a First Amendment emergency! ALA (<http://www.ala.org/bbooks/challengedmaterials/>) and the National Coalition Against Censorship's Kids' Right to Read Project (<http://ncac.org/project/the-kids-right-to-read-project/>) are also invaluable resources in the fight for the right to read.

Betsy Gomez

[continued from page 7]

**That was Alan Moore's League of Extraordinary Gentlemen: The Black Dossier in Jessamine, Kentucky, and they were library circulation clerks.**

They were circulation clerks, and they decided that they did not want Alan Moore's *The Black Dossier* in circulation because it would make them—you know, it would give them ideas. So, they checked it out, or they took it out so it was not there, and I believe they did some kind of magic cleansing ritual to try and banish the evil spirits in *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*. And then they just kept it off the shelves. They kept it at home and when asked, when challenged on this, when asked to bring it back, they explained that they had a duty to keep things like this off the shelves. And you know the final upshot of it was the book finally went back on the shelf, and they lost their jobs. And I have to say, your job as a library clerk is to put stuff on the shelves; it's not to decide what

other people can't read.

*And the worst part about that case, too, is that after they lost their jobs, they retaliated by going to the media saying that this library system is giving pornography to children, and so this is why we did this. The library director was receiving literal death threats at his home phone number, and that was where we had to become involved in the case. Ultimately we worked to get it back on the shelf.*

*These things are happening with alarming frequency, and people are at risk of losing their jobs, people are at risk of losing intellectual freedom in their communities, and so I guess we return to where we started, which is that free speech is still very much in danger in the modern period.*

Free speech is not free. Free speech is something that we have to fight for.

## 1954

[continued from page 9]

In February 1954, as *Seduction* leapt to national attention, Robert C. Hendrickson, the chair of the U.S. Senate Subcommittee investigating juvenile delinquency, announced that the subject of comic books would be taken up when the committee arrived in New York later that year.

Gaines was furious when he learned comics were going to be made a televised spectacle on the order of 1950s organized crime hearings. He funneled his indignation into the parody ad, "Are You a Red Dupe," which asserted "THE GROUP MOST ANXIOUS TO DESTROY COMICS ARE THE COMMUNISTS!" Gaines sent a pre-publication copy of the ad to Hendrickson, who later denounced the publisher and his ad on the Senate floor.

As the April hearings neared, the committee called 14 witnesses, including cartoonists Walt Kelly and Milton Caniff, the publishers of *Timely/Atlas/Marvel* and Dell, experts on juvenile delinquency, and psychiatrists, including Wertham. Gaines and the publishers of other notorious comics were absent from the list of witnesses. Seeing this as a moment to correct the record, Gaines volunteered to testify despite close associates advising against it.

Hendrickson was happy to accommodate.

...

In the wake of Gaines's disastrous testimony and faced with an angry public and the threat of government regulation, the comics industry was backed into a corner. They responded by establishing the Comic Magazine Association of America, which instituted the Comics Code Authority, a censorship code that thoroughly sanitized the content of comics for years to come.

Almost overnight, comics were brought down to a level appropriate only for the youngest or dimmest readers. Horror, crime, science fiction, and other genres that appealed to older and more sophisticated readers were wiped out for a generation.

Although the final report of the Senate Subcommittee ultimately exonerated the medium, the damage was already done.

Hajdu writes: "Between 1954 and 1956, more than half the comic books on the newsstands disappeared; the number of titles published in the United States dropped from about 650 to some 250. By the end of 1955, when EC discontinued all its comics (retaining only *MAD*) five other publishers went out of business." The following year continued the trend of publishers shuttering, and with those closures, hundreds of writers, artists, and editors were suddenly out of work, in most cases permanently.

For those who did stay in the business, the stigma associated



with the work was severe. Carmine Infantino told Hajdu, "If you said you drew comic books, it was like saying you were a child molester."

...

The Subcommittee Hearings and their aftermath confirmed Bill Gaines' anti-authoritarian sensibilities. He moved his remaining profitable comic, *MAD*, to magazine size and left the Comics Code behind. *MAD*'s non-conformist attitude would be a profound influence on 20th century pop culture.

Wertham's legacy is far more dubious. *Seduction of the Innocent* had already been widely scorned as a work of biased pseudoscience that overshadowed his more meritorious work as a pioneer in neuroscience and advocacy for the poor and disenfranchised. But in 2013, it was shown

that he actually fabricated his evidence against comics.

CBLDF Editorial Director Betsy Gomez writes, "Carol Tilley, a University of Illinois professor of Library Science, compared Wertham's notes to the final published version of *Seduction* and found that the doctor revised children's ages, distorted their quotes, omitted other causal factors and in general 'played fast and loose with the data he gathered on comics.'"

...

Today, comics have been exonerated in American culture and are now a fundamental influence on its popular media. However, newer forms of media are under attack with arguments almost exactly like the ones brought against comics in the 1950s.

Despite the poor outcome in 1954, Bill Gaines' prepared remarks to the Senate Subcommittee ring true now, perhaps even moreso than when he first said them.

"What are we afraid of?" Gaines asked. "Are we afraid of our own children? Do we forget that they are citizens, too, and entitled to select what to read or do? ...The basic personality of a child is established before he reaches the age of comic-book reading.... The truth is that delinquency is the product of real environment, in which the child lives and not of the fiction he reads....There are many problems that reach our children today....No pill can cure them. No law will legislate them out of being. The problems are economic and social, and they are complex. Our people need understanding; they need to have affection, decent homes, decent food. I can never remember having seen one boy or girl who has committed a crime or who became neurotic or psychotic because he or she read comic books."

In the final analysis, perhaps Bill Gaines was right after all.




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**Raising a Reader!**

How Comics & Graphic Novels Can Help Your Kids Love To Read!



By Meryl Jaffe, PhD.  
Introduction by Jennifer L. Holm  
Three-Time Newbery Honoree

A Comic Book Legal Defense Fund Publication — 1

**Raising a Reader!**

How Comics & Graphic Novels Can Help Your Kids Love To Read!



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Three-Time Newbery Honoree

A Comic Book Legal Defense Fund Publication — 2

Raising a Reader: How Comics & Graphic Novels Can Help Your Kids Love to Read! (U.S. & U.K. Editions)

by Meryl Jaffe with art by Raina Telgemeier and Matthew Holm. Introduction by three-time Newbery honoree Jennifer L. Holm.

Covers: (1) Raina Telgemeier, U.S. edition and (2) Jamie Smart, U.K. edition

Just in time for Children’s Book Week, CBLDF is proud to release a new printing of *Raising a Reader! How Comics & Graphic Novels Can Help Your Kids Love To Read!* CBLDF’s signature resource for parents and educators! By popular demand, we are also releasing a version for the U.K. market, featuring new cover art by Jamie Smart! It’s an indispensable tool for showcasing the value of graphic novels and chock full of reading suggestions and title recommendations to get kids engaged with this exciting medium! **Available April 29, 2015!**

**The CBLDF Presents: ELEPHANTMEN! #1**



by RICHARD STARKINGS with art by DOUGIE BRAITHWAITE, BOO COOK, SHAKY KANE, MORITAT, TIM SALE, and DAVE SIM

CBLDF Presents: Elephantmen! Shots #1

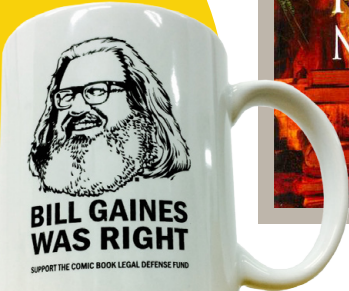
by Richard Starkings with art by Dougie Braithwaite, Ian Churchill, Boo Cook, Shaky Kane, Moritat, Tim Sale, and Dave Sim

Covers: (A) J. Scott Campbell, (B) Tim Sale & Boo Cook, (C) J. Scott Campbell (1 in 25 sketch variant)

This 40-page extravaganza collects all of the strips from *Hero Comics*, *Liberty Comics*, and *The Thought Bubble Anthology* and features the hard-to-find Judge Dredd, Strontium Dog, and Marineman crossovers! **On shelves May 27, 2015!**

REWARDS ZONE SPOTLIGHT

Not only was William Gaines a brilliant publisher, presiding over some of the greatest comics ever made and America’s most beloved humor magazine, he was a tireless fighter against censorship and a lifelong advocate for free speech. In honor of the legendary publisher of EC Comics and *MAD Magazine*, CBLDF’s Bill Gaines premiums proudly proclaim what every free speech supporting comic fan has known for years: Bill Gaines was right! Visit the CBLDF Rewards Zone (<http://cblfd.myshopify.com/collections/gaines>) to pick up a t-shirt, coffee mug, or tote bag that celebrates Gaines’s efforts on behalf of comics!



FOR DEFENDER READERS

If you enjoyed our interview with Neil Gaiman, check out these premiums, signed by Gaiman and available at special donation levels exclusively for CBLDF Defender readers!

“In Reilig Oran” Print

This poem, unpublished anywhere else, was illustrated by Tony Harris of *Ex Machina* and *Starman* fame. “In Reilig Oran” is a breathtaking experience—a gorgeous limited edition 12” by 20” print, created exclusively for CBLDF.

Sandman: Endless Nights

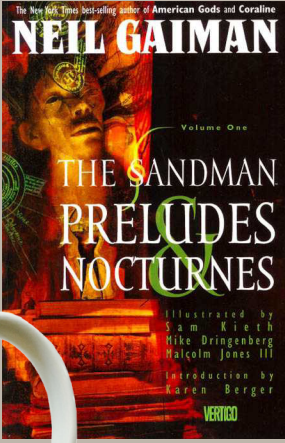
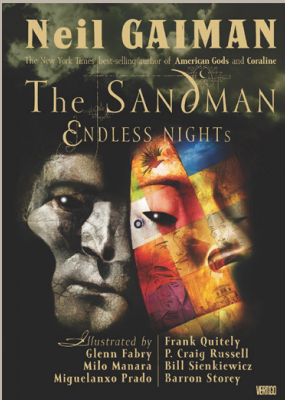
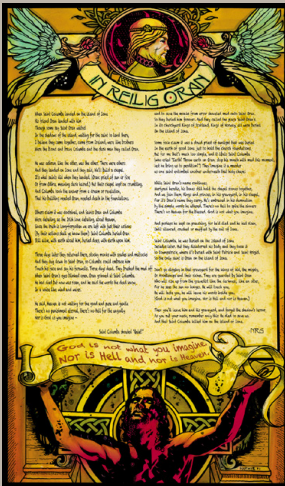
Joined by a dream team of artists from around the world, *Sandman: Endless Nights* marks Gaiman’s return to the beloved characters he made famous. Alternately haunting, bittersweet, erotic, and nightmarish, the seven stories in this book—one for each of the Endless siblings and each illustrated by a different artist—reveal strange secrets and surprising truths.

Hansel & Gretel

This all happened a long time ago, in your grandmother’s time or in her grandfather’s time. A long time ago, back then, we all lived on the edge of the great forest. Gaiman and artist Lorenzo Mattotti recall the horror of the original Grimms’ Fairy Tales in this re-imagining of the classic Hansel and Gretel story.

The Sandman: Preludes & Nocturnes

Often hailed as one of the finest achievements in graphic storytelling, Gaiman created in *The Sandman* an unforgettable tale of the forces that exist beyond life and death, weaving ancient mythology, folklore, and fairy tales with his own distinct narrative vision. *Preludes & Nocturnes* introduces readers to Dream and the Endless as Dream goes on a quest for vengeance and his lost objects of power.



To access these premiums, use the QR code below or visit [tinyurl.com/ooh3792](http://tinyurl.com/ooh3792).





## UPCOMING EVENTS

### March 27–29: Emerald City Comicon

- Booth 1239
- <http://emeraldcitycomicon.com/>

### April 3–5: WonderCon

- <http://www.comic-con.org/wca>

### April 11–12: MoCCA Arts Festival

- <http://moccafestnyc.tumblr.com/>

### April 24–26: C2E2

- <http://www.c2e2.com/>

### May 2: Free Comic Book Day & Children's Book Week Launch

- Free Comic Book Day leads off Children's Book Week, the annual celebration of books for young people and the joy of reading! More than two dozen kid-friendly titles will be given away at more than 2,000 comic book specialty stores nationwide!
- Visit your local comic book shop to pick up a special, all-ages edition of CBLDF's *Defend Comics*!

### May 4–10: Children's Book Week

- To learn more about Children's Book Week and how your store can participate, contact Charles Brownstein at CBLDF ([Charles.Brownstein@cblddf.org](mailto:Charles.Brownstein@cblddf.org)) or Shaina Birkhead from CBC ([shaina.birkhead@cbcbooks.org](mailto:shaina.birkhead@cbcbooks.org)).
- <http://www.bookweekonline.com/>

### May 9–10: Toronto Comic Arts Festival

- <http://torontocomics.com/>

### May 22–25: Comicpalooza

- <http://www.comicpalooza.com/>

### May 23–25: Denver Comic Con

- <http://denvercomiccon.com/>

### June 6–7: Special Edition NYC

- <http://www.specialeditionnyc.com/>

### June 19–21: HeroesCon

- <http://www.heroesonline.com/heroescon/>

### June 25–30: ALA Annual Conference

- <http://alaac15.ala.org/>

*Schedule subject to change. Visit [cblddf.org](http://cblddf.org) for the latest updates, booth numbers, and program updates.*

## JOIN THE FIGHT!

Joining the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund puts you on the front line of the fight against censorship! When you join CBLDF, we'll thank you with the best incentives and benefits in the free speech community, starting off with a stunning membership card by cartoonist Michael Cho! We have membership plans for donors in every budget, and all of them are tax-deductible:

- **Member (\$100):** CBLDF membership card, a button set, a sticker set, an embroidered patch, and an exclusive member-only t-shirt featuring Michael Cho's gorgeous art!
- **Associate Member (\$30):** CBLDF membership card and a CBLDF bumper sticker!
- **Supporter Member (\$50):** CBLDF membership card plus a button set, a sticker set, and an embroidered member patch!
- **Defender Member (\$250):** All of the above, plus a subscription to *CBLDF Defender*, a coffee mug, and a canvas tote bag!
- **Protector Member (\$500):** All of the above, plus an exclusive embossed executive Moleskine journal and a gym bag!
- **Champion Member (\$1,000):** All of the above, plus recognition in the next *CBLDF Liberty Annual* and a CBLDF publication assortment that includes variant covers and assorted printed matter!
- **Guardian Member (\$2,500):** All of the above, plus special recognition in CBLDF publications throughout 2015!

Use the signup form on the back cover of this magazine or visit <http://cblddf.myshopify.com/collections/memberships> to join today!



Art by Michael Cho





## Comic Book Legal Defense Fund

255 West 36th Street, Suite 501  
New York, New York 10018

[www.cbldf.org](http://www.cbldf.org)  
[info@cbldf.org](mailto:info@cbldf.org)

1-800-99-CBLDF

## FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO READ — JOIN CBLDF TODAY!

CBLDF's important work defending the freedom to read is only possible because of the support of individuals like you. Show your support for our work protecting the freedom to read by making a tax-deductible membership contribution today! We have membership plans for donors in every budget! *(For descriptions of the membership incentives for each level, turn to the inside back cover.)*

### Contact Information

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### Membership Level

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|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Member   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Protector Member  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Associate Member  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 Champion Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Supporter Member  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500 Guardian Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Defender Member  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm already a member, but I'd like to make an additional donation of \$_____ |  |

Members joining at the \$100 level and higher will receive a 2015 CBLDF shirt, with art by Michael Cho! T-shirt size **(circle one)**:    **S**    **M**    **L**    **XL**    **XXL**

- ☐ Please send no premiums.

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### Payment Information

- ☐ **Online** (Visit us at <http://cbldf.myshopify.com/collections/memberships>)
- ☐ **By check** (Please make checks payable to CBLDF.)
- ☐ **By credit card** (Please complete the following.)

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**Thank you for your support!**

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