

A GRRRGRAPHICS BOOK

ROGUE CARTOONIST



THE INTERNET PERILS OF A CITIZEN MUCKRAKER

Ben Garrison

Many concerned

young people urged me

to publish this book.

I dedicate it to them.

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Special thanks to John DiLiberto and Kevin Conroy, Muckraker Inc. of Blanco, Texas

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ADVANCED REVIEWS

Troll comments that were harvested verbatim
from anonymous message boards:

*“This actually could be the kind of thing a book is
written about when you think about it.”*

—Anonymous

*“Picture a man in his mid 50s fuming about teen-
age Internet trolls as he hammers away on some
antiquated typewriter. This book is going to be a
riot.”* —Anonymous

*“His book is going to be a glorious train-wreck
and will probably make him look even sillier (if
that’s even possible).”* —Anonymous

*“Ben ben ben. Poor deluded ben. You were never
going to change the world with a cartoon be-
cause you aren’t us ben. But we changed your
world didn’t we ben?”* —Anonymous

“He is nothing without us.” —Anonymous

“Maybe Ben should get a real job like being a Wal-Mart greeter instead of thinking he could make a living off of some MSPAINT tier hate speech doodles.” —Anonymous

“I used to feel a little sorry for this Ben Garrison guy, but if he believes this shit then fuck him.”
—Anonymous

“I’m honestly surprised old benny boy has lasted this long without hanging himself. Who knows, maybe his libertarian paradise awaits him on the other side.” —Anonymous

“Cartoonists do not change society. Ben Garrison was nothing but a two bit doodle artist, and nothing he has ever penned could be considered hard hitting.” —Anonymous

*“The only way Ben can escape this is with a legal
—name change and cosmetic surgery.”*

—Anonymous

*“So it seems that Fake Ben has officially moved
on from being a dumbass lol cow to being an out-
right scumbag. Not only is he defensive of fags,
but he’s also a feminist and openly pro-SJW.”*

—Anonymous

*“His life is completely ruined but it’s so hilari-
ous.”* —Anonymous

*“Ben Garrison is an ignorant fuck faced freak. I
hope a Jew sets him on fire, puts him out and
then throws him in acid. [It] would be hilarious.”*

—Anonymous

*“Ben Garrison is a old crazy man who’s just go-
ing to blame everything on whatever seems con-
venient, like most conspiracy nuts.”*

—Anonymous

“Ben Garrison is unfunny. To be a cartoonist, you need to be funny.” —Anonymous

“Ben Garrison perpetrated this whole meme himself and he’s really a modern version of comedic genius madman Andy Kaufmann.”
—Anonymous

“Kill yourself.” —Anonymous



My most popular cartoon was also drawn in the least
amount of time.

I dashed it out in about three hours.



The grrrgraphics.com watchdog

PROLOGUE

In 2008, the big banks were bailed out.

Like many Americans, I was outraged. We angry citizens wrote our senators and congressmen and demanded our representatives vote "NO!" We were ignored as most of the politicians voted yes anyway. One of my senators at the time, Patty Murray, made a condescending statement to us voters. She admonished citizens, saying, "Eat

your vegetables!” This kind of contempt toward voters made me even angrier.

I decided to do something about it. To illustrate the corruption, I began drawing editorial cartoons in 2009. I wanted to become a citizen journalist—a muckraker. At first my cartoons were a big success. I needed neither marketing nor a publisher. Thanks to the Internet, some of my cartoons were seen by millions of people from around the world.

Then the trolls showed up. I had unwittingly snapped a wet towel on the butt of a merciless lion of hate. I didn’t realize I was about to become the most trolled cartoonist in the world.

Friends, family, and acquaintances have all informed me that it’s my *own fault* for poking a stick at a hornets’ nest. They said I should have ignored them. Only I didn’t poke a stick at anything. The hornets spewed from their hives of enmity and began stinging without provocation.

They attacked not only me, but also my family. They targeted my business. Hackers were encouraged to target my email, Facebook, and PayPal accounts. They even defaced my fine art. Ignoring the trolls is a strategy that hasn't worked for me and neither has it worked for many who are bullied by them.

Trolling has always been a problem on the Internet . . . and it's growing worse. Cyberbullies are a more virulent type of troll and derive pleasure from attacking people online whom they don't even know. Hate speech and impersonation plague social media. Trolls create spiteful memes that, with endless repetition, can go so far as to sway young minds into actually believing it might be okay to murder people. These hateful memes permeate social media. The irresponsible trolls have created conditions that will likely tempt government to step in and end anonymous free speech altogether.

I am a humble artist with limited means. Unlike ~~mainstream media cartoonists who have access~~ to big shot lawyers, I've had to combat the harassment mostly by myself. I did seek advice from several attorneys. The first one gave me a free consultation and informed me that I could not sue sites such as Facebook because of their ironclad disclaimers. I'd have to go after the anonymous perpetrators instead, I was advised, which would be costly and difficult. Basically, he told me that nothing could be done. I coughed up a lot of money and hired a second lawyer. His contract stated that he promised no results and I received none. He eventually returned my money after informing me that such cases are very expensive and time consuming. Most likely there would be little chance of compensation should the case be won. I have not given up on pursuing a case, because to me it's more about justice than obtaining money.

I paid for a consultation with a third lawyer. She flatly told me that nothing could be done

without spending a fortune because Internet libel is the Achilles' heel of lawyers. She advised me to launch a PR blitz that might include writing a book. She thought it might help clear my name. Here is that book.

I'd like to thank all of those who have helped me along this journey. Many strangers have written to offer help, encouragement, and suggestions. One young man even wanted to send me money to help with legal expenses. I couldn't accept the offer because he was in college and struggling to make ends meet, but I was touched by it and by his concern. I appreciate the few bucks that strangers have contributed via my cartoon site, which includes a "donate" button. Fellow libertarians have also helped out. One was a cyber investigator who expertly tracked down several of the most brazenly offensive trolls. The difficulty lay in proving that they were the ones anonymously posting the libel.

I want to thank all the people who have helped me remove libel from Facebook. Some are Jewish. I know they probably don't agree with my politics, but they have been tireless in their reporting efforts, regardless. They are some of the smartest and kindest people I've met, and I have come to experience firsthand the kind of hate and bigotry they've faced all of their lives.

I'd like to convey a special thanks to Chae, who had the courage to write me to bring to my attention a Facebook impersonation page that had stolen my cartoons and photos, all of which were defaced into hate. The perpetrators claimed it was the "official" Ben Garrison page, and they made me appear as a Nazi white supremacist. I didn't even know it existed and was stunned to notice it had amassed nearly 1,000 "Likes." They had placed a photo of my smiling face next to words calling for the death of Jews and African-Americans. I looked with horror at my very own signature that was brazenly pasted at the end of the threat. Chae didn't know for sure if I really was

“Zykon Ben” or not and she was happy to hear that no, I was indeed not that vile troll creation.

When I saw the outrageous libel on Facebook, it marked the point where I decided to stop ignoring the trolls. Since removing that first fraudulent page, many more Facebook pages sprung up impersonating me, and Chae has helped remove each and every one. She’s spent countless hours working tirelessly to remove imposter pages from Facebook.

I especially want to thank my mom, who held the family together. She’s a musician, a fine artist, and a quintessential optimist. She requested that I not put her in my book, but I’m going to rebel and mention her in the prologue at least.

Finally, I’d like to thank my wife Tina. I’ve wanted to give up countless times, but she has always been there to encourage me. She has helped my art career tremendously. She spends a great deal of time monitoring and posting on the

GrrrGraphics.com WordPress blog as well as our authentic Facebook pages. Despite the rocky roads and many years of marriage, she still wants to keep me around for some reason. I'm a lucky man.

—Ben Garrison

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A CITIZEN MUCKRAKER



Everyone has a talent. Everyone can speak out (or squeak out) and do something.

Become a citizen muckraker!

“You can’t fight city hall.”

This was the comment my gray-haired father made in reply to my rambling complaint about the red light cameras popping up all over Seattle. I received a ticket in the mail because I had apparently not waited an adequate amount of time before making a right turn. It didn’t matter that I made a full stop and looked carefully before making that turn. As was his habit, my surly dad said nothing as I prattled on about my situation. I wanted to tear the ticket up. I wanted to complain to my accuser, but the company that manufactured the devices was located in Cincinnati. I had no choice but to pay. Otherwise, city government operatives would begin harassing me. Still, I was considering tearing the thing up and not paying. How could they prove I was

driving the car? What if all citizens got together and stopped paying?

“You can’t fight city hall,” grumbled my dad. I should have expected his gruff retort. Unsympathetic verbal backhands were his specialty. There would be no debate. Dad never debated anything. Very few conversations with my dad were pleasant and this one had just come to an abrupt end.

Nevertheless, his clichéd answer annoyed me for a long, long time. I was there when he died of cancer about a year later. He had been in a coma for days . . . no more conversations. I was playing Scrabble® with mom when he suddenly stopped breathing. Later, I thought of the last conversations I had had with him and what stood out the most was his cliché. I kept thinking, why *can’t* we fight city hall? Surely something can be done besides voting. Why can’t we change injustice and end corruption? After all, politicians are people, not mountains to be moved or weather to

be changed. It's not like I wanted to yell at rain clouds. ~~There had to be some sort of effective avenue of protest.~~ When did the red light cameras begin springing up? I didn't recall voting for them. What could I do about it now? Protest signs? I'd be ignored. Spray paint over the cameras in the middle of the night? I'd probably get arrested. Write letters to the city council? I didn't even know who they were.

I decided to pay the damn red light ticket even though I knew it constituted nothing but another unjust form of revenue collection. To prevent it from happening again, I purchased license plate covers, plastic things with swirls to deflect the light flashing from the cameras. The ticket cameras would only pick up glare. I never received another ticket. I did receive some queries along the lines of "Are they legal?" and "Aren't you afraid you'll get in trouble?" People's fear of the state increases continually as years go by. What, we're not supposed to push back? Not even in the face of open corruption? How has this

fear of the state become so pervasive in the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave? Perhaps it happened because people—including me—weren't paying enough attention. Too many citizens have failed to pay attention for a long time, and the great cost has become evident. We've paid the price in fees, fines, taxes, and lost liberties.

In the not-too-distant past, investigative journalists rang alarm bells continually, revealing corruption and ensuring public officials who committed crimes either resigned or went to jail. Nowadays very little is done. Billions of dollars are lost or stolen by our government. The president can execute citizens without due process. Votes are lost or changed. The IRS confiscates wealth from Americans who are guilty until proven financially innocent. The IRS even harasses those who speak out against government corruption. The targeted audits are illegal, but astoundingly the IRS receives no punishment.

Americans are spied upon without proper warrants by government agencies. Lobbyists bribe Congress. Congress changes laws so they can enrich themselves. For example, federal legislators can now conduct insider trading with impunity. Corporate welfare continues on a massive scale while small businesses are harassed and shut down. Police steal from citizens, murdering some outright without consequence. Presidents lie to start wars and Americans die.

And what happens? Nothing. No impeachment. No resignations. No jail time for those in charge, all of which constitute signs of corruption far advanced. Regular citizens sure do serve jail time, though. We have by far the largest prison population per capita in the world. Too many African-Americans are arrested and made to work in corporate-run prisons. It's in the best interest of the for-profit prisons to dole out lengthy sentences. It's a new form of slavery.

The formerly trusted “mainstream media” are now ~~neither mainstream nor trusted~~. They have become global corporate mouthpieces, owned by corporations for corporations. The mainstream media (MSM) no longer alerts us to the problems or engages in serious investigative journalism. Instead we’re distracted with celebrity gossip and fluff. The MSM have become part of the problem.

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