

Political Cartoons and Graphic Novels:  
A Study of Political and Social Commentary in Comics

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## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	P. 1
Methodology.....	P. 3
Literature Review.....	P. 4
Chapter 1: Cartooning and Its History.....	P. 6
Chapter 2: The Importance of Editorial Cartoons and Graphic Novels.....	P. 8
Chapter 3: Investigating Graphic Novels with Political Themes.....	P. 12
Chapter 4: Fieldwork.....	P. 19
“Geraldo Rivera vs. the Swine Flu” by Josh Mauser.....	P. 20
“Get an Abortion” by Daniella Orihuela-Gruber & Annaliese Christman....	P. 26
“Doug Hardie’s Revolution” by Daniella Orihuela-Gruber.....	P. 29
“TEA Party” by Cali Mica.....	P. 33
“Dragon in the Bear Market” by Tamar Curry.....	P. 36
“Swine Flu” by Daniella Orihuela-Gruber.....	P. 45
“A Foot in the Door” by Phyllis Douglas.....	P. 48
“The Communist Flag Incident” by Daniella Orihuela-Gruber.....	P. 52
Conclusion: Political and Social Commentary in Graphic Novels.....	P. 58
Bibliography.....	P. 59

## Illustrations

“Geraldo River vs. the Swine Flu” by Josh Mauser.....	P. 25
“Get an Abortion” by Daniella Orihuela-Gruber and Annaliese Christman.....	P. 28
“Doug Hardie’s Revolution” by Daniella Orihuela-Gruber.....	P. 32
“TEA Party” by Cali Mica.....	P. 35
“Dragon in the Bear Market” by Tamar Curry.....	P. 44
“Swine Flu” by Daniella Orihuela-Gruber.....	P. 46
“A Foot in the Door” by Phyllis Douglas.....	P. 51
“The Communist Flag Incident” by Daniella Orihuela-Gruber.....	P. 57

## Introduction:

It is clear to those who study art that it reflects the events and feelings of society of the time and those of the artist as well. Art often takes on the job of illustrating many different important aspects of life during when it was created. It can do everything from educate the viewer on the influential politics at the time to what shoes the fashionable upper class ladies are wearing. In the same vein, political cartoons do the same on a much more regular basis than that of the first caveman painters. They are able to do so, not only in a visual format, but in a verbal one as well, by being able to show a snippet of public opinion through a small conversation within the cartoon or through the careful use of labels placed on the cartoon's subjects.

The simple illustration eventually changed into the multi-panel strip, allowing for a story to emerge behind the political cartoon and develop both visually and verbally. Wide spread publication helped that the cartoon reached wide spread audiences across the country. Political cartoons of this nature even litter modern day textbooks and other educational materials, where they are used as an illustrated primary source of a time period.

Then, the medium of political cartoon takes a step further into comic books, or graphic novels as they are called now. Comic books allow for the stories and visuals to be continued to provide a more complex story than a comic strip in a newspaper would allow, even if the comic book's story is only a few pages long. And although many early popular comic books dealt largely with fantasy or superheroes, it wasn't long before the limits of graphic novels were only tested by the imaginations of their creators. The medium was used early on for conveying political messages, particularly those of



patriotic and nationalistic natures, but now it thrives with political expression from all angles.

With the popularity of graphic novels in mainstream media, even those who do not read the comic book are often those who go to see a movie version. With that kind of widespread popularity, comic books could very effectively be utilized to further the socio-political functions of their predecessors. Graphic novels are often seen taking a sort of long editorial stance on the issues that the creator feels the need to comment on or are personally connected to, therefore it should be possible for a graphic novel to take on political and social controversies and cover these issues much like opinion-editorial journalism would.

There are definite drawbacks to using comic books as a medium to convey socio-political opinions. First, is that of timeliness. It is important in news media culture to stay as up to date as possible while covering a story. Another drawback is the definite bias seen in comic books of political nature. This is important in journalism as well, but journalism allows political cartoons to run, so there is an accepted basis of comics as a biased medium.

## Methodology:

This experiment was conducted through research of political cartoon, comic book and graphic novel history and through reading and questioning of modern graphic novels that include political and social commentary.

By taking into account world history and political and social commentary found in comics, it was possible to analyze the purpose of such commentary and how the purpose and ways of communicating that commentary have changed. Using what was learned from this analysis, a line of questions were created to analyze the way comic book creators in the last 30 years have illustrated their opinions. The answers to these questions were also compared to the other books analyzed.

In order to get a fresh sampling of how creators would portray political and social commentary, the comic anthology was undertaken by volunteers who had complete \ creative freedom aside from having to include political and social commentary about a relevant issue in Spring 2009.

## Literature Review:

*“Like other journalists, editorial cartoonists follow and interpret campaigns for the public. Like columnists, cartoonists openly praise or condemn candidates and campaigns. But the power of pictures sets cartoonists apart from other editorialists.”* (E. H Buell Jr., M Maus – PS: Political Science and Politics, 1988 – American Political Science Association)

The purpose of this project is to show the impact and validity behind the political cartooning, especially through the political graphic novel. This statement summarizes the way political cartoons and graphic novels function similarly to journalistic methods and still stand in a different place from traditional political coverage. The same is true of other areas that media outlets cover.

Cartooning brings a controlled and precise visual interpretation of any issue that it wants to bring to life that the more candid form of photography cannot always capture. This is enhanced in longer graphic novel format by the storytelling involved with creating comics and not cartoons consisting of single strips or a few panels in a row, which limits the stories that are able to be told. Perhaps political and editorial cartooning can benefit from the simplicity of one image and a few words, but there is intrinsic value in telling a story in a larger space.

*“Historic and recent examples demonstrate the continued ability of the political cartoon to draw attention, spark controversy, and trouble leaders across the globe. Exploring the rise of new media alternatives... stresses that the fate of the political cartoon has never been, nor need be, bound to that of a newspaper.”* (I Danjoux – PS: Political Science & Politics, 2007 – American Political Science Association)

Here it is explained how political cartoons have more power than most give them credit for. Decades and centuries later, political cartoons are the things that have illustrated the life and sentiments of peoples past and it is clear that today, not even the bounds of distance can keep a political cartoon from reaching people across the globe.

At its base, cartooning is a medium that can be done wherever a mark can be made, whether it's pen on paper, digital or graffiti on a wall. This therefore makes it accessible to everyone and every issue they feel the need to express. The internet makes it easy to share these expressions with a very large audience, sometimes even more than that of a newspaper and more diverse as well. While online comics are drawn in many different ways and styles, it is still possible to imbed political meaning into even the most fantastical stories, much like how Golden Era superhero comics were often used as subtle methods of propaganda to fight off the evils of Nazism or communism that from inside the story line of the patriotic, American superhero.

If current political and social commentary can even be imbedded in fictional stories, then graphic novels have certainly already established themselves as a viable medium for political cartooning and not just light-hearted stories for those who want only entertainment. The graphic novel is capable of such things as educating and informing people of the current news and is a powerful form of entertainment as well.

## Chapter 1: Cartooning and Its History

The graphic novel is well established as a versatile medium, capable of standing up to the rigors thought up by its creators. *Time Magazine* describes the graphic novel as “a book-length comic book with ambitions above its station” in its list of the 100 All-Time Best Novels.<sup>1</sup> The praise is specifically for the influential “Watchmen,” most recently made famous by a movie version. In its All-Time Best Graphic Novels list, *Time* lists the graphic novel as a “grave moniker”<sup>2</sup> that gets applied to any extended form of comics, including non-fiction and short story collections. Seven out of the ten graphic novels listed utilize pop culture and societal, political or personal issues in their stories. Other websites describe the graphic novel in similarly ambiguous terms and it is just as unclear when the first graphic novel was published as many comics of similar format were published under a variety of names.

Editorial cartoons, or political cartoons, debatably go back to the days of Leonardo da Vinci, but the first established political cartoon is the famous image of “Join or Die” by Benjamin Franklin at the time of the American Revolution. Since then, political cartoons have become a staple in newspapers across the globe, evolving from single panel illustrations, which are still used, to strips in order to create a set up for a joke or another scenario. The medium is so popular, that a Pulitzer has been given out to the best political cartoonist of the past year since 1922, only five years after the inception of the award.

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<sup>1</sup> "Watchmen - ALL-TIME 100 Novels - TIME." Breaking News, Analysis, Politics, Blogs, News Photos, Video, Tech Reviews - TIME.com. Time Inc. 12 May 2009  
<<http://www.time.com/time/2005/100books/0,24459,watchmen,00.html>>.

<sup>2</sup> "Graphical Novels - ALL-TIME 100 Novels - TIME." Breaking News, Analysis, Politics, Blogs, News Photos, Video, Tech Reviews - TIME.com. Time Inc. 12 May 2009  
<[http://www.time.com/time/2005/100books/0,24459,graphic\\_novels,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/2005/100books/0,24459,graphic_novels,00.html)>.

In the broadest sense, comics are illustrations, most often drawn in caricature. Usually, they are a series of illustrations put together to form a sequential narrative, but as established above, a single panel comic is still effective and can still form a story line. The history of comics, using this definition, is therefore very long and more familiar than most might think. Art dating back to cave paintings could be seen as a sequential narrative. In fact, it is often said that Japanese comics are not derived from a Post-World War II need for expression, but from the woodblock print and painting style created centuries earlier.<sup>3</sup>

It is therefore understandable why graphic novels and political cartoons are so vaguely defined. There is no easy way to define art, let alone comics themselves, or to pinpoint where either came from, other than from the depths of human ability. Therefore, all forms of comics, like other art forms, are left up to the minds of those who create them and a tool for whatever they want to express.

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<sup>3</sup> Perkins, Jennifer D. Google. 8 May 2009  
<[http://74.125.155.132/search?q=cache:D2M4gQf90cYJ:www.ceas.ku.edu/uploads/Dixon-Perkins\\_Ukiyo-E%2520Prints\\_01.doc+ukiyo-e+and+manga&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&client=firefox-a](http://74.125.155.132/search?q=cache:D2M4gQf90cYJ:www.ceas.ku.edu/uploads/Dixon-Perkins_Ukiyo-E%2520Prints_01.doc+ukiyo-e+and+manga&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&client=firefox-a)>.

## Chapter 2: The Importance of Editorial Cartoons and Graphic Novels

The most important thing about political cartooning is how it reflects public opinion. While no one shares the exact same opinions on everything, for one particular issue, a large amount of people can be united in thinking.

The creator is writing specifically to reflect popular public opinion in a humorous or informative way. It is not just the creator that experiences and interprets an event and it is not just their opinion that comes into play, but the truth behind a situation and why it is important to draw about. This is probably why there are many methods to the composition of an editorial cartoon. Depending on the situation, the cartoon could be grave, comical or satirical and still convey the feeling that the audience has experienced along with the creator. It does not hinder the message of the comic to parody a more frivolous, commonly known social event with the serious dealings of politics. In fact, the more social meaning tied into an editorial cartoon makes it riper than your typical Sunday paper's funny pages.

Another thing that an editorial cartoon can do is influence public opinion and inform the people on a particular topic. If it were not so, historians would not look to editorial cartoons as much as they do and their importance would be obsolete and largely unrecognized. Considering how successful editorial cartoons and comics are, it is easy to see that they have more common value than that.

If nothing else, editorial cartoons show people who to point the finger at. While Using a scapegoat is not the most honorable use of the medium, it is still common for the public to choose a side when it comes to an issue. The artist may take part in placing the blame on a specific person or thing within the comic, but since a cartoon will still be

interpreted differently than the artist's personal opinion, it's not entirely the artist's fault when their work is viewed differently.

But editorial cartoons definitely influence the public in many different ways. They are passed around in emails to friends and in some cases are controversial enough to cause riots like the ones printed in Denmark that depicted the prophet Mohammed, much to the chagrin of the Muslim population.<sup>4</sup> Editorial cartoons are also used as a form of propaganda to influence public opinion. This is especially popular in radical regimes, such as Nazi Germany, and in other radicalized issues such as race relations, where a subject can be easily caricatured in a demeaning manner.<sup>5</sup> While this method has mainly been used in the past, it is still possible that oppressive governments and other highly prejudiced organizations are creating cartoons and comics that are extremely biased and could be considered propaganda.

Still, whatever unwholesome factors might come into play in cartooning, it does not change their historical significance. Even if an editorial cartoon is completely immoral and prejudiced, it can be used as a historical tool for later generations to see what the attitudes of the time were like, as can a cartoon from the side that is historically "right" in its thinking. Thus, even the most controversial cartoons retain the utmost historical importance by literally illustrating public opinion at the time and as well as being part of it.

Graphic novels are similarly important because they are often infused with

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<sup>4</sup> "BBC NEWS | Europe | Muhammad cartoon row intensifies." BBC NEWS | News Front Page. BBC NEWS. 12 Apr. 2009 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4670370.stm>>.

<sup>5</sup> "Nazi Propaganda (1933-1945)." Calvin College - Distinctively Christian, Academically Excellent, Always Reforming. 24 Apr. 2009 <<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/ww2era.htm>>.



political and pop culture from the imagery to the themes of the comic in the time that it was published. While this is not true for all comics, especially those who deal with settings that are outside the world as we know it, it is still likely that most comics portray common social standards of the time in which they were made in. It was especially common during the Golden Age of comics that semi-fantastical stories involving super heroes were used to promote nationalistic feelings, especially against Axis powers in World War II.<sup>6</sup> This era is one of the clearest examples of fantastical comics being used on a regular basis to promote opinion on real world issues.

With a move toward realism in comics later in the century, less fantastical stories are seen and more auto-biographical experiences are being published. These auto-biographical comics, or semi- realistic ones as is also the case in comics still dealing with elements of the fantastical, deal with social and political views more directly and more personally than before. Often times, in the Golden Age, the superheroes who protected society against the evils of the Axis powers were never opposed in comics because the enemy was evil and that was that. Now there is a wide range of comics that deal with many different viewpoints and to mention topics, and occasionally readers get to see more than one side of the comic book villains.

These auto-biographical comics deal with personal opinion. They do not seek to propagandize their readers, merely to inform or educate on a certain topic through their own experiences or merely to share those experiences because they are meaningful to the creator. Obviously these kinds of comics are still heavily biased, but it is not bias with intent to negatively change public opinion as before. The intent only to express and share

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<sup>6</sup> Ness, Alex. "STL COMICS - Thoughts From the Land of Frost - "Fighting the Wars With Four Color Comics" by ALEX NESS." Stl Comics. 24 Apr. 2009 <<http://stlcomics.com/columns/tftlof/1/>>.

is there. Perhaps this is because creating comics for a living is not quite as lucrative as before when comics were a mainstream form of entertainment or a relaxing of attitudes on public expression, but it certainly allows for less propaganda all around and less threatening personal bias. It is best to assume that there is always bias in comics and to recognize the comic as a forum of personal opinion like an editorial column and not objective news reporting that is subversively trying to lead the reader astray.

Timeliness and relevance is also an issue. Can issues be covered in the same manner as by editorial cartoons if the production time for graphic novels is so much longer? Will they still hold the same significance if published after a big media fuss is over? The best answer is to not cater to these problems and instead produce comics on issues that are longer term problems and not rapidly changing issues that would end before much more than a page could be drawn. If larger issues are the focus, such as the battles with legalizing gay marriage or the recent recession that has hit the United States, then it is possible to cover these problems over many pages and be relatively timely and relevant. How fast these kinds of comics can be produced mostly depends on the artist doing them.

## Chapter 3: Investigating Graphic Novels with Political Themes

Is it possible to study a creative work like it is a science project with definite results? Not in the same exacting scientific manner, but it is still possible to assess whether a graphic novel possesses the ability to effectively convey political and social themes. The following questions are an attempt to do so in the most scientific manner possible.

### Guidelines for Assessing Political Graphic Novels:

#### General Questions:

- What type of graphic novel is it? (Fantasy, Realistic, Semi-realistic)
- When was the graphic novel first published? How is this relevant to the issues covered in the graphic novel?
- What is the graphic novel's setting? How is this relevant?

#### Questions About Visual Elements:

- Are there any visual references to political and social issues in the graphic novel's setting? Are these blatant or subtle? How often are these references made? How are they relevant to the issues being covered?
- Are there any visual references to political and social issues in the graphic novel's art? Are these blatant or subtle? How often are these references made? How are they relevant to the issues being covered?

#### Questions About Story Elements:

- Are there any written references to political or social issues in the graphic novel's dialogue? Are they blatant or subtle? How often are these references made? How are they relevant to the issues being covered?
- Are there any written references to political or social issues in the graphic novel's narration? Are these blatant or subtle? How often are these references made? How are they relevant to the issues being covered?

#### Questions About Informational Elements:

- Does the graphic novel explain or put into context any political and social issues into the graphic novel's major storyline?
- If the graphic novel is fantasy-related, do the political and social issues addressed follow closely to political and social issues in the time in which it was published?
- Are these issues still relevant today?

#### Questions About Mass Exposure:

- Has this graphic novel been read by a large number of people?

- Has this graphic novel's exposure been expanded due to adaption into other media?

"Y the Last Man" volume 1 by Brian K. Vaughan and Pia Guerra<sup>7</sup>

"Y the Last Man" is a semi-realistic comic set mostly in America. It departs from complete realism because of the main story arch where all of the males of every species on the planet

dying out, except for one man and his male capuchin monkey. It was first published in 2003, so the events of 9-11 could have an influence on the comic. There are certainly references to other terrorism issues faced by the American public since 9-11, such as gas attacks and anthrax scares.

Comic plunges straight into a large amount visual and written references to political and social issues as there are major connections of the characters to politics, militaries and their conflicts, government agencies and issues such as cloning and radical feminism. The main character himself is the son of a congressional representative (female), and secondary characters include Israeli soldiers, agents of secret government organizations, a doctor who specializes in cloning research and other politicians and government workers.

Most of this makes the imagery and written references rather blatant, but more subtle prods at other issues are also made, such as the behavior of one of the Israeli soldiers, which suggests that the Israeli military is overly violent. More obvious jabs at personal opinions on larger issues include regular rhetoric by the characters themselves that cloning is against nature and that the radical feminists are extremely overzealous. While these prejudices are opposed by other characters, they are brought up enough to suspect that they are key issues for the author. The issues in the comic are largely still

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<sup>7</sup> Vaughan, Brian K. "Y the Last Man." Cartoon. New York: DC Comics, 2002.

relevant as the U.S. still deals with conflicts over biological and nuclear weapons, the ethics behind scientific research, equal rights for women as well as many other groups, and political problems like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

As for the exposure of this comic, it has definitely been read by a significant number of people and has been the recipient of Hugo and Eisner awards, some of the most prominent awards given in the comic book industry. There is also a movie version in the planning and pre-production stages, which would ensure much more exposure in the future.

“Watchmen” by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons<sup>8</sup>

“Watchmen” is a semi-realistic comic, but it departs further from realism than “Y the Last Man” does. Although the premise of “Y the Last Man” is very unrealistic, “Watchmen” features extremely unrealistic superheroes and other events, such as a dictatorship by Richard Nixon. While it remains firmly planted in the real world and criticizes actions of the real world, it is just as much a commentary on superhero comics as well as politics and social happenings. It was first published in 1986 and focuses mainly on Cold War politics, although back story has also allowed it to cover World War II, the creation of the Atom Bomb and the Vietnam War, although it rewrites most of it to create a familiar but alternate history. Its setting is largely in America, which is the source of many of the targets of criticism come from, but there are some other settings as well.

Visual representations of political and social themes are ripe within the setting and the art and often times these representations are used to connect pieces of the plot or

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<sup>8</sup> Moore, Alan, and Dave Gibbons. "Watchmen." Cartoon. New York: DC Comics, 1986.

just implant scenes strongly in the minds of readers. They are blatant and fairly common, whether it's the shadows of lovers carved out by nuclear fallout, one of many hints that nuclear war is lurking dangerously, or the "topknots," who represent rising gang violence and people's underlying prejudices. Still, it is made clear in the end, that despite sinking to terrible lows, humans try to be inherently good most of the time.

Much like the visuals, the elements of the story are chock full of political and social commentary on just about everything under the sun. Prejudice, chauvinism, feminism, Cold War tensions, war, murder and even the justification of all of human existence all come under scrutiny in "Watchmen." Nothing is really left unquestioned and this makes it one of the most powerful graphic novels to read as it creates personal debate for the reader. The creators, deliberately made the comic this way so as to highlight the strengths of the medium and to make allusions that are not always obvious to the reader in the first reading.<sup>9</sup> This purpose in mind gives the comic the ability to pull of its over-abundant amount of commentary.

Since the reader is given an extended timeline of history from about World War II to 1985, "Watchmen" does an exception job of putting its commentary in to context even when the history in the comic is changed to show how the superheroes have affected it. This is all filed through history that has become familiar to most, especially since it is recent, like the Vietnam War. This makes the alternative history a lot easier to digest for the reader, since life is still shaped by familiar events and relative normalcy. It also creates a certain amount of retained relevancy since the events covered are so imbedded into American history. It is harder to relate them to most modern issues, but criticism of

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<sup>9</sup> Eno, Vincent; El Csawza. "Vincent Eno and El Csawza meet comics megastar Alan Moore". *Strange Things Are Happening*. May/June 1988.

the American attitude is one commentary that will never cease to be timely.

No doubt “Watchmen” has been read by many people as it is widely considered one of the most influential graphic novels of all time as well as winning a Hugo award. It was also made into a movie in 2009, although the movie version largely down played the cultural commentary that is so connected with the graphic novel. While this is understandable, as it is hard to translate every last aspect of one medium into another, it still reached a large audience that had probably not read the comic until the movie’s publicity campaign or after seeing the movie.

“Persepolis” by Marjane Satrapi<sup>10</sup>

Unlike “Watchmen” and “Y the Last Man,” “Persepolis” is an auto-biographical graphic novel that is set in Iran and partially in Austria. It was first published in 2003, but the material only covers the author’s life from a very young age in the late 1970’s until she is in her mid-twenties in the early 1990’s.

While the art does not always allow for the same richness of visual commentary As “Watchmen,” the simplicity of it allows for a good deal of visual commentary to speak plainly without distracting the reader from a powerful image. Visual representations are usually direct, such as a man with a beard siding with the Islamic fundamentalists or a woman dying her hair or wearing make up to look more Western. The art relies more on expressions to convey meaning into the events of the graphic novel, and this is largely the author’s own personal reactions to what goes on around her are illustrated.

A lot more is said within the story and narration of “Persepolis.” Events and

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<sup>10</sup> Satrapi, Marjane. "Persepolis." Cartoon. Paris: L'Association, 2002.

experiences are explained and personal opinions of them are expressed, again with simplicity and directness. We get a line into the author's personal bias because we have known her story since childhood and this exposure helps ease the reader into the backdrop of Satrapi's opinions, even when they are at their most liberal or their most traditional. This helps us understand how she feels when she is oppressed or otherwise hindered by the Iranian government. There is also a great deal of other opinions from supporting characters, although other than her immediate family, none of these characters remain a large part of the commentary. Still, it allows for a brief inclusion of a larger pool of public opinion.

The comic is very informative in its story and its commentary. The author takes a great deal of care to explain the workings of Iranian society during her life there and the events that shape it. There is commentary on war, propaganda, sexuality, feminism and the many aspects of life that come under the scrutiny of the fundamentalists in power. It is a good informative tool this way, telling the stories of not just pure history, but of actual life in Iran. This story is still relevant because the government that Satrapi lived under while in Iran is still in power and how the Iranian government continues to oppress its citizens in the same ways is still a large issue today. It also covers a recent time period and this makes some of the larger events more relevant, as some have still continued to this day or come up again.

"Persepolis" has also been made into a movie, but unlike "Watchmen," it was not given as wide a release or as much publicity. This is largely because the graphic novel does not have as much action as "Watchmen," which enabled that movie to become a blockbuster in the style of other recently made comic book movies. This does not mean



that “Persepolis” is not widely recognized because it was critically acclaimed at the time of its release and also won a Cannes Film Festival prize. No doubt that, like “Watchmen,” more people read the graphic novel due to the movie release.

## Chapter 4: Fieldwork

Attached to this paper are examples of the researcher's and those of other volunteers attempts to create short comics with political and social commentary. These examples come in the form of scripts and completed pages made with the intent to create political and social commentary in the final product although there was not enough time to complete fully finished comics for the completion of this paper. These efforts have been put forth in the hopes of continuing the project beyond this research paper and eventually publishing a completed anthology sometime in 2009. They are attached with the permission of all of the writers and artists and the creators retain their rights to the materials allowed to be included in this project.

### **Contributors:**

Josh Mauser: Writer and Artist of "Geraldo Rivera vs. the Swine Flu."

Annaliese Christman: Artist of "Get an Abortion."

Tamar Curry: Writer and Artist of "Dragon in the Bear Market."

Phyllis Douglas: Writer and Artist of "A Foot in the Door."

Cali Mica: Writer and Artist of "TEA Party."

Without the volunteered effort of the above, the actual experiment of whether or not political and social commentary can exist in graphic novels could not have taken place.

## **Geraldo Rivera vs. the Swine Flu (working title)**

### **A Short Comic Story by Josh Mauser**

**Page 1:** Perote, Mexico. A woman is attending to her sick husband, a pig farmer when something terrible happens.

**Panel 1:** Exterior establishing pig farm.

Caption: La Gloria, Mexico

Husband: Grroooooaannn!

Wife: Try to relax, mi carino, I am here for you now.

**Panel 2:** Interior, man laying in bed, his face contorted and sweat pouring off his brow.

Wife kneeling beside him laying cool towel on his forehead.

Husband: My sweet Esmeralda, I feel just terrible...The pigs...I think they might....\*cough\*

Esmeralda: Shh, just be still. Does this help?

**Panel 3:** The husband begins to convulse wildly.

Husband: AA-AAACK!

Esmeralda: Paco, I can't...I don't know what is happening!! What is wrong!

**Panel 4-5:** The husband undergoes a hideous transformation, developing more pig-like features.

**Panel 6:** Esmeralda falls to her knees and tries to protect herself. A monstrous shadow is draped over her figure. She screams out.

Esmeralda: No! Do not come closer! UN CERDO DIABLOOO!

**Page 2:** La Gloria, Mexico. Geraldo Rivera is wrapping up an actual, credible on-location report in . He is satisfied that he seems to be on track to regaining his credibility as a reporter when a video call from Bill O'Reilly dashes his optimism.

**Panel 1:** Geraldo standing in front of news camera with child Edgar Hernandez by his side. Child is wearing boxing gloves.

Geraldo:...and as the sun sets and light fades here in La Gloria, its residents can only hope the swine flu panic fades as well, so that little Edgar here might get to make his "big ring" dreams come true.

**Panel 2:** Geraldo leaning down, signing one of Edgar's boxing gloves.

Geraldo: There you go, tigre.

Edgar: (shocked) You...signed over Oscar's autograph!

Geraldo: Ah ha haa...I'm Geraldo Rivera, from La Gloria, Mexico./ Goodnight, America!

**Panel 3:** Geraldo addressing his cameraman excitedly. Edgar running off into background sobbing.

Geraldo: Wow! It feels so *good* to use my celebrity to help these people. I tell you, it'll turn my career around!

Cameraman: Um...sure./Oh, looks like we got incoming from HQ.

Geraldo: Yes! A response already! Put it on the video chat!

**Panel 4:** Geraldo watching as Bill O'Reilly's head erupts from the video screen.

Bill: RIVERA!

Geraldo: Oh./ Hi, Bill.

Bill: Shut up! I got a bone to pick with you, nancy boy.

Geraldo: Ugh./ Fire awa-

**Panel 5:** O'Reilly fills the panel, ranting.

Bill: What's with this story angle? Rainbows and sunshine?! It's a pandemic, man, people have got to be scared!

Geraldo: (off panel) Well, it *isn't*. That was sort of my point-

Bill: To hell with your points, hippy!

**Panel 6:** Dejected Geraldo taking it all in.

Bill: (from TV) Orders from the top, moustache. Either you juice this thing up by airtime tonight, or you're gonna be out on your ass suckin' leaves outta gutters!

Geraldo: \* sigh \* Sure thing Bill. Over and out.

**Page 3:** Hospital Guadalupe, Mexico. Dr. Ignacio Malcolm is developing a vaccination to swine flu. All is by the books until Esmeralda from the first scene bursts into his office with her half pig/half husband Paco.

**Panel 1:** Dr. Malcolm peering into a microscope, poking a petri dish with tweezers.

Malcolm: Aaand, there. A few more tests and the this H1N1 flu vaccine is in the bag.

**Panel 2:** A loud THOOM from off-panel breaks his concentration.

Malcolm: What?!

**Panel 3:** Esmeralda bursts through the door and with Paco in tow.

Esmeralda: Doctor!

Malcolm: No, no, no, you people can't be in here!

Esmeralda: You have to help him, *please!*

**Panel 4:** Close-up of Paco's grotesque swine like features.

Paco: \*Grunt\*

**Panel 5:** Malcolm is stunned.

Malcolm: My god...

**Panel 6:** A short while later, Malcolm once again peering through a microscope. Esmeralda comforting Paco on a stretcher in the background.

Malcolm: This is impossible. I've...I've never seen anything like it! The strand of H1N1 influenza in your husband's blood has...mutated! It's far beyond previous cases, seemingly able to re-define his molecular structure completely!

Esmeralda: What does it all mean, doctor?

**Panel 7:** Close up of Malcolm's concern.

Malcolm: It means we have to warn them...everyone. The whole world! We've got to stop this thing./But how...

**Panel 8:** Malcolm turns to see Rivera's broadcast on a television behind him.

Geraldo (on TV): This is Geraldo Rivera from La Gloria. Good night, America!

Malcolm: That's *it!*

**Page 4:** Geraldo is wallowing in self-pity at a La Casa Gofre on a stretch of highway outside La Gloria. Malcolm eventually interrupts him with an urgent proposal.

**Panel 1:** Establishing exterior of La Casa Gofre. Media van parked out front.

Geraldo (from window): Whaaa-haa -haa \*sob\*/ \*munch munch\*

**Panel 2:** A dejected Geraldo sitting at a booth while recalling O'Reilly's warnings.

Caption: "...Juice it up..."/ "...out on your ass..."/ "...leaves outta gutters!..."

Geraldo: \*sob\* I don't want to juice it. I want my respect back!

**Panel 3:** A combination flashback of Geraldo opening Al Capone's vault.

Caption: It all started on that horrible day.

Geraldo: Outta the way, I wanna do it! Me me me!/ Get the camera ready.

**Panel 4:** The vault opens and inside is, desolation and a couple bottles.

Geraldo: Ladies and Gentlemen, there's.../...there's nothing.

**Panel 5:** A chorus of laughter fills the space around an embarrassed Geraldo.

Geraldo: \*sob\* It's not.../...funny. \*snif\*

**Panel 6:** Dr. Malcolm bursting in through the diner door, much to the surprise of Geraldo who snaps out of it.

Malcolm: Mr. Rivera! You have to come with me!

Geraldo (with waffle in mouth): Hunff?

**Panel 7:** Malcolm lays it down. Geraldo confusedly acknowledges.

Malcolm: There's something...something in the virus! The world could be in danger!/ We have to go, right now!

Geraldo: Guh?!

Malcolm: Now, right *now*! C'mon! Go go go!

Geraldo: Guh!!

**Page 5:** Malcolm, Geraldo, and his cameraman return to the hospital. Malcolm explains the virus, Geraldo agrees to do a report. But then...

**Panel 1:** Geraldo looking through microscope.

Geraldo: You weren't lying Malcolm, this thing is seriously nasty!

**Panel 2:** A view of the virus in action.

Geraldo (off panel): My god, it's hideous.../...do you really think it will spread, doctor?

**Panel 3:** Malcolm gives an elaborate analogy.

Malcolm: (will add dialog later)

**Panel 4:** Determined Geraldo motions to his cameraman.

Geraldo: Right, I'm convinced. We've got to do a live broadcast right away!/ Alphonse, ready the equipment!

**Panel 5:** Alphonse pulls a gun.

Alphonse: I'm's afraid I cant's does that's, Mr. Geraldo.

Geraldo: What is this!?

**Panel 6:** A group of silhouettes appears behind Alphonse.

Group: You see, he's with us.

**Page 6:** The silhouettes reveal themselves as agents from the Center for Disease Control. They explain their nefarious plot.

**Panel 1:** The silhouettes speak.

Geraldo: Who are you people?!

Agent 1: We are from the Center for Disease Control, Mr. Rivera. We will take the pig-man now, if you please.

Agent 2: Come quietly and no one will be harmed.

**Panel 2:** Geraldo retorts.

Geraldo: It was the CDC all along! The swine flu virus...the mutations! All those people! My god, man, why?!

**Panel 3:** The silhouettes reply.

Agent 1: Control, Mr. Rivera. Control. Just look at him, the pig-man. Hideous, isn't it?

Agent 2: An *imperfect specimen*.

**Panel 4:** Paco cowering with his wife.

Agent 1(off panel): He is the first successful mutation recorded since we unleashed the swine H1N1 strand here in Mexico

Agent 2 (off panel): ...and yet, unsuccessful, you see. His physical attributes are not developed to the level required of our/ race of *super swine*.

**Panel 5:** They continue.

Agent 1: You see, we have discovered crossed-breed swine DNA structure to be the ultimate evolution for our species.

Agent 2: The perfect race.

Agent 1: Once the entire world is infected, the people of the earth will finally unite as swine brethren, all as one. Peace, you see.

**Panel 6:** Geraldo comes back.

Geraldo: A peace built on lies will never survive! And what of the ones the virus rejects! Millions dead in the name of your bastard utopia!

Agent 1: Perfection has a price.

Agent 2: Enough of this! Give us the pig-man!/ NOW!

**Page 7:** Geraldo springs into action and escapes the clutches of the CDC. But was it *too* easy?

**Panel 1:** Geraldo's mustache twitches.

Geraldo: Never.

**Panel 2:** Geraldo dives and whips a syringe.

Geraldo: HA!

**Panel 3:** It hits Alphonse square in the forehead. He drops his gun.

Alphonse: Ughh!

**Panel 4:** Geraldo judo chops the agents and calls out to the rest of the group.

Geraldo: Hurry! We've got to make it back to the United States! They can't stop us now!

**Panel 5:** The agents keeled over as the trio flees.

Agent 2: \*cough\* We...must pursue them!

Agent 1: No! \*cough cough\* wait!

**Panel 6:** A sinister, confident tone falls over the agent. He makes a call on his phone.

Agent 1: I think we've overestimated our predicament.

Agent 2: You mean-

Agent 1: Yes...let him do his report. After all, it is...

Agent 2: ...Geraldo.

**Page 8:** Later that night on Fox News.

**Panel 1:** Bill O'Reilly opens the headlines.

Bill: Tonight on O'Reilly Factor, Geraldo Rivera weighs his thoughts on the swine flu pandemic, in a discussion I've dubbed, heh heh, "Pig Men and the Women Who Love Them"/Geraldo are you there?

**Panel 2:** A crackled video feed comes through, showing Geraldo short of breath.

Geraldo: Bill, I've uncovered something huge here in La Gloria. Swine flu is worse then we thought!

Bill: But didn't you just say in a report earlier tonight that you, quote, "hope the panic fades as well."

Geraldo: Listen for once, Bill! That was before I knew...before I knew everything!

**Panel 3:** We see that the CDC is in the wings as O'Reilly retorts.

Bill: Oh boy, here it comes.

Geraldo: Listen to me! The virus has undergone a mutation! It's affecting human beings on a molecular level! Just look at this man!

**Panel 4:** Geraldo shows off Paco.

Bill: What the heck is that thing?

Geraldo: This was once a man! The new H1N1 mutation altered his genetic-

Bill: Oh please, I can see the mask lines from here, moustache!

**Panel 5:** O'Reilly scoffs.

Geraldo: Don't pretend this isn't a problem, Bill! This a huge consp-

Bill: This stinks worse than that Al Capone vault disaster, Rivera! I'm insulted!

**Panel 6:** Geraldo gets cut off.

Geraldo: That was like 20 years ag-

Bill: Oops, seems we've lost the feed. /There you have it folks, pig-man conspiracies...We'll try to ring in Geraldo's leash, right after this.

**Panel 7:** Cut to a guy on a chair watching TV.

Guy: Man/ Geraldo's so full of shit.

THE END.





Get an Abortion  
By Daniella Orihuela-Gruber

Page 1

Panel 1: A girl (15) holds her stomach. Her eyes are closed and she is floating in a spectral background in her underwear.

Thought bubble: Oh no.

Panel 2: She begins to cry.

Thought bubble: I'm pregnant.

Panel 3: Thought bubbles surround the girl.

Thoughts in no particular order, but the underlined one should be bolded: Is it too late for Plan B? Why did I sleep with him so soon? What do I do? How am I going to tell him? My parents are going to kill me! I'll get kicked out of school! Should I get an abortion?

Page 2:

Panel 1: The crying girl puts down a pregnancy test. She is in a public restroom.

Panel 2: Outside, she calls someone. It is getting late in the day.

Girl: I need to see you.

Panel 3: An older boy approaches the girl, who is sitting on a bench. We do not see his face.

Boy: Hey.

Panel 4: The girl looks up and begins to cry again.

Girl: I'm pregnant.

Panel 5: The boy shrugs.

Boy: Then get an abortion.

Panel 6: The girl looks shocked and hurt as the boy quickly walks away.

Page 3:

Panel 1: The girl talks with her friend at school. They are huddled in a quiet corner.

Girl: He was so cold to me!

Friend: He's a jerk. Don't listen to him, you shouldn't get an abortion.

Panel 2: The girl is surprised.

Girl: But how am I going to take care of a baby? How am I going to even tell my parents?

Panel 3: The friend puts an arm around the girl, but the girl looks skeptical and confused.

Friend: God will find a way. He will forgive you as long as you don't kill what is His.

Page 4:

Panel 1: The girl walks up to an abortion clinic. There are protesters outside, who harass her loudly.

Panel 2: The girl steps inside.

Panel 3: The receptionist smiles. The place is clean and she looks very motherly.

Receptionist: They didn't hurt you, did they?

Panel 4: The girl shakes her head.

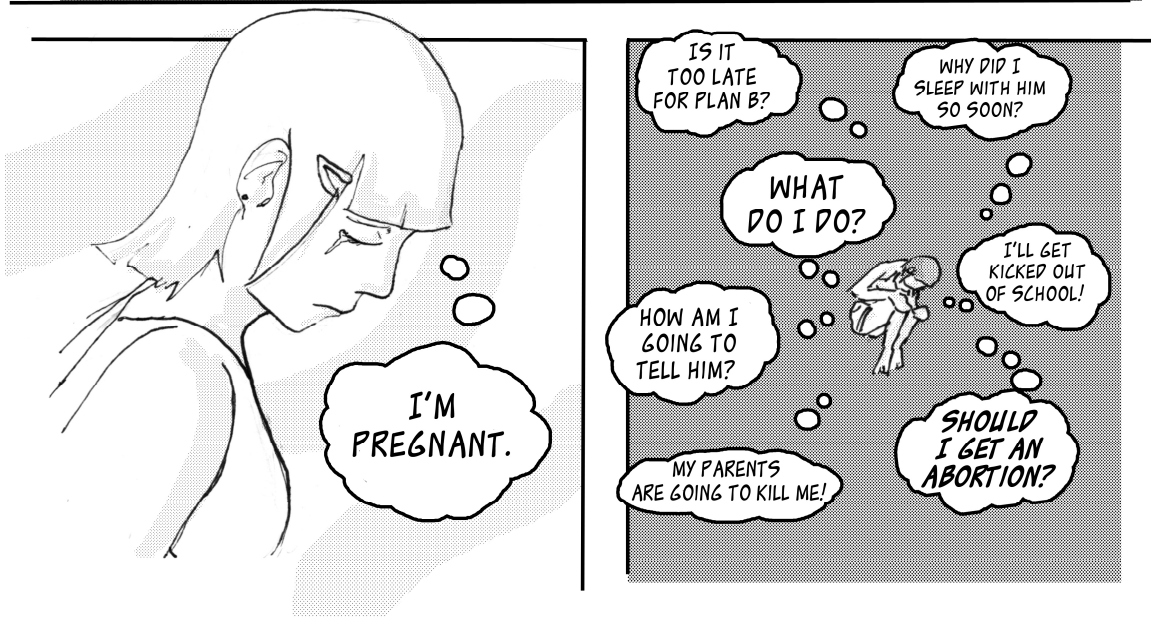
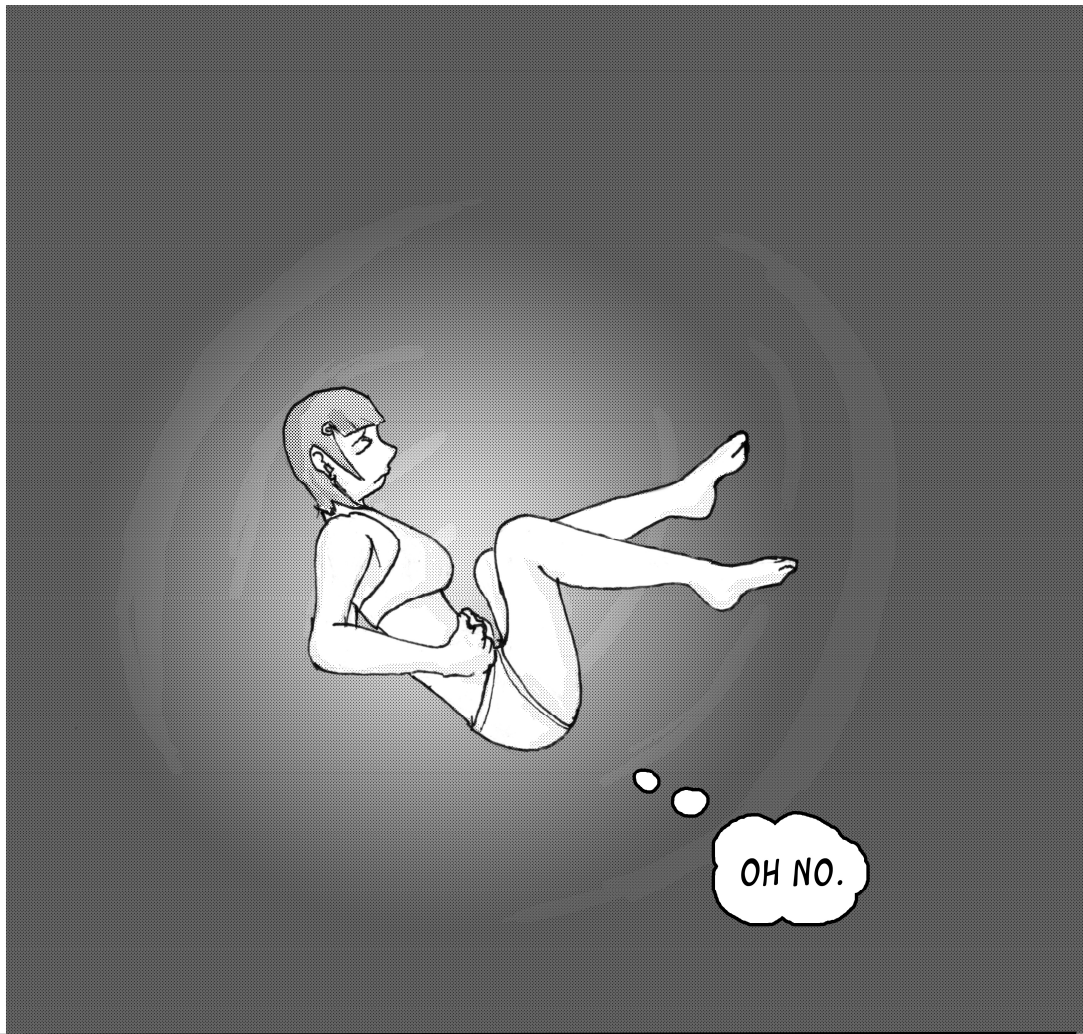
Girl: They were just upset.

Panel 5: The receptionist holds her head in her hand and continues to smile. The girl smiles back.

Receptionist: That's good. How can I help you?

Girl: I'd really just like to ask some questions.

End.



Doug Hardie's Revolution  
By Daniella Orihuela-Gruber

Page 1: Newscaster (male, older middle-aged) talks about a small uprising started by a grassroots leader (Doug Hardie) after the May 15, 2009 tea party protests. Doug is a middle-aged accountant with a soft spoken demeanor. The newscaster emphasizes this and hands off the interview to a field correspondent. correspondent (female, early 30's) emphasizes how unlikely it is for Doug Hardie's philosophy to have become so popular in a nation of vastly divided opinions.

Page 2: She chronicles the uprising's start from a local tea party protest to an impromptu speaking tour at political clubs nationwide and how everyone seems to agree with his ideas.

Page 3: Interview begins. Doug is not smiling, but slightly cheerful in demeanor and very soft spoken even when making a point. The interview begins with a question on how his ideas came to light. He emphasizes how he's surprised that his ideas have become so popular.

Page 4: The interview (it is obvious that we have not seen all of it) ends and the newscaster ends the segment. In another scene, a man (late 30s-mid 40s), turns off a TV while smiling at Doug. They talk about his success briefly. The man gives him a small pep talk and tells him to "get out there and slay 'em." Doug walks out to a podium and is greeted by a very large crowd. He smiles, sheepishly, embarrassed and blushing.

Page 5: Doug starts out, introducing himself as if in a personal conversation. Carefully explaining himself and his ideas. First, that the government should be trying to pinch its pennies, just like the rest of America is having to. There are wild cheers from the crowd.

Page 6: Doug explains his idea that politicians should be given regular evaluations by their governing district and that their salaries should be docked or increased based on how well they've done. ("They should be able to be fired or laid off just like the rest of us can be!") A number of the people approve loudly. He explains how there should be ways to force Congress to stop spending unnecessarily, that certain kinds of projects should be stopped in times of need for the good of people's wallets.

Page 7: Doug explains that the system of government currently in place, prevents the citizens from being able to truly touch the government beyond what few laws and politicians they get to vote in and suggests that now is the time to make the change towards a truer democracy where the people have more control on how money is spent and what gets put into the law books. We see that Doug's speech has been broadcast all across America and the world. Doug thanks everyone for their time, to deafening applause.

Page 8: A short while later, President (Obama) calls an emergency assembly to convene to decide how the nation's money should be spent to save the economy. Doug and his newly formed political party are invited to attend, as Doug has recently been named one of Obama's economic advisors. They wind up dominating the assembly with their ideas on how to create a more self-sufficient and voter-centric system, stressing how it would be beneficial to the politicians as long as efforts were made to widely educate the people on the issues they were voting on (more than the booklets sent out by the government). Doug is seen posing with important political figures for photos.

Page 9: The assembly releases a new set of laws, largely written by Doug's new party, that puts many of his ideas into effect. In a televised speech, Doug calls for the Americans to start rooting out the sources of money drains that affect the people at whole.

Page 10: This plan starts in New Mexico where large numbers of illegal immigrant children (of Mexican and Central American descent) are forced to leave public schools unless their parents were born on American soil. This spreads to other border states in the Southwest. Santa Ana, CA, which has the largest Mexican population in the U.S., is turned into a ghetto.

Page 11: People in Midwestern states turn against Arab communities who have settled there, blaming them for the money spent fighting wars in Arab countries, despite the fact that large parts of the communities are American citizens, green cards or refugees and that many were born on American soils or in countries not involved in wars in the Middle East. The sudden hatred towards Arab and Mexican/Central American immigrants is less pronounced in the major cities, but the undercurrent still flows as many of them are mistreated by the rest of society.

Page 12: The U.S. announces that it will stop giving foreign aid to many of the countries in need to focus on saving its own country from Third World conditions. There is news coverage of the rich stopping their large donations to charity and beginning to go into seclusion because their wealth is being targeted by an increase in robberies in rich neighborhoods.

Page 13: The first round of politician evaluations begins. Americans nationwide are seen reading up on politics. The White House broadcasts senators and representatives who are let go from their positions and those who have been docked pay due to poor work. State and local governments are seen doing the same. Elections are arranged to replace those who were fired.

Page 14: After a long campaigning period, meant to use the money spent on the campaigns to boost the economy, a large number of Doug's party is elected into office. They are immediately praised by the news media for hiring all their previously unemployed campaign staff on as their office staff.

Page 15: The small boom created by the elections dies off shortly after as more money is spent on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan instead of going to help build up the economy back home. The public is outraged as social benefits at home are cut to provide for the war effort.

Page 16: Violent crowds storm Congress and hold the politicians hostage. They demand that the war be stopped before it ruins America. Politicians who agree with the protesters act as a provisional representative government. Again, Doug's party dominates. They are able to pinpoint corrupt military industries to the corrupt banks that endorsed them.

Page 17: As more and more corruption is discovered in the corporate world, Doug calls for criminal punishment for those who have stolen from the people. Thousands of executives, politicians, and other corrupt individuals are arrested and put on trial.

Page 18: The first in a long wave of death sentences begins. Their executions (by lethal injection) are televised. A number of those who are sentenced and killed profess their innocence before they die. A worried Obama asks Doug how the nation is able to condone such violence. Doug responds that society had been allowed to rot for too long and now it must be cleaned of the infection. "Sometimes the people need to be shown how their lives should be run."

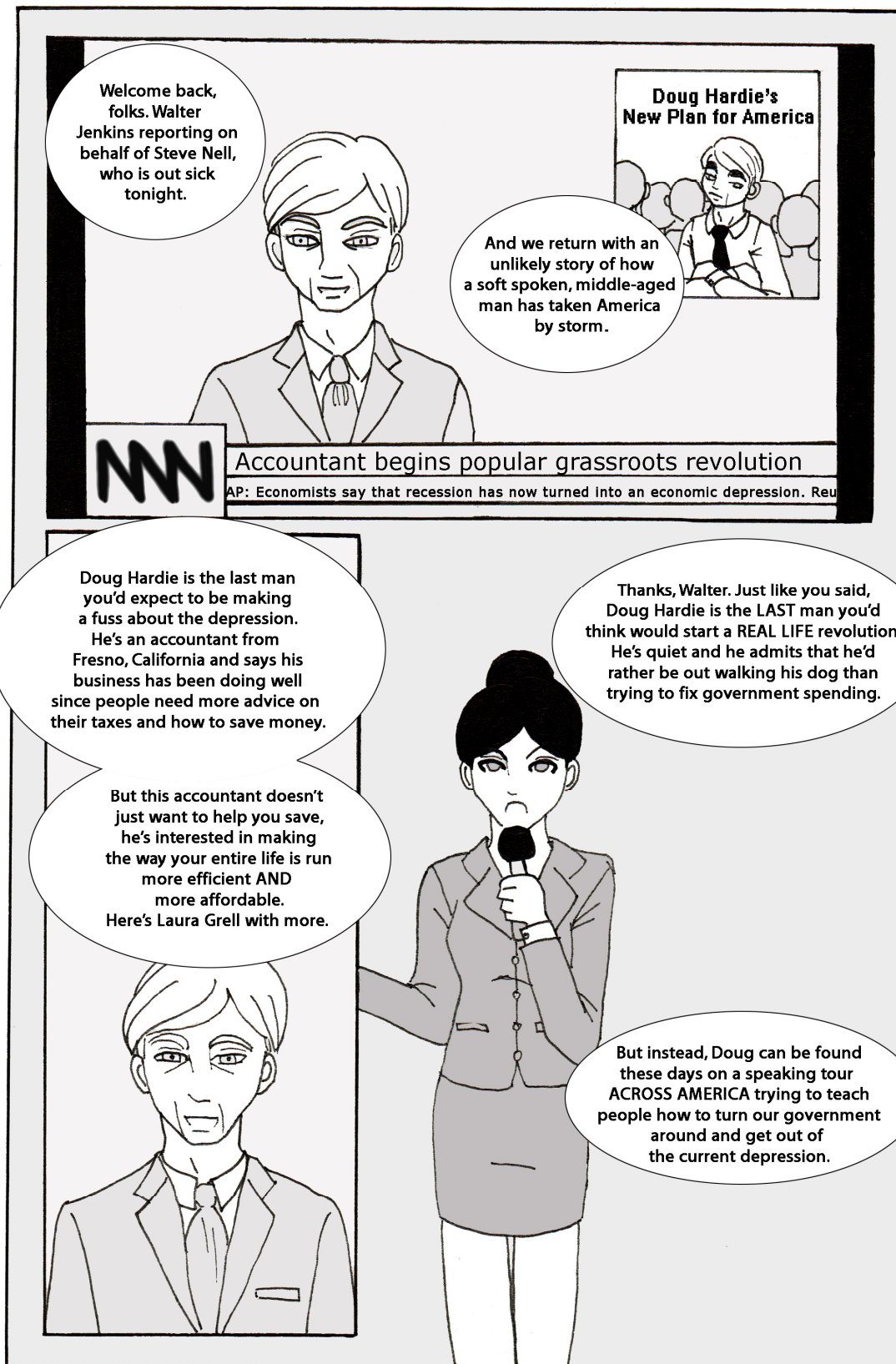
Page 19: Trials of petty thieves begin to end in death sentences as well. They are sentenced to guilty of stealing from the American nation. Those who oppose Doug's party are accused of being thieves and arrested. Many are put to death.

Page 20: Many of Doug's party begin to plot to overthrow Doug. He is arrested and tried of accepting lavish gifts from lobbyists and denying health care benefits to his staff. He is sentenced to death and publicly executed. His last words question himself and wonder if he's gone too far with his ideas.

Page 21: A large number of Americans, unhappy with the violence, allow a more conservative group of politicians to take an overwhelming majority at the next round of evaluations. The conservative group arrests politicians of Doug's party and execute them for innocent people to be killed during their time in power.

Page 22: The conservative group reverses all the laws made during Doug's party's time in power and close of the political realm to the popular vote, making voting decided by electoral college. The economy begins stabilize due to the vast number of executions opening up enough jobs to employ those still unemployed.

End.



Created by Daniella Orihuela-Gruber

## TEA Party by Cali Mica

### Page 1:

Panel 1: Carrie falls down on bed

Panel 2: Carrie: Man I'm beat. This multi-job thing is killing me.

Panel 3: Carrie(turns on the tv) I wanna watch some tv.

### Page 2

Panel 1: Tv person 1: All the American money that is currently in circulation in the whole world is enough to cover the stimulus package.

Panel 2: TV person 2: That's a good thing right? We have enough money to cover the package.

Tv person 1: If you think that taking all of everyone's money so they have nothing to pay for food, housing, clothes, education and other things is ok, then yeah. Not a problem.

Panel 3: TV person 2: Well the government isn't going to go into our homes and take all our money.

Panel 4: Tv person 1 Right, so instead they will print the money they need. And that will cost us all a lot of money.

### Page 3

Panel 1[ref 1]:

Panel 2: Tv person 2: How much?

Panel 3: TV person 1: For each employed American about \$5,600. For unemployed Americans it's \$77, 200.

Panel 4: Carrie: Whew. \$77, 200. That's more than I make in a year.

Panel 5: Carrie: How could the unemployed pay that much though?

Panel 2[ref 2]:

Panel 1: Tv person 2: But the millionaires will be paying for it all, won't they?

Panel 2: Tv person 1: No. Like I said before: All the American money in the world can't cover for it, so all of our millionaires won't be able to pay for all of it. Then we will also have to pay for his budget which is \$3.552 trillion dollars.

Panel 3: Carrie(with wide eyes): Wait...we already spent all our money with the stimulus package...how can we afford all this...

Panel 4: Tv person 1: This budget will cost each taxpayer \$25, 573.48. This does not count the 700 billion that Bush and Congress passed last year.

### Page 4. [ref3]

Panel 1 :Tv turns off. Carrie: Enough.

Panel 2: Carrie puts a pillow over her head. Carrie: Err!

Panel 3: To pay it off would take my whole income for a year! I wouldn't be able to afford food, rent, my debt, my car insurance and health insurance! I couldn't live!

Panel 4: She notices the clock say it's 10:30 pm. Carrie: Ah, I've got to go to bed! I got work in the morning!



Page 5:

Panel 1: Carrie is walking out of a building

Panel 2: Cell phone rings

Panel 3: Carrie (picks it up to her ear): Hello? Oh, hey Kairos. Yea, I'm done with work till 5 then I go to my second job. Sure, we can meet up at the café.

Page 6

Panel 1: The café

Panel 2: Carrie and Kairos sitting at a table. Kairos: The Fire grilled Ahi sandwich sounds good. What are you gonna get.

Carrie: I dunno probably some soup and some water.

Panel 3: Kairos (looks at Carrie): You've got to have more than that.

Panel 4: Carrie: It's all I have left to spend on food for the month. I spent the majority of my food budget on groceries.

Page 7:

Panel 1: Kairos: With all your jobs you can't afford more than soup and water? How many jobs do you have?

Panel 2: Carrie: 3. I can't afford more because I'm paying off my student loans. Once I get rid of those, then I will have more money and I can start saving for a starter house.

Panel 3: Carrie sighs

Panel 4: Carrie: At least that was before I realized how much more debt the government is forcing me to take on.

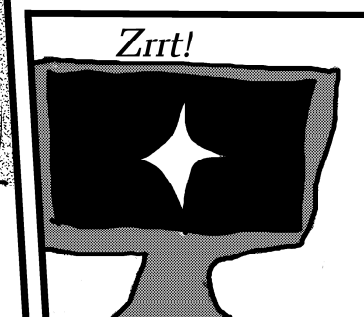
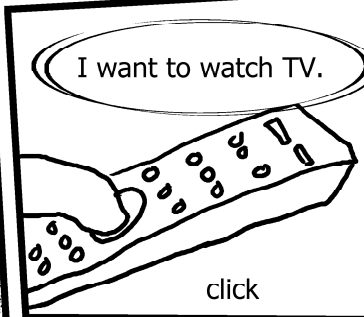
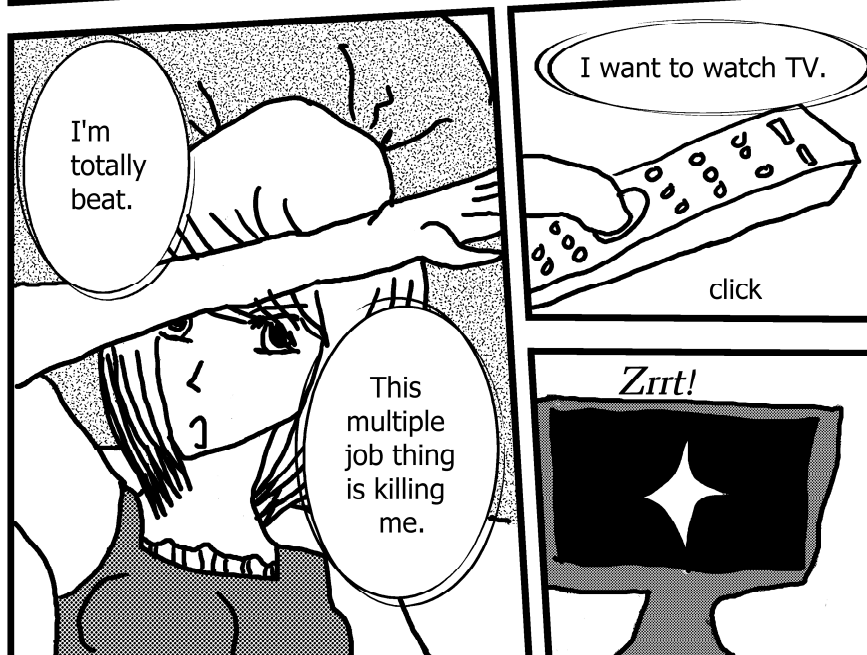
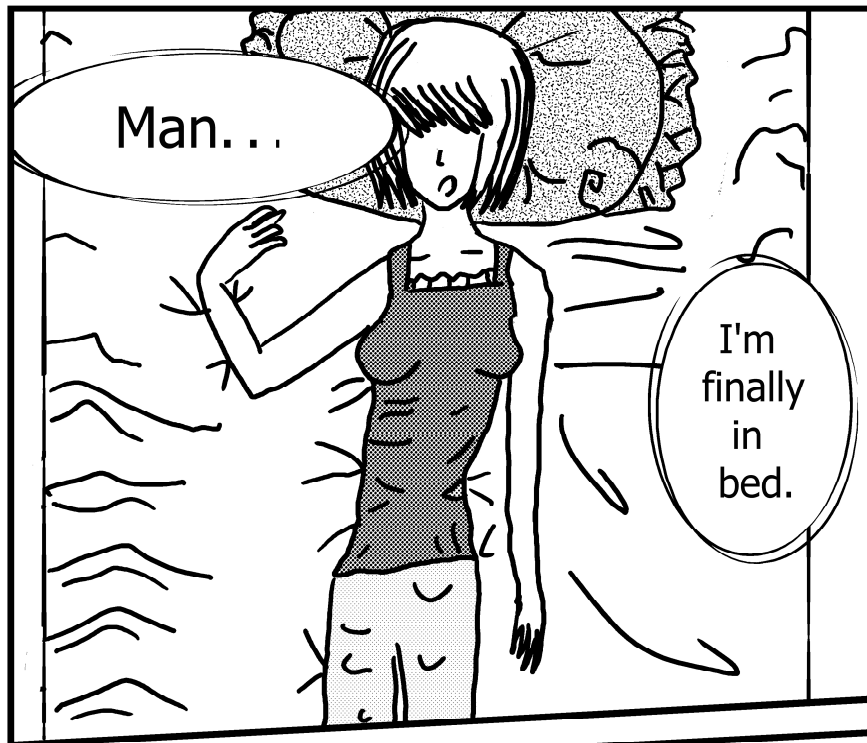
Page 8:

Media: tea baggers are nutjobs, and only care about taxes with the millionaire.

Millionaire tax: couple making 300k, 200k single

New taxes: 1/3 ny cellphone bill goes to taxes, cig tax, streetlight user tax in dc, and a bed tax in las vegas. 12. 8 T= every dollar earned/spent in usa

\$330,000 photo opp for a plane –plane over newyork



Dragon in the Bear Market by Tamar Curry

Page 1

Panel 1:

Complete darkness. Sounds can be heard as though someone is cutting something.

SFX:

SHK! SHK!

Panels 2 and 3:

Eventually, the darkness begins to give way to a clearing in a forest. The darkness surrounding the viewer are actually bushes.

SFX:

SHK! SHK! SHK!

Panel 4:

A hand moves forward towards the clearing.

Panel 5:

It pushes aside the bushes to get a better look at the clearing.

Panel 6:

Pull back to see a middle-aged, balding man. He has a machete in one hand and is pushing the bushes away from him. He seems aggravated.

Panel 7:

A loud “HIC” is heard from the right side of the panel. The man is surprised and turns to the direction of the sound.

Panel 8:

The man peers into the clearing. He sees a large dragon laying in front of an entrance to the cave. The dragon seems inebriated. There is also a woman sitting on a rock in front of the dragon. Her clothing and tiara indicates that she's most likely a princess. She stares off in another direction, not seeming to be worried about the beast at all.

Dragon (very drunk):

Uuugh. -URRGLE- HIC

Page 2:

Panel 1:

The man approaches the princess. As he steps forward, his foot hits something that sounds like a glass bottle.

Man:  
Uhm... excuse me, miss, but is this--

SFX:  
TINK

Panel 2:  
The man looks down by his foot and sees several empty bottles. They appear to have held some sort of alcoholic beverages.

Man:  
Uhm...

Panel 3:  
Closer shot of the man and the princess. She also appears to be somewhat inebriated, but she is doing a better job of keeping herself than the dragon. The man is still looking down, somewhat worried as to what the empty bottles indicate.

Man:  
Uhm... Is this..where... the great dragon lives?

Princess (looking lazily at the man):  
Aye. That'd be him behind me.

Panel 4:  
The man looks at the princess. He's a bit confused.

Man:  
...Okay. Uhm... Is he okay? He doesn't look well.

Princess:  
Actually, 'tis one of his better days.

Man:  
Er... well... what's wrong with him?

Panel 5:  
Close up of the princess's face. She's enraged by the man's inquiries.

Princess (slurring her words a bit):  
Wha's wrong wit him? As though t'aint obvious!

Panel 6:  
Pull back as the princess stands up and screams right in the man's face.

Princess:

## IT'S THE ECONOMY, YA DUMMY!

Page 3:

Cut to a flash back. The princess narrates. Panels here exaggerate her words.

Panel 1:

Close up of the princess as the dragon holds her in his hand. She is scared, reaching out for help. Her clothing is tattered and ripped, but still manages to hang on to her body (which is depicted as being much more curvaceous and endowed than she actually is).

Princess:

Use t'be every day that the dragon would hold me captive in his lair against me will!

Panel 2:

Pull back as we see the massive body of the dragon (much more massive and muscular than he really is). He is perched on a mountain, looking down at a prince who is challenging him.

Princess:

Princes from all over the world would come to do battle with him in a bold attempt to save and wed with me. Sometimes as many as a dozen a day.

Panel 3:

Close up of the dragon as he belches fire.

Princess:

But the dragon, he was too strong. He'd roast his opponents alive and then collect whatever spoils they were traveling with at the time.

Panel 4:

Cut back to the princess. She is upset and close to tears.

Princess:

But then the economy tanked! No prince c'n find the funds to mount a campaign to rescue me! So I'm stuck here with this lush of a beast, growing old and wrinkly!

Panel 5:

The princess approaches the man in tears. He tries to back away.

Princess:

S'gotten so bad, even the bards who sang of us are leaving! They're heading to other kingdoms that offer better tax incentives for entertainers! We can't even collect the royalties from them n'more!

Panel 6:

The dragon begins to awaken off panel. As he speaks, the princess and the man turn towards him. The princess's expression turns from sadness to anger.

Dragon (very drunk):  
Huh? Who're talkin' to?

Page 4:

Panel 1:  
The dragon tries to focus his attention on the man.

Dragon:  
Who're you?! Lookin' fer a fight, baldy?! I only fight people who gots money, ya know...

Panel 2:  
The princess gets right into the dragon's face.

Princess:  
Shut up, you! You're the reason I'm like this, ye know! But not anymore! This fine man has come t'rescue me! I'm not stayin' with ye any longer!

Panel 3:  
The princess looks back quizzically at the man for confirmation.

Princess:  
...You did come here t'rescue me, din't ya?

Man (reaching for something at his side):  
Actually, I'm not a prince...

Panel 4:  
The man holds up what appears to be a legal document.

Man:  
I'm a representative of the bank that owns this land. And you're behind on your payments. Unless you can get the money by tomorrow afternoon...

Panel 5:  
Man:  
I'm afraid you're cave will have to be foreclosed.

Dragon and Princess (screaming in unison):  
FORECLOSED?!

Page 5:

Panel 1:  
The princess is hysterical. She's screaming at the man.

Princess:  
Surely, ye can't be serious! The bank said we had more time and arranged a payment schedule!

Man:  
Your bank went under and we bought them out. The terms of your contract have changed.

Panel 2:  
Princess:  
NO! NOOO! This can't be happening! How can we get the money by tomorrow!?

Panel 3:  
Man:  
Well, surely you must have money in stocks and savings. Didn't you prepare for this?

Panel 4  
The princess hugs the dragon. They cry together.  
Princess:  
\*SOB\* We invested in a man who said he could mass produce books with a new printin' machine! Said he was goin' t'make millions! But he launched it in a kingdom that has a 92.7% illiteracy rate! WE LOST ALL OUR SAVINGS!

Panel 5:  
The man attempts to be helpful.  
Man:  
Well, surely there are other financial opportunities for you to pursue. How you thought about changing your business practices to better suit the economic climate?

Panel 6:  
Princess (still crying):  
Better suit the economic climate?! So, what, ye saying we should go lookin' for fights and money instead of waitin' for them to come to us!?

Panel 7:  
The dragon's eyes suddenly grow wide.

Dragon:  
...Say... That's actually a good idea!

Princess (staring at the dragon in disbelief):  
...Huh?

Page 6:  
Later that day...

Panel 1:  
Cut to a village. The people look up into the sky. Fear and panic show in their faces.  
One peasant points to the sky.

Peasant:  
LOOK OUT! A DRAGON!

Panel 2:  
The dragon flies high above the town.

Panel 3:  
He belches fire upon the villagers.

Panel 4:  
As buildings burn, he roars wildly.

Dragon:  
Foolish peasants! If you don't want me to burn this town to cinders, give me all the money you have now!

Page 7:  
The next day...

Panel 1:  
The dragon is walking back to his cave. He has a pile of money in his hand. He seems very happy.

Dragon:  
Wow, I made even more than I thought! If I don't spend too much, I'll be able to keep my cave for at least another year and--

Panel 2:  
Close up of the dragon's face. His happy expression is replaced with shock and disbelief.

Dragon:  
What the!? What's going on!?!



Panel 3:

Pull back to show the princess in a horse drawn wagon that has been modified into a cage. The princess is locked inside.

Dragon (to the princess):  
Why are you locked in a cage?

Princess (crying):  
The banker came back! He—HE'S SELLING OUR CAGE TO AN OGRE!

Panel 4:

The man and an ogre emerge from the cave. The dragon turns towards them.

Man (to the dragon):  
That's right! Mr. Grog here has been buying up quite a bit of property from us and has expressed interest in this cave.

Panel 5:

Man:  
And since he's got good credit, the bank even offered him a discount on the purchase!

Ogre:  
Yeah! Grog get good price!

Page 8:

Panel 1:  
The dragon pleads with the man.

Dragon:  
But—but I got the money before the deadline! Just like the contract said!

Man:  
Ah, so it appears you did. But we couldn't turn down Mr. Grog's request! Especially since he has such a convincing smile! Show him that smile, Grog!

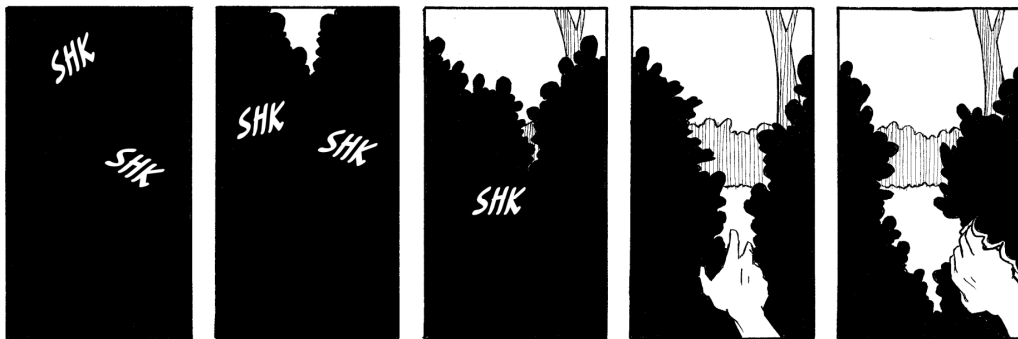
Panel 3:  
Close up of the ogre as he shows his nearly toothless smile.

Panel 4:  
The dragon looks at the two. He's very enraged. The man, clueless about the dragon's anger, continues to try to direct attention to the ogre's smile.

Man:  
See! And that a beaut?

Panel 5:  
Parting shot.

The ogre and the man are tied together and roasting over a fire. Their eyes are wide and their mouths stuffed with produce. The dragon blows flames to keep the fire going and the princess is on the other side, moving the coals with a hot poker.



## Swine Flu

By Daniella Orihuela-Gruber

Page 1:

Panel 1: A crowd panics as a girl sneezes.

Narration: The world doesn't seem to be very accustomed to epidemics these days. We seem to freak out over every little one.

Panel 2: A pile of dead outside a Medieval town.

Narration: Despite the fact that all of the recent epidemics haven't gotten anywhere near the death counts of epidemics of old.

Panel 3: Scale measures influenza deaths versus swine flu deaths.

Narration: But what strikes me the most over the hysteria over swine flu, is the panic its created despite how few people its actually killed so far.

Panel 4: Picture of Mexico City, deserted with clear skies.

Narration: Mexico City has been nearly emptied to the point where blue skies can be seen again in one of the most polluted cities on the planet.

Panel 5: Joe Biden.

Narration: Vice President Joe Biden isn't even properly informed. He recommended people stop using public transportation to stop the spread of the virus.

Page 2:

Panel 1: A page of Twitter feeds.

Narration: Here in California, the newspapers are twittering like mad over each new development.

Panel 2: Narration illustrates the picture.

Narration: Google maps is keeping a geographical record of the outbreak.

Panel 3: Same as above.

Narration: Turkey killed all its pigs without even testing them for the virus.

Panel 4: Picture of a baby licking a pig's nose. Caption reads: You little bastard. You've killed us all.

Narration: There's even an internet meme.

Panel 5: Daniella stands next to a pig and shrugs.

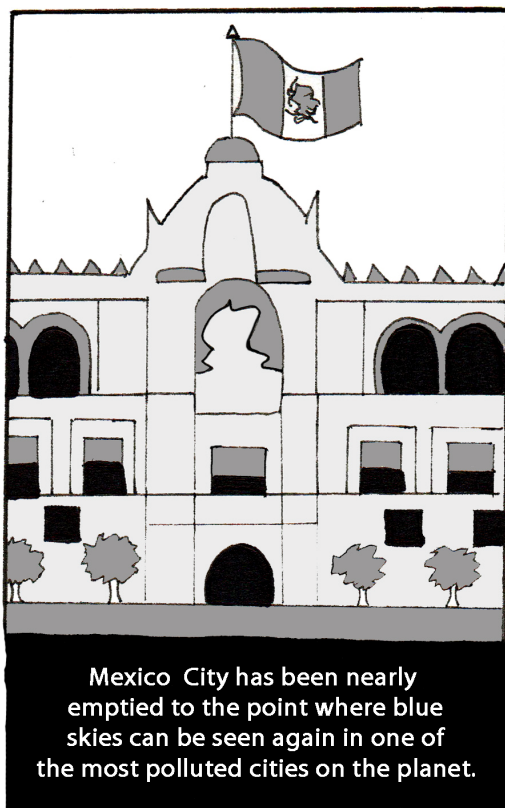
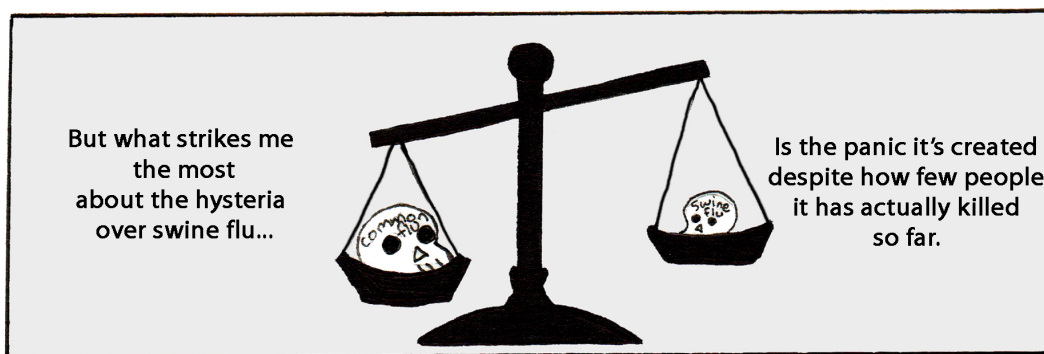
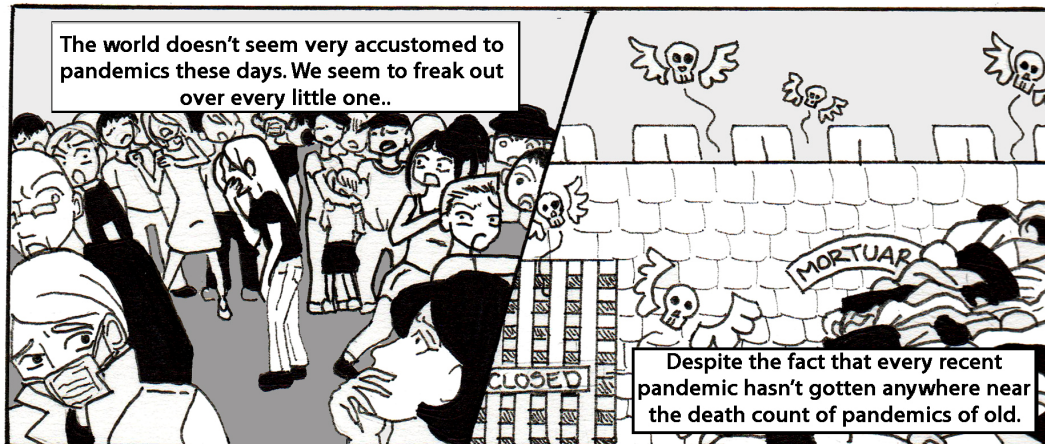
Narration: My opinion?

Daniella: I'm glad I don't eat pork?

Panel 6: Daniella pets the pig.

Daniella: Just kidding. I'm only scared because I have a poor immune system and that makes me more vulnerable than most of the population.

End.



Created by Daniella Orihuela-Gruber

On Twitter, people are tweeting like mad over each new development.

**TIME** Skies are clear f  
4 minutes ago from Tw

**slotri'buna** 3 suspe  
cases in SLO country  
4 minutes ago from we

**dos Angeles TIMES** Santa Bar  
County has 5 confi  
about 3 minutes ago

**GStephanopoulos**  
Talk with Mexican o  
5 minutes ago from 7

**slotri'buna** Just ha  
flu might have come  
6 minutes ago from T

**nytimes** 1st Swin  
in U.S. <http://tinyurl.com/1tinqur>  
7 minutes ago from

**CNNbrk** 1st Swine  
in Texas. <http://tinyurl.com/1tinqur>  
10 minutes ago from

**decoy** OMG I thin  
have Swine Flu

3341

Google Maps is keeping a geographical record on the suspected, confirmed and fatal cases in each country.

11751



Turkey killed all its pigs without even testing for the virus.

**YOU LITTLE BASTARD.**



**YOU'VE KILLED US ALL.**

There's even an internet meme.

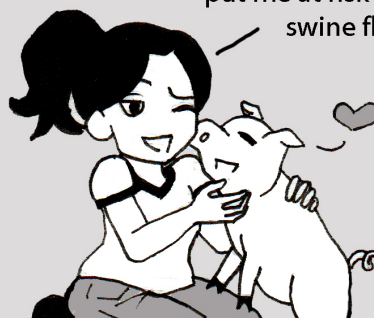
My opinion?



I'm glad I don't eat pork?



Just kidding.



I'm only scared because my own health problems put me at risk to catch swine flu.

END.

## "A Foot in the Door"

By Phyllis Douglas

### Page 1

- "High school: A kinda boring place to be."
- "But... it's not all that bad. Once you find that special someone,"  
– *SFX: FWIP!*
- "life... just seems to get better. ...Well, until you realize you might not be with them forever. Heh."
- "Or, you know, if you just happened to want to marry that person,"
- "sometimes... you just can't."

### Page 1

- "Guess what?"
- "Eh?"
- "Gay marriage is legal in California now!!!"
- "Wha-"
- "Yaaaahhh!!!"  
– *Title: A Foot in the Door – Phyllis Douglas*

### Page 2

- "Today, June 16, 2008, marks the day California declared gay marriage as legal throughout the state."
- "Massachusetts was the only state before California to allow gay marriage in all of the United States."
- "People from around the globe have gathered here in San Francisco, all waiting to get their marriage certificate."

### Page 3

- "As you can see behind me, Johnson, it's just packed!"
- "This line is just incredible. Reminds me of those lines at Disneyland."
- "Jim! Jiimm!!"
- "Eh? What?"
- "Get in here now! Look what's on TV!"
- "Oh. You gotta be kidding me."
- "No, Jim, look – we can finally get married here!"
- "We don't have to move to Canada anymore!"
- "Yes!!!"

### Page 4

- "We just got word that New York mayor David Paterson pledges to bring same-sex marriage to New York as well!"

- “What is this bull crap?”
- “These damn faggots. Get their damn foot in them political doors and look what we get!”
- “Honey! There’s some shit on the TV.”
- “Oh dear God.”

*Page 5*

- “Haha! Jim, this is the most fabulous day of my entire life.”
- “I just wish this day could last forever!!! Hahahaha!”
- “I just hope they don’t change this law or something. That’d be stupid, don’tcha think?”
- “Ha, I doubt they’d do that. I mean, if the law passed, why would they want to change it back?”
- “Not like it’s harming anyone.”
- “In fact, the government’s probably happy they’re getting more money than ever!”
- “Hahahaha!”

*Page 6*

- “The clouds are grey.”
  - “A storm’s coming in.”
  - “Those gay people are intruding into our lives.”
  - “They’re going to teach my children to be gay in their school.”
  - “Do you want this to happen to you?”
  - “Vote yes on Proposition 8.”
  - “Show that you care about your children and the safety of their future.”
- *Text: Funded by the Campaign for California Families*

*Page 7*

- “...Uh... who’d ever believe this ad? What a bunch’a bull.”
- “...Ha... Yeah... O-of course! Haha...”
- “And what’s up with those storm clouds?”
- “Ooo, we gay people are gonna bring an eternal cloudy nightmare. Oooo.”
- “Oooh, we’re gonna make your kids gay. Really? Man, how ridiculous can they get?”
- “Oh, yeah... yeah...”

*Page 8*

- *Text: November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008: Election Day*
- *SFX: TICK TICK TACK*
- “Booth 11, please.”
- “Thank you. Please exit that way.”

*Page 9*



- “This just in: The results of this election are still developing, but it looks like we have some definite outcomes here.”
- “Aaannnndd... it seems that Barack Obama is winning the presidential election!”
- “And we turn our eyes onto California where the hotly-debated subject of same-sex marriage battles out.”
- “Ooo! Looks like Prop 8 is winning by about 10%!!! Interesting turn of events.”
- “Serves them right.”
- “Well said, dear.”

*Page 10*

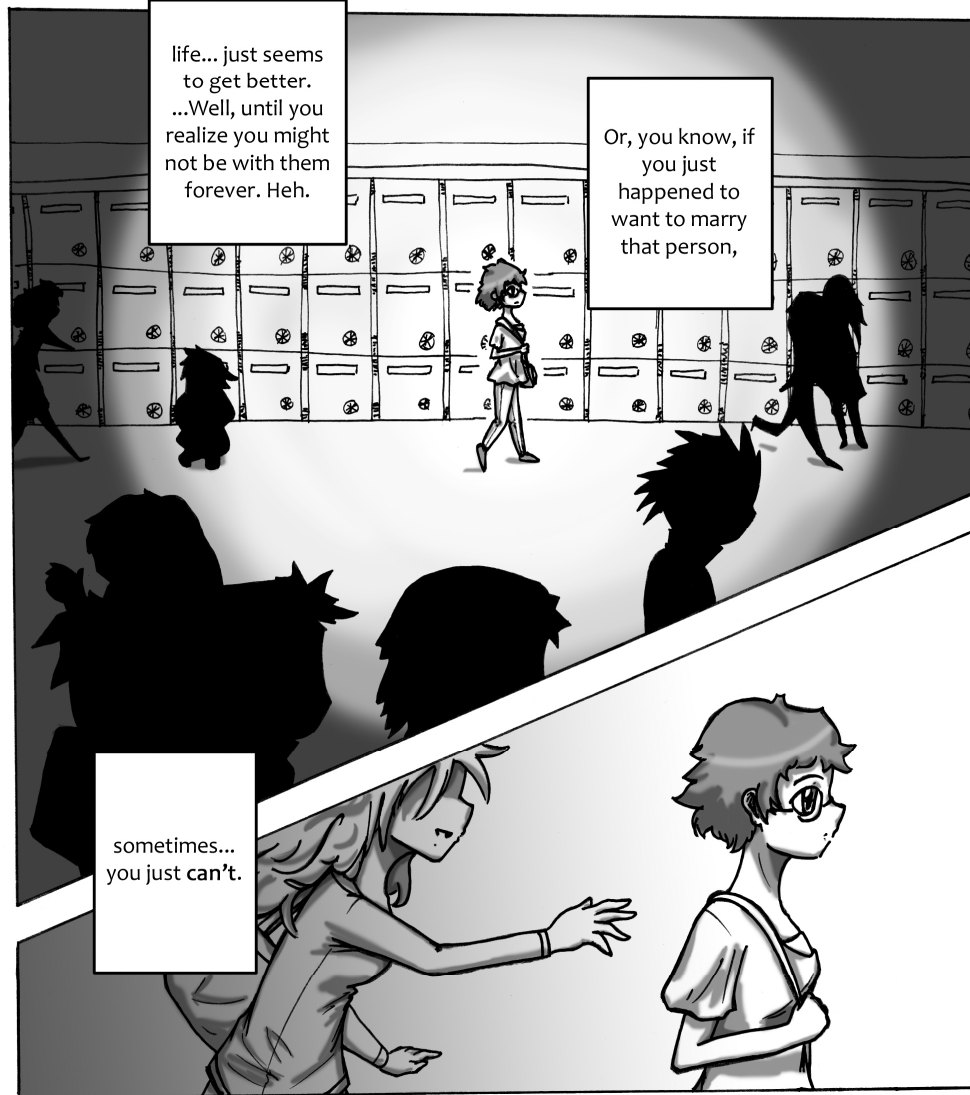
- “High school kinda sucks right now.”
- “Prop 8 won, me and my girlfriend broke up, and I’m studying my ass off for college entrance exams.”
- “But, you know, things can turn around every now and then.”
- “Hey – we got our first minority president in the United States, and I got to witness that. Pretty cool, I think.”
- “At least we got a foot in the door.”
- “Now we just have to shove our way through that open crack,”
- “and maybe we’ll finally get that equality we’re all looking for.”



High school: a  
kinda boring  
place to be.



But... it's not all  
that bad. Once  
you find that  
special someone,



The Communist Flag Incident  
By Daniella Orihuela-Gruber

Page 1:

Panel 1: Spring 2008. Picnic scene in a small grassy area between bungalows.

Narration: After a tough quarter of classes, one of my professors invited us to a picnic at her place.

Panel 2: Hedge with Viet Comintern flag tied to it.

Narration: Her area of study being Vietnam, she was very into Communist kitsch and marked our picnic spot with a Vietnamese Comintern flag.

Panel 3: Close up on picnic and attendees.

Narration: The picnic lasted quite a few hours and finally people began to leave.

Panel 4: A hand grabs the flag and pulls it off violently.

Narration: Then...

Page 2:

Panel 1: Daniella turns away from the picnic, others stare in the same direction as her.

Panel 2: Daniella turns to Professor Firpo.

Daniella: Would you like me to get your flag?

Firpo: Yes, please.

Panel 3: Daniella approaches the woman who is walking away with the flag.

Daniella: Excuse me, could we have our flag back?

Panel 4: The woman faces Daniella and yells at her angrily. Daniella is startled.

Woman: NO!

Panel 5: Daniella is very surprised.

Daniella: Um, its my professor's flag. She'd like it back, please.

Panel 6: Woman angrily points to the flag.

Woman: You can't fly this flag here! You have the fly the AMERICAN flag in this country!

Page 3:

Panel 1: Daniella frowns. Firpo and the other students run up to her.

Daniella: Um. Ok. Can we have the flag back?

Woman: No!

Firpo: What's going on?

Panel 2: Woman turns to Firpo. They are now outside a raised, white house. The woman's husband stands with a bag of groceries in his hands.  
Woman: You can't fly this Commie flag here! My father didn't fight in Iwo Jima so you could fly the Commie flag in America!

Panel 3: Firpo and the students raise their eyebrows.  
Firpo and students thought bubble: We were allied WITH the Russians in World War II...

Panel 4: The woman is angrily breaking off branches tangled in the flag.  
Woman: My grandfather built this house and all twelve of his sons fought in the war! They didn't fight for America so you could fly this Soviet flag!  
Man: Honey...

Panel 5: The man tries to plead with his wife.  
Man: Give them back their flag.  
Woman: No! I'm going to throw this flag away! I'm going to burn it!

Page 4:

Panel 1: Firpo steps forward.  
Firpo: Ma'am, I don't want to fight you, I just want my flag back.

Panel 2: The woman is angry.  
Woman: Do you know what flag this is? This is the SOVIET RUSSIAN COMMUNIST FLAG! You can't fly this here without flying the American flag above it!

Panel 3: Firpo smiles skeptically.  
Firpo: Actually, it's a Comintern flag.

Panel 4: The woman pauses.

Panel 5: The woman frowns again.  
Woman: You're still not allowed to fly this flag in this country! I'm going to let your landlord know about this!

Page 5

Panel 1: The woman storms off into her house while Firpo, the students and her husband watch.  
Man: Honey! Give them their flag back!

Panel 2: Firpo turns to the man with her hand proffered.  
Firpo: Sir, I don't want to fight you. Let's shake.

Panel 3: They shake hands.

Man: I'll try to get your flag back, ma'am.

Firpo: Thank you.

Panel 4: The man looks Firpo and the students over.

Panel 5: He frowns slightly.

Man: You're Cal Poly students aren't you?

Firpo: Yes...

Page 6:

Panel 1: Man becomes a bit more excited.

Man: You're all white, I know that Cal Poly's trying to make us white people a minority. Cal Poly tried to make my son feel like he's lower than all the Mexicans and Chinese and all the women there.

Panel 2: Firpo and students look at each other quizzically. Arrows point to Jewish and Latino students. Only one student is male.

Firpo: Uhhhhh.

Panel 3: Man gets excited.

Man: I know how it is there! They're trying to force the gay agenda on you and turn you into gays!

Panel 4: Firpo turns to the students. They nod enthusiastically.

Firpo: Yeah! You guys are all gay, right?

Student 1: Yeah!

Daniella and Student 2: Totally!

Student 3: Uh-huh!

Panel 5: Man is surprised.

Man: Yeah, I know how it is. I'm a writer. I write good.

Panel 6: Students and Firpo are dumbfounded. Arrow to Daniella says Journalism major. Thoughtbubble: Don't you mean "write WELL?"

Daniella: Ugh!

Page 7:

Panel 1: Man continues to talk about writing "good" in background. Students and Firpo also in background. A foot appears menacingly in the foreground.

Panel 2: Students and Firpo turn towards the foot.

Panel 3: The woman is waving a large American flag on a short pole.

Woman: If you're gonna fly a Commie flag, you better fly this flag above it!

Panel 4: The students and Firpo are wide-eyed. The man is smiling.

Narration: That's when we decided it was time to get the hell out of there.

Page 8:

Panel 1: Firpo and students return to the scene of the picnic and look at each other, flabber-gasted.

Panel 2: They all bust out laughing.

Victor: Oh my GOD, that was hilarious!

Panel 3: The students begin talking excitedly to each other.

Narration: We discussed the incident we had just witnessed for a few hours more and then went off on our separate ways for the summer.

Page 9:

Panel 1: Daniella is in a circle of friends.

Narration: We told our friends...

Friend: Weren't we ALLIED with the Russians in World War II?

Daniella: YES! Thank you!

Panel 2: Firpo teaching a class. Spring 2009.

Narration: And the next year I took another one of Professor Firpo's classes.

Firpo: I have an AWESOME story for you guys!

Panel 3: The entire class laughs as she tells the story.

Panel 4: A student speaks. Firpo pauses.

Student: Yeah, I heard on Polyratings that you were a dirty Communist.

Panel 5: Firpo laughs.

Firpo: That's HILARIOUS.

Panel 6: Other students speak.

Student 1: My friend told me you were a Communist too and that you had a red star tattoo.

Student 2: I heard you were a hardcore Commie too.

Student 3: My friend told me you had a nice ass!

Panel 7: Close up of Firpo's foot. Arrows to the tattoo: Blue (star), Red (outline).

Firpo: This tattoo is more because of the Grateful Dead than Communism! I got it when I was like 16!

Panel 8: Firpo is smiling widely.

Firpo: Please continue to spread this rumor about me! I think it's hilarious!

Page 10:

Panel 1: Daniella is on a cell phone.

Narration: When I told my mom about Professor Firpo hearing a rumor that she was Communist...

Mother: She could get blacklisted for that!

Panel 2: Daniella cracks up laughing.

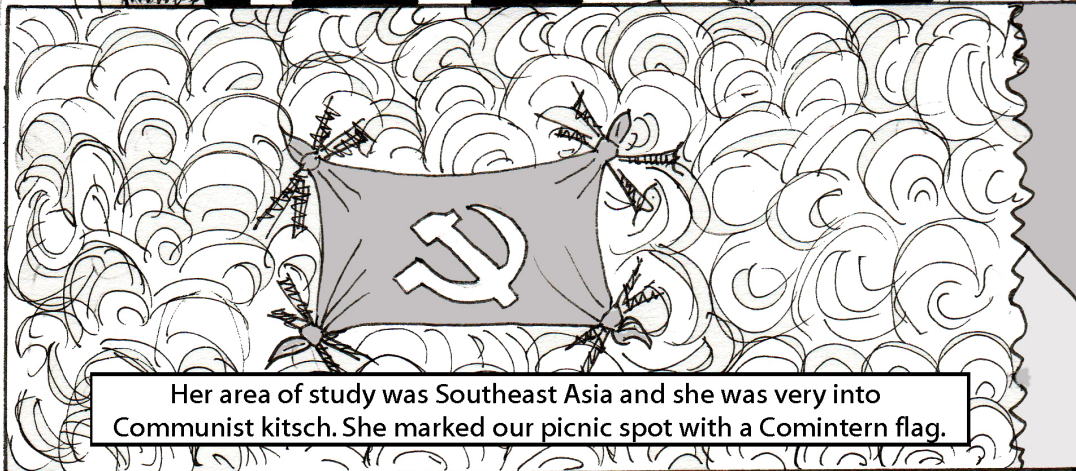
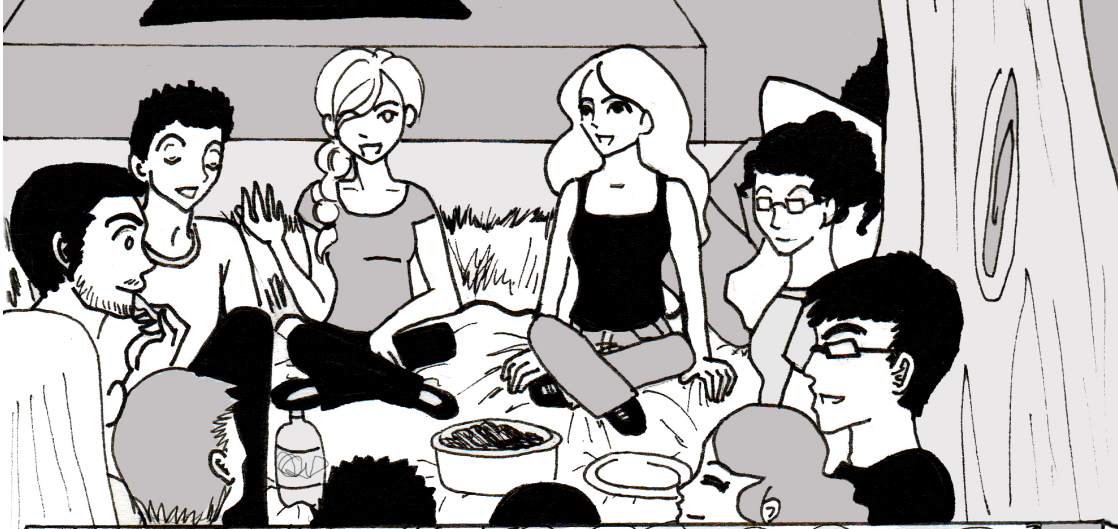
Daniella: Mom, she works for the HISTORY department and the Cold War is OVER! She'll be fine.

Panel 3: Narration: Still, almost 20 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the westernization of many former Communist countries, I guess we're still afraid of the Reds.

Panel 4: Narration: And ethnic minorities, and women, and homosexuals, and social equality and proper grammar.

**Spring 2008**

After a tough quarter of classes, one of my professors held a picnic for us at her place.



Her area of study was Southeast Asia and she was very into Communist kitsch. She marked our picnic spot with a Comintern flag.

The picnic lasted quite awhile and finally people began to leave.



**THEN...**



Created by Daniella Orihuela-Gruber based on true events



## Conclusion: Political and Social Commentary in Graphic Novels.

There is a long history of editorial commentary in cartoons and comics and it is still continued as a viable creative outlet today. Although comics themselves may not have started out this way, there wouldn't be such a large amount of political and social discussion through comics if it wasn't an effective means of communication. While editorial cartoons are the classic way of expressing thought and debate on current issues, graphic novels have definitely been able to adapt this idea to the longer format successfully. In fact, graphic novels are largely bettered by the fact that they can use more visual and written tools in the longer format to enhance their commentary.

Still, comics in their many forms have limitations. It is nearly impossible to cover a fast developing story with comics due to production time and the speed of digital media and comics that cover issues that are only important for a short time aren't likely to succeed. In this capacity, editorial cartoons are a better medium for more fast-paced issues. Although this is true, graphic novels and editorial cartoons are able to explore issues that reporting can only give lip service to due to restrictions. They certainly allow for opinion to be more personal and clearly conveyed because comics are allowed to use more than just words to express.

To some, comics might still be an industry dominated by the ridiculous or fantasies that have no relevance to society, but they have failed to see where comics are a powerful communication tool. Comics are an established medium and their only true limitations are the minds of those making them.

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