

(Get free) The Horror! The Horror!: Comic Books the Government Didn't Want You To Read (with DVD)

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Jim Trombetta

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Jim Trombetta : The Horror! The Horror!: Comic Books the Government Didn't Want You To Read (with DVD) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Horror! The Horror!: Comic Books the Government Didn't Want You To Read (with DVD):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Censorship, Congress, and Comics... oh, my!By Sunny CaliforniaAs a college instructor teaching a Mass Media class to mostly young people born in the very late 1980s and 1990s, I found this book to provide good examples of material that is definitely horrific, and yet was supposed to be "for" very young children (8-12 years old). The DVD that comes with this title is of a television broadcast investigating the

dangers of comic book consumption by these same children, and while it is overly dramatic in a typical 1950s fashion, it reminds me of the contemporary discussions around violence in video games and access to Internet porn and the possible damage each is doing to young (and old) psyches. This ongoing argument of free speech is not a black and white discussion. Yes, as Americans it is vital to our core beliefs, and yet it also leaves us to wrestle with protecting our young children from very dark and disturbing visual images. As this book shows, this is a conversation that started more than 50 years ago and continues to be relevant up 'til today. This is a comprehensive book, and I'm grateful to the author for providing an in-depth history of this genre of entertainment. I admit there were images in the book that I found very disturbing, and I would definitely hesitate before putting this book in the hands of a young child. Sadly, students today may find learning about censorship through instances of book burning in our country's history to be boring. Using comic books to discuss censorship and Congress in action is a way to bring students into the conversation, and once there, they begin to understand some of the complexities of free speech in America. I also have my students watch the documentary *Comic Book Confidential*, available through Netflix, which includes Wm Gaines being questioned before Congress about his "severed head" comic book cover.⁴⁶ of 49 people found the following review helpful. coulda been more, but it's still pretty darn good. By Sean Burns

As a long-time collector of EC and pre-code horror comics, I was really looking forward to this book. I was hoping for a well-researched tome, one that might turn over some new stones and shed some light on the (still mostly unknown) second-string creators and companies whose comics captivated kids and horrified their parents in the staid 1950's. Or perhaps a volume with loads of stories that would convey the essence of these forbidden comics. What we have is a book with only 16 stories (boo!), lots of single pages and panels (ok), and loads of covers (Hurray!) It could serve as an introduction to the horror-comic genre for newcomers, with way too much psychological analysis heaped on top. The history is mostly a few oft-repeated stories (The Senate hearings, the Comics Code, Gaines' fight in defense of the story JUDGMENT DAY). You know all these by heart if you are anything more than a very casual fan. There is nothing new or very revealing about the industry or the guys who turned this stuff out. Instead we have reams of Freudian analysis, much of which reads like a parody of itself. Some of it is so off-base, in attempting to make a dubious point, that I sputtered out loud. (Note to future comic book analysts: LET ME DECIDE MYSELF WHAT I SEE IN A COMIC.) Examples? The comic BATTLE CRY showed, in its logo, a soldier screaming- issuing a "battle cry". The author sees this: "The logo of BATTLE CRY, with its bawling GI head... suggests that it's all right for grown men who have lost their buddies, who have suffered the "heartbreak" of a brutal engagement, to break down and cry... the conventional war comic is the male equivalent of a romance comic." HUH? A page later we have this, in search of phallic symbolism: "...The artist has supplied us with a surplus, even gratuitous, phallic symbol: the GI's pistol holster. It doesn't seem to contain a pistol; it's not really connected to the pistol belt; and it rides not on the GI's hip but extends rigidly from his crotch, pointing downward directly at the dead man's splayed form." Problem is, that's not a pistol holster. It's a BAYONET HOLDER. The soldier just bayoneted someone. That's the scabbard his bayonet came from. That is why it doesn't look like a holster. The horror comics have been analyzed to death by now. If I'm getting a history book, I just want the cold, hard facts. Or in a reprint book, give me stories with minimal commentary, allowing them to speak for themselves. That's not this book. There is almost no info about the men behind these comics, and only a broad outline of the history of the genre. Most of the books in the bibliography have been printed after 1995. It's lazy scholarship to fill pages with pop- psychoanalytical ruminations, and to rely on recent works instead of ferreting out source material from the time. I was REALLY hoping for some solid research- some real meat and potatoes- that would cast a new light on the horror era or fill in some of the blanks. PROS: The cover is great. The book is the actual size of the comic books themselves, which is nice. There are DOZENS of covers, many excellent, mostly full- page. (To me, the book is worth it for the 9 Bernard Baily covers alone!) The author does a nice job in spotlighting the connection between crime comics and the horror comics they morphed into. Most of the stories are at least decent, some are excellent. All are worth reading, even if a couple are overly- familiar (Ditko Wolverton). The proofreader seems to have done a good job (but that's not a Matt. Fox cover on page 201). CONS: Most of the covers are not printed to the edge of the paper, but have a white border with the editorial info printed at the bottom. It destroys the "cover" illusion, for me- it loses some impact. The non-glossy paper also takes away from the "feel" of a cover. Some of the covers are very worn and no restoration was done to improve their appearance. The stories are scanned from the comics, so off-register coloring and some muddiness result at times- although it is true to the way these cheesy books looked. There are only 16 stories in 300 plus pages. Another problem is the paper. In duplicating the look and feel of a cheap 1950's comic (a good intention), an absorbent matte-finish paper was used. Many of the black areas are fragmented and blotchy (pages 3 4 of NIGHTMARE WORLD); some of the color is dull and washed out looking. And did I mention that there is a tad too much Freudian analysis for my taste? Despite my beefs, this book is still EASILY worth what it costs on . There are over 100 FULL-PAGE covers alone! Sorry if I sound like COMIC BOOK GUY. It's just that I was hoping for more- typical of a fanboy, I guess. Also check out FOUR COLOR FEAR: FORGOTTEN HORROR COMICS OF THE FIFTIES by Greg Sadowski; released only a month or so apart, the two books are the best ever done on non-EC 50's horror. They pack a potent one-two punch. Sean Burns

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Three Thumbs Up! By Richard Testa I spent this past Holiday reading this and even dedicated one night in Vegas to perusing

its pages. The compilation is a great collection of horror comics that would be nearly impossible to collect individually. I recommend it to horror comic fans with three thumbs up (and if that's not creepy...trust me this book is).

The Horror! The Horror! uncovers a rare treasury of some of the most important and neglected stories in American literature—the pre-Code horror comics of the 1950s. These outrageous comic book images, censored by Congress in an infamous televised U.S. Senate subcommittee investigating juvenile delinquency in 1954, have rarely been seen since they were first published and are revealed once again in all of their eye-popping glory. Jim Trombetta, in his commentary and informative text, provides a detailed history and context for these stories and their creators, spinning a tale of horror and government censorship as scary as the stories themselves. Bonus DVD—Confidential File, a rare 25-minute TV show that first aired on October 9, 1955, about the "evils" of comic books and their effect on juvenile delinquency is included with the book. Please note that the enclosed DVD begins with a 58-second test pattern, followed by the TV show. Praise for **The Horror! The Horror!**: "In addition to offering a generous helping of controversial comics . . . Trombetta's book provides insightful history." -New York Times Book Review

From Booklist Horror comics dominated the comic-book industry in the early 50s before they were targeted by congressional hearings aimed at stemming their lurid excesses. Trombetta documents the phenomenon, reprinting more than 100 covers, dozens of excerpts, and a handful of complete stories that amply demonstrate the imaginatively gruesome tales that shocked a nation but captivated millions of readers. Since his aim is to accurately characterize the genre, most of Trombetta's examples sport crude artwork, preposterous plots, and risible dialogue. However, several rise above the mediocrity: while EC Comics—the artistically preeminent publisher of the decade—is represented only in passing, complete stories by such auteurs as the celebrated Basil Wolverton and the underappreciated Howard Nostrand are included. Trombetta strings together the selections with perceptive commentary that assesses the comics recurring elements—not just zombies and werewolves, but also such themes as hunger and sexual hostility—and ties them into such cultural and political currents of the era as anticommunism, nuclear terror, and racism. A suitable companion volume to David Hajduk's 2008 account of the anticomics witch hunt, *The Ten-Cent Plague*. --Gordon Flagg
About the Author Jim Trombetta has been a Shakespearean scholar, a reporter and editor for *Crawdaddy*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and other publications, and a writer of numerous TV shows, including *Miami Vice*, *The Flash*, and *Star Trek*. He lives in Los Angeles. R. L. Stine is the bestselling author of hundreds of horror novels, including the *Goosebumps* and *Fear Street* series.