

Story: Abbie Hoffman's War of Symbols

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Synopsis: Doug gets hit with Abbie Hoffman's spittle and is inspired to learn about his legacy.

TITLE PANEL 1

PANEL 2

IMAGE: Close up of a speedometer going 80 mph

CAP: As usual I was running late making my way to the University of South Florida in Tampa to attend what was being billed as "The Yippie vs. Yuppie Debate of 1985."

PANEL 3

IMAGE: Golfing monks

CAP: I was covering the event for the St. Leo College (now University) student newspaper.

PANEL 4

IMAGE: Rubin & Hoffman in 1986 or so.

CAP: The so-called debate, 20-years after the upheaval of the 1960's, was a face-off featuring Abbie Hoffman on the side of 1960's idealism vs. Jerry Rubin, 60's radical and associate of Hoffman, arguing on behalf of the unapologetic materialism of the '80's.

PANEL 5

IMAGE: Rubin and Hoffman from the 1960's

Corner CAP: A look back.

CAP: Hoffman and Rubin are largely credited with founding the Youth International Party or Yippies, a youth-lead byproduct of the anti-Vietnam war movement, in 1967.

PANEL 6

IMAGE: Walter Cronkite on the old-school TV.

CAP: I was born in the early 60's and too young to know first-hand that era's student protests and urban unrest. My parents watched the nightly news so I learned early on about Hoffman.

PANEL 7

IMAGE: 80's Abbie at the lectern, Doug sitting at his feet.

CAP: Arriving late to the oversold, standing-room only event, I found myself in one of the best seats in the house.

PANEL 8

IMAGE: 80's Abbie, shown at lectern from a different angle, arm raised, emphatically speaking.

Abbie: We're the richest country in the world, yet we have millions of homeless in the streets!

PANEL 9

IMAGE: 80's Abbie, shown from a another angle, yet again.

Abbie: How much does the ruling class need to be comfortable?

PANEL 10

IMAGE: Jerry at the lectern making his point.

Jerry Rubin: I'm proud of what we did in the '60's but you're living in the past. Entrepreneurism is where it's at. I'm choosing to effect change from inside the establishment.

PANEL 11

IMAGE: The view pans back from close up on Abbie and now includes the full lectern with Doug shown sitting at the base, and the arc of the drop of spittle is depicted with a motion line flying out of Abbie's mouth and heading toward Doug's face.

Abbie: College campuses today have become hotbeds of social rest...

PANEL 12

IMAGE: Close up for Doug's cheek

IMAGE: Close up of Doug's face/cheek with the spittle the drop there.

Abbie: ...about as exciting as hospital food or watching television bowling!

PANEL 13

IMAGE: Pan back on Doug with big smile fitting into the panel, still shown with spit drop on cheek.

CAP: I was baptized! It was gross, but it was Abbie Hoffman's sputum! I was physically connected to the epochal '60's political street theater virtuoso who helped bring an end to the Vietnam war.

PANEL 14

IMAGE: '60's Abbie at the mic, surrounded by people.

CAP: And what protest theater it was. At the height of his activism, America couldn't divert it's eyes from the anti-war movement as a result of a series of stunts conceived for maximum impact.

PANEL 15

IMAGE: Exterior of the NY Stock Exchange, Wall St. street sign in the foreground.

Top Left Corner CAP: "August 24, 1967"

PANEL 16

IMAGE: Abbie in the visitors gallery of the Exchange. Please include a sign, "Visitors Gallery" depicted in the background. The gallery is like a theater balcony above the Exchange floor. Abbie is shown throwing paper money down to the trading floor.

CAP: Abbie and fellow protesters threw money onto the floor of the NY Stock Exchange. Some traders dove for the bills and others shot birds to the gallery above. It made the evening news.

PANEL 17

IMAGE: Aerial view of the Pentagon from above.

Top Left Corner CAP: "October 21, 1967"

CAP: Pushed for by fellow movement leader Rubin and artist Michael Bowen, a consensus was reached on the next target of the movement.

PANEL 18

IMAGE: Abbie on TV speaking into a mic

CAP: Fellow organizer, the poet Gary Snyder suggested the Pentagon needed an exorcism. Abbie took it a step further.

Abbie: We're going to levitate the Pentagon 300 feet in the air!

PANEL 19

IMAGE: Abbie on TV (shown again) speaking into the mic

Abbie: We'll dye the Potomac red, burn the cherry trees, panhandle embassies, attack with water pistols, marbles, bubble gum wrappers, bazookas, girls will run naked and piss on the Pentagon walls...

PANEL 20

IMAGE: Student burning his draft card

CAP: There were all forms of protest.

PANEL 21

IMAGE: Military Police with guns and bayonets pointed at students.

CAP: Nearly 600 were arrested across two days of the Pentagon protest. It was front page news across the country

PANEL 22

IMAGE: College student placing a flower into gun barrel with head shot of Ginsberg above and blended into the scene.

CAP: According to poet & philosopher Allen Ginsberg, "The (symbolic act of) levitation of the Pentagon was a happening that demystified the authority of the military."

PANEL 23

IMAGE: Couple holding "Vote Pig" banner

Top Left Corner CAP: "August 23-29, 1968"

CAP: Ratcheting up pressure on the eve of the Democratic Convention in Chicago.

PANEL 24

IMAGE: Students holding up a pig before a crowd of people

CAP: The Yippies nominated a pig for president they named Pigasus.

PANEL 25

IMAGE: Police with Pigasus

CAP: Rubin, Hoffman, and Pigasus were arrested. The pig was placed in a paddy wagon and reportedly never seen again.

PANEL 26

IMAGE: Welcome Democrats banner with police and rifles in foreground

CAP: Chicago under Mayor Daley took a much harder approach with the protesters.

PANEL 27

IMAGE: The Chicago Police Department beating protesters

CAP: Pentagon troops showed restraint compared to the Chicago Police Department.

PANEL 28

IMAGE: The Chicago Police Department beating protesters (again)

CAP: The police acted out violently against student protesters in unprovoked and indiscriminate ways.

PANEL 29

IMAGE: Ribicoff speaking to convention attendees. If possible Daley is shown in the background.

CAP: When Connecticut Senator Abraham Ribicoff spoke in support of George McGovern, he called out the Gestapo police tactics outside the convention hall...

PANEL 30

IMAGE: Mayor Daley with upraised fist

CAP: Mayor Daley shouted on camera in response to Ribicoff's remarks with something unintelligible on the television feed.

PANEL 31

IMAGE: Mayor Daley with hand to mouth shouting

CAP: Lip-readers claimed to have observed him shouting, "Fuck you, you Jew son of a bitch."

PANEL 32

IMAGE: Bloodied protester

CAP: When the dust settled Chicago police reported 589 arrests, and 119 police and 100 protesters injured. It was a week that shook America.

PANEL 33

IMAGE: Abbie smiling in hand cuffs with the Chicago police.

CAP: As a result of the unrest in Chicago, Abbie and 7 fellow organizers were arrested on charges of criminal conspiracy and incitement to riot.

PANEL 34

IMAGE: All 8 original defendants are depicted in the panel.(a photo of all 8 does not exist)

CAP: The Chicago 8 included Hoffman, Rubin, Tom Hayden, Black Panther Chairman Bobby Seale, (the only African American in the group) David Dellinger, Rennie Davis, John Froines and Lee Weiner.

PANEL 35

IMAGE: Same image as in previous panel except Bobby Seale is fading out.

CAP: The Chicago 8 forever became the Chicago 7, as if Seale didn't exist.

PANEL 36

IMAGE: Bobby Seale bound and gagged in a chair.

CAP: Seale, after repeatedly disrupting the trial, was literally bound and gagged while in the courtroom and ultimately separated from the group and tried on his own.

PANEL 37

IMAGE: The group at press conference

CAP: Acquitted of the conspiracy charges, Hoffman, Rubin, Dellinger, Davis, and Hayden were ruled guilty of crossing state boundaries with the intent to incite a riot and sentenced to 5 years in prison and fined \$5,000.

PANEL 38

IMAGE: Bobby Seale in suit and tie.

CAP: On November 5, 1969, Judge Hoffman sentenced Seale to four years in prison for 16 counts of contempt, each count adding three months to his imprisonment because of his disruptive behavior during the trial.

PANEL 39

IMAGE: Group with arms raised in victory.

CAP: On Nov. 21, 1972 in a court of appeals, all criminal convictions except Seale's were overturned.

PANEL 40

IMAGE: Cover of *Steal This Book*

CAP: His major legal issues behind him, Abbie wrote & compiled *Steal this Book*. He believed it was a moral imperative to undermine the system if you believed it to be biased and corrupt. Rejected by 30 publishers he was forced to self-publish. With no reviews and only word of mouth, the book sold 250,000 copies.

PANEL 41

IMAGE: Abbie looking at and speaking to the reader.

CAP: A year later Hoffman was arrested for selling cocaine to two plainclothes police officers.

Abbie: It was an act of stupidity and it was an act of insanity.

Abbie: The movement was falling apart and I was very depressed. (second speech bubble)

PANEL 42

IMAGE: Abbie in disguise as Santa

CAP: Rather than face the charges Abbie went underground. He succeeded in outrunning the law for nearly 6 years while he held numerous jobs and became an accomplished environmental activist taking the name Barry Freed.

PANEL 43

IMAGE: Abbie and woman in Save the River t-shirts.

CAP: According to the Watertown Daily Times, "His north country (environmental activism) legacy lives on; (he turned) Save the River into a long term, effective environmental organization, largely because of his unique skills, and selfless dedication."

PANEL 44

IMAGE: 80's Abbie holding picture of 60's Abbie

CAP: Hoffman surrendered to authorities in 1980. He eventually he pleaded guilty to selling \$36,000 worth of cocaine to undercover officers in 1973 and was sentenced to serve a year in prison before being eligible for parole.

PANEL 45

IMAGE: 80's Abbie and Rubin

CAP: Upon release he continued his environmental activism and along with writing speaking out, started traveling the country with Rubin for the Yippie vs. Yuppie debates.

PANEL 46

IMAGE: NY Times Headline of his Death

CAP: Abbie suffered from prolonged clinical depression and periods of manic activity, telltale signs of manic-depressive disorder, AKA bipolar disorder. In 1989 he was found dead. According to the coroners report it's believed he took 150 phenobarbital pills mixed with alcohol, surely an intentional act.

PANEL 47

IMAGE

CAP: Along with his fellow Groucho Marxists, Hoffman above all others understood the power of the still emergent mass media. He was a self-promoter but made incalculable sacrifices, never wavering from his beliefs. He was an authentic figure whose passion was dimmed only by mental illness.

PANEL 48

IMAGE: Text fills the panel. His quote.

CAP: We would hurl ourselves across the canvas of society like streaks of splattered paint. Once we acknowledged the universe as theater and accepted the war of symbols, the rest was easy. All it took was a little elbow grease, a little hustle. - Abbie Hoffman

END (lower right)