

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

**CENSORSHIP OF COMIC
BOOKS:**

**A STATEMENT IN OPPOSITION
ON CIVIL LIBERTIES GROUNDS**

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170 Fifth Avenue American Civil Liberties Union

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INTRODUCTION

Within the past few years, the country has focused increased interest on the problem of juvenile delinquency and the relationship, if any, between this social evil and comic books devoted to crime and horror stories. Reflecting the widespread public concern, a number of solutions have been proposed that run the gamut from legislation forbidding publication of such comics or banning their sale to minors, to less drastic measures such as publishers' self-regulation.

As an organization devoted solely to the preservation of civil liberties, the ACLU's interest is confined to the civil liberties aspects of these proposals. We are not experts on juvenile delinquency, nor are we specially trained in the fields of sociology or psychology. And we do not claim to be particularly experienced in the skills of law enforcement. Our special field of knowledge, developed over 35 years, is civil liberties and the necessity of maintaining them in a society that practices and encourages freedom.

The problem of juvenile delinquency is of major importance and we believe that every legitimate effort must be made to deal with its causes and to seek its cure. As an organization concerned with the welfare of the American community, and as parents concerned with the welfare of our children, we are anxious that this alarming problem be solved.

DO COMICS BREED DELINQUENCY?

One of the main emphases in the public debate on the causes of juvenile delinquency has been the relationship between delinquency and the reading of crime comics. A large segment of the public has generally assumed that crime and horror comics do stimulate children to commit crimes. But this assumption does not reflect the spirited controversy among the experts in the fields of sociology, child psychology, psychiatry, and law enforcement. The debate indicates that there are almost as many opinions as there are experts about the degree of importance and significance of comic books dealing with crime, violence

and horror and their connection with the rising tide of juvenile crime.

Some experts state that crime *comic* books have the most direct relationship to the occurrence of criminal acts. A second group believes that crime comic books have some importance, but are not the controlling actor. Still a third group asserts that comic books play only a minor role in the development of a juvenile delinquent. A number of specialists feel

that comic books do not have the slightest bearing on the problem. Finally there are those who feel that comic books actually help children by allowing them to give vent, vicariously, to their drives for adventure and thrills.

The ACLU believes that comic books like the other mass media may play an important part in the development of children's minds and behavior. But, in view of the divergent--even contradictory--opinions expressed by responsible and qualified persons, it believes there is lacking the assurance that crime comics are a significant cause of delinquency. This view is held by such an eminent crime authority as J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the FBI. In 1950, after commenting on the fact that certain crime stories and comics may be dangerous, particularly in the hands of an unstable child, he said:

"It is doubtful, however, that an appreciable decrease in juvenile delinquency would result if crime comic books of all types were not readily available to children.

"Guidance by parents in the reading habits of boys and girls is the best defense against possible addiction to certain 'horror' stories. The love for this type of reading may reveal a lack of balance not only in reading habits but in the child's environment at home, in the school and in the neighborhood.

"The answer may lie not in wiping out objectionable crime comics but in substituting restrained presentations which will allow the child under guidance to logically set up standards as to what types of crime comics are good or bad."

It is not the function of the ACLU to decide the merits of the various and opposing contentions. It is appropriate to say, however, that at this time there has been no showing that the circulation of crime comic books constitutes a clear and present danger with respect to the occurrence or continuance, of juvenile delinquency. Unless such a danger is shown--and further, the inadequacy of alternative means to combat this evil--there is no justification for cutting into a basic right guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, a free press unhampered by governmental interference. In view of the anti-delinquency work being carried on

1. An appendix of representative statements is attached.

by churches and synagogues, schools, social agencies, and civic and community organizations, it can hardly be said that there is insufficient time to combat whatever evils may be presented by crime comic books by means short of censorship or by legally banning their publication. Unless such time is lacking, then even the fact that some relationship is shown between the increase of juvenile delinquency and the distribution of crime comic books is no justification for their suppression.

CAN CENSORSHIP BE LIMITED?

The ACLU is not doctrinaire in its opinion about the various solutions that involve curbs on comic books which have been proposed to deal with the problem of juvenile delinquency. Although as individuals we may question the wisdom of a particular proposal for the solving of juvenile delinquency, we want to see this problem solved without subverting civil liberties.

Some persons have suggested that, as a general rule, censorship is wrong, but that it might be proper to censor comic books since only children's reading would be affected. If the problem existed in a vacuum, it could be effectively argued that children's reading material should be handled differently than adult material, because the youthful mind has not matured to the level where it can assimilate and wisely evaluate a complex of ideas. But the problem does not exist in a vacuum, and this consideration is outweighed by others. First, it is most difficult to limit censorship only to the elimination of misdeeds and horrors to which children should not be exposed. Historical experience has shown that private groups who seek to inculcate their particular point of view are always eager to broaden the scope of banned material and seize on censorship as an ally. Once the wall has been breached, more ground may be lost. Second, if a system of censorship is established for children, it could pave the way for censorship of adult reading material. To institutionalize the censor and his scissors is a real danger. Governmental censorship, even in a limited form, has within it the means of ~~destroying~~ the climate needed to nurture the minds of free men.

However, it is unreal to discuss the problems of censorship of comic books in a context which implies that only children would be affected. There is ample evidence that a large part of the comic book readership is adults. The ACLU is opposed to the prior censorship of reading material for adults, even if children may obtain access to such material, for we believe that the First Amendment flatly prohibits it. To condone pre-censorship for children is to risk abandonment of all reading material to the censor, since in one way or another youngsters are apt to obtain any book at some time. If the objective is to seal off tales of horror and crime from

children, it will be necessary to ban classics of literature. Should we bar *Crime and Punishment* and *The Turn of the Screw*? Will we have repetitions of the attempt to suppress *Ulysses*? Or *An American Tragedy*? Will those who frown on the depiction of the intimate details of the commission of crimes turn their shafts on *Hamlet*? Is it so ill necessary to set forth the massive historical weight of evidence against prior censorship of books? Have we not yet finally passed this milestone of progress on the road to freedom?

THE SPECIFIC RESTRAINTS

Some advocates of the theory that reading of comic books leads to delinquency and crime suggest that the sale of comic books to children under a certain age be banned.

Such legislation is aimed at banning distribution to under-age children rather than the comics themselves; in theory, no objection can be made, but the scope and administration of such legislation might draw ACLU protest. However, although we are not experts in law enforcement, we suspect that this solution will result in a great deal more confusion. ~~than benefit here is~~ ample evidence that a prohibition always heightens interest in the banned product, and it can be expected that bootleg sales will spring up, especially as children realize that comics are legally unobtainable. Some local ordinances allow sale of comics to young children if their parents consent, and there are many parents who will buy any comic book that their child requests. It is common knowledge that comic books are passed from one child to another and if one undesirable comic book gets into the hands of a single child, a great number of children will be exposed to it. In those communities where the law provides that crime comics may not be sold to children under a certain age, each bookseller is faced with the task of determining who is a qualified buyer, and deciding which comic book is outside the pale. This law may be more difficult to administer than the laws forbidding the sale of liquor to minors.

An extreme proposal, which has been incorporated into the law of many states, is an outright ban on publications devoted principally to criminal news and stories of bloodshed, lust, and crime—broad enough to include crime comics. In the ACLU's opinion, which has

been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, such laws cannot meet constitutional standards.

In a key test case, the U.S. Supreme Court in 1948 declared a New York State law invalid because of vagueness (*Winters v. New York*, 33 U.S. 507). A New York State joint legislative committee subsequently studied the problem and attempted to enact new legislation whose language would be more definite. Former Governor Thomas E. Dewey vetoed two such bills on the ground that neither met the constitutional test of required definiteness and certainty. In 1955, a restrictive law aimed directly at comic books was finally passed and signed, but this, too, appears not to meet constitutional requirements. As the ACLU sees it, it may be impossible to legislate in this area without either making a frontal attack on civil liberties by setting up a licensing or censor system, or making indirect attacks on freedom of the press by enacting laws which are either too vague or indefinite for proper enforcement. In either case, they do not conform with the principles set forth in the First Amendment.

Still another technique, which has gained wide popularity, is the formation of volunteer citizen groups to serve as "watchdog committees" which attempt to influence book dealers not to handle the books that such "committees" consider improper. Recent newspaper reports indicate that the number of these groups has increased and that their influence is being felt more every day through different techniques of boycott and coercion. Certainly individual members of the community have the right to decide what they or their children should read. Such discipline is entirely proper. But concerted action, designed to decide the reading fare of the entire community, imposes the will of one group on other persons and constitutes an attempt to enforce conformity, a practice alien to the American idea of free choice. For some time suggestions have been made that the comic book publishers should impose censorship on themselves by the promulgation

of a code of principles to which they would all adhere. Recently, Magistrate Charles F. Murphy of New York City was appointed as the Code Administrator of a newly-formed Comic Magazines Association, created by a number of the comic book publishers, and a code was formulated by the Association. There can be little doubt that a major purpose in the organization of the Association and the promulgation of the Code was to forestall legislative action against the publishers, which would have been for them much more unpalatable than the type of discipline which Magistrate Murphy might mete out.

The Code adopted by the Association contains "do's" and "don'ts" that follow the rules established by the "Hays Office" of the motion picture industry. In most instances, the precepts of the Code seem directly related to eliminating the more distasteful episodes of crime, bloodshed and violence appearing in a number of the *comic* books. In some cases the rules seem to go much further—and regardless of individual judgment as to their merits—they have nothing to do with protecting children against being exposed to horror, bloodshed, and violence.

Because codes have inevitably had the effect of inhibiting the free expression of ideas, the ACLU has opposed their establishment among industry members of the mass communication fields, *i.e.*, motion pictures, radio and television. Although a single publisher may prescribe for himself any set of standards he may desire for the publication of material, a different situation exists where a significant segment of the industry agree to abide by a code. Collective adherence to a single set of principles. If a code has the effect of limiting different points of view, because individual publishers—as well as writers—are fearful of departing from the accepted norm lest they be held up to scorn or attack and suffer economic loss. (The "seal of approval" granted by the Code to approved publications also places economic pressure on local distributors: who are all under surveillance by local pressure groups.) But the variety of ideas is the lifeblood of a free society. Whatever evil

exists in the restraint of competition in our economic life pales in significance when compared to the dangers of monopoly or uniformity of ideas. Experience has shown that the restrictive effects of codes goes far beyond their original purpose and intention. As described above, this is clearly evident in the Code published by the Comic Magazine Association where restraints unrelated to horror, crime and violence have been promulgated and are being enforced.

Therefore, while we encourage each individual publisher to develop his own standards of taste and decency in the publication of comic books, we are opposed to the establishing of rigid standards to which all publishers are constrained to abide.

What Can Be Done?

Is there anything that can be done to meet the comic book problem without creating the perils of censorship or other restrictions on freedom of expression? let us consider obscenity laws, the manner of enforcing such laws, and the responsibility of parents. First, there is an area for proper enforcement of obscenity laws, and as we stated in 1952 to the Gathings Select Committee on Current Pornographic Material, the ACLU has not intervened in many "obscenity" cases.

It should be made clear, however, that the obscenity laws are designed to protect the community against smutty and salacious material. These laws were not intended to include within their orbit material which may offend the good taste of the majority of the public, but which nonetheless is not licentious. In reviewing the various reports describing crime comic books, we observed that the majority of these books-whatsoever other failings they may have-are not obscene. Even where obscene material is involved, a sharp distinction must be drawn between prior-censorship and post-publication punishment. Prior censorship, apart from preventing obscenity, also has great deterrent effects upon the publishing of proper material, for authors and publishers may eliminate passages or even whole books because of the fear that they will be considered obscene. Furthermore, prior-censorship places in the hands of a few public officials the power to make decisions affecting the community at large. On the other hand, post-publication punishment for violation of a law allows the defendant the rights of due process of law, including a jury trial. A jury far better reflects the community's current standards of taste than a few officials whose long labor in the vineyard of censorship may have given them a narrow outlook which refuses to broaden with the passage of time.

We are also interested in seeing that the manner in which such obscenity laws are administered by public officials does not have the effect of deterring publishers and booksellers from publishing and selling legitimate reading material. We are opposed to the wholly improper procedure of certain law enforcement officers who, instead of commencing prosecutions against the publishers and wholesale distributors of magazines---,businessmen economically able to defend them-selves against lawsuits-rather threaten the small, local retail book-sellers who are in no position to resist official coercion. What happens in these cases, in effect, is that a ban on particular books results with- out any hearing on the merits of the book itself and the protection of a jury trial as set forth above.

Probably our best hope lies in the home itself-parental control over the reading habits of their children. A congressman's comment on television programs that portrayed crime and violence, "Did you ever think of turning the damn thing off?" suggests that parents sufficiently interested in the proper development of their children should keep a careful watch over their reading material. And, as the testimony of child welfare experts attest, an environment which embraces a wide range of interests will make comics less of an attraction to children. This is in line with accepted educational theory and practice which conceives of the child as a whole person, whose total needs must be considered. To those who argue that not every child's home environment can meet his total needs and something must be done to safe-guard children who, unfortunately, live in an unwholesome environment, the answer lies in the work of schools, churches and community organizations. The creation of the healthy environment is their challenge.

Finally, additional study on the subject of juvenile delinquency and comic books should be encouraged. The research under way is a gratifying development. Experts are plumbing the depths of individual behavior and soon perhaps evidence will be forthcoming that will demonstrate the relationship, or lack of relationship, between comics and the wave of juvenile delinquency which has spread in recent years. As we have stated before, there is a healthy diversity of opinion already re-corded, but there is by no means evidence that a clear and present danger exists in the publication of crime comic books, which would justify their suppression. Further investigations of the relationship between their publication and juvenile delinquency have the endorsement of ACLU. We believe such research will have broad ramifications, leading to study of the effect of all mass media on human

behavior.

THE HARM OF CENSORSHIP

The ACLU understands the concern of American parents that their children are being subjected to a barrage of written material that may wield real influence on their impressionable minds. But there is another danger that must be equally considered—the danger of censorship. To suppress books in the absence of a clear and present danger, even offensive comic books, is in violation of the First Amendment. And the weakening of the First Amendment can lead to the undermining of our free institutions, which we want our children and their children to enjoy and respect. True, there may be a risk in allowing the circulation of books—all kinds of books—but risk is an indelible mark of democracy and a society of freedom. As the ACLU's executive director, Patrick Murphy Malin said, in his testimony before the Gathings Committee:

"All that I have said does not mean that action cannot be taken to curb the abuses that arise in this field. Such action is already taking place in American homes, schools, the churches and synagogues—all mustered to do battle with any evil tendencies, if such there be, that crime books may bring out. Are we to say that these forces are powerless? - - -

"There may be, in the absence of censorship, some risk that some persons along the line may possibly get hurt. But our life is founded upon risk. There is risk—and indeed certainty—that every day many people will be killed by automobiles, and yet we leave automobiles on our streets. I suggest to you that the institution of free speech is surely just as vital to our society as the automobile. Risk there is in all life, and we must take this risk on the side of freedom. That is the glory of our way of life. Censorship is abhorrent to Americanism."

APPENDIX

1. *Individuals taking the position that there is a direct or significant relationship between the reading of "crime" comic books and the increase of juvenile delinquency:*

(a) Frederic Wertham, *Seduction of the Innocent*, 1954, p. 164.

"Our researches have proved that there is a significant correlation between crime-comics reading and the more serious forms of juvenile delinquency. Many children read only few comics, read them for only a short time, read the better type (to the extent

that there is a better type) and do not become imbued with the whole crime-comics atmosphere. Those children, on the other hand, who commit the more serious types of delinquency nowadays, read a lot of comic books, go in for the worst type of crime comics, read them for a long time and live in thought in the crime-comics world."

Frederic Wertham, "What Parents Don't Know About Comic Books," *Ladies Home Journal*, November, 1953, p. 219:

"Crime comics create a mental atmosphere of deceit, trickery and cruelty. Many of the children I have studied have come to grief over it. How best to summarize the attitudes most widely played up in crime comics? One might list them in some such way as this: assertiveness, defiance, hostility, desire to destroy or hurt, search for risk and excitement, aggressiveness, destructiveness, sadism, suspiciousness, adventurousness, non-submission to authority. Anybody could make up such a list by going over a thousand comic books. Actually, though, this is a literal summary of the traits of typical delinquents found by the famous criminologists Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck in a study of 500 delinquents when compared with 500 non-delinquents. In other words, the very traits that we officially wish to avoid we unofficially inculcate."

(b) Walter Lippmann, *New York Herald Tribune*, September 7, 1954:

"Third—There can be no real doubt, it seems to me, that the movies and television and the comic books are purveying violence and lust to a vicious and intolerable degree. There can be no real doubt that public exhibitions of sadism tend to excite sadistic desires and to teach the audience how to gratify sadistic desires. Nor can there be any real doubt that there is a close connection between the suddenness of the increase in sadistic crimes and the new vogue of sadism among the mass media of entertainment.

Censorship is no doubt a clumsy and usually a stupid and self-defeating remedy for such evils. But a continual exposure of a generation to the commercial exploitation of the enjoyment of violence and cruelty is one way to corrode the foundations of a civilized society. For my own part, believing as I do in freedom of speech and thought, I see no objection in principle to censorship of the mass entertainment of the young. Until some more refined way is worked out of controlling this evil thing, the risks to our liberties are, I believe, decidedly less than the risks of unmanageable violence."

(c) Charles T. G. Rogers, Chief Probation Officer, San Diego, California, *Juvenile Delinquency, Special Committee to Investigate*

Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce, Senate Report, 81st Congress, 2nd Session, 1950 (hereinafter referred to as *Juvenile Delinquency . . .*) p. 35:

"There is no doubt that a relationship exists between the reading of crime comic books and juvenile delinquency. Like the dime novels of an earlier era; the normal, well-adjusted child could read them without the experience being traumatic or sparking a pattern of behavior unacceptable to the society in which he functioned; the danger of such literature *is* to the juvenile whose psychological or emotional make-up predisposes him "to deviant reaction. The youngster of border-line or lower mentality who is susceptible to suggestion in any form may be stimulated to attempt to carry out activities depicted in a crime comic. The emotionally or psychologically maladjusted child who feels a greater need for attention or security than normal, and who has failed to achieve such attention or security through normal channels, may attempt to secure the attention or gain recognition by criminal acts. These may use crime comics as a source book."⁶

(d) *Report of the New York State Joint Legislative Committee to study the Publication of Comics, Legislative Document No. 37, 1954, p. 11:*

- "4. So-called 'comics' are a most effective medium for the dissemination of ideas and when such a medium *is* used to disseminate bad ideas which may leave deep impressions on the keen, absorptive minds of children, the unrestricted publication and distribution of 'comics' becomes a matter of grave public concern.
6. The reading of crime 'comics' stimulate[s] sadistic and masochistic attitudes and interfere[s] with the normal development of sexual habits in children and produce abnormal sexual tendencies in adolescents.
7. Crime 'comics' are a contributing factor leading to juvenile delinquency."

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2. *Individuals taking the position that there is some relationship, though not necessarily a significant one, between the reading of "crime" comic books and the increase of juvenile delinquency:*

(a) *Interim Report of the Committee on the Judiciary, Senate Report No. 1064, 83rd Congress, 2nd Session, 1954, p. 10:*

"Through TV, radio, movies, and comics, children are fed a heavy diet of violence and crime. Although it is generally pointed out that law and order eventually prevail in these presentations, the life of the underworld *is* frequently glamorized in the process. Lawlessness and evil are overcome only by brute force. Opinion thus far received *is* varied relative to effects of such programs upon the behavior of youth. That it has some influence is manifest in the play and garb of children. The old western tradition of checking your gun at the door is now literally carried on in the elementary classroom. The subcommittee has had called to its attention instances in which youngsters are required to leave their play 'shooting irons' outside the classroom, indicating the effect of mass media western programs have upon such children. Whether or not such programs also influence a child's attitude towards the standards of society and his sense of right and wrong is a matter to be explored by the subcommittee in its future work."

(b) Katherine F. Lenroot, Chief, Children's Bureau, Federal Security Agency, *Juvenile Delinquency*, p. 8:

"There is general agreement in this country that delinquency is a product of multiple causes, that it is not a single act or a single determining factor or cause. We know that economic insecurity, parental neglect, domestic strife, lack of training, lack of love and affection, lack of spiritual guidance, lack of recreational facilities, inconsistent discipline, and physical handicaps are some of the factors which must be considered. I doubt, in the absence of some of these other factors, whether the reading of comic books *per se* will make a boy or girl delinquent. Any publication that glamorizes crime and criminals and presents in detail illegal acts and techniques may be harmful to some children. Boys and girls who have been exposed to unsatisfactory home and community conditions and, therefore, [are] vulnerable to delinquency may adopt certain illegal acts or techniques from these publications. Publications that provide schooling in crime for those youngsters who might have otherwise expressed their anti-social drives by less serious and less damaging misbehavior are obviously dangerous."

(c) Harold R. Muntz, Chief Probation Officer, Hamilton County, Ohio, *Juvenile Delinquency . . .*, p. 13:

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"Some readers, we believe, easily follow the suggestions of the comic book pages, while others just as easily slough off these influences and are not impelled to try to imitate the activities of the comic book characters or improve upon their experiences and learn by their fictional mistakes. We believe there is a relationship between reading crime comic books and juvenile delinquency, but only as one factor in a great list of factors that cause delinquency."

3. *Individuals taking the position that there is little or no relationship between the reading of "crime" comic books and the increase of juvenile delinquency, or that there is insufficient information to make a useful judgment:*

(a) Philippe Bauchard, *The Child Audience* (published by UNESCO),

1952, pp. 13 and 14:

"In fact, where the influences affecting children are concerned, it seems essential to make a clear sweep of all preconceived ideas and prejudices, such as that the cinema encourages juvenile delinquency, pornography is dangerous for the young, accounts of crimes incite children to imitate the criminals, etc. In truth; strange as it may appear, we are forced to admit that we know almost nothing about what affects the child. It is thus for non-official bodies dealing with children, for the psychology and pedagogy departments of universities or, failing them, for the public authorities to initiate research which would enable us to say and, in many cases, to know how and why, when and in what circumstances, children react. (p. 13)

"So long as this preliminary work is not done, neither educators, legislators, nor those publishing papers, directing films or producing broadcasts for children, will be in a position to achieve anything useful. To try to safeguard children without knowing what really endangers them, to set out to please them without knowing their tastes or understanding their development processes is to court failure. As of 1952, despite the efforts and goodwill of educators and legislators, the desire of those who produce papers, films and broadcasts to attract and retain the juvenile public, in short, despite the endeavors of all who have tried to take an interest in children, the results obtained are far from encouraging." (p. 14)

(b) Charles Y. Glock, Director, Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University, "Juvenile Delinquency and the Mass Media," Sept. 15, 1954:

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"In the midst of our deep concern with this problem, all sorts of ideas have been advanced to explain why juvenile delinquency has become a common characteristic of our cities and suburbs. One of these ideas is that there is a relationship between the increase of delinquency and the extent to which crime and violence have invaded the content of our mass media.

"This contention has gained wide acceptance and support, in part, because it seems so manifestly to be true and, in part, because it appears to offer the possibility of a relatively easy solution to the problem. However, upon close examination, the evidence which has been accumulated in its support is not conclusive. We are still groping to learn just what effects exposure to the mass media do have on our children."

(c) Erik H. Erikson, Senior Staff Member, Austen Riggs Center (see *New York Times*, Oct. 3, 1954):

"There is too much 'scapegoating' on the subject of juvenile delinquency and not enough careful search for the real causes, an authority on adolescent psychology said today.

"Erik H. Erikson, senior staff member of the Austen Riggs Center here, asserted there was an unfortunate and increasing tendency to blame without adequate evidence such media as comic books, television, movies and all the graphic representations of violence."

(d) Ellen Winston, North Carolina State Board of Public Welfare, *Juvenile Delinquency* . . . , p. 15:

"In our experience we have been unable to fix any reliable relationship between reading crime comic books and juvenile delinquency. On the whole, causes of juvenile delinquency have seemed to lie much deeper in the personal and environmental difficulties of the child rather than in stimuli of the type offered by comic books."

(e) Wallace H. Kuralt, Superintendent, Department of Public Welfare, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, *Juvenile Delinquency*, p. 18:

"The staff of this court believes that there is no direct connection. We have never had a case in which reading crime comic books seemed to be a motivating factor in the art of delinquency. Many seriously delinquent children frequently seem to be unmoved by what normal children seek in the way of thrills and excitement. **If** crime comic books and crime plays on the radio offer this thrill which satisfies the more seriously delinquent, and there is evidence that they may, the result is probably of a positive value rather than a negative value. We have noticed that chronically delinquent children almost always are poor readers."

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(f) John J. Doyle, Probation Officer, Ramsay County, Minn.,
Juvenile Delinquency . . . , p. 28:

"You ask whether or not juvenile delinquency would decrease if crime comic books were not readily available to children. I doubt if crime comic books are any more significant as factors in the production of delinquency than their predecessor the dime novels were, and I would place the pool hall first, undesirable movies second, lurid magazines third, dramatic newspaper stories fourth, and comic books last.

"If you are measuring influences of a commercial nature, the delinquent is today what he always was: the product of the social milieu; i.e., the interplay of heredity and environment, and the child's everyday training in the home, the places he plays, the education he receives in school, and the people he meets, together with his physical and mental inheritance, are all of them more important than something he may read or see."

(g) E. W. Brewer, Case Work Supervisor, Superior Court of King County, Seattle, Wash., *Juvenile Delinquency* . . . , p. 29:

"My professional opinion is that any relationship between the two is a nebulous one. Those of us who have had specialized training for this field and have worked in the field of treating the delinquent child firmly believe that delinquency is a symptom of a sick personality. Myriad factors make up the total personality; and, therefore, crime comic books only present one of thousands of influences in the forming of any personality."

(h) Joseph A. Homer, Probation Officer, Juvenile Court of Allegheny County, Pittsburgh, Pa., *Juvenile Delinquency* . . . , p. 37:

"On this question there is a difference of opinion among our staff members. However, the great majority of them believe that there is a very little relationship between reading crime comic books and juvenile delinquency. The consensus of opinion is that those who are apprehended for violating the law and attribute this violation to reading comic books would have found some other means of committing the same offense anyway."