

Becoming suicidal I resumed drinking for the first time in seven years and moved out of state to get away from her as well as because I was financially crippled by the divorce and losing my house. When I visited, she sent me a fake restraining order:

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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON
FOR THE COUNTY OF MULTNOMAH

In the Matter of the Marriage of:

ALEXAND SUNSHINE BOWLES

aka ALEX WREKK,

Petitioner,

vs.

JOE BIEL

Respondent

Case No.

STIPULATED NO CONTACT ORDER

This matter came before the court on the agreement of Petitioner Alexand Sunshine Bowles (Wife) and Respondent Joe Biel (Husband), as evidenced by their signatures on this Stipulated No Contact Order. Having considered and approved the agreement and stipulation of the parties and the court being fully advised, now, therefore,

IT IS ORDERED AND ADJUDGED as follows:

1. Husband is prohibited from threatening, intimidating, interfering with, or menacing Wife. Furthermore, Wife is prohibited from any attempt to contact or return contact which Husband has made. Except for court proceedings, including depositions, hearings, and trials, Husband shall remain at least 20 feet away from Wife at all times, except as otherwise as agreed upon between the parties in writing, in a writing signed and witnessed by both parties.

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IT IS SO STIPULATED:

Alexand Sunshine Bowles

Date

Joe Biel

Date

I HEREBY DECLARE THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENT IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, AND THAT I UNDERSTAND IT IS MADE FOR USE AS EVIDENCE IN COURT AND IS SUBJECT TO PENALTY FOR PERJURY.

Alexand Sunshine Bowles

I HEREBY DECLARE THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENT IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, AND THAT I UNDERSTAND IT IS MADE FOR USE AS EVIDENCE IN COURT AND IS SUBJECT TO PENALTY FOR PERJURY.

Joe Biel

SUBMITTED BY:
SOTO LAW ASSOCIATES, LLC
Theresa I. Soto, OSB No. 062516
Of Attorneys for Petitioner

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Theresa Soto, OSB No. 062516
Of Attorneys for Respondent

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The short of it: I moved back in with J, things went badly, I left him, took some time and then got back together with Paul.

I continued to work on things like boundaries and respecting myself that I had learned in Counseling. The more I seemed to ask for my boundaries to be respected the more J tried to hold onto power and control that was opposed to those boundaries. He was doing it so sweetly that it was difficult to put a finger on it. It eventually became clear that my inherent flexibility had allowed me to be used and manipulated. I came the realization that I was not crazy as J said and that needs were legitimate and then I really started sorting what I needed from what he was giving me.

There were other things that came out of counseling and leaving J that I didn't expect. I started getting along with my parents in ways I never did before. J always judged them under the magnifying glass of class war and was never able to see them as humans. He didn't like his parents, why should I like mine?

I had kept a lot from my parents all my life but once I started opening up to them and even giving them a copy of Brainscan 21 they started to understand what I was going through. They offered to loan me money if I needed it and my dad started researching divorce in Oregon. They told me they were there for me and offered their support.

My family had always liked Paul. If you noticed my sister was in several of the flashback stories. We all used to hang out together and go to shows. After Paul

and I were back together my mom told me that she appreciates how he never tells me how to deal with my situation with J. She can tell that he knows I have the strength and intelligence to handle it. Paul and I have a nice mutual flexibility. We acknowledge each others knowledge and expertise. When we disagree we look it up. We don't challenge each other with our feet set in concrete insisting that we are right.

It has been hard for me to go through all the writing about the past 5 years. It was hard to put my brain back in such a confined space and watch myself work my way out. I am so much happier now. I may be traveling alone for over a month but Paul knows this is what I need to do and I know he has things he needs to do in that time. I know that when we are together again we will listen to records, cook food in our awesome new kitchen, try the new seasonal beers and finish crossword puzzles at our favorite pub.

The final straw came in August right before the 2005 Portland Zine Symposium. J and I set up a time to discuss how to avoid fighting during the event because we did every year. Every single year for the 4 previous zine symposiums we had huge fights. We were both organizers and were stressed out which always erupted into huge fights. I was determined to talk about that 5th year so we could figure out how to support each other. I expressed my needs and boundaries to feel safe and comfortable.

He found my needs unreasonable. He didn't want to work out a schedule for our table. He wanted to leave whenever he wanted not caring that I would have to pick up the slack. Then he tore into me about my behavior at events and saying I'm lazy and don't do anything citing

the Allied Media Conference the past June where it was my birthday, I had ridden my bike 30 miles with a severe head and chest cold. I had taken medication, which I normally never take, my throat felt like fire and my brain couldn't think straight. It was a low blow to use that as a reference but that was just typical of his behavior, painting me as wrong in his eyes to get what he wanted.

That was it for me. I didn't need to be ridiculed ~~just~~ because he wasn't getting what he wanted. My concerns were valid. I had been noticing patterns with J. Patterns with me. Patterns with work. Patterns with his family. I had enough.

For months we lived in the same house and I rented a basement room as I was trying to figure out what to do next. I visited Paul in Utah twice. On one of those

My life was changing and things were falling into place. I was still working with J and I moved into my new apartment at the beginning of February, Paul moved to Portland and into our apartment at the end of February.

Working with J was becoming increasingly difficult. We were trying to make our business a collective yet he kept doing things behind the supposed Collective's back insisting that not everyone's vote was equal. He wouldn't let Paul visit me at work to bring me lunch or walk me home yet he had various people he dated run errands for our business and even work on larger projects without me knowing. I eventually caught him in several lies.

Things were getting to be too much for my brain to handle on my own. I was having nightmares and waking up with panic attacks so in the Spring of 2006.

I started seeing a counselor weekly for several months. We worked on issues of self worth and resentment relating to my relationship with J. She helped me start to unravel years of mistreatment and what ultimately I came to understand as years of emotional abuse. I wrote more about that in Brainscan 21.

I eventually had to quit working with J. Unfortunately it was at a time when he was on tour. He had done things that made me completely incapable of doing the job I was supposed to do. He took my name off the business checking account, canceled my business credit card, left no petty cash, changed the locks on our house without giving me a key and a couple other backhanded things. I scheduled an emergency appointment with my counselor mid-melt-down to check in and make sure I had all my ducks in a row. Then I quit in October 2006.

In my previous counseling with J I had learned that I try to please people and that I'm very flexible and accomodating. It took me 28 years to realize that. It turns out that my flexibility is a blessing and a curse. My adaptability may allow me to see the world differently and act in turn. I found that my mercurial dynamic nature prevented me from setting concrete boundaries. It was easy to have an idea of what I didn't want, but harder to know what I did want. The gray space between was perfectly susceptible to being taken advantage of and manipulated

All my romantic relationships, besides Paul, were with people who pursued me. I was flattered by the attention. My flexibility, like a willow bent me in the breeze of who I was around and the attention they gave me.

In the beginning when J flattered my art and writing I was drawn to him and felt I owed flexibility to that flattery. What I was unable to see then was his male privilege and family experience had taught him that he deserved it, that it was appropriate for people to bend to him. Under the microscope it was a very unhealthy relationship. I guess some of that was coming through when I initially told J that I was unhappy and boxed in. I knew that something wasn't right.

For me, the idea that I had tried for years to make someone happy but was unable to frustrated me. I guess it also frustrated him.

What it came down to was that one spark, a catalyst to show me that wasn't what love was. Some flexible willows get bent into wicker furniture. I didn't want to be furniture rearranged in a room to J's liking.

Paul was that catalyst. He showed me that love was supposed to be unconditional, not bending someone to your will or even a static state. Love is a dance; a verb, not a noun, as Bell Hooks says.

Paul told me that in 1999 he was having an identity crisis and could see that he was holding me back. He didn't want to hold me back or drag me down so he let me go so he could sort himself out. He was fine to be the 'villain' in my life. Looking back, sure it was hard for me to move on but it is pretty obvious now that we both had a lot of growing up to do. I'm glad I moved to Portland and have been able to accomplish all that I have.

It took until April 2007 to finally settle the divorce. J got the business and I got the house that I was planning to sell and open a bottle shop of beer. J moved the business out of state where his new girlfriend lived.

Paul and I worked to fix up the house for sale. We painted the exterior, refinished the wood floors, painted over years of punk house interior colors, put in new light fixtures, new flooring in the kitchen, and fixed up the yard.

All of this was done in 2007, just in time for my 30th birthday in June, and just in time for the housing market to crash. The house wasn't even worth the gross of what our business made that year so I was sort of screwed, but at least I had a beautiful house and the love of my life. Instead of selling it we moved into the house in October of 2007 with some friends and have been living happily ever after.

Robert and I had met at a church retreat when I was 15 and we became best friends. Robert was in love with me for a long time and looking back I see that it took me well over a year to finally give into his flattery. We started dating when I was 16, through the end of high school and into college. That's when I realized that placating him in his neurotic, forceful, jealous doting was making me mentally unstable. Robert was the first lesson in learning that there comes a point in relationships that my mental health meant more than making someone else happy.

[REDACTED]

At the age of 19 when I broke up with him he told me

[REDACTED]

"YOUR IMPERFECTIONS SHATTERED MY WORLD"

10 years of water under the and I'm stepping off the train at the Delancy stop, climbing up to the busy streets of the Lower East Side and instantly identifying Robert's towering frame with

I'M A WRECKER

#2

you said that all the girls in your life seem to have some association with Jawbreaker, and that when we weren't together anymore I would end up buying a Ford Escort like your other ex-girlfriends. I decided to leave the State, buy a bike, and find a boy who likes Jawbreaker and used to have a Ford Escort instead.

brainscan zine

P.O. Box 14332 PORTLAND OREGON 97288

Trade/Stamp/\$1.00



1999 zine, plus the advertisement for it which focuses on Joe

TRUST ME: I know what I'm doing

About Me

October 24, 2013 at 9:58am

Home

Reblogged from alexwrekk

Hard Fifty Duke: alexwrekk: Well, I didn't expect my day to be ruined first things in the morning by Joe Biel →

jessie-duke:

alexwrekk:

gnade:

Yes, this is true. Joe Biel from Microcosm is threatening Jessie Duke from Pioneers Press with a \$48,000 some-odd dollars lawsuit. And we're not the first zinesters he's threatened with lawsuits this year ...

Don't ever sign a contract with Joe Biel.

Don't ever intern with Joe Biel.

Don't ever buy anything from Joe Biel.

Don't get your zine published or distroed by Joe Biel.

Put your money (and ethics) where your mouth is.

DON'T STAND FOR ABUSERS SUING THEIR VICTIMS.

Always speak out!

Boycott Microcosm Publishing!

alexwrekk:

When I said that survivors of abuse should be supported I alluded to boycotting Microcosm, but it's not enough to simply boycott. If you mean to send a message you should let them know why you are not spending your money with them, why you don't want your zine/book distributed or published or your artwork used by them. Also, if you have had specific problems with your interactions with Microcosm you should speak up. Trust me, you are not the only one. Let them know what they need to fix, what they need to pay more mind to. Give them an option, give them a choice to change because ultimately, it's not only in their best interest, it's the right thing to do.

If Microcosm truly wants to show that it is a collective, that they do not struggle with Joe's abuses of power, and that they support the ideas and values behind the books and zine they publish and distribute then then should as Cindy Crabb said in this [post](#), "come up with a collective statement confronting/admitting Joe's abuse and manipulation, and/or for Joe to legally remove himself from the collective". I'd also like to add another option, for people in the community and people who are associated with Microcosm to seriously encourage Joe to cooperate in a transparent accountability process because his hurtful actions and problematic behaviors are putting people's livelihoods in jeopardy.

My intent was never to destroy Microcosm or Joe or anyone that works with Microcosm. I left Microcosm in October of 2006 because I was not happy with how the business worked or how I was treated. With a whisper I have been asking for accountability for almost 4 years, I got tired and left it to smoulder. But now I'm tired of seeing other people hurt and disrespected and having no voice and I'm really glad to hear that other people are recognizing this..

So, if you aren't on the "Alex Wrekk is crazy" train, or the utilitarian "my calculator does social math and it tells me that the good outweighs the bad" camp, or the "Microcosm is great for me so why should I care?" brigade here's some other awesome distros to check out to buy zines and maybe even have your zines distributed. If you know if more distros that should be on this list let me know:

So, the question is do I think people should support Joe Biel and Microcosm? If you think survivors of abuse should be believed, supported and respected and you believe abusers should be held accountable to their community and those they have hurt then I think you know my answer.

This tumblr contains mostly a collection of things from the internet that amuse me like cats & fandoms with a side of light social justice. Check the links above for specific interests.

mostly straight white cis-lady - they/them/their/she/her/hers

arterialtrees Follow

Few abusive men rely entirely on verbal abuse or intimidation to control their partners. Being a nonstop bully is too much work, and it makes the man look bad. If he is abusive all the time, his partner starts to recognize that she's being abused, and the man may feel too guilty about his behavior. The abuser therefore tends to switch frequently to manipulating his partner to get what he wants. He may also sometimes use these tactics just to get her upset or confused.

There are some signs of manipulation by abusers that you can watch for:

- *Changing his moods abruptly and frequently*, so that you find it difficult to tell who he is or how he feels, keeping you constantly off balance. His feelings toward *you* are especially changeable.
- *Denying the obvious about what he is doing or feeling*. He'll speak to you with his voice trembling with anger, or he'll blame a difficulty on you, or he'll sulk for two hours, and then deny it to your face. You know what he did—and so does he

—but he refuses to admit it, which can drive you crazy with frustration. Then he may call you irrational for getting so upset by his denial.

- *Convincing you that what **he** wants you to do is what is best for you.* This way the abuser can make his selfishness look like generosity, which is a neat trick. A long time may pass before you realize what his real motives were.
- *Getting you to feel sorry for him, so that you will be reluctant to push forward with your complaints about what he does.*
- *Getting you to blame yourself, or blame other people, for what he does.*
- *Using confusion tactics in arguments, subtly or overtly changing the subject, insisting that you are thinking or feeling things that you aren't, twisting your words, and many other tactics that serve as glue to pour into your brain. You may leave arguments with him feeling like you are losing your mind.*
- *Lying or misleading you about his actions, his desires, or his reasons for doing certain things, in order to guide*

alexwrekk



Follow

you into doing what he wants you to do. One of the most frequent complaints I get from abused women is that their partners lie repeatedly, a form of psychological abuse that in itself can be highly destructive over time.

- *Getting you and the people you care about turned against each other by betraying confidences, being rude to your friends, telling people lies about what you supposedly said about them, charming your friends and then telling them bad things about you, and many other divisive tactics.*

In some ways manipulation is worse than overt abuse, especially when the two are mixed together. When a woman gets called “bitch,” or gets shoved or slapped, she at least knows what her partner did to her. But after a manipulative interaction she may have little idea what went wrong; she just knows that she feels terrible, or crazy, and that somehow it seems to be her own fault.



arterialtrees

Lundy Bancroft 'Why Does He Do That'

6,396 notes



Exhibit E

Show All



polyglotplatypus Follow

Dan Harmon's Apology To Megan Ganz - Harmontown 272

Harmontown

polyglotplatypus

Last week, former *Community* writer Megan Ganz engaged in an online dialogue with her old boss, Dan Harmon, about the ways he “treated [he like garbage]” and “crossed lines” when they worked together. At the time Ganz said she wasn’t ready to accept Harmon’s apology, and he offered to do anything he could to make it right.

And in a rare and encouraging outcome for these scenarios, Harmon apologized at length for his behavior on the new episode of *Harmontown* released today, and Ganz says she accepts his apology. In fact, she was the one who called attention to the apology on Twitter, saying, “it is a masterclass in How to Apologize. He’s not rationalizing or justifying or making excuses. He doesn’t just vaguely acknowledge some general wrongdoing in the past. He gives a full account.”

Megan Ganz @meganganz 18h
Here's a weird one for you: Last week, I called out my former boss @danharmon for sexual harassment, and today I'm going to ask you to listen to his podcast. harmontown.com/2018/01/episod...

Megan Ganz @meganganz
I'm not being flippant. I didn't bring up this mess just to sweep it back under the rug. But I find myself in the odd position of having requested an apology publicly, and then having received one—a good one—also publicly. I waited 6 years for it, but you can find it 18:38 in.
9:41 AM - Jan 11, 2018
13 replies 588 retweets 5,101 likes

Megan Ganz @meganganz 18h
Replying to @meganganz
Please listen to it. It's only seven minutes long, but it is a masterclass in How to Apologize. He's not rationalizing or justifying or making excuses. He doesn't just vaguely acknowledge some general wrongdoing in the past. He gives a full account.

Megan Ganz @meganganz
Yes, I only listened because I expected an apology. But what I didn't expect was the relief I'd feel just hearing him say these things actually happened. I didn't dream it. I'm not crazy. Ironic that the only person who could give me that comfort is the one person I'd never ask.
9:41 AM - Jan 11, 2018
30 replies 607 retweets 7,503 likes

we rarely see big figures in the industry come clean about what they did wrong, and even moreso in such a public way, so i thought i'd isolate this apology for everyone to listen to.

#i too might accept an apology that was this thoughtful reflective sincere and truly aware and personally accountable for the understanding o
#of power in a situation.

2,852 notes

Share, Reply, Retweet, Like icons

FOLLOW ON TUMBLR ASK ME, ASK ME, ASK ME! RSS FEED ARCHIVE



hermitcrabzine replied to your post: anonymous asked:so pioneer's took...

AHEM dear snot-nosed anonymous, courts are bullshit. having a settlement doesn't mean right/wrong. it just means rather than wasting more energy/time/lifeforce in a bullshit court there was a settlement.

Exactly.

Jan 26, 2015 9:12 am 3 Notes



HERMITCRABZINE

Like 0 Tweet 0 +1 0 tumblr.

gnadeadam likes this

mappingthemoon likes this

paulbaribeau likes this

alexwrekk posted this



Tweet 0

anonymous asks:

Who won the lawsuit? Why isn't this common knowledge in the 'zine community'?

alexwrekk said:

Does anyone ever really "win" a lawsuit like that? There was a settlement so no one actually "won" because it didn't go to/finish the trial.

I don't know why more people don't know about this. A lot of life depends on the direction we are looking at and the tools and information we have available to educate ourselves. Also, Pretty sure Joe conducted a lovely smear campaign while the Pioneers Press were unable to say anything as it could have been used in court against them. I hear the reddit AMA was filled with lies and obfuscation. I haven't read it because I think I would find it extremely triggering, but that's what I hear.

Jan 25, 2015 9:49 am 4 Notes



ANONYMOUS GO ASK ALEX

Tweet 0

anonymous asks:

what was the result of the pioneer's press lawsuit? do you know?

alexwrekk said:

I typed up a whole thing and then tumblr ate it.

The short answer is yes, I do know some of what happened. However, I'm not sure how much I can say. Someone who is very close to me and not connected to the case went to the trial as an observer and saw the whole thing. I'm not sure how much they can or want to say. I can say publicly.

Comments



Alex Wrekk says:

July 1, 2011 at 3:58 PM

It might be better if you linked to these on my blog:

<http://alexwrekk.wordpress.com/2010/07/29/so-whats-the-deal-with-you-and-microcosm/>

or this:

<http://alexwrekk.wordpress.com/2010/12/31/a-microcosm-public-statement-seriously/>

or my response to this Microcosm statement including the responses that were deleted off their site:

<http://alexwrekk.wordpress.com/2011/06/23/my-response-to-the-microcosm-public-statement/>

Reply



Millicent says:

July 2, 2011 at 10:57 PM

Y'all don't offer any commentary here. It's nice that you linked to Alex's posts about the situation, but without affirming her conclusions that this statement is too little, too late for the reasons she and others detail in her linked posts, this post implies that this letter makes Microcosm a good model of community accountability. It's not.

Zinesters and punks: Boycott Microcosm. There are plenty of other zine distros that sell zines about support & consent whose collectives don't violate those principles.

Reply

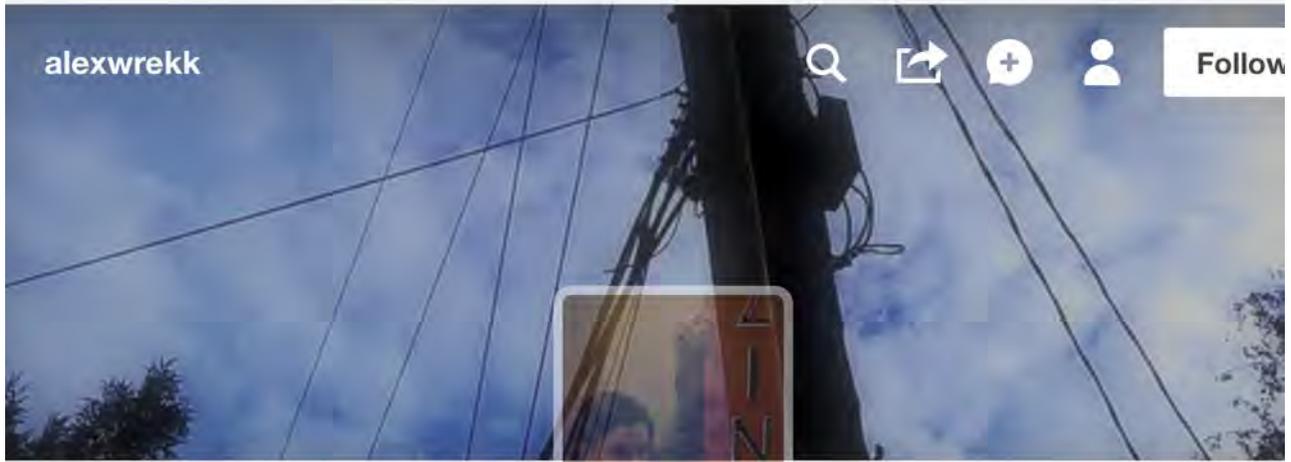


zach bender says:

October 18, 2011 at 4:44 PM

i am myself a survivor of psychological and emotional abuse extending over more than twenty years. i am slightly acquainted with joe biel and his current partner, elly blue, on what i would call a friendly basis. i have read brainscan 21, and what i find there is a story of two young people, each somewhat confused and imperfect in their communications with one another. i do not find alex herself saying that what joe "did to" her was intentional. if the legal matters between these two have been resolved, i think everyone needs to move on.

Reply



STUFF AND THINGS

This tumblr contains mostly a collection of things from the internet that amuse me like cats & fandoms with a side of light social justice. Check the links above for specific interests.

mostly straight white cis-lady - they/them/their/she/her/hers

Microcosm Distribution makes custom buttons now, eh?

I think that the the Microcosm Publishing/Distribution split is a laughable attempt at change, but I don't really care enough about it to spend much time on it. They still support and carry Microcosm Publishing titles so I still see them as supporters and apologists for Joe Biel.

What I found today annoys me. Apparently Microcosm Distribution makes custom buttons. Microcosm Publishing didn't and doesn't make custom buttons since I left. Do you know why? Because I was the one who made custom buttons when I worked there and when I left Microcosm and divorced Joe there was an agreement that Microcosm would not make custom buttons and compete with my business. So, Microcosm Distribution is a totally different company? Great, I guess that means they don't have to honor the agreements made by Microcosm Publishing.

If you would like to get custom buttons made by someone who has been doing this since 2000, you should follow me to my new project Portland Button Works.

STUFF AND THINGS

This tumblr contains mostly a collection of things from the internet that amuse me like cats & fandoms with a side of light social justice. Check the links above for specific interests.

mostly straight white cis-lady - they/them/their/she/her/hers

gofundme.com



Click here to support Legal Fee Fund for Alex Wrekk organized by Amber D. Garza >

Hello all in receipt of this plea. I am writing to ask you for your help for a member of our community. Alex Wrekk, a treasure to the zine community and all-around wonderful person, needs our help. She's being sued by Joe Biel in Portland, Oregon. We can't discuss specifics, but needless to say,...

I can't discuss specifics about this, but I would love any help you could send my way from spreading the word to donating some pocket change.

I started crying the other day
when I noticed that Paul had refilled the
saltshaker,

me on the floor crying
because of something
as simple as
a refilled saltshaker.

I was crying on a floor that gets
mopped in a house with a toilet
cleaned by a man I live with,
who doesn't have to be asked
to do these or other things around

Why is that such an
earth-shattering event?

J never did any of those sorts of
small tasks. His head was always
on the next prize the next goal
and never in the present.

It is really amazing that he has
gotten as far as he has with such
an inability to function in normal,
everyday tasks.

His dedication to his causes
has lost him his health
and his marriage, and it is really
hard not to say he doesn't deserve
it a little bit.



[s://alexwrekk.wordpress.com/2010/07/29/so-whats-the-deal-with-you-and-microcosm/](https://alexwrekk.wordpress.com/2010/07/29/so-whats-the-deal-with-you-and-microcosm/)

realizing that the situation is not behind me when I dread running into him in public. I fear he, or one of his friends, will confront me so I don't go to events that I think he'll be at. I wrote him a letter expressing my boundaries and what he needs to do to show accountability and I have worked with mediators to try to set boundaries yet he has left flyers and put stickers in places he has been asked not to go, I have seen him ride by my house a few times, he sent me a very triggering letter that left me weeping on the post office steps when I had specifically asked him not to contact me. He has demonstrated time and again that he is incapable of respecting my boundaries. Maybe I too thought it was a personal thing and that I should keep silent. Our culture teaches us that we don't talk about such things publicly, they are our secret shames.

Quimby's

[See Translation](#)



I almost forgot, in case you didn't know, one of my favorite spectator sports is to watch the sinking ship that is Microcosm Publishing. It's great that I don't feel so attached at all these days but, I had to admit to myself that I must enjoy gossip because I find it pretty amusing to see the drama unfold from time to time. Usually my tip off is seeing hit spikes on [this post](#) and [this post](#). This time it had to do with a [space in Minneapolis asking not to have the latest Microcosm tour in their space](#). Then there was someone posting their ["sunshine is the best disinfectant" e-mail correspondent with Elly](#). Which lead to Ciara posting ["extortion is so punk rock"](#) on her blog. Maybe it is just me who has been banned from anything Joe puts on the internet, but does anyone else find it amusing that he never seems to be the person writing anything publicly anymore?

FOLLOW ON TUMBLR ASK ME, ASK ME, ASK ME! RSS FEED ARCHIVE



Ugh, I hate it when I remember things. I just realized today would have been my 12th anniversary with The Bile. Maybe one day an October 12th will go by without thinking about it.

Oct 12, 2014 1:15 pm 4 Notes



MY TEXT I MADE A HORRIBLE MISTAKE

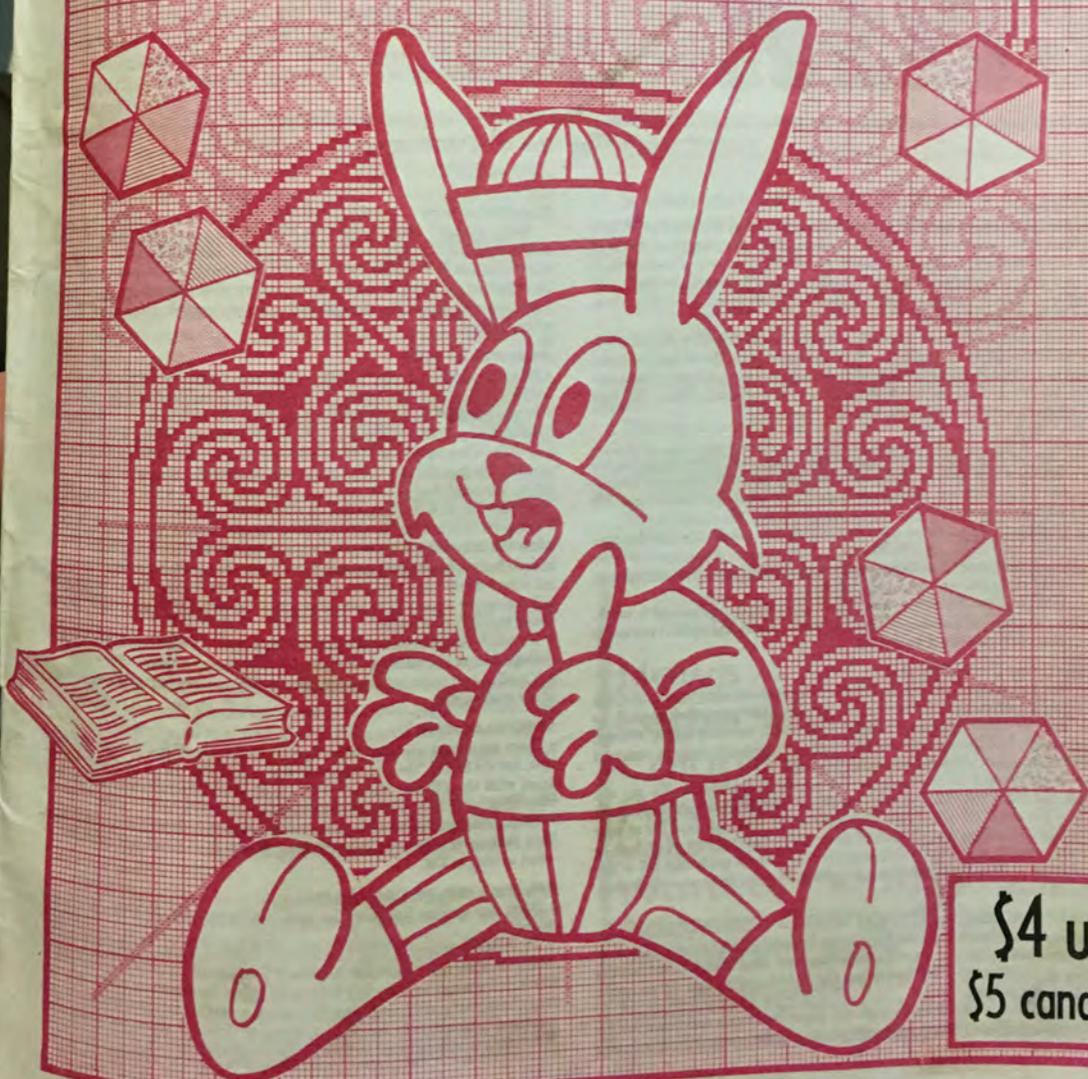
Tweet 0

g+1 0

ZINE WORLD

#25

A Reader's Guide to the Underground Press



\$4 us
\$5 canada

Free Speech Is for Everyone



Microschism

Joe Biel and Alex Wreck were one of the zine community's best-known couples. Together, they built Microcosm Publishing—a distributor of zines, books, stickers, buttons, and more—into a large and well-known distro, one with a positive reputation for the variety of their stock and their prompt payments to publishers. Together they published *Stolen Sharpie Revolution*, the ultimate how-to guide for zine publishers. Together they furthered the zine and DIY community.

Last year, Joe and Alex got divorced. Alex quit working for Microcosm and started her own project, Small World Buttons. Joe moved to Bloomington, Ind., taking Microcosm with him. Those are the basic facts, but of course there is more to the story than that.

In a manifesto published on the Microcosm website, and within articles published by Portland media, Joe explained that part of his reason for moving away from Portland was that his difficulty purchasing affordable property, for a permanent building to house Microcosm's operations. Initially, Joe planned to invest in a redevelopment project in Northeast Portland, but he later pulled out as "the project became less and less in touch with our values."

In early 2007, Joe announced he was moving to Bloomington, a place where he had friends and had previously spent time interning at Boxcar Books. During the transitional period and since, Microcosm has had a nearly complete turnover in staff. Currently Microcosm has four full-time employees in Bloomington, continuing to employ the same collective decision-making process it has for the past two years. Microcosm still sells zines, books, stickers, patches, and other items but has stopped offering custom-made stickers and buttons. A few people continue to work for Microcosm in Portland (doing tabling and publicity), and Joe says Microcosm plans to open a new office / storefront in Portland.

Alex contends that Joe already had his sights on Bloomington at the time Microcosm pulled out of its re-development contract. In October, while Joe was on a zine tour, Alex quit Microcosm because of continuing personal conflicts between her and Joe. The two had already agreed for her to keep the house they had previously co-owned in Portland. Alex—who made buttons for Microcosm, among her other duties—now offers custom buttons through Small World Buttons. She plans to completely revise *Stolen Sharpie Revolution*, releasing the new edition through Fall of Autumn Press.

In the interest of full disclosure: Zine World has long had a business relationship with Microcosm Publishing. Microcosm is currently our largest wholesale customer, and they have been a frequent advertiser with us. Microcosm sends us numerous zines and books for review. In addition, I am friends with Alex, and we recently co-presented a panel discussion at the Richmond Zine Festival (with Taylor Ball of Parcell Press).

We at Zine World have always held that it is impossible to be impartial when it comes to news, and this particular story is no exception. For that reason, we're going to let Alex and Joe tell their story themselves. In the following Q&As, we let Alex and Joe tell us, in their own words, about the changes that have taken place and the ones that are to come for Microcosm, SSR, and their other projects.

But even this isn't the whole story. We didn't want this article to be an airing of dirty laundry, so we cut out the personal attacks and claims we couldn't substantiate. —Jerianne

Alex Wreck

When did you become a part of Microcosm?

Joe started Microcosm on his own in 1996 in Cleveland, Ohio. He and I were pen pals and I wrote for his old zine. I invited him to move to Portland in 1999 and my first official Microcosm "work" (unpaid of course) was collecting his mail before he moved to Portland and e-mailing him the orders. Once he got here I was peripherally involved in the goings on. I started making buttons for Microcosm in 2000 but I held a normal job until 2001 when I went to making buttons full time. In 2002 I put out SSR and in 2003 was the first time I was ever paid for any of my non-button Microcosm work.

Did you and Joe co-own Microcosm as a business?

I "co-owned" Microcosm only in word. Joe told me several times that he would put my name on the papers but never did. When Microcosm started the stages of becoming a collective I felt there was no need to push for it further.

Tell us about quitting Microcosm.

I had planned to stay at Microcosm, but I feel like Joe was pushing me to quit. ... Leaving Microcosm was one of the hardest things I have ever done. I loved that little company like a child and feel like I watched it grow up as something that has been in my heart since 1999. I just knew that staying was the worst thing for me mentally and emotionally and that I can't work with someone who can't respect my boundaries.

Fall of Autumn will be the new publisher for Stolen Sharpie Revolution. Will Microcosm still sell it?

I would rather that Microcosm not have any distribution of it.

Is it ok with you that they're still selling copies of the older edition?

At first it was ok but then personal issues came up and I tried to buy back all my copies that were left. Microcosm denied my request with no reason other than it was what they thought was appropriate. I'm really

frustrated with them.

Why did you ask Microcosm to stop using the chainer heart logo? What was the response? Do you think it's a fair request to make, considering it is so well known as the Microcosm logo?

The chainer heart image was created by Aaron Rainer as the design for Joe and I to get as a wedding tattoo. At some point Joe wanted to make stickers out of it and we discussed making something so personal into a logo. We never intended it to get so big. We saw the design as being a part of us, and became something that represented both of us and our company. As egotistical as it might sound, when I had to leave I felt that Microcosm would never be the same without me. I have been told that I was seen as the heart of Microcosm and Joe was the head. Joe and I looked at Microcosm like our child, something we had grown and nurtured for years; leaving was really difficult.

I have asked them to stop using the image as a logo, because the intent of the design is no longer there. However, I have not asked for them to stop distributing the design. I'm content to let the image blend into collective symbolism but that can't happen if Microcosm continues to use it as a logo; it is still branding a company with something I had tattooed on my body before it belonged to the company. ... To be honest, I think the image is a lot more recognizable to the bike community as just a symbol than it is to the zine community as belonging to Microcosm.

Are there other products you designed or had a hand in that you have asked Microcosm to stop producing or selling?

There were several designs and items that I have had my hand in, probably a considerable portion of the catalog. But that input spans the gamut from coming up with ideas, designing images, brainstorming concepts, figuring out who to ask to publish next, or just editing the wording on a sticker designs. But how can you quantify time spent talking across a table at breakfast? There are a few designs that I

specifically asked them to stop publishing, the "resist gossip" and "resist fashion" come to mind; there were a few others. Again, my requests were ignored.

Anything else you want to say?

I'm really disheartened at the treatment I have received from Microcosm after leaving. I expected more from someone I have known for a decade and a company that I poured myself into for so many years. I understand that in this situation it is really difficult to separate the personal and the business but these concerns are sort of the tip of the iceberg. As a company they just leave a really bad taste in my mouth. ...

The next edition of *Stolen Sharpie Revolution* will be published by Fall of Autumn. It will be the 5th Anniversary edition! We are planning a complete overhaul. I'm really excited about it since some of the content is a bit outdated and the zine community is more Internet-focused these days. We plan to add things like "what do you do at a zine fest anyway?" and sort of an open discussion about etiquette, zines, and education and a few other new things in the resource section. It should be pretty fantastic. I'm back working on the Portland zine symposium again after a few years off so that should be fun (August 12-13). And I still make custom 1" and 1.25" buttons from my own website, www.smallworldbuttons.com.

Joe Biel

Was Alex ever considered co-owner of Microcosm?

Because we were married, Alex was entitled to half of my property, which legally made her an owner of Microcosm in 2002. She was never decidedly made an owner otherwise but weighed in on major decisions because of her legal ownership and had more of an unspoken, understood hierarchy because we were married. When I asked various employees what their perception of her role was in a day-to-day sense, the resounding response was that all decisions were my brainchildren and that I ran the long term planning ship and decided our focus and towards the end of her involvement, Alex ran the office in a day-to-day kind of management sense.

How has moving changed the dynamics of Microcosm? Is it still collectively run?

The biggest change in dynamic is having fewer people who work more, are more focused, and don't need to be brought up to speed on what we do at every meeting. We have two monthly meetings—one for administrative discussions and changes and the other where we go over submissions and our publishing product chart as a group. We discuss titles that we could publish, discuss all of the current submissions that we are all required to read, and discuss the point that every future published title is at. These are paid, mandatory meetings where we discuss changes, brainstorm ideas, and make decisions as a group. It is also crucial for group communication even though we all work in the same office everyday.

Why do you think Microcosm has become the biggest / most well-known zine distro?

Principally I think our success of being large and well known are a product of sticking around. It doesn't hurt either that we have such a large and extensive catalog. We were also one of the first places (if not the first) that offered true online zine sales with a credit card. Regardless of the ethical concerns of such practices, it truly seems to be something that people desired from zines for a long time.

I think this is also a long-term product of lasting for 11 1/2 years while most others last for a year or two. Mind you, the personal compromises that I've made for eternal poverty, living without a car, cell phone, children, clean clothes, medical insurance, or free time have certainly allowed the 100 hours per week that I worked for free, for years to build up the organization to the point that it was at by the time that we started hiring anyone—Alex included. I think it's also important to note that we are part of an industry that is nearly extinct. Working here is pretty much an agreement that you will never be paid market rate for your skills or close to what it costs for a reasonable lifestyle.

Stolen Sharpie Revolution has long been Microcosm's most popular selling title. How will Microcosm adjust to the loss of SSR?

Stolen Sharpie Revolution was a pretty defining title for us over the last 5 years but it has been receding pretty steadily over the last two years. I think changing publishers is going to hurt the book more than anything, which is unfortunate for everyone involved. We have newer titles like the *Zinester's Guide to Portland* and *Making Stuff and Doing Things* that are selling quite a bit more copies now but since our focus has always been central around zines, we have been talking about [publishing] a new meta or theory book about zines. ...

We've been talking to Stephen Duncombe about republishing *Notes from Underground*, which went out of print this year. He offered the book to us as long as Verso is not going to republish it. In my opinion it is a good companion and theory book to a practical text like *SSR*. ... This week we got a call from Bill Brent about re-editing and republishing his book *Make a Zine* to bring it up to date. This is an even more appealing offer as it would allow me to re-edit this book, include new content that I feel is lacking in this medium, and publish a book without taking a year to write a new one.

What about other items that Alex designed or had a hand in, such as some of the buttons?

Alex [demanded] that we would discontinue selling/producing/distributing anything that she designed or produced. We have discontinued all buttons, stickers, and patches that Alex designed. She has taken many things that she didn't design and sells them through her website.

Alex said that she tried to buy back the leftover copies of the previous edition of SSR but her request was denied. Is this standard practice to deny such a request, or is this a special situation? Either way, why the refusal?

It is standard policy that we sell authors copies of their books at our cost to produce them. For the same reason it is very important to have careful understandings that they cannot just purchase these titles and sell them to outlets that we deal with, essentially undermining us. We do not work with contracts, just handshakes and agreements. Part of that agreement is that an author cannot purchase more than 10% of our present stock of an item. We offered Alex the 10% of what we had left of *SSR* (500 x 10% = 50 copies). Now we are down to about 300 copies. Also, part of the divorce agreement specifically stated that Microcosm would continue to distribute the remainder of this printing.

Another issue of contention is the chaining heart logo. Alex has said that she has repeatedly asked for Microcosm to stop using the image as its logo since your divorce and her quitting Microcosm, because of its history and what she feels it represents, but her requests have been ignored. What is your response?

When we were divorced, Microcosm was granted to me to do with it what I chose. I see using the logo that she contributed to as somewhat equitable to her taking the house that I put hundreds of hours of unpaid work into. ... The [chaining design] had been decided to be the logo for Microcosm in 2002. We also got married in 2002. There are differences between the logo images and the wedding tattoo. The image was brainstormed mutually but drawn by Aaron Renier, who was the legal owner. Microcosm has since purchased the image from him and because of this I feel it is unfair to be taken away from us after it was decided to be our logo for the last 5 years. Despite this and because of continued harassment from Alex to present employees, Microcosm has agreed to change to a new logo when we can find another one that we are equally happy with.

Anything else you'd like to add?

Microcosm is thousands in debt right now and has no money to its name. Its net worth is negative. We all do this because we want to. If we have another major financial problem it will probably be the end of us. Rich benefactors get in touch.



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Hi there!
This is Alex.

I just got back from NYC Feminist Zine Fest, where we had a great time with family, friends, snow, and zines! I come back home feeling supported & so thankful for my zine community.

Over 200 people have pitched in and I wanted send out my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to my legal fund. It means so much to me. You have no idea how much it makes my heart swell to see my friends, family, and my communities come together to support me however they are able. Every dollar counts. Every fundraiser, extra cash handed to me at events, or sharing of this gofundme online gives me hope and brings me to tears by your kindness.

I still can't discuss details of this case, but I have some public record filings to share with you. These can be shared as you see fit, as they are public documents.

The first document is the complaint filed against me. I know people have asked me what the specifics are and I haven't been able to answer but here you can read for yourself.

The second document is the fruit of this fundraiser: the anti-SLAPP motion we have filed. I would like to share with you what you have helped make happen. Lots of research and care went into drafting this document by my legal team. I am very pleased with the attention to detail and comprehensiveness of the filing.

Both documents can be found here. Please read the complaint first and the anti-SLAPP motion second.

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/voqqa24jn2j6bwz/AAA2YnnwRJK_W7BA5tCbpJX6a?dl=0

That being said, we are not done. My recent invoice from my attorney is close to \$15,000. This invoice covers all of the research and work that went into drafting the motion. With this gofundme, my personal funds, and the money donated off site I can cover this invoice, but there will be more fees and it is important to me to do this correctly and thoughtfully.

So, if you read these documents and think that maybe you could chip in a little more, that would be great! If you could even just spread the word a little more, that would be great too.

I am now offering a little perk! To everyone who donates \$10 or more I will let you in on a little project I've been working on. My partner Paul and I have been kicking around the idea of Stumbling Distance for

- \$20**
hopskotch SunDAY
6 hours ago
- \$50**
Jeremy Matthews
12 hours ago
- \$50**
Kurt Morris
12 hours ago
- \$25**
Devin Jordan
15 hours ago
- \$100**
Anonymous
16 hours ago
- \$50**
Doug Taylor
18 hours ago
- \$100**
Cindy Crabb
19 hours ago
- \$50**
Lynne Monsoon
19 hours ago
- \$10**
Tiphonie Henningsen
19 hours ago
- \$20**
James Generic

From 2004 to 2006, I attempted to get divorced, agreeing to whatever request Defendant had, but even though she had begun a new relationship, she was not interested in divorce:

>From: "alex wreckk" <brainscanzine@riseup.net>

>To: joe@microcosmpublishing.com

>User-Agent: SquirrelMail/1.4.6

>Importance: Normal

>X-Virus-Scanned: by amavisd-new-20030616-p10 (Debian) at riseup.net

>X-Antivirus-Scanner: Clean mail though you should still use an Antivirus

>X-Status:

>X-Keywords:

>

>i guess i'm just confused about how you feel working with me. when i asked
>if you wanted me to not work here you said that you did. but then at the
>house you said you thought about it and it seemed like you answer changed.
>i wasn't sure what you meant after that but i wasn't even sure what
>question to ask.

>

>i was thinking about what you said about us not really being readers and
>how that bummed you out. i can understand that. so i think you should
>charge me with a book from our catalog that you think i should read. i'm
>not really sure what the point of it is but it seemed like a good idea or
>maybe a gesture to my commitment to microcosm and an understanding of what
>is important to you.

>

>as for buttons, it is a transition and it is a bit threatening but i'm
>willing to make changes. there have just been so many in the past year and
>change is difficult for me. especially when it feels like external pressure
>on something that has become part of my identity that i have been doing
>for about 6 years.

>

>so, here's what i think is fair. 15% off the top of regular order for
>microcosm and I would get the rush fees (unless it is for express postage)
>and we set up the long distance network and i do all the layout from home
>and try to answer all the e-mail before i get to the office. how does that
>sound?

>

>As for **divorce**, i agree but i'm hesitant. and it is a strange reason why.
>paul has asked about it a few time. He is uncomfortable that we are still
>married and has said that he just wants to know that if he asked me to
>marry him that there wouldn't be anything in the way. i find it amusing
>because i told him that i would never marry him several times. It is
>strange because i see all of the things we did and created together as
>more important than some stupid piece of paper.

>

>My friend Theresa just passed the BAR and i'm sure she could help us for
>free or cheap if need be of we need a lawyer. I'll work on putting some
>money aside for that. There are a few things I'd like to see in order
>before. namely the business and the house, two things i feel you have been
>resistant from the beginning to putting my name on despite my requests. If
>microcosm is going to become a collective i'd like to see everyone's name

of getting divorced, she spent the next year telling me about her current relationship and why it's valuable to her, going so far as invading my room to tell me about her current boyfriend.

----- Original Message -----

Subject: i've been thinking
From: "alex wreck" <brainscanzine@riseup.net>
Date: Thu, November 17, 2005 5:17 pm
To: joe@microcosmpublishing.com

joe,
i need to get this out while it is on my mind. i have been working on this e-mail for awhile and i hope it gets my ideas across. i have been reevaluating my comment about me making comparisons. it is not that i am comparing you to paul. it is that i am comparing myself. i am comparing my reaction to stimuli, my comfort in my own skin, my confidence in my words, all of that. i want you to understand that. it is really hard to express feeling to you. i feel like you understand things so differently than i do, it frustrates me to communicate on your terms.

i feel like you have a lot of questions about my thoughts, my motives, my perspective but you don't ask them. on one hand i'm really grateful of this distance and respect but on the other it is also hard to have this distance with someone i have been so close to for over six years. maybe you don't have questions. but if you do i think i am at a point where i can try to answer them if you do.

when i came into your room last week and said there were things we needed to talk about and when i said we needed to talk about paul you asked why. at the time i thought you were right. what was the point of me talking about paul? was it to make you upset? jealous? sad? i was searching myself for the answer but after more thought i don't think it was any of those. i really want you to understand my situation. i want you to understand how i feel and why i make the choices i do. i want you to understand how i got to those decisions and not just dismiss them as something you knew i would do. like you had some sort of insight to me that i didn't. it really hurts my feeling when you do that because it feels so clinical and distant, maybe it is suppose to feel that way, i don't know. i hate how our conversations always seem to devolve into the deficiencies in our relationship. it makes me feel petty and crappy about myself. i don't want to be telling you things about paul to showcase our differences. i want you to understand why it is important to me and how it makes me feel.

i talked to him about that thing you said he said about laughing with his friends and he has no idea what you are talking about. he doesn't even have many friends that he would talk about that sort of thing with anyway. he's not some stupid party dude talking shit. would you actually think i would be attracted to someone like that? he said that he told you he thought about all the things he could tell you but didn't. that seems like his way to show what he thinks is important, not saying spiteful things. and honestly, do you think he wasn't uncomfortable too.

to me ▾

joe,

i'm at the iprc. i guess the board hasn't sent the letters to people who applied for the position and didn't get it yet so it is still on the hush hush of sorts that i got it and we aren't going to talk about it at the meeting tonight. granton just walked in. i wonder if people know some how? nicole had a pleasant conversation with me about doing a workshop for the zine canteen thingie. i think she just wants something from me sometimes.

it seems that you are working well in the tangible field of bookselling. good for you. i think you always liked the hands on part better anyway you book fetishist you.

i understand that this was a painful time. it has been a painful time for me as well. i really thought this relationship would last and i really tried to make it work. it took me a long time to realize it just wouldn't work. we have been over this. i'm actually surprised that you find talking about paul as so painful. i don't really understand that. i'm not sure what else to say when you can't even type paul's name. how can i be open with you? do you even want me to be open about him?

one of the most important things that i feel with paul is safe. i don't, and haven't in a long time felt that way with you. i don't feel i need to watch my words. i don't feel paranoid. i feel understood. i myself find it ironic that i would end up with some one who smokes pot everyday. it is not something i do or wish to be involved with and he knows this. i accept that as part of the package as long as it ends there. Sometimes i worry about being in the position you are in where i have the power in the relationship because he is so willing to let me have it. i realize that it is something i need to be conscious of but i also feel much more secure in that position now that i am aware of it. i mean, he apologizes for disagreeing with me.

yes, you were doing a really good job at being loving and caring and supportive but i was always second guessing that all the time. when i saw slips it scared me and i couldn't handle that.

you do have the right to state you feelings on the matter but when it came up with me you were the one who asked how i felt about it. i did not impose my feelings about it on you. and even if you say you defend me i have this feeling in my gut that you don't. maybe that is my paranoia maybe i jsut don't trust you use of language because i see how people get something totally different out of the things you say than i do. i don't think that you think you frame yourself as anything but i worry about the words you chose and what they mean to others. does that make sense?

i have more to say but everyone started showing up here and we are getting chatty. so i'm going to go.

-alex



Move to Inbox



i'm sorry if it seems like i talk about paul as some savior. it was really just a change to have someone so attentive to my needs and feelings. he has his own list of faults i'll be the first to admit. he's not nearly as intelligent or confident, two things i really admire in you but i guess those are part of what make him feel so safe to me. if you don't want me to talk openly about him i'm not sure if it is fair for you to be open with me about your interests. i care about you and want to know what is going on in your life but it doesn't add up to me.

"alex left me because she is still in love with someone she dated 8 years ago. we were having problems before that and i was wielding all of the power in our relationship".

i have some serious issues with that statement. first, the problems in our relationship come first before the part about paul. then the second part so so vague no wonder no one believes you. what does "problems" and "power" mean anyway? the general problem was that you were not respecting me. my idea, or my feelings and systematically ignored my concerns about work or our relationship.

people need specifics and when you place the first statement that i was still in love with someone else that is all they will focus on. it does come off as an admission of guilt. being self deprecating is a great way to avoid things, look at dave. he makes a life out of it. and no one thinks you could possibly do terrible things cause you are joe biel. you are a nice, cool, successful guy...emphasis on the guy part. few people have seen that side of you.

i'm going to have to keep saying i'm sorry for being so resentful. here are some new things i wanted to talk about:

i have been thinking of boundaries and here are some of them:

-i need my paycheck itemized by hours, consignment, and royalties (when i have them) NOT written by hand on a piece of scrap paper but printed out and not placed on the fridge.

-i need you to change the passwords on microcosm things which we already talked about at the meeting.

-If you talk to people about the issues between us you must explain how you fucked up and if you feel they aren't believing you then send them to me for a list of grievances because I have many.

-examine your use of language and not just what it means to you but how it is perceived by others.

this one will probably get vetoed but paul is willing to talk to you and apologize to you for last year if you are will to give him a chance.

i have also been thinking about separation stuff and here are a few things we need to figure out:

-records: i did some sorting but there are a few that i think we need to talk about. they are on their own shelf in the living room.

We agreed not to hire lawyers or file for divorce so we could work it out between us but she secretly hired a lawyer and demanded to receive the house or the business. I agreed to whatever she decided:

joe biel <ragsinyourstabwounds@gmail.com>

Tue, May 2, 2006, 7:52 AM

to brainscanzine

alex,

sorry that i feel grody talking about things like this in e-mail, but you deserve a response. i understand your difficulty in accepting and responding to all of these changes. i have a very hard time with it too. i guess, think about the reasons that you made these decisions and how you've benefited and the results of my actions, etc. we are both losing so much; not to say it's the wrong choice, but i feel all kinds of losses on all levels all the time.

i have no motive to getting divorced other than having it resolved and not feeling like it's hanging over my head ready to collapse someday that i'm not wearing my bike helmet.

i would really rather resolve the money of the house before it's sold, for a few reasons. mostly for the same reason i want to get divorced - resolution. i talked to kim about her similar situation, and what she did when her ex left her was she just bought out his portion of the house when he moved out. she had purchased it but he had contributed obviously a significant portion to it as well over the years.

what i came up with was to see how much you had contributed towards the house (\$50-100/per month + materials) and then extrapolating that based on value, assuming the house is worth about 2.5 times what we paid for it.

i wish that buying the house could have been more of a financial mutual effort with us but at the time, you obviously weren't in the position that i was. your contribution was crucial and should be respected though.

this model seems more fair to me because i was basically putting all of my income towards the house while you were contributing \$50-100 per month. additionally, i was generally the one fixing broken things and scheduling things to be fixed, taking the loss when people skipped out on rent/bills, etc.

it's important and difficult to me too that whenever the furnace broke or we needed a plumber or anything, it was me on the phone finding someone, making appointments, and paying the bill. this was/is a huge burden on me. i understand there are extenuating circumstances that caused your lack of personal confidence to attend to these things, but it remains that these burdens were continually falling squarely on my shoulders.

there are always going to be numerous intangibles that can't be defined or resolved in any fair agreement but this was what seemed best to me. it would also reflect better the period of the last 5.5 years vs however long i remain in the house.

i kind of hate it. it's too big, too drafty. i wish we had bought a small, two bedroom or something. i am actually thinking about either trying to build a more intentional community in the house someday or consider eventually selling it.

i would pay you off as fast and as much as i am able until we are even. i didn't calculate how much it would be as i don't want this to appear as an overpracticed or presented proposal. it's entirely based on what kim told me that seems like a very fair resolution. i don't know how fast i could do it either. i would just really like to resolve it.

i don't believe there was ever conclusive agreement to share ownership of the business with everyone. there is a huge difference between collective decision making and cooperative ownership. given the last few weeks, i don't think anyone even wants that besides you. more importantly, for a situation like this, it does not take into account my first 6 years of cheap/free labor that built the inventory, cash flow, and model into place. it does not take into account my investments and the fact that no one else took the risks or invested any money. i don't think they would even want to. on much investigation, i don't know of any co-op organization where you don't need to "buy in" for ownership.

i also don't want to force you to be a reader. my issue isn't about wanting to mold people into readers of our lit. it's about the idocy of deciding what to publish and distribute with people who don't actively read the materials for fun or work or even when it's understood that you need to be familiar with them for the meeting. i can't foster my level of commitment in everyone. i don't want to force it. everyone is VERY good at their respective jobs. i don't question that. it's just silly to make decisions about what to publish/distribute with people who don't actively pursue or stay informed about the culture/materials/readables on their own. i don't feel like i should need to explain what each person's historic reference or importance is. it's similarly frustrating to organize with people who don't pursue the culture outside of work, for fun and entertainment. it makes it feel like it's "just a job" sometimes. i'm fine to talk about a particular title's importance or how it plugs into my vision of microcosm, but i hate backpedaling about each individual title.

i think you should convert custom buttons into your own private enterprise as that is how it's been run since shawn quit. that way there would be no confusion or lack of clarity about how to split the money or what belongs to whom. it's all yours. you don't have resentments about money. i don't have resentments about promoting your private business.

alternatively, i would possibly be open to hearing a solution that benefits microcosm. something like 15% flat off the top, you do all of your work off the clock, use a separate e-mail address for it, don't reference any calls to the office, and you match the fiend or faux prices for catalog buttons (11 cents + 15% = about 13 cents each). you earn more than anyone else at work; about \$25-50 per hour from making buttons. granted, it's shitty work but that is heavenly pay, especially when you call all of the shots and your business is financed by microcosm.

you may be happy to know that you don't have to pay to change your name back. it's free with the divorce application.

i just want to get through this with something we can both accept without ugliness or too much pain. i want to be able to go through my days without worrying about detangling these things still after almost a year.

love,
joe

brainscanzine@riseup.net house or business

Response...



alex wrekk <brainscanzine@riseup.net>
to me

>>> 1. Split the business. You take the published books, dvds and zines
>> and
>>> that's it (maybe even srr). Distribution would have a six month
>>> exclusive
>>> distribution of microcosm titles and a 5 year non competition clause
>>> where
>>> you can not distribute other people's items. I don't even want most
>> of
>>> the
>>> books we carry anyway so those can go back to publishers.
>>>
>>> 2. Give me the house and you take microcosm. As for a cash
>> settlement?
>>> You
>>> know I have no idea what is fair and that I
>>> can't name a price. YOU also know that we can't find a price with out
>>> spending a lot of money doing it.
>>>
>>> As for you getting a lawyer? you probably should have done that a
>> long
>>> time ago. At least then you would have a better idea of how this
>> works.
>>> Most
>>> people advise both a lawyer and mediator. You getting a lawyer and
>>> eschewing
>>> the mediator means that we go to court instead. Not only is that
>>> costly,
>>> but
>>> it means that some random judge hears our case and decided how things
>>> get
>>> split instead of us.
>>>
>>> I want to a lawyer to know my rights and options. It also let me know
>>> just
>>> how much you were planning on short changing me playing on your same
>>> value
>>> of your work as more important than anything I have done. Well, you
>> may
>>> have
>>> been able to do that when you had me alone, isolated and my psyche
>> was
>>> at
>>> your will but the law sees me as equal and I'm relearning how to feel
>>> that
>>> way again.
>>>
>>>

>
> Thanks for looking into all of this. I don't believe at all that you are
> going after my assets. I expresed to you several times to decide what you
> think is fair financially and we can do that. I would really rather not
> deal
> with operating a company with so many people. I don't like it. As such
> this
> division seems possibly beneficial forboth of us.
>

I really wish you would would just admit that you are a complete control freak that can't handle people disagreeing with you or that you can't manipulate into agreeing with you.

> I got the numbers for the stocks recently when I got the information that
> the mediator asked for. I was pretty shocked to see how much was there
> too.
> I had no idea it was that much. My mom and I had never talked about
> specifics. I am kind of upset that she never told me just how much it was.
> We were paying taxes on those capital gains each year while Microcosm did
> not generate more than a few hundred dollars of taxable income (mostly
> through state income based on gross, not net profit). In 2005 Microcosm
> lost
> money and the accountant started to show our backstock to compensate
> (backstock is taxable "property") and balance it out.

I don't beleive that you did not know about the money. I know how financially savy you are. There is no way that you did not calculate the size of the stocks when you knew what the dividends are.

>
> Similarly, I believed my mom had my best interest in mind but at this
> point
> I want to get them taken out of my name as it makes me feel highly
> uncomfortable to have that kind of money and unknowingly for all this time
> apparently. I think my parents came into this money through investments
> over
> the last 5 or 10 years. Their lifestyle definitely changed after I moved
> to
> Portland. I think I've mentioned this to you gradually. I tried to ignore
> it
Exhibit F

she began blacklisting me from an event I co-founded and forced organizers to quit who did not support removing me in order to achieve consensus. Fellow organizers referred to the fake no contact order as “legal action.”:

2008 Portland Zine Symposium

Portland Zine Symposium <pdzines@gmail.com>
to Joe, pzsorganizers

Dear Joe Biel,

We would like to inform you that we've reached a formal consensus and decided to officially request, as organizers, that you not attend the 2008 Portland Zine Symposium.

We have concluded after much deliberation that certain actions and behaviors of yours violate the PZS Safer Spaces Policy. You can view that here at the PZS website: <http://pdzines.com/info/safer-spaces-policy/>.

Individuals have contended that your presence would detrimentally infringe upon PZS endeavors to make the event one free of oppressive behavior. Please note that this is a decision specifically applying to the 2008 Symposium and does not necessarily mean you will be unwelcome in the future, should particular legal and personal matters be resolved prior to the 2009 Portland Zine Symposium.

We would like to clarify that Microcosm Publishing, under supervision of an individual other than yourself, is still welcome at the 2008 PZS. This is a compromise presented by the individuals who raised concern with your presence.

We apologize for the delay in relaying you this information; it required multiple meetings of all organizers to discuss this issue and come to a conclusion in a fair manner. We didn't want to rush the decision in lieu of extensive discussion to ensure the Symposium had arrived at a decision regarding your presence that was in line with PZS policies and adhered to our endeavors to create safer spaces in our community. We also extend our apologies for the manner in which we had previously dealt with this conflict. We had yet to reach a consensus when communication with you began.

Thank you in advance for adhering to our request.

Sincerely,
PZS Organizers

Joe Biel / Microcosm Publishing <joe.microcosm@gmail.com>
to Portland

Thanks for the response.

I appreciate the time and effort that this conclusion must have taken to come to.

Due to the extreme vagueness of this message, I am not sure what behaviors or actions are in question. I am also not sure how you can predict that my behavior at the event will be oppressive. Particularly, because I haven't interacted with any of you in years.

Most curiously though, I would like to know what "legal" and "personal" matters are needing resolved, as I have no idea what those would be.

I will be in Portland for the next few months regardless and will be living there for half of the year. I would really like to resolve this as the Symposium is something that is very dear and important to me and I have benefitted greatly from attending each year.

I would love to resolve these things but I am unable to do so if it is not clear and unexplained what even needs resolved.

As I explained already, none of the other staff members at Microcosm are able to attend. We will do our best to try and find some volunteers to staff and table the event.

Thanks
Joe

Drugless F. <skikepunk@gmail.com>
to Joe

Joe,

How many more times must I ask you to let the issue lay?

I have a very hard time believing that you are completely unaware of the nature of imbrolio that your presence would rick at the 2009 Portland Zine Symposium. I am not looking to create any kind of a showdown with long time organizers past and present, and from what I can see, that is exactly what would happen. Why not just avoid the situation altogether? Why not listen to the requests of others that have volunteered their time?

As you have been given a dis-invitation and several requests to leave it alone and walk away, The only current conflict I see is your continued impotunity.

This is a matter that will not be resolved before the 2009 Portland Zine Symposium, and it is not our responsibility as organizers to ensure your attendance when your actions have made this extremely difficult. The totality of the circumstances can only lead me again to personally insist that you do not attend the 2009 Portland Zine Symposium and to refrain from contacting me --again-- regarding this decision. I apologize for any inconvenience.

However, no means no.

Sincerely,
Doug Taylor

Christina Crow <lovetomationsry@gmail.com>
Drugless, Joe

It is also important to note that attempts have been made to mediate this situation within the community to no avail.

Joe, we've said our piece, you're not welcome because your presence would make our fellow organizer feel unsafe because you continue to violate her boundaries. Continuing to contact us shows how little you respect boundaries people attempt to set with you.

We hope you take this to heart, we've formally asked you to not attend and that is that.

-Blue

Other founders and former organizers asked them to uphold their policies as written but were ignored:

July 22, 2009

To All It May Concern:

We are writing in support of keeping the 2009 Portland Zine Symposium open to all who wish to attend. We write in explicit support of Joe Biel, but with the broader hope that the values celebrated and fostered by the event – community, open dialogue, and cooperation – be retained. In addition, we support peaceful resolution of conflict and recognize the importance of communication in the zine community and creation of truly safe spaces at public events.

We believe in the right of all who attend the Portland Zine Symposium to feel safe and respected. We support the event's Safer Spaces Policy being applied as written and intended, with mediation provided during the Symposium to address interpersonal issues. This policy in no way calls for excluding any person from the event; it seeks to uphold the spirit of the event and the community by seeking peaceful resolution and cooperation.

Maintaining the openness of the Portland Zine Symposium upholds the intent and purpose for which it was founded: to be a place for dialogue, exchange, skill sharing, critique, and celebration. A spirit of inclusion allows the community to truly be an active part of the event, strengthening it through participation and taking part in its organization, and ensures that exclusion of community members does not become the norm. When individuals stand and make public complaints directed at other individuals in the zine community, we hear those complaints, yet feel that all have a right to attend public events and that these events are not an appropriate venue for interpersonal disputes.

We are concerned that attempts to exclude this one person from the event have never reached consensus, because they led to the resignation of many event organizers, to the detriment of the event and the community. We call for a return to consensus based organizing and an inclusive spirit, not imposed decisions that force organizers to leave.

We understand that a precedent may have been set in 2003 when, by consensus, the Symposium organizers advised an individual who made members of the zine community feel unsafe not to attend the Symposium, though he was not banned from attending. This was not a personal attack, but was part of a larger effort on the part of the organizers to increase dialogue and counter misinformation about issues of sexual assault and abusive behavior in the zine community. The Symposium that year also included a series of workshops on this topic organized in conjunction with a staff member from a local women's services organization. In addition, Symposium organizers made themselves visible and open to all who wished to discuss this issue in order to make the Symposium a truly safer space.

Certainly, we have all had the experience of having someone who had deeply hurt us or with whom we deeply disagreed with attend the Symposium or another public event. To deal with that experience is not easy, but it does not mean that we should try to ban or censor. We can ensure safety without perpetuating divisiveness. We can promote a spirit

of growth and openness, which can only strengthen our community and ourselves. We can move beyond our fears to bring back a spirit of positivity in resistance to a spirit of personal vendetta.

As supporters and advocates for independent and do-it-yourself media we recognize that each has a right to speak and express themselves. We appreciate being part of a community of diverse and sometimes dissenting voices. They are truly what make our community unique and strong.

We have always welcomed all people who want to attend the public Portland Zine Symposium. Each one brings their voice. Each one with ears can choose to not listen, or can listen and form their own opinion. Most importantly, our community recognizes that we cannot silence anyone's voice and censoring or banning an individual from the Symposium sends a dangerous message and sets a precedent that could be damaging to all who support the Symposium, as well as to free speech and open dialogue.

Joe Biel is a dedicated member of the zine community and we do not hear fighting words, nor hate speech, nor defamation from him. Nothing in his actions, speech, or work violates the policies of the Portland Zine Symposium. We want his voice to be included in the multifaceted group of voices that will be part of the event. In order to retain the spirit in which the Symposium was founded, as well as the best aspects of the zine community that promote dialogue, discussion and growth, we do not take sides on this issue, but ask that Joe Biel be welcome to attend the 2009 Portland Zine Symposium and that the Symposium be kept open to all.

Someone recently said, "So long as our relationship is defined by our differences, we will empower those who sow hatred rather than peace, and who promote conflict rather than the cooperation that can help all of our people achieve justice . . . This cycle of suspicion and discord must end."

Together,

Eleanor Whitney

Co-founder and core organizer of the Portland Zine Symposium, 2001 – 2004

Nicky Robo

Core organizer of the Portland Zine Symposium, 2001 – 2005

Shelley Pearson

Core organizer of the Portland Zine Symposium, 2003 – 2006

Nathan Beaty

Core organizer of the Portland Zine Symposium, 2002; Web master 2002 – Present

Krissy Durden

Core organizer of the Portland Zine Symposium, 2002 – 2003

Shawn Granton,

Core organizer of the Portland Zine Symposium, 2002 – 2003

Claudia McBarron

Core organizer of the Portland Zine Symposium, 2007 – 2008

Becky Morton

Core organizer of the Portland Zine Symposium, 2007 – 2008

Believing that the other people involved would help to resolve this conflict, I agreed to mediation and resolutoin across the next eight years:

3/23/16

Joe Biel / Microcosm Publishing <joe@microcosmpublishing.com>

to Doug ↵

Hi Doug

Sure. I understand.

My question is what do you think about arranging mediation between Alex and I so we can actually move on from this? I think that you're in a unique position to do that.

There's no rush, really, because at a dozen years we've got nothing but time but the situation as it stands is only hurting everyone that it touches.

3/23/16

Doug Taylor <sbikepunk@gmail.com>

to Joe ↵

I'll talk to her about it. I would brace yourself for a flat refusal, however. She has moved on and is much better off than she has been in years.

If you all want to go for something like that, it needs to be something you are both comfortable with. I doubt very much something like that exists. I cannot speak for Alex, but I don't know what that might be for her. You'll have to accept whatever comes as what it is.

3/23/16

Joe Biel / Microcosm Publishing <joe@microcosmpublishing.com>

to Doug ↵

I was confused too. She came to my reading event at Powell's last month and seemed to want to attempt to start a dialogue. It's clearly still impacting her and one her mind. She still seems to bring me up as a subject regularly.

There has never been an actual dialogue, which it seems like would be the thing that would lay the issue truly to rest.

Alex refused last time when Debbie Rasmussen from *Ritch* tried in 2010 but has apparently since expressed interest in it...?

At minimum, I wanted to say that I'm willing. Obviously, I've very much moved on with my life but when she does something like show up to my event, it's clear that some part of her has not.

Tasks: Joe Biel / Microc

2/10/10

Doug Taylor <sbikepunk@gmail.com>

to Joe ↵

Hey Joe,

Thanks for writing. I'm not sure what the guerilla city repair project consists of, but it sounds pretty interesting to me. I don't know how relevant it is to your project, but I recall reading an article in *Slingshot*. I think it was, about a group of people that were planting sunflowers in abandoned lots that had absorbed many toxins. The sunflowers were useful in sucking up poisons out of the, thereby gradually rehabilitating it so that it could be used to grow flowers, or in some instances, edible crops. Interesting stuff, and much more useful than the casual nihilism that becomes so much a part of resistance movements. I wish you success with this recent venture, and I hope that you and your group learn ways to be most effective. It shouldn't be hard to find places around our city that could benefit from a little TLC.

I apologize for the slow progress being made in regards to the PZS issues surrounding the ongoing dispute between you and Alex. I regret more the departure of the librarians Cathy and Laurel from the PZS organizers. As I told you, I felt that their presence was a moderating influence and offered us valuable insight with their professional perspective. Their concerns of conflicts of interests and ethical responsibilities have not gone lost on me, despite their departure. I understand the way they felt, even if I didn't always agree. They are missed, and I wish them nothing but the best.

I don't think it is hopeless. I believe I represent a unique viewpoint regarding this, and for perhaps that reason, I have been selected as the individual responsible amongst the PZS organizers for correspondence between aggrieved parties and any possible mediators. I believe a possible volunteer mediator was selected, but I have not yet had the opportunity to confer with them.

Please feel free to contact me regarding any questions or concerns you have, because that is one of my responsibilities for organizing this year. Organizing is not without difficulties, but you only ever get one skull in life that's yours. The price on your head can't be so high that you're trying to cash in, eh?

Sincerely,

Doug Taylor

11/1/10

Doug Taylor <sbikepunk@gmail.com>

to Joe ↵

Hey Joe--

Sorry to hear about your accident, man. That shit sucks. I hope things are going better for you. Please be careful! I obviously don't know all of what happened, but you only ever get one skull in life that's yours. The price on your head can't be so high that you're trying to cash in, eh? Also on the lighter side, it sounds like you could have had a pretty good mummy costume!

No more jokes. My domestic problems have definitely started to dominate my life. With no small amount of irony do I find myself attending to an issue such as the one that draws you and I familiar while my own relationship is in a state of serious disrepair. I did say no more jokes, but effectively communicate. Time will tell.

This brings me directly to my next concern. I cannot help but keep thinking that I may not be the man for this task. I have learned the hard lesson about he who throws the first stone. I am learning it still. I am uncertain, also, how best to proceed. I do not know if Alex wishes to partake in much of anything with you, much less a separate Portland accountability team. I have unsuccessfully broached the topic with her recently after she returned from her zine tour. This was a few weeks ago. I do not know how she wishes to proceed, or what that proceeding would entail without her involvement. I would like to ask her what she would like to do once again.

I will send you another email by the close of this week. Please feel free to contact me anytime. Take care of yourself --- vitamins, food, medicine, water, rest, meditation, all that.

I also wrote a letter to Defendant asking to resolve the situation and she responded with actionable steps and boundaries, which I responded and adhered to:

Druggless F. <xbikepunkxx@gmail.com>

to Joe

Dear Joe,

The things you told me have had a deep impact on me. Our whole interaction has. This whole process has. I will be replying again soon, since it was such a long email, and I simply don't have the strength for all that must be said. Right now, I just wanted to touch on some things while they were fresh for me.

This thing has been very painful for me also. I've been trying like mad to process all of the divergent viewpoints, to engage in listening with empathy, and it has had a deleterious effect on my overall mental health. I have sought out support so I can do this. It is not easy, but it is part of the job I signed up for.

You have told me things that I can only consider to be deeply personal, and I assure you, I keep them in confidence. I will respect your wishes to my best ability. Many people are survivors in the punk community, as you well know. For what it's worth, I am a survivor of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse as well. Some families are really dangerous, and not everyone really does survive. Therefore, I make it a rule to listen when survivors speak. However, I know all too well from my own family tree's history how survivors become abusers. All survivors run this risk, and the responsibility is theirs.

I am the person that will be speaking to you from the sitting PZS organizers. You don't get to pick and choose on this one. I struggle to maintain my objectivity, but as I keep repeating, acting in solidarity with survivors will have definite effects. My greatest bias of all is to have the zine community represent the great egalitarian ideals of social justice, community ethics, and personal accountability that it possessed upon my entry. It is poor stewardship to abandon principles in the face of adversity.

Having been with the PZS for three years, I believe that a depoliticizing momentum is being felt. When I happened across zines, the personal is broadly welcomed. Now the personal is broadly welcomed. Just as long as it isn't "too political". For shame. Sometimes, I think that if I was that 12 year old kid finding out about punk all over again, I wouldn't even want anything to do with it. This scares me.

I will not allow it to further decay while I am on shift, no matter how unpopular my decisions or words become. We are creating legacies, Joe. Each thing that we do has importance beyond this present time. Your actions carry particular weight and importance. As Uncle Ben in the Spider-Man comics says: "With great power comes great responsibility." It is you that owes the zine community, not the zine community that owes you.

What gives with Cindy? I thought you liked her? Who are you best able to work with on the team? Joe, we are running way overtime. Three years is too long. When it comes to a community as closely-knit as zines, everyone already knows each other. You are not guaranteed an impartial jury when it is the affected community that is trying to process and resolve long standing issues.

You and I agree that abuse is never simple. However, even if I or others weren't there, we can and do speak to what happened by dealing with its consequences. We are imperfect people hoping to create something better. The problem here, Joe, has been the unresolved issues. I will cite them one more time, but you already know what they are. I have an extremely hard time understanding why you claim ignorance. Maybe you still don't know, as unlikely as that sounds. This comes directly from Alex. You've seen this before:

To make amends:

- 1) Seek professional counseling with someone who is not your friend to deal with your past family issues as well as issues of control and manipulation.
- 2) Publicly acknowledge that you have issues of abusing power through manipulation.

3) Do not involve anyone you are dating with your work.

4) Show me demonstrable changes in your behavior patterns.

Alex also has boundaries that she wishes to be maintained.

1) Do not call me, speak to me in public, or send letters to my house (use my post box if you have to send things but please don't ever send me a personal letter again. Alex Wrekk p.o. box 17230 pdx, or 97217)

2) Do not come within a 5 block radius of my house (not including the credit union since I know you have to go there)

3) Do not go to Beaterville Cafe

4) Do not go to Amnesia Brewing

5) Do not go to Pause

5) Do not go to The IPRC

6) Stop the psychological warfare like leaving or having someone else leave images of your tattoo outside my workshop at the symposium, riding by my house or writing things like "I forgave my mother" on royally statements.

7) Do not attend any zine reading or event that I'm at in Portland or any show that any of Paul's bands play.

8) Please don't ever mention my family. That was one of the things that upset me most about your letter. They want nothing to do with you.

As you know, there are numerous other complainants, which I do not know whether they have been rectified or not.

Tasks: Joe Blaf / Micro...

a few more things

In 2006 she began publishing the first of twelve publications and hundreds of blog posts about our relationship and my character. She began involving my managers, staff, and co-owners in the dispute. She pushed our authors to take a stand against us. We complied with all requests.

doriszineblog.blogspot.com/search/label/microcosm

Microcosm... This. Facebook Microcosm Gmail - Inbox - joe... Endicia Lookup isbn barcode gen goat

TUESDAY, JULY 27, 2010

Microcosm

This is about Joe Biel and Microcosm.

A number of years ago I read Alex's zine Brainscan 21. Alex was Joe's long-term partner and wife and worked with Microcosm. It was about how she came to realize, with the help of her therapist, that he was emotionally abusive and manipulative in their relationship and business. It wasn't a big surprise to me, because when I had seen them together, they really reminded me of me and my former emotionally abusive partner. After I read the zine, I wrote to Alex and asked if she thought I should remove my stuff from Microcosm, and she said she didn't really think I should have to do that. In retrospect, I wish I had.

I believed Alex's zine. I wanted to believe that Joe might change, or that his behavior could possibly be situational and not show up as abusive in other relationships. I also said to myself "all publishers and record store guys are scumbags." I saw that Microcosm had more members than in the past, and was being collectively run, and I hoped that this meant Joe was stepping aside and giving up power in order to deal with his control issues. I had heard he was in therapy.

The truth was, I benefited from being published and distributed by Microcosm. I was overwhelmed by dealing with abuse in my immediate community, and didn't want to look too closely at my complacency regarding Microcosm.

Early this year, I got involved in trying to set up an accountability process for Joe. He had said that he had done all that was requested of him and that he didn't know how to stop rumors or how to communicate with Alex that he had changed, since she didn't want contact.

Attached below is the final statement of the attempted accountability process.

I am trying to figure out what to do about Microcosm and distributing my zines with them. Below the statement from the accountability process is a letter I wrote to Microcosm a few weeks ago.

Microcosm is collectively run by like 8 people or something, and Joe does not have final say in things, however, as I say in my letter, I think collectives have to stand up and confront abuse by members within their collectives. Microcosm as a collective, does not do this.

I don't want people within the Microcosm collective who do believe Alex, and who know that Joe does have abusive and manipulative behaviors, to suffer, however, I can no longer support a collective that will not stand up against abuse.

I won't be publishing my next book with Microcosm. I am going to give them until the end of the year to come up with a collective statement confronting/admitting Joe's abuse and manipulation, and/or for Joe to legally remove himself from the collective. If by the end of the year, this isn't done, I will be removing my zines from Microcosm. I will also be reprinting Support and Learning Good Consent on my own.

Statement from the Athens Support Network:

In January, 2010, we convened to help with the accountability process of Joe Biel. We had been given the understanding, from Joe, that he was in therapy, had met Alex's demands, and didn't know how to proceed since she did not want contact. We confirmed that Joe had met most or all of Alex's logistical/legal demands, but in order to confirm whether or not he had identified and changed his behavior, we set about some written exercises. Our process was straightforward and formal, working on identifying behavior and making amends. Joe cooperated with the "identifying behavior" exercises - vacillating between what we perceived as willingness and defensiveness. We did not make it past the "identifying behavior" section of the process, as it became clear that a much deeper conversation/process needed to happen and we were unable to commit to the time and energy it would take. We think that if another process was to take place, it would need to be face to face and would need to have people in his immediate community actively involved. We believe that these people would need to have professional training and experience, and have a large amount of time to commit to the process. We do not believe it is the community's responsibility to sacrifice themselves for this. We do think that it is the responsibility of Joe's friends and other people who benefit from acquaintance with Joe to recognize that the accusations concerning his abusive behavior are valid, that he still has problems with control and manipulation that he is working on, and to point out to him when he is behaving in these manners, even if it is not negatively affecting them. We also believe it is up to Joe to actively encourage and support this type of dialogue with his friends, co-workers and acquaintances.

Joe is in therapy, and we feel that he is making progress through therapy. He has identified a large number of behavior issues and has

When I submitted myself to intensive counseling in 2009 and my feminist counselor found that I did not fit the psychological make-up of an abusive personality and it was instead learned that I had autism, Defendant merely denied and refuted the legitimacy of these findings:

[/alexwrekk.wordpress.com/2010/07/29/so-whats-the-deal-with-you-and-microcosm/](http://alexwrekk.wordpress.com/2010/07/29/so-whats-the-deal-with-you-and-microcosm/)

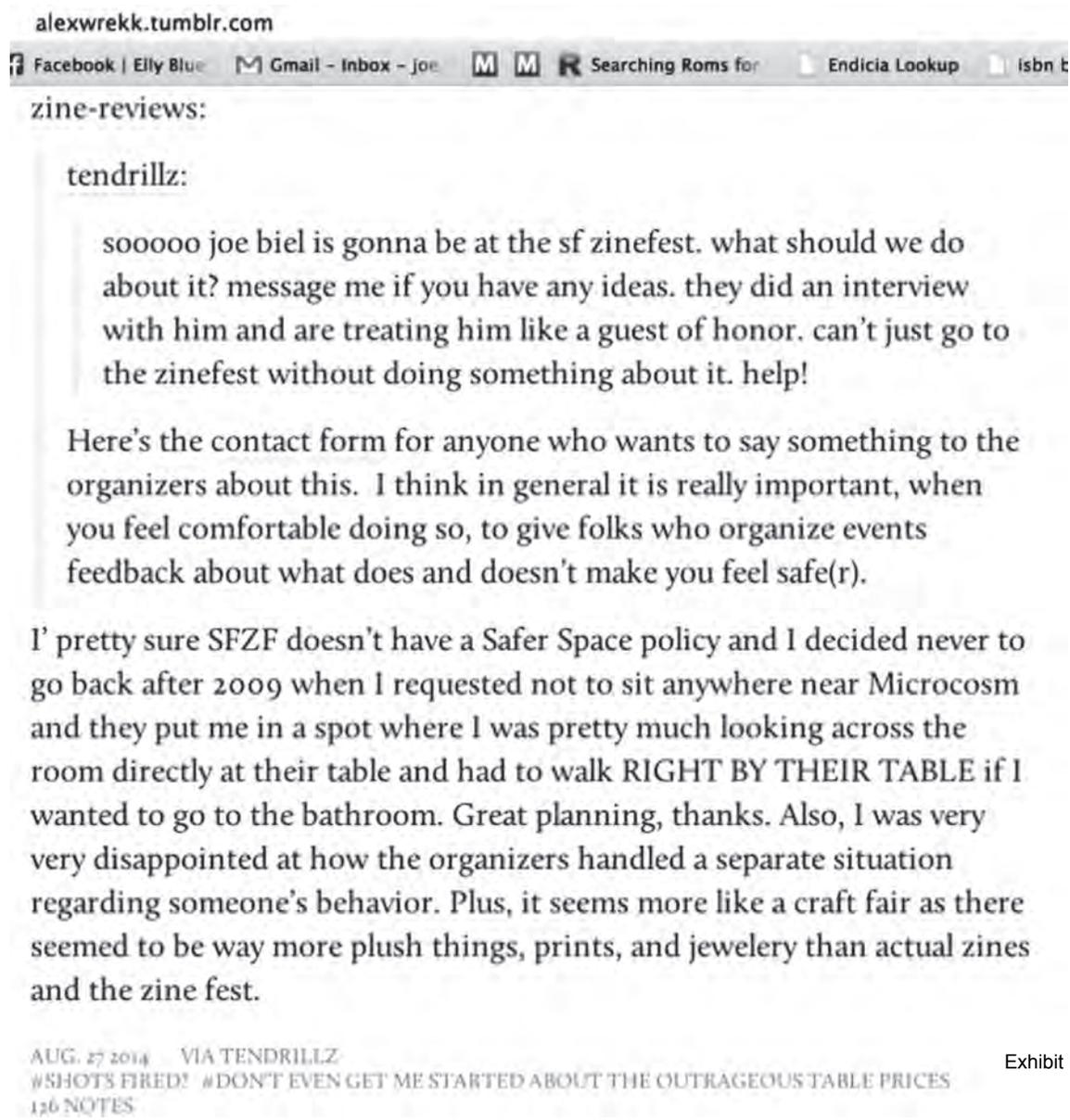
In 2008 I was contacted by individuals in Portland offering to help in mediation between Joe so that I could feel safer in my city. That mediation failed because Joe was unable to even work with the mediators. This year Cindy Crabb, from Doris zine and various other projects, and a few other brave souls began a new mediation and accountability process with him. She has been a huge support with this and has done a great job at pulling together people and resources for a task that has already failed before and most likely will again. I have heard that Joe has been in therapy and that his therapist has concluded that he is not abusive, which just felt really dismissive of what I experienced for years. I'm not sure how this could be done without even trying to consult with me, which is what is supposed to be done in abuse therapy. Also, I don't put much weight in Joe changing after having see his manipulative behaviors first hand with two different counselors.

In the end, I find it hypocritical that a company masquerades as a happy collective but is really being run by a supposed anarchist and feminist who is dismissive when called out as emotionally abusive. It seems ridiculous that a person who runs in circles of feminists, anarchists, and other radicals would balk at requests for accountability, ignore requested boundaries, and blatantly disregard their hurtful behaviors and then chock it all up to a "personal vendetta". It makes me sad that so many people ignore the issues when they are brought to light and that the community refuses to challenge these behaviors.

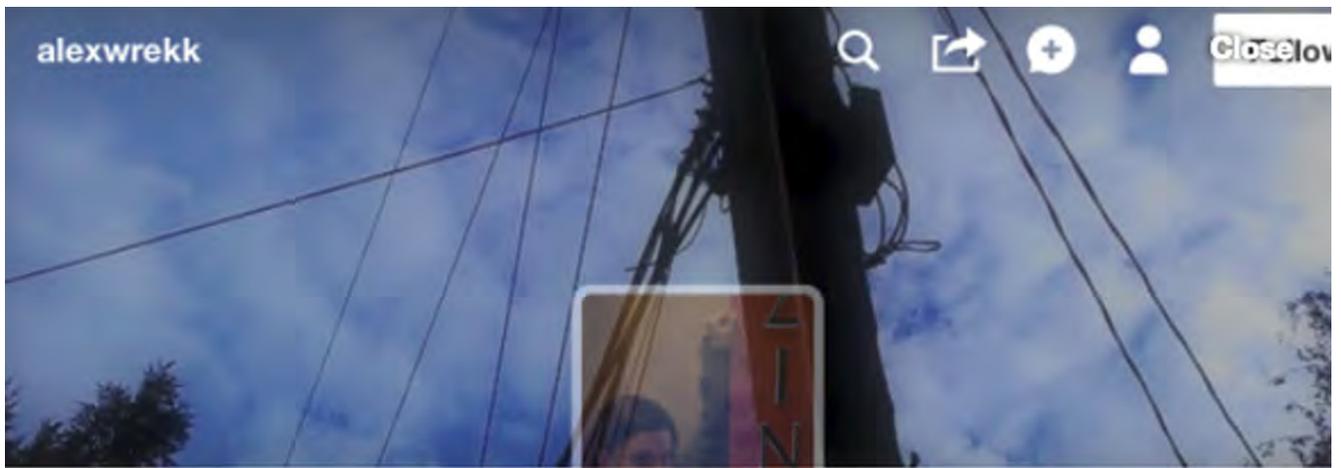
Where it gets tricky for me is knowing that several people make their livelihood or have their art distributed in ways they never could because of the machine that is Microcosm; from the zinester that is happy to get that \$100 check to pay their rent, people who are excited to have their work published or distributed, the printers of Microcosm t-shirts and stickers, to the people that make a living working at Microcosm. I even understand the complexity of someone living in a small town whose eyes were opened up to ideas and politics through the Microcosm catalog. But at what cost? When problematic behaviors go unchallenged and are swept under the rug because it is easier or because there are benefits to ignoring it, the larger patriarchal system of power and abuse is just being perpetuated.

At first it merely hurt my feelings a little when friends would continue to have their zines carried or published by Microcosm. I didn't feel I had the support or right to ask them otherwise. Bur now, after failed attempts at mediation, accountability and repeated belittlement I have changed my mind. I believe in honesty and justice and giving people information to make up their own minds and they should act in accordance to their values.

Each time someone buckled to her demands, she would celebrate in the harm that she had caused:



In 2012, my business partners proposed splitting the business to escape from Defendant's attacks. She continued to attack them and their business until they took a stand against me:



STUFF AND THINGS

This tumblr contains mostly a collection of things from the internet that amuse me like cats & fandoms with a side of light social justice. Check the links above for specific interests.

mostly straight white cis-lady - they/them/their/she/her/hers

Microcosm Distribution makes custom buttons now, eh?

I think that the the Microcosm Publishing/Distribution split is a laughable attempt at change, but I don't really care enough about it to spend much time on it. They still support and carry Microcosm Publishing titles so I still see them as supporters and apologists for Joe Biel.

What I found today annoys me. Apparently Microcosm Distribution makes custom buttons. Microcosm Publishing didn't and doesn't make custom buttons since I left. Do you know why? Because I was the one who made custom buttons when I worked there and when I left Microcosm and divorced Joe there was an agreement that Microcosm would not make custom buttons and compete with my business. So, Microcosm Distribution is a totally different company? Great, I guess that means they don't have to honor the agreements made by Microcosm Publishing.

If you would like to get custom buttons made by someone who has been doing this since 2000, you should follow me to my new project Portland Button Works.

Defendant and her former business partner, Derek Neuland, felt the need to insert themselves into every conversation about myself and Microcosm:

derekneuland.tumblr.com/post/28854326867/suzy-x-announcement-my-big-publishing-news

Free ISBN and EAN-13 | Facebook | Elly Blue | Gmail - Inbox - joe | M XE - The World's

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Ahahahaha fuck Joe Biel.

If Microcosm Distribution thinks this will solve all of the problems people have with Microcosm then they are delusional. The only way this would have been a step in the right direction is if the split off, changed their name, publicly denounced Microcosm, and refused to distribute anything published by them.

oh and THIS!

yeah, i'm not too sure about this... like, i think the problem goes beyond Joe Biel and the Microcosm collective should be accountable to how they dealt with the issue. the problem with abuse in our communities doesn't end at the abuser, it's also how communities respond to abuse and sexual assault and how we create a culture that does not support survivors and continues to allow abusive assholes to exist and be validated in radical scenes. from what i've read, it doesn't seem like the microcosm collective has taken any real responsibility for the ways in which they've enabled Joe Biel. what, if any, concrete things have they done to held him accountable, held themselves accountable, and respected the wishes of his ex-partner? i'm thinking that getting tired of having no one wanting to buy their books because they are shitty and slightly changing their name is not enough. is there a statement, or anything that proves me wrong? regardless, even if they got rid of joe biel, i think they have to do a lot more work to gain our trust back. again, it doesn't end at the abusive person, we all have to be accountable for how we validate abusive behaviours and create a culture that is unsafe for survivors etc.

When my former business partners did buckle under her pressure to take a stand against me, she began supporting them:

news.adamgnade.com/post/85180271107/people-are-still-asking-about-microcosm

Microcosm... This. Facebook Microcosm Gmail - Inbox - joe... Endicia Lookup isbn barcode gen goat A Month Without a... How to File an At

gnade

Shoe in Philadelphia, [that is here on tumblr](#).

It has been surmised that Microcosm has been under legal obligation not to talk about these things as they sorted their grand split into two separate companies: Microcosm Publishing and Microcosm Distribution. But, now that they are split people are asking the same questions.

Maybe you want to know what I think about the split? [This is all I have to say about it here](#). Maybe you don't care. Hell, I kind of don't care but I feel a sense of responsibility to tell the story, to answer questions, to be transparent, and to express solidarity with that oppose abuse of power in all forms.

Got any more questions? [Feel free to ask](#). But I would really love for this to be the last time I have to cobble all this stuff together in one place.

I might not get to your questions right away. Today's my day off from my awesome buttons and zine shop, [Portland Button Works](#). I'm going to spend the rest of my morning in bed with my supportive loving partner and an adorable cat named Jackie. Then I'm going to clean my house and work in my yard because these are things I do normally, not fret over the other crap.

Feel free to reblog away!

I posted this over a year and a little has changed besides [my shop being targeted by Microcosm since they moved into my neighborhood](#) and I now support Jessie and Pioneers Press. I understand the struggle and the frustration and they deserve support.

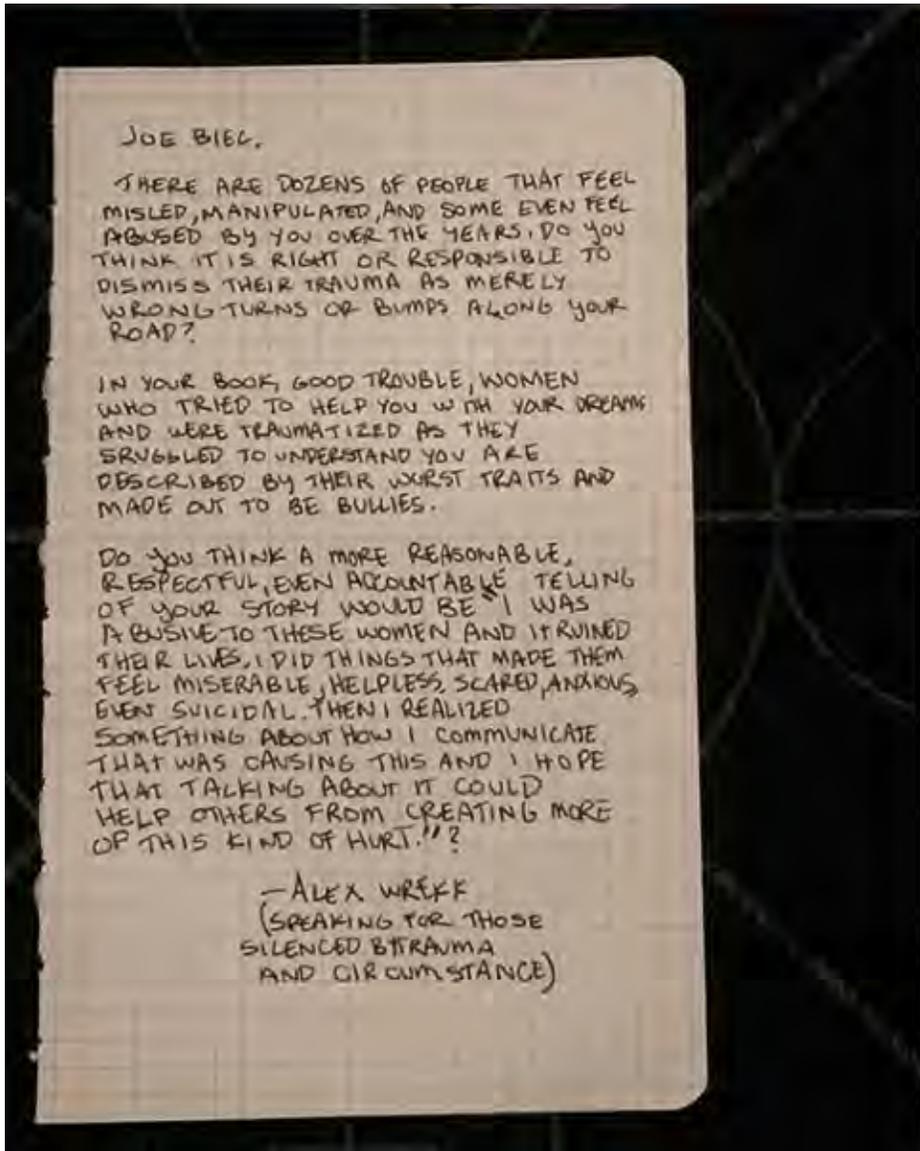
Reblogging to state that I support Pioneers press in their ongoing legal bullshit against Microcosm Publishing. They need your help and are having an SOS sale to fund their defense. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

Portland Button Works · Pioneers Press · Mike's Books · Portland Button Works · SOS Sale · Pioneers Press · Portland Button Works · Pioneers Press

130 notes · May 8th 2015



When I had a book release event in 2016 she showed up with the intention of causing trouble:



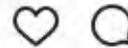
alexwreckk • Follow

invited here to stop creating more of this kind of hurt.

punkjoanofarc Using your disease to explain and justify abuse is the opposite of positive behavior. It's actually something that most behavioral workers and mental health providers tell their clients right away.

beaugheale I agree, which is why my previous comment stated exactly the opposite. I have never justified my actions through my diagnosis.

noirybianco You are seriously a disgusting human being. You have manipulated so many people into believing that you are a victim when you had been the hideous bully all along. Guys, here is the true story :<https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-biggest-mindfuck-ever/answer/Joe-Biel>



50 likes

FEBRUARY 11, 2016

Log in to like or comment.



How I, Joe Biel, Have Been Accountable for People I've Hurt

I was married from 2002–2004. It was years before I was diagnosed with autism in 2009 and learned how to understand or respond appropriately to emotions and nonverbal communication. I came to understand that intentions were not what mattered as much as impact. I hurt my ex and several others in serious ways which I feel responsible for and as a result I'd like to issue the following apology to anyone whom my actions have negatively affected:

“I’m so sorry for bulldozing your boundaries repeatedly throughout the six years of our relationship and for the following two years at work afterward. I’m sorry for almost never truly hearing the things that you said, over and over and for bludgeoning your feelings like they weren’t important. I repeatedly put my wants ahead of your needs and despite your repeated patience, I obviously did not recognize or respond to your efforts to try and help me understand where you were coming from and what you needed. I can see in hindsight that this turned even the simplest conversations into protracted power struggles and that I did not give up power easily, if ever. I remember countless times where you were trying to impress something important upon me or tell me what you needed and instead of empathic listening, I tried to “fix” a problem. I cannot imagine the pain that this must have relentlessly caused over eight years. I take full responsibility for the constant feelings of self-doubt that you’ve discussed experiencing as a result of my behavior, as well as the continual agony having even basic communication with me about even the simplest subject. It took me an embarrassingly long time to see, recognize, and understand these patterns—much longer than I would have liked. I’m deeply sorry for the disrespect and pain and what may have felt like an overwriting of your experience.”

As far as specific steps that I have taken to being accountable, these were the requests that my ex sent me in 2007 (and again in 2010) to resolve the situation and how I have complied with them:



1) Seek professional counseling (with someone who is not your friend) to deal with your past family issues as well as issues of control, abuse, and manipulation.

I've attended a total of over six years of therapy and psychology, most of which with Ruth Gibian in Portland, an expressly feminist social worker to focus on issues of my family history, control, abuse, and manipulation. The first three months with her were intensive therapy of four hours per week with ten hours of homework and reading. She expressed that she did not believe that I was an abusive personality and determined we were completed working on these issues in May of 2011. I can see how it would

be painful, confusing, and difficult to date a previously undiagnosed autistic

person and I feel for my ex's pain. I continued the pursuit of other therapy goals in the meantime for my own benefit. I grew a lot through this process and I am thankful for it.

2) Publicly acknowledge that you have issues of abusing power through manipulation.

See above. I also made a public statement about this in June of 2009 on a now-defunct website as well as this one where I again express sorrow and regret. I wrote and published a book about it in March 2016.

3) Do not involve anyone you are dating with your work.

I did not involve any person that I dated in my work for over seven years. Eventually, at the request of my current partner, we merged our two companies in 2015.

4) Show me demonstrable changes in your behavior

My counseling resulted in getting an autism diagnosis in 2009. I followed up with years of CBT learning work, which is where Autistics learn to intellectually mimic neurotypical/emotional behavior, agreed to "mediation" in 2008 which was one phone call where the people screamed at me for an hour and then failed to schedule a second meeting, submitted myself to and cooperated with an accountability process in January, 2010. I cooperated with Doug Taylor, who had been selected to mediate a resolution between Wreckk and I in February, 2010 and shared this list with me again in March, 2010. By November, 2010 after a single meeting, Doug was having his own relationship problems, recused himself, and told me "I do not know if Alex wishes to partake in much of anything with you...I have unsuccessfully

broached the topic with her recently.” I attempted to bring in a new mediator in 2011 but Wreckk declined to cooperate. I approach Doug Taylor about resolution again in March 2016 after Alex had attended my reading event and posted a note to me publicly and he responded “I’ll talk to her about it. I would brace yourself for a flat refusal, however. She has moved on and is much better off than she has been in years.”

Indeed, I am too. I’ve been in a healthy relationship for over nine years and counting. I haven’t had any new conflicts like is described with anyone in my life since my diagnosis and treatment. If these are not demonstrable signs of change in my ability to maintain healthy relationships, I don’t know what would be.

5) Do not call me, speak to me in public, or send letters to my house (use my po box or speak to the mediators [Wreckk is referring to the people who have since been referred to as an “accountability process”] but don’t ever send me a personal letter again.

I didn’t contact her for ten years until after Alex Wreckk showed up at my book reading, posted a public letter to me, and reviewed my book on Goodreads, at which point I sent her a formal request to settle the matter, since she was actively engaging with me.

6) Do not come within five blocks of my house (not including the Credit Union since I know you have to go there)

I have honored this request.

7) Do not go to Beaterville Cafe

I haven't been there since 2008.

8) Do not go to Amnesia Brewing

I haven't been there since 2006.

9) Do not go to Pause

I don't know what/where that is and thus I have never been there.

10) Do not go to the IPRC

I haven't been there since 2008.

11) Do not go to any zine reading I am performing at or any shows played by [my partner's] bands.

I have not attended any of them and would be terrified to. Still, Alex attended my reading event and events where she knows I am present.

12) Stop engaging in "psychological warfare" like writing "I forgave my mother" on my royalty statement or leaving images of your tattoo where I would run into them near my workshop at the Symposium.

I mentioned the former to Alex in 2007, thinking that she would be one of the few people who understood the implications of that statement and could empathize with its meaning. At that time, she and I were still mutually communicating and she was closer to me than many people and one of the only people in my life who had met my mother. I can see how it could be taken

the wrong way or hurtful. We no longer have contact so this isn't an issue. When the latter happened I had nothing to do with it and only knew about it because she mentioned it to me. I was at my dad's funeral in a different state and had nothing to do with other people making copies of publicly available images. I think it is hard for her to believe that it was a coincidence and I could see why that is upsetting for her. I recognize that these things were traumatic for her and make continuous effort to make sure that more things along those lines do not happen. This is difficult as she finds symbolic meaning in places where it wasn't intended and to blame me when, for example, a steak appears on her porch or UPS accidentally delivers our boxes to her home or an intern flyers at her store without telling anyone that they are doing it. Each time something like this happens, I go to greater lengths to ensure that nothing like it happens again.

13) Do not ever mention my family ever again. That upset me the most about your letter.

Haven't mentioned them again; don't talk to her.

14) Remove Stolen Sharpie Revolution from GoogleBooks

GoogleBooks suffered a lawsuit for their habit of adding books from libraries without permission. Microcosm/I did not give them permission and they removed it within a week when I asked them to.

15) Quit using my artwork on the website side bar.

She was aware that our programmer had spent years overhauling the website backend to edit the artwork and that we were working on a redesign jump already. It was removed as fast as we could; within a few months.

16) Disclose any contract or any agreement you have with the publisher of the Alternative Media Handbook to my attorney.

She gave the editors permission to use her work. I had no contract or agreement with the publisher regarding her work. I forwarded her attorney the few emails where the editors had contacted me, which included quoted emails where she had given the editors permission to use whatever they wanted of her work in their book.

17) Pay me the \$800 owed for my medical stipend.

She quit working at Microcosm three months before medical stipends were issued. She quit in October of 2006 when she knew that management had decided that it could not afford to begin paying medical stipends until January of 2007, due to owing our printers over \$30,000. Various former staffers have explained this to her.

18) Pay Brian for his sticker layout work.

Brian had paid his rent money to her instead of to me in February 2007. I showed him the divorce documents and he agreed that he owed this money to me. We subtracted his rent from the money that I owed him for contract work. He accepted that and moved on.

In addition to the attempts at mediation and the requested public statement from me in 2009, I proposed that my business, Microcosm Publishing become managed collectively by its staff in 2005 and created a system for employees to become owners. Upon request from Wrekk, our staff wrote two public statements in 2010 and 2011 that they took Alex's experience and accusations seriously and well as each person writing an individual statement about the

matter. In a further effort to resolve this situation, I left management completely and agreed to sell all of my ownership off in late 2010. I've extensively researched best practices in this situation and found that there are few. I eventually quit the company completely but returned in late 2012 when the manager and remaining owner did not feel comfortable taking on the risks of all ownership due the public campaign being waged against us.

To this day, as a response to Alex's statement that "it is bad enough for me to feel written out of a history I helped nurture," the company shares Alex's contributions, perspective, and experiences about myself and Microcosm with our staff and interns when they start and the public. We also offer the opportunity to talk about the situation and have created infrastructure, staff, and policies to resolve problems that may arise. Microcosm shares all internal data with the entire staff so that nothing is privatized and we have publicly published our finances since 2010 for maximum transparency as an organization.

Recently I was listening to a podcast and seemingly out of nowhere, the words came out of the host's mouth. "Bullies make people agree with them. People who aren't bullies make effort to agree with others." This was hard to hear as it resonated deeply with me. I certainly have put tremendous effort into making others agree with my perspective at the expense of hearing and agreeing with others' differing perspectives. I asked a few people about this and the response from each of them was that they had watched my behavior evolve as I learned how to have agency in my own life. My current partner told me that while I had once pushed her to understand and agree with my perspective, today she feels like I spend the effort to hear her perspective and internalize it as a way to respect her in the future. This was comforting to hear but I feel like I still have work to improve in this area.

I asked about the same issue at work and got a very different response; that I'm not expending effort to make people agree with me *or* agree with others. Again, this was hard to hear but a good lesson in understanding my personal growth. To be honest, while I've spent quite a few years learning how to be a leader, I don't actually enjoy those aspects of the job. I find it exhausting and confusing and I'd honestly much rather do production and development work quietly by myself at my desk. I was inspired when I read about the founder of a major news company who simply works to work as a reporter instead of managing their entire staff. So we hired a young relational woman who told me years ago "The most important lesson that I've ever learned is to respect everyone's truth." I still beam when I think about her and the first time she told me that statement. I felt like, in that moment, I didn't have to carry the burden anymore.

She assured me that things might be a little ugly but that she would unearth and repair every broken dynamic in every work relationship. And if she did that job, she would *do that job* and I better be prepared for the results of everyone's grievances coming to light. I was ecstatic because so many times over the years I would hear about two people not getting along far too late to repair their trust and relationship. And only then would I recognize that I had painfully missed all of the early warning signs. These things are still so difficult for me to understand and recognize and as a result it's important to bring in someone who is well-liked, not emotionally attached to the old ways of doing things, and focused mostly on resolving interpersonal problems. It feels like the next step in making amends for the hurt that I've caused in the past.

Good Trouble

Building a Successful Life & Business with Asperger's

© Joe Biel, 2016

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For a catalog, write or visit:

Microcosm Publishing

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The events detailed in this book are meant to tell the story and context of the author's life, experiences, and journey and should not be read as indicting or condemning the actions of others. Everyone behaved in the best way that they knew how at the time of reporting. Some names have been changed because it's not about them; it's about me. No real person, living or dead, committed any of the crimes or misdeeds depicted in this book. Because that would be wrong. Exhibit G

11/20/8

Microcosm Publishing
222 S Rogers St.
Bloomington, IN 47404
www.microcosmpublishing.com
812-323-7395
joe@microcosmpublishing.com

This is a contract that Cindy Crabb (known hereby as "author") and Microcosm Publishing, LLC (known hereby as "publisher") will maintain a working relationship with the books "Doris: An Anthology 1991-2001" and "Doris: An Anthology Volume II" (working title). Both books will continue to be published by Microcosm through subsequent editions and can be updated at the author or publisher's choosing.

Terms are as follows:

- * Author owns the entire contents and "licenses" publisher the contents to publish for each printing.
- * Publisher will print around 3,000-5,000 copies per edition.
- * Publisher will provide author with 15% of the profits and 5% of the physical copies we print each time.
- * Publisher will send author a check each time we owe you at least \$100.
- * Publisher expenses for both books will be combined and royalties will be paid once both books have paid for themselves.
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- * Author may request additional copies against royalties or projected future royalties.
- * Publisher tends to price things lower than the industry norm. Typically about 5-7x the price of printing. (Industry standard is 10-12.)
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Take care,
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DOWNTOWN BOOKS + NEWS
MALAPROPS
INTERNATIONALIST BOOKS
PEGASUS
PENDRAGON
or if author is in a town doing a reading + the store is low or out of copies.

author promises not to undermine Microcosm's awesome work + dedication + completely respects The great deal Microcosm gives The author + promises not to take advantage or go ballistic.
Exhibit H

Cindy



brosephinebaker



♥ 21 likes

brosephinebaker We really can!!! Would you like your own END JOE BIEL shirt? Let me know! #microcosm #joebiel #fuckwad



brosephinebaker

108w

We really can!!! Would you like your own END JOE BIEL shirt? Let me know! #microcosm #joebiel #fuckwad



lakeswimming

108w

hahahahhahahahaha this is amazing



lakeswimming

108w

@kvltcake @heyhlc @twiggonomics @total_lbs



dragonette_420

108w

LMAO I love this!



brosephinebaker

108w

@lakeswimming 🧑🏻 I'm so funny



lakeswimming

108w

brilliant



cephalopunx

108w

Ha!



beaugheale

33w

Sorry to see that your campaign has gone so badly. Perhaps something constructive.



brosephinebaker

33w

@beaugheale I will continue to fight the good fight! Get bent Joe!



beaugheale

47m

How much bullying and how many threats before anyone feels better? <https://medium.com/@joebiel/on-the-resiliency-of-the-cockroach-aspergers-the->

Exhibit I

Click here to support Legal Fee Fund for Alex Wrekk organized by Amber D. Garza ➡

[alexwrekk](#):

I can't discuss specifics about this, but I would love any help you could send my way from spreading the word to donating some pocket change.

These two people are personal friends of mine, and while Alex can't talk about what's going on, I'm not subject to any kind of gag order. I don't know the specifics of this particular case, but here's what I know: Alex used to be married to Joe Biel, who is suing her. Joe owns Microcosm. She divorced him several years ago after realizing that he was chronically emotionally abusive, and after multiple attempts to get him to be accountable and seek treatment. Like most people who have had to end a relationship with an abuser, Alex just wants Joe out of her life. Unfortunately, like so many abusers, Joe wants to continue to control Alex and to inflict maximum damage on her for leaving him, and he is quite willing to abuse the court system to do this - this is not the first time he has taken her to court vindictively. If you've ever had a bad relationship, you know how hard it can be to deal with an ex who just won't leave you alone, and to live with the fear of that person coming back to make trouble. Alex is living through this again. Please throw her a few bucks to help out, or to show solidarity to someone who's going through a hard time. I vouch that this is legitimate and I personally know both Alex, who is the target of this suit, and Amber, who is running the fundraiser. They are both great people who are incredibly responsible and awesome. (via [alexwrekk](#))

@2 days ago with 210 notes

(± 0 Comments)



Wren Awry

@WrenAwry



Follow

@EntropyMag Looking for info now, but among the DIY/Zine community Joe Biel/Microcosm are deeply mistrusted & many do not work w/ them.

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1



9:06 AM - 10 Jan 2017



1



1



Reply to @WrenAwry @EntropyMag



Wren Awry @WrenAwry · 22h

@EntropyMag Cindy Crabb, who is featured in the post, has sent cease & desist orders to Microcosm about them printing her work.

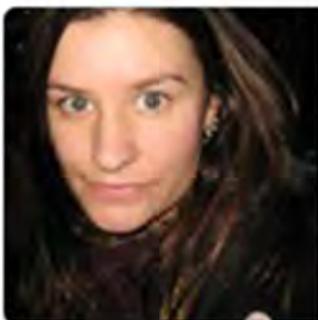


1



Wren Awry @WrenAwry · 22h

@EntropyMag



So, What's the deal with you and Microcosm?

I have to write something about this and not just leave it muddled in the words of others on the internets. I have seen and heard public discussion of my past involving...

alexwrekk.wordpress.com



Joe Biel is doing a reddit Ask Me Anything right now. Maybe you have a few questions for him?

http://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/28aydo/iam_joe_biel_independent_publisher_filmmaker_and/

To learn more about this scumbag here's a starting point

<http://alexwrekk.wordpress.com/2010/07/29/so-whats-the-deal-with-you-and-microcosm/>

#Joe Biel #Microcosm publishing abuse #boycott #anarchist

10 notes





so a new edition of the hitler youth handbook came out.

DEC. 7 2012 #WTF #RACIST #JOE BIEL #BLAH #HATE 6 NOTES

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Spectrum: Autists and Activism: An Interview with Joe Biel

T.H. Vega

Joe Biel (JoeBiel.net) founded Microcosm Publishing in 1996. His neighbours were unionized, working-class Democrats who helped establish his early interest in leftist politics. However, it was not until his teens when he discovered punk rock, and later with the founding of Microcosm Publishing, that he got involved in radical social justice activism. Microcosm has grown since its founding to be one of the largest distributors of independent publishing and zines in North America. After 15 years of involvement in social movements, engaging with issues like police brutality, globalism, public space, bicycle activism, queer and women's rights, Joe withdrew from neurotypical activism. When he was 32 he was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, an autistic spectrum condition, which played a large part in conflicts with other organizers and his feelings of isolation. Joe Biel sat down with Thania Vega to speak about his experience as an autistic person within leftist social movements, and what needs to be done to make these movements more inclusive of autistic people and the issues impacting their lives. The interview took place in November, 2016.

There have been several years of controversy surrounding Joe Biel and Microcosm. Shortly after conducting this interview, it came to our attention that there was an active boycott against Joe Biel and Microcosm Publishing due to a history of conflict and harm between Joe Biel, an ex-partner, and other activists. When we approached Joe Biel about these conflicts he acknowledged this history and told us the multiple steps he had taken to be accountable, which some of his accusers still consider to be insufficient or incomplete. There continue to be some independent zine publishers who will not partner with Microcosm and have spoken out publicly about their experiences. With full knowledge of this, we decided to publish the piece for one main reason: although it is possible for someone on the Autism Spectrum Disorder to engage in abusive behaviour, we believe that our movements fundamentally lack the tools and understanding to accommodate neurodivergence within its spaces. We hope that this article opens the space for activists to consider contradictory needs such as the need around community accountability processes and the need to understand autistic people's different capacities to assess social situations. We welcome any comments or feedback on this article and our decision to publish it.

Due to the general unfamiliarity with autism, let's start with you describing your experiences. What was the impact of the diagnosis on your life?



Joe Bile

4 hrs · 🌐

You abused our friend Alex. You refused to face accountability for it. You run a publishing company widely known for its unethical practices, including but not limited to stiffing authors on royalties and duplicating and selling other people's work without permission or payment. You have been banned from zine event after zine event, yet still have your "street team" show up with promotional materials, including at Alex's place of work. You sued your "friends" and former employees, that's been resolved and old news for a long time, and you're all the sudden posting a "joint statement" when that usually implies a statement by more than one party, and they don't seem to be saying anything. And now you're posting in a community you know Alex and her friends are active in, even addressing some of them directly when you know how vile they find you. Let's face it, many of us in the zine community have bad blood with each other, over differences personally, creatively, business wise... yet we keep our respectful distances (and leave the shit talking where it belongs - in private over text messages and conversations at the house we're staying at while in town for a zine fest). Joe, you know that if you had the audacity to show up at any of these places in person, you would be tarred, feathered, and run out of town on a board before you could finish the sentence "But it's my autism, you see..." It's a wonder that no one has punched you in the mouth yet, so who knows, maybe there is hope for humanity as a peaceful species after all. In the meantime, stop blaming being a shitty man on your disability. Even if we pretended for a moment that your outreach on Zines A Go Go was sincere effort at amends (and not a thinly veiled plug for your book and attempt to exploit free labor by taking people's thread comments and putting that content in your book), you're going to need to understand that reconciliation efforts should be by the terms of the afflicted party, not the perpetrator. You're not welcome here (pats on the back by known racists like Kari Tervo don't count, as she's not welcome here either). Delete your posts and leave and don't come back.

👍 Like

💬 Comment

➦ Share

an unknown person pretends to be me on Facebook and begins to send me bullying messages

< Home (1)

Joe Bile
Facebook

Invite Joe to Messenger

abusing me for years in our relationship.



Not giving you any more free labor, you can take your questions to Zines A Go Go. And stop messaging me to ask to get you in touch with Alex.

Awesome. Let me know if you're ever willing to take accountability seriously.

SUN 4:17 PM



It's really disgusting that you're doing that thing abusers do where YOU claim to be the one that got abused, YOU pretend to be the victim.

Are you denying the abuse that I received?



Don't write me here again. You want to ask these questions, you do it out on Zines A Go Go, since you're adamant about staying there and posting.

You just wrote to me!

I actually said that I wasn't adamant



Move to Inbox



>
> We're writing you concerning Microcosm Publishing's request for table
> space at the 2013 Bookfair. The last time you requested space, in 2011, we
> ended up not accepting your proposal in solidarity with a request put
> forward by a survivor of abuse perpetrated by a member of your collective,
> Joe Biel. We appreciated your thoughtful response, and your subsequent
> efforts to follow up with us and keep us updated by sending along your
> collective's June 2011 statement.
>
> That's partly why we found it strange that you re-applied again this year
> without any mention of our previous correspondence or of the process
> surrounding your collective's understanding of and progress on this issue,
> especially since we specifically requested that this information be
> provided if you were to apply again in the future.
>
> From what we've been able to understand, this failure to address the issue
> is a problem perceived more widely amongst folks associated with the
> anarchist/zine/queer/punk communities. Frankly, we're frustrated that you
> wrote to us without a recognition of this context or of our implication in
> it.
>
> We think highly of the work y'all do and would love to have your many
> wonderful publications at the Montreal Bookfair. Unfortunately, without any
> word from you as to how the situation has changed vis-a-vis your
> collective's relationship to this accountability process, we're forced to
> say again that we can't welcome Microcosm to the 2013 Bookfair.
>
> Again, we are interested in following up with you about this, and in
> having Microcosm present at the Montreal Anarchist Bookfair in the future.
>
> In solidarity,
>
> the Montreal Anarchist Bookfair Collective

--
POUR RESTER EN CONTACT/TO STAY IN TOUCH:

-> e-mail: info@salonanarchiste.ca

-> web: www.salonanarchiste.ca

-> tél: [514-679-5800](tel:514-679-5800)

-> liste d'annonces/announcements :

<https://masses.fao.ca/lists/listinfo/salon-annonces>

Entropy magazine deleted an interview with me after being bullied by strangers:

Dennis Sweeney <dennisjsweeney@gmail.com>

to me

1/10/17

Dear Joe,

I'm really sorry to write about this and really regret having to do so. When the Small Press Database interview with you went up today, we received several comments and emails from readers about difficulties people have had with Microcosm, past abuse, and some conflicts that remain unresolved. Because we stand unequivocally with victims of abuse, I decided to take the article off our site. This was in consultation with the head editor of Entropy, but in the end it was my decision and I accept the responsibility for doing so.

My understanding is that in the past and present you and Microcosm have been seeking solutions to these problems, and I know you're working to make Microcosm a really good thing. The press is doing great work. But Entropy, as I see it, has the responsibility of creating above all a space for people to feel welcome and unthreatened, and if our publishing that interview triggers anyone in any way I feel it's right to take it down from the site.

Again, very sorry to tell you this, especially after the work you put into the interview and the work that has presumably gone into resolving the aforementioned issues.

All best,
Dennis

Despite being a contributor for nearly 20 years, Maximum Rocknroll magazine will no longer run our advertisements, interviews, reviews, or articles:

MRR Ads <ads@maximumrocknroll.com>

to Joe

7/19/15

Hi Joe,

Thanks for reaching out. I'm sure you'll be disappointed to hear that we will not be running a Microcosm ad at this time. A previous coordinator made the decision that as a magazine we will no longer be reviewing Microcosm books and I'm upholding that policy — that will extend to advertising as well. Hope you haven't sent them along already, save the postage and the copies for a publication that will cover them.

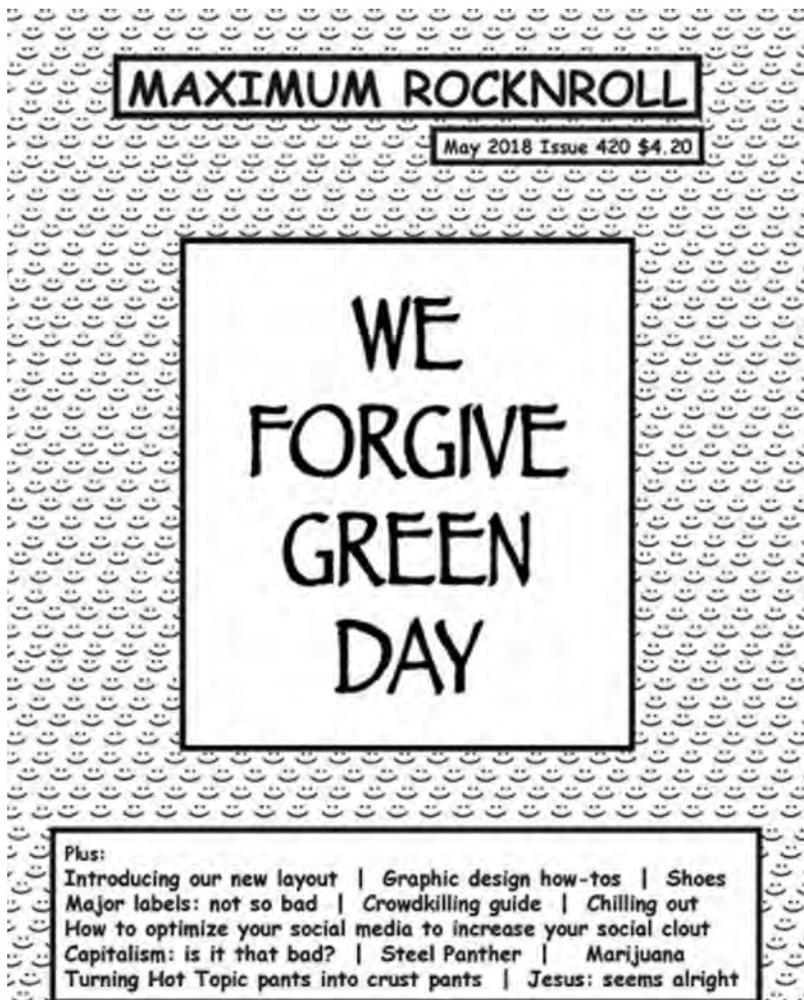
I think that you can probably guess at the reasons why the decision was made and upheld. The decision has nothing to do with your status as an independent company, which is not under question, and everything to do with the cycles of abuse upheld by yourself and the collective, and the failed accountability processes that go along with that. *MRR* is not interested in dragging your or Microcosm's name through the dirt, but we do not want to be associated with your project any longer, and that includes reviewing publications and running ads.

Cheers,

Grace

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL
Magazine | Radio | Archive
PO Box 460760
San Francisco, CA 94146
USA
[415-923-9814](tel:415-923-9814)
www.maximumrocknroll.com

For their April Fool's Day issue this year, they made the joke that I would write an editorial, which is absurd in their view because of Bowles cemented narrative about my view and character:



maxrnr • Following

maxrnr Issue 420 goes to print this week! We decided to change things up a bit: new positive mental attitude, new logo, and most importantly, some long-needed graphic design and layout changes.

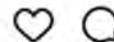
braidsssssssss Oh shit this is the issue with the joe biel editorial right? Can't wait to pick it up!

maxrnr @braidsssssssss Yep! And Chris Clavin!

jeffpootontheinternet best holiday ever mozine 🤪 - 🤪 - 🤪 very funny finally_punk happy easter

mickey_cued Leave it to @maxrnr to cover some no name hipster band like Steel Panther... what are they post-post wave?

bulletbeltfromdracula you fools still doin



1,304 likes

11 HOURS AGO

Exhibit I

Add a comment...



More from: Issue 78



The New Tattoo Underground
Zinester's Toolkit: Monica Trinidad

Patrons, Perks, Payout? Patreon for DIY creators

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Zine Review: Beginner Houseplant Guide

Book Review: Punk Is Dead: Modernity Killed Every Night

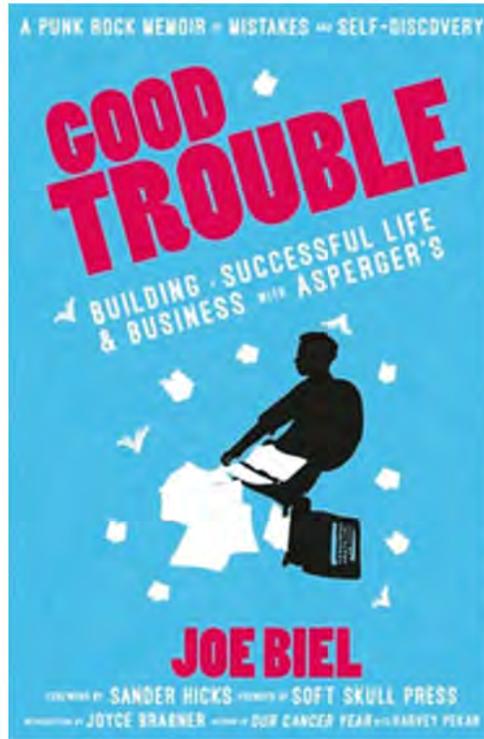
Zine Review: Introspection Intermittently #3

[More Reviews](#)

Book Review: Good Trouble

Issue 71, News, Reviews

Sunday, May 22nd, 2016



Good Trouble

Joe Biel, 192 pgs, Microcosm Publishing, microcosmpublishing.com, \$14.95

This was a really hard review to write, for a number of reasons. Chief amongst these is that depending on whom you speak with, Joe Biel is either a visionary or a nightmare of a human being. For the uninitiated, here's an extremely cursory primer: Biel founded Microcosm Publishing in 1996, possibly the first company to become a successful international distributor of zines (and later books) dealing with a variety of themes: radical politics, food, punk rock, bike culture and self care. In 2005, the company was made into a collective. In 2008, Biel participated in a mediation and accountability process after his ex-wife and former Microcosm employee Alex Wreck revealed that Joe had emotionally abused her in their relationship and had been similarly abusive in his business practices. After several attempts at mediation, it was determined that Biel had not made himself accountable, and a number of authors

withdrew their books from Microcosm's catalogue. Statements and counter-statements have been posted, boycotts were called and a maelstrom of bad vibes has swirled around Biel and the company he founded ever since.

Biel has now published a book coinciding with Microcosm's 20th anniversary that attempts to address this time period and his actions, with a twist: he was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome sometime in 2008. Herein lies the challenge of reviewing this book: if we review it, we risk amplifying the voice of a known abuser. However, if we don't review it, we are negating the existence of a company that is, for all intents and purposes, a DIY success story that helped legitimize, organize and amplify the practice of zinemaking as well as many brilliant voices (including Wreck herself). Finally, if I give into my (very strong) urges to shit on Joe Biel, it means I'm invariably shitting on a person who has a disability. Perhaps you see our dilemma; perhaps not.

At any rate, there are maybe four things I liked in this book. One is Joyce Brabner's intro (although I'm bummed that she intro'ed this book and not, say, the recent re-issue of Wreck's *Stolen Sharpie Revolution* or a Doris anthology or something else by a female zinemaker). Joyce rules! Second: I loved hearing the story of how a nervous-sounding Tom Neely pitched one of my favourite comics of all time, *Henry & Glenn Forever* (depicting the imagined romantic relationship between notorious tough-guy punks Henry Rollins and Glenn Danzig). Microcosm, initially shot the project down but later reconsidered, luckily for us. Third: Before his narrative gets mired in "he said she said" tedium, I liked Biel's warts-and-all rundown of the pitfalls of managing a business as a collective and the mistakes he and the various members made through miscommunication and bad money management. These are not easy things to admit and it is refreshing to read an honest breakdown of how this shit actually works. Running a business is hard. Fourth: Biel tells a story about trying to make money as a broke-ass teen in Cleveland by making videos for a tickle fetish website with his friends doing the tickling. Actually, the whole early chapter of the book about Biel's punk youth is great, including how he schlepped milk crates stuffed with Microcosm zines to punk shows every damn night.

Here's the thing that really chafes me: this book could have been a great resource, and a satisfying "fuck you!" mea culpa to all the people in this miserable, money-grubbing world who think the idea of art-based small businesses (and the publishing industry, period) is a folly and a waste. But all of Biel's pearls of wisdom and interesting anecdotes are bogged down by his exhausting rundowns of his relationship with Wreck, his issues with the collective and the accountability process, and his constant explaining-away of his problems using Asperger's as a crutch. I knew that these parts of the book would make me angry; I didn't expect that they'd also make me so bored. At any rate, while I can't wholeheartedly recommend this book, I do recommend that folks looking to start their own businesses look to Biel and his whole community as a cautionary tale and learn from the abuse, the errors, the bad business practices and the drama. It seems that Microcosm literally became its name; this is what happens when an empire, however small, starts to eat itself. (Alison Lang)

Exhibit I

microcosm publishing



microcosm publishing **statement**

Remove

microcosm publishing **2017 finances**

Remove

microcosm publishing

microcosm publishing **abuse**

microcosm publishing **joe biel**

microcosm publishing **coupon code**

microcosm publishing **lawsuit**

microcosm publishing **split**

microcosm publishing **twitter**

Microcosm Publishing, North Williams Avenue, Portland, OR

Report inappropriate predictions

Joe Biel

<https://www.joebiel.com/> ▼

This site contains images of **Joe Biel's** drawings, paintings, artworks as well as biography and articles and reviews.

The Power of Bullying: How I, Joe Biel, Have Been Bullied for My ...

<https://medium.com/@joebiel/the-politics-of-bullying-54f5fba40c0a> ▼

Jan 15, 2017 - The Power of Bullying: How I, **Joe Biel**, Have Been Bullied for My Autistic Behaviors for Over a Decade. I've been bullied for over twelve years by strangers on the Internet because of the way that my ex-wife depicts our abusive relationship that deny my experience and pushed me until I was suicidal.

How I, Joe Biel, Have Been Accountable for People I've Hurt - Medium

<https://medium.com/@joebiel/how-i-joe-biel-have-been-accountable-for-people-ive-h...> ▼

May 16, 2017 - How I, **Joe Biel**, Have Been Accountable for People I've Hurt. I was married from 2002-2004. It was years before I was diagnosed with autism in 2009 and learned how to understand or respond appropriately to emotions and nonverbal communication. I came to understand that intentions were not what ...

hello blog hit spike, thy name is microcosm/joe biel/abuse/alex wreckk ...

<https://alexwreckk.wordpress.com/.../hello-blog-hit-spike-thy-name-is-microcosmjoe-bi...> ▼

Jun 21, 2011 - So, some of you may know about my history with Microcosm Publishing and **Joe Biel**. And, if you don't, you can read this post here. At the very end of last year a supposed public statement from Microcosm was posted here. I posted my response here. Well, a new statement was actually posted on the...

You've visited this page 2 times. Last visit: 3/29/18

So, What's the deal with you and Microcosm? | Alex Wreckk

<https://alexwreckk.wordpress.com/2010/.../so-whats-the-deal-with-you-and-microcosm/> ▼

Jul 29, 2010 - I have to write something about this and not just leave it muddled in the words of others on the internets. I have seen and heard public discussion of my past involving Microcosm Publishing and **Joe Biel**. A lot of things have been said; some true, some not. Some things, like the discussion of Microcosm...

have been hurt by this. We unequivocally stand for those who have suffered from abuse. And we've struggled with where to go from there. The collective believes that ostracizing someone isn't a healthy, restorative response, and we've struggled with accountability being more than a radical judge-and-jury trial.

...

For the past nine months, Debbie Rasmussen (former publisher/director of *Bitch* magazine) has offered *pro bono* facilitation creating an "organizational refounding" and discussing proposed accountability processes. While the movement is gradual, there have been many organizational changes in the past months. Joe stepped down from being a collective member, and Microcosm will be collectively owned by the remaining members by the end of this year. The collective is working to create a Resource Council, an independent group of volunteers to offer support and mediation to Microcosm. Our hope is that an external ring of support could offer help with personal conflicts that fall outside of our Non-Adherence Policy and assist in maintaining a compassionate Safer Space Policy for the non-physical space that is Microcosm.

Holy sheeit. Joe Biel stepped down from Microcosm finally. Maybe the collective will manage to be a collective again. This is a pretty big deal as far as radical projects lining up their talk and their action goes.

It's hard because Microcosm has become like the Wal-mart of zine distros. On the one hand, it's really easy to find zines you want all in one place from them, and when we were first building up our zine library, that was sometimes important for easily doing big orders. But on the other hand, there's so many smaller zine distros to support too, and many of them specialize in areas that are really interesting. I know of at least one zine library/distro that refuses to buy from Microcosm.

When they had zine writers on tour about two years ago, doing skillshare/zine reading events, I booked them to come to our infoshop because I wanted to support those zine makers. I wasn't excited about supporting a project dominated by an abusive dude, or trading emails with him to set it up, or meeting him after having heard nasty shit about him. But I wanted to support the writers on the tour. And it was a great event, but one I was way too ambivalent about setting up. Radical projects like this need to really do what they talk about, and be accountable for it when they fail at that; booking an event like that shouldn't come with so much baggage that you have to justify it to yourself. It should be undoubtedly awesome and open and comfortable for everyone.

#Microcosm #zines #accountability

2 years ago on June 28, 2011 at 02:09pm
0 Comments · 7 notes

0 Comments

readin & fightin

Login

Sort by Best

Share

Favorite



Emma Falconer @EmmaFalconerArt · 2h

I can very much assure you that Joe Biel is a real prick in many other ways as well



Emma Falconer @EmmaFalconerArt · 34m

oh I've been friends with Alex & Paul for a long time so I have years worth of stories here. Bye bye 🙋

Vachon, Jude vachonj@carnegielibrary.org via yahoogroups.com [Unsubscribe](#)
to zinelibrarians

11/19/13

I'm not sure how complex it is at this point actually. It just seems like there is so much ugly evidence?

Jude

From: zinelibrarians@yahoogroups.com [zinelibrarians@yahoogroups.com] on behalf of AnomaLily [anomalily@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2013 4:40 PM
To: zinelibrarians@yahoogroups.com
Subject: Re: [zinelibrarians] Re: Microcosm damned!

The Seattle Free Press article was the best write-up I've seen this far.

Man, this is a complex freakin issue when it comes down to it.

On Mon, Nov 18, 2013 at 4:57 PM, twelveohtwo zine distro <twelveohtwo@gmail.com<mailto:twelveohtwo@gmail.com>>> wrote:

also this is happening:

<http://jessie-duke.tumblr.com/post/66218058033/a-few-months-ago-i-posted-this-statement-about>

--
twelveohtwo zine distro
po box 42 stn p / toronto, on. / M 5 S 2 S 6 / canada
www.facebook.com/twelveohtwo<<http://www.facebook.com/twelveohtwo>>



Kirsten Tamara

May 5 at 11:31am · 🌐

#tfw you find out your favoritest zine store is run by an abuser.
#tfw you feel like you shouldn't be surprised but you are and that is why you're so surprised
#tfw fake men suck and men won't fix themselves and I'm over men for the most part



hello blog hit spike, thy name is [microcosm/joe biel/abuse/alex wrekk/boycott...](#) or any combination of them.

ALEXWREKK.WORDPRESS.COM



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Comment

Share

Cascade Media <cascade.media.info@gmail.com>

11:34 PM (12 hours ago)

to joe

Hi Joe sorry for the delay in responding. After consulting with a couple people they advised that we not have Microcosm table at the conference. Apparently there have been some allegations leveled against you in the past. We don't know if those are true or not, but it seems certain that we would have to deal a lot of controversy if we did have Microcosm table, and we would prefer to avoid that. Sorry.

CMC Organizing Committee



UrbanTurnip

@UrbanTurnip

Jan 23

Any of my #trans tweeps know anyone interested in writing about cycling for an amazing feminist publisher? <https://t.co/YSMHC9tANM>



sean collins

@seancllns

Jan 23

@UrbanTurnip hm, i've heard really bad things about microcosm (specifically joe hiel)

Exhibit I

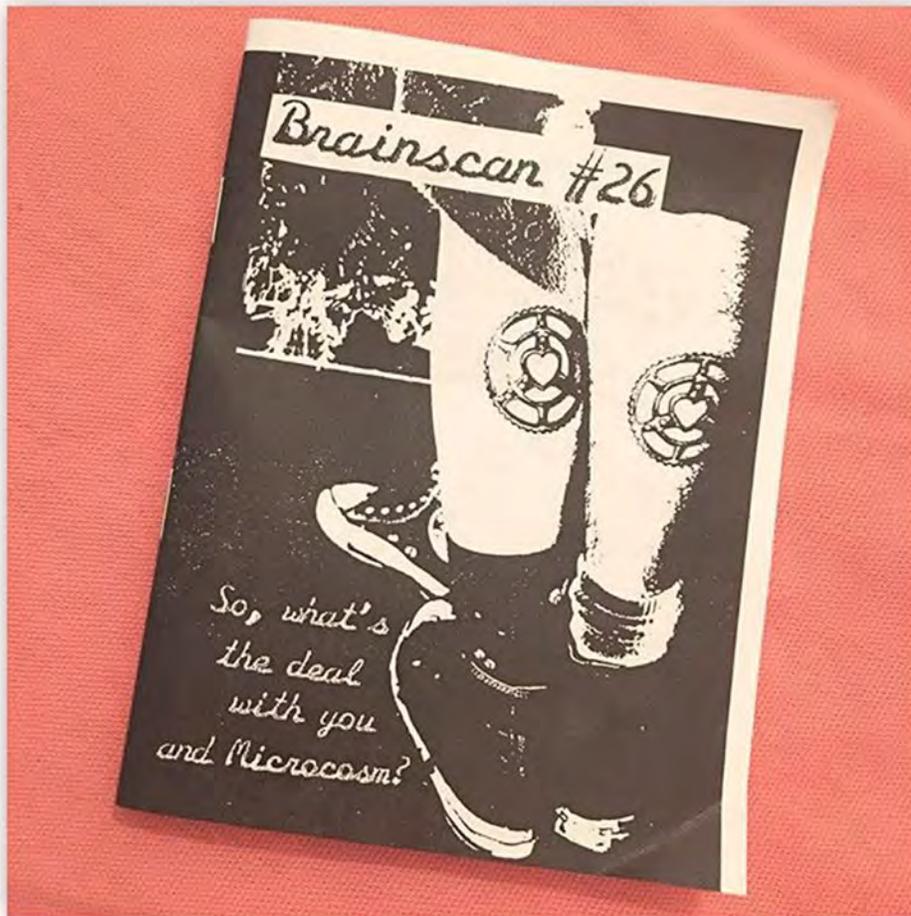


MOST RECENT
#brainscanzine



blythespeaks

Follow



21 likes

blythespeaks When you come across a #zine that really makes you sit and think. Thank you @alexwrekk for challenging my way of thinking and moving me outside my happy little bubble.





-Aqam

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Ahahaha fuck Joe Biel.

If Microcosm Distribution thinks this will solve all of the problems people have with Microcosm then they are delusional. The only way this would have been a step in the right direction is if the split off, changed their name, publicly denounced Microcosm, and refused to distribute anything published by them.

oh and THIS!

yeah, I'm not too sure about this... like, I think the problem goes beyond Joe Biel and the Microcosm collective should be accountable to how they dealt with the issue. the problem with abuse in our communities doesn't end at the abuser, it's also how communities respond to abuse and sexual assault and how we create a culture that does not support survivors and continues to allow abusive assholes to exist and be validated in radical scenes. from what i've read, it doesn't seem like the microcosm collective has taken any real responsibility for the ways in which they've enabled Joe Biel. what, if any, concrete things have they done to held him accountable, held themselves accountable, and respected the wishes of his ex-partner? i'm thinking that getting tired of having no one wanting to buy their books because they are shitty and slightly changing their name is not enough. is there a statement, or anything that proves me wrong? regardless, even if they got rid of joe biel, i think they have to do a lot more work to gain our trust back. again, it doesn't end at the abusive person, we all have to be accountable for how we validate abusive behaviours and create a culture that is unsafe for survivors etc.



MOST RECENT
#brainscanzine



blythespeaks

Follow



25 likes

blythespeaks Who wouldn't want to come home to all this #happymail from @portlandbuttonworks after running errands all morning? LOVE the cover... more

#happymail #portlandbuttonworks





Hawthorne Post

Yesterday at 6:06 PM ·



Alex is a good friend and a great person who some trust fund jerk is messing with.



GOFUNDME.COM

Click here to support Legal Fee Fund for Alex Wreck organized by Amber D. Garza



Like



Comment



Share

Be the first person to like this.



Theresa Ines Soto
omg. que mierda

[Back](#)**Hawthorn H. Wright**

Feb 16

@HawthornRants

SERIOUSLY??? If Joe Biel was anything like the caring friend of alternative media that he claims to be then he would've left and stopped sabotaging it at least 10 years ago. Please help if you can. Enough is long past enough.

<https://t.co/trnDhIL4Ww>

Back



Shane
@shane_marble

19s

Alex Wrekk is a treasure and Joe Biel is a piece of shit so please consider donating to this if you can <https://t.co/DpEsVJU9Q>





First off, I do my best to not support Microcosm Press. I won't get too much into it here but you can search Microcosm lawsuit and a lot of articles should come up. I also read Alexx Wrek's Brain Scan zine series, the later issues exploring her break up with Microcosm's Joe Biel as a partner/business partner and I empathize with her experience. It is the biggest zine publisher and distro going. I came so close to ordering the new Morrissey and Nick Cave vegan cook books but halted when I saw who had published them. Too bad.

I preface this by the fact that my most adored cook book also happens to be published by Microcosm. Many years ago I found Please Don't Feed the Bears on the bottom shelf at Herbivore. I didn't notice the iconic bike gear heart emblem on the back and it wasn't until the lawsuit against Pioneers Press that Joe Biel's shady history even came on my radar. When I first got the book I showed it to my brother just to say 'Look at this guy's impeccable music taste!' He asked to borrow it and ages passed till I more or less stole it back from him. I pulled it off his shelf, flipped it over and groaned. I clammed up ever recommending it or mentioning it during Vegan MoFo. I didn't want to draw



Please Don't Feed the Bears on the bottom shelf at HEB. I didn't notice the iconic bike gear heart emblem on the back and it wasn't until the lawsuit against Pioneers Press that Joe Biel's shady history even came on my radar. When I first got the book I showed it to my brother just to say 'Look at this guy's impeccable music taste!' He asked to borrow it and ages passed till I more or less stole it back from him. I pulled it off his shelf, flipped it over and groaned. I clammed up ever recommending it or mentioning it during Vegan MoFo. I didn't want to draw attention to supporting that publisher. Today I'm going to separate the book from the dealer and appreciate it for what it is: My favorite vegan cook book.

"I can't believe I'm holding a copy of Please Don't Feed the Bears. I still have my dog-eared, food-covered (zines) on my shelf, but I can't tell ya what a great joy it is to see this in print again! It reads like the little spitfire brother of Soy not Oil, where vegan recipes are listed with songs to listen to while cooking. You want this on your shelf." -Profane Existence

"A must have for every vegan metal fan." -410 Media

"Well put together, cleverly researched and clearly written by someone who views veganism as a way of life." -Riot 77 Magazine

"I can easily see this becoming a classic on the shelf." -Xerography Debt

"Easily the most entertaining cookbook I've ever come across. Wouldn't you be into eating a meal called Taco Thrasherole?" -Hanging like a Hex

"This is the vegan-punk-rock equivalent to the Betty Crocker tome my mother used on a regular basis". -Brian Redbeard, Give Me Back #51





MOST RECENT

#microcosmpublishing



11 likes

thejasonhearne Amazing delivery from Portland, OR all the way to Rain City, UK. #microcosmpublishing #carfree #onelesscar

View all 11 comments

moreohs @jasterixstrange Admittedly trolling here: Champion of cycling aside, the co-founder of Microcosm was an abusive and manipulative dude to way more people than just his ex-wife, and lots of them have also bravely spoken up about it. But I take it you'd rather just write [...]

thejasonhearne @moreohs happy to read up on it if you can send some reputable links? No one wants to give cash to people who don't deserve it. I did some research, although really briefly, and I couldn't find anything.

MAY 9, 2014



situology [Follow](#)

I have a copy of the 1st edition of Alex Wreck's Stolen Sharpie Revolution that I got at Reading Frenzy. I'm organizing my things and I look at the price and year I bought it and written in ballpoint is the word "Biel." This turns my stomach.

#joe biel #emotional abuse

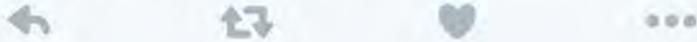
3 notes





Ambellina @cosmicdear · 6h

Aspie followers, let me know if I'm out of line. According to some Aspies I've talked to on facebook, these comments are all necessary.



Ambellina @cosmicdear · 6h

The man raising money for his memoir, Joe, is an abuser of women. He should NOT be supported. kickstarter.com/projects/micro...



[View summary](#)



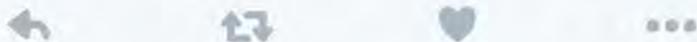
Ambellina @cosmicdear · 6h

The video itself contains clips of someone he has abused, which of course, is distressing.



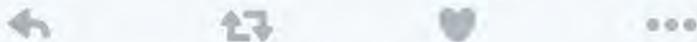
Ambellina @cosmicdear · 6h

Yes, Asperger's may have something to do with his failed relationships. Missing social cues, partners that aren't understanding, etc.



Ambellina @cosmicdear · 6h

Please, please, please spread this and ask anyone who might be considering supporting him to put their support elsewhere.



Issue that has come to our attention

Pasqualina Azzarello <pasqualina@youthbikesummit.org>

1/21/15

to me

Hi Joe,

I wanted to reach out to you about a message that was sent to Youth Bike yesterday regarding Microcosm. It addressed what it deemed to be some recent and ongoing issues involving local zines and allegations of abuse. I'm not sure if these things are true but I did want to check in as it would be helpful for us to have a better understanding the larger context of whatever it is/was that's transpired.

Just to be clear, neither myself nor Youth Bike has jumped to any conclusions but it feels important to check in. Any information would be helpful so that we have a better sense of how to respond to an inquiry like this and also whether or not there is a conflict.

Thank you in advance for any information.

Best,
Pasqualina

Youth Bike | Director
www.youthbikesummit.org | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

Youth Bike Summit | February 13 - 15, 2015 | Bike Works | Seattle, WA

Youth Bike transforms our local communities and strengthens our national movement by empowering bicycle leaders.

Joe Biel <joe.microcosm@gmail.com>

1/21/15

to Pasqualina

Hi Pasqualina,

Sorry that people are bothering you about us when you have a conference to organize. There is someone in S

I was separated from a two year marriage in 2004 and my ex continues to focus on this and frame all events o involved in it.

Whenever I try to engage in dialog with the people bringing this up, they refuse to discuss the matters and just effort to heal the issue. Fortunately, they have never show up to the events in person.

I have no idea what "recent and ongoing issues" would be surrounding "local zines." If you have more informa

If you really want to put in some hours reading into this rabbit hole, you can see more here:
<http://microcosmpublishing.com/blogifesto/2013/01/a-statement-from-the-microcosm-collective>

Sorry that you are being dragged into this.

J

Tasks: Joe Biel / Microco...

- TUE: Re:spectrum card
- TUE: design Chocolate
- TUE: staff update (1/31)
- WED: bikes in space, bike/opla support, H&GFE1, this is pdx
- WED: accounting
- WED: Emile
- PRH distribution
- WED: design Anxiety
- FRI: Cursor in typing box default on website
- FRI: pay 132/OQ to PO BOX 14800 Salem OR 97309-0920

Actions + [trash] [list] [refresh]

March Jobs

an event there.

is dragging other people into becoming

ring salt in a wound without any seeming

PR alert about Joe Biel, director of Aftermass

Cathy Tuttle <cathy.tuttle@seattlegreenways.org>

10/5/14

to Davey, Blake, Elizabeth, Anne, Rick, me

Thank you Davey, Blake, Elizabeth, and Anne for coming on Friday, October 17, as panelists after the film Aftermass to discuss the evolution of Seattle as a bicycling city.

I want to give you a heads up about an issue that you, and perhaps your PR staff may need to be aware of.

Joe Biel, the director of Aftermass, is coming from Portland for the screening. I have received information about Joe's past from several sources that encouraged us to boycott the film because of Joe's marital and professional conflicts in the early 2000s. I have read the blogs that lay out their case against Joe. I have read the blog Joe has refuting these sources and I have spoken with Joe. I feel comfortable showing this film, as does the Meaningful Movies.

Please know that I considered the merits of both the request for boycott and the impact of a boycott on an individual with as much care as I could. I feel comfortable with my decision but it took a great deal of discussion and thought and I will appreciate any decision you make as well.

Here is one of the "anti-Joe" blogs: <http://alexwrekk.wordpress.com/2010/07/29/so-whats-the-deal-with-you-and-microcosm/>
Here is the response, written by Joe's partner Ely Blue: <http://microcosmpublishing.com/blogifesto/2013/01/a-statement-from-the-microcosm-collective>

I'll be sending out detailed logistic information soon.

Here are the event pages on Facebook and our website.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1472840612991755/>
<http://seattlegreenways.org/events/aftermass-movie-panel-discussion/>

Please let me know if you've got any questions about this evening and thank you.

Cathy Tuttle, Executive Director
Seattle Neighborhood Greenways
(206) 713-5869
Impact HUB Seattle
220 2nd Ave S #100 98104
www.SeattleGreenways.org
check out our newsletter! <http://seepurl.com/32vpl>

Davey Oil <daveyoil@gmail.com>

10/5/14

to Cathy, Blake, Elizabeth, Anne, Rick, me

Heya Cathy,

Thanks for the thoughtful email.

I've known Joe for years and was very heavily involved in the zine scene when this boycott started. Joe is the only person involved that I know well personally, but I take community accountability seriously and I spent a long time working to understand about this boycott and the people involved. I am happy to let you know that I am delighted to support Joe and participate in the film event.

I think you did the right thing sending this email to the participants and I think you did the right thing going ahead with the event as planned.

Thanks!

Exhibit I

Tasks: Joe Biel / Microco... [refresh] [close]

March Jobs [refresh] [close]

 **Rick Turner** <rick@meaningfulmovies.org> 10/3/14

to me, cathy.tuttle

Hi Joe,

I received the email below the other day. I read a number of citations (<http://wemakezines.ning.com/profiles/blogs/why-are-many-in-zine-community-boycotting-microcosm-publishing>). I'm also Cc'ing Cathy Tuttle who has been center point on organizing the evening and coordinating the guests.

The info is incomplete and I can't really dissect appropriately. My first inclination is to not let this effect our screening. Our organization is founded on principles of peace, justice and non-violence across the board. Along with all parties, this of course extends to also being fair with you in how this resolves. But currently, while I do have concerns, I have insufficient data to really understand whether this is a personal or business issue or??, or whether it's relevant at all. And there's nothing I've seen connected with the topic of the evening. Nevertheless, our big concern is with how the connection to the various groups and panel representatives will see this. These are large organizations or individuals largely vested in their work and community. And of course, **Meaningful Movies** has similar vested interests.

I guess I'd like to briefly hear a response from you on this. Our venue is free and open to the public so anyone is able to attend, and there is the possibility that this could be brought up during our discussion. The evening is scheduled with a dynamic group with a lot of ground to cover, and I want to minimize unneeded diversion if I can. We have no desire nor intention to enter in any situation as a mediator on this, but if the subject comes up, we may need to be able to address it.

To what degree do you think this issue might be of concern? Can you give us more information?

Thanks again.

All the best,
Rick

Rick Turner

206-450-5998, rick@meaningfulmovies.org

Director, **THE MEANINGFUL MOVIES PROJECT:**

Helping communities and groups organize and educate using the power of Social Justice Documentary Film and Community Discussion.

FRIDAY NIGHT AT THE MEANINGFUL MOVIES:

Social justice documentary films and community discussion ...every Friday evening - Free and open to the public.

www.meaningfulmovies.org

<http://www.facebook.com/MeaningfulMoviesProject>



From: Paul Brown [<mailto:kozemchuk@gmail.com>]

Sent: Monday, September 29, 2014 8:48 PM

To: info@meaningfulmovies.org

Subject: Re: [bikeshack] "Aftermass": bicycling in a post-Critical Mass Portland, 7p Friday 17 October

Hi Rick,

I thought I'd send you this email. I encourage you to cancel the screening with Joe Biel.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks ~ Paula

Tasks: Joe Biel / Microco...                                                         



Violet Fox

@violetbfox

Follow

Hi zine friends! It's your old pal Violet asking you kindly: please don't do business with Microcosm Publishing. #zines

RETWEETS

2

LIKES

9



9:57 AM - 18 Apr 2017

1

2

9



the trash wizard @ourcityburning · 3h

Replying to @violetbfox

is this for the same reasons that have been known for awhile?

1



Violet Fox @violetbfox · 3h

Yep. But I keep seeing people publish w/ them? As a zine fest organizer, it's the issue that just won't die: just came up again this week. 😞

1

1



the trash wizard @ourcityburning · 3h

fair enough. that stuff was already on my radar a) glad to hear it being talked about still b) wanted to make sure there weren't new things

2



dayna moth 🌙 @catmothcrow · 15h

Replying to @catmothcrow

You can't be an abusive prick and be cool, idc how weird yr fashion is, or how good yr taste is. A community is only as cool as its members.

👤 1 ❤️ 4



dayna moth 🌙 @catmothcrow · 15h

Replying to @catmothcrow

Saying you support survivors of abuse doesn't mean shit if there's no action, or if you ignore abuse because that person is "cool".

👤 1 🔄 1 ❤️ 1



dayna moth 🌙 @catmothcrow · 15h

Replying to @catmothcrow

Or how feminist ideals are extolled but not put into action.

👤 1 🔄 1 ❤️ 1



dayna moth 🌙 @catmothcrow · 15h

Replying to @catmothcrow

How someone's music taste or interest in bicycles is seemingly more important than the mental or physical abuse they've perpetrated.

👤 1 🔄 1 ❤️ 1



dayna moth 🌙 @catmothcrow · 15h

Replying to @catmothcrow

Some friends and I were just discussing how abuse and misogyny is tolerated in local punk/diy/leftist communities and how fucked up that is.

👤 1 🔄 1 ❤️ 1



dayna moth 🌙 @catmothcrow · 16h

That disappointed feeling when you discover a local zinester is affiliated with Microcosm... 😞



dayna moth  @catmothcrow · 1m

Replying to @joebiel_ @dongdaddy69

@joebiel_ I have to get ready for work, but if you want to continue this conversation, please dm me so we can talk in more than 140 char.



dayna moth  @catmothcrow · 3m

Replying to @joebiel_ @dongdaddy69

This issue is still ongoing. Who you distribute your titles to, etc. This is outside of all the "old stuff."



dayna moth  @catmothcrow · 9m

Replying to @catmothcrow @joebiel_ @dongdaddy69

Even beyond your abuse, I don't agree with your business practices. Thus I'm not going to support Microcosm stuff. Again, that's that.



dayna moth  @catmothcrow · 11m

Replying to @joebiel_ @dongdaddy69

I want you to go away! I've read your side of things, the articles and books, and I still think you're at fault. That's that.



dayna moth  @catmothcrow · 12m

Replying to @joebiel_ @dongdaddy69

You literally just did! I said it was swept under the rug, and your response was learning you're autistic.



dayna moth  @catmothcrow · 14m

Replying to @joebiel_ @dongdaddy69

My personal reaction is you were sweeping it under the rug, blaming everyone/thing but yourself. And you still are!



dayna moth @catmothcrow · 24m

Replying to @joebiel_ @dongdaddy69

In that case, I read the lawsuit when it was made publicly accessible, and I do not agree that you are in the right/owed money.



dayna moth @catmothcrow · 26m

Replying to @joebiel_ @dongdaddy69

Your continued actions, including but not limited to the way you handled your past behavior in your book, are still harming people.



dayna moth @catmothcrow · 29m

Replying to @joebiel_ @dongdaddy69

Blaming one's abuse on autism is ableist; autism is not an excuse for abuse.

ilikecats • @ilikecatstoo2

14 Jan

@joebiel_ Boycott Microcosm. **Joe Biel** is a misogynist who uses autism as an excuse for abusive behavior.

Reply • Retweet • Quote • Like

Exhibit I



What's the deal with **Microcosm Publishing?**

(self.zines)

submitted 5 hours ago by [TheChoirDropout](#)

I don't wanna seem like I'm digging up old drama again or anything, but I stumbled across all the news about Microcosm and abuse allegations against Joe Biel, including the disaster of an AMA he tried to do, and I'm confused.

Is there anyone that can clarify what happened? I'm trying to find more recent news about it, but all I'm finding are old scattered articles.

Not to mention, Cindy Crabb, who previously denounced them, posted on her blog for the first time in 6 years saying [this](#).

Sorry if this doesn't really belong on the sub, but this whole thing is really creeping me out. Can anyone help clarify things? I just wanna know if it's worth still

A Modern Woman on the Move

in

Accountability, Joe Biel, and Microcosm

leave a comment »

What I love about the zine community! Holding a person and a collective accountable for habitual abuse... <http://heavymentaldistro.org/blog/open-letter-to-microcosm-publishing/> - For those of you who ask why I don't like Microcosm, here is a start for your reading and deciding for yourself. -

I have had several friends over the years ask me what the deal is with Joe Biel and Microcosm. Why don't I like Microcosm? Should they participate in an anthology being put out by Microcosm or Joe? Should they have their zines sold by Microcosm? Does one guy really ruin it for everyone?

Well, maybe not for you, but, for me, yes.

When I first met Joe at a board game night about 8 years ago, I was just as charmed as most people are by him. This was despite the fact that he was as condescending as all get out, including making fun of me and saying I was a vegan poser because I went with my friends to Denny's and ordered coffee. I didn't take the remarks he made too seriously then, until I realized later that he can just be generally demeaning. When I learned more about him from our interactions and from friends, including Alex Wrekk, I quickly became uncomfortable around him or anyone close to him. I don't hate him, hate is too strong of a word... I just think he is boundary pushing, disrespectful, and probably emotionally abusive.

Probably that is, if any part of any story I had heard about his relationships was true, which I do believe many of the accounts I have heard to be true indeed. Of course, I heard about the complications of his relationship with Alex Wrekk first, but there were more beyond and past him, including a woman he was in relationship with after Alex who now tells a similar story as Alex's about their relationship... As well as knowing the perspective of outside mediators that have tried to work with Alex and Joe. And also, knowing how he and Microcosm have related to other businesses and people whose work they publish and/or distribute.

It's complicated to explain more about all of this in a blog post. I started writing this post as a much longer entry, but, ultimately, I don't have time or energy right now. So I will post what I have told many friends over the years:

If you want to here a lot more details about all of this and my personal perspective, just give me a call or let's have coffee. I will tell you what I know, how I feel and why...

Meanwhile, I will volunteer what I have said a few times, including what I told a lady friend who asked me recently over the phone about Joe Biel and Microcosm. I, personally, don't feel comfortable with him or Microcosm for a variety of reasons, but I would not hold it against you or anyone else for deciding to participate in an anthology project or being distributed with them. You have my acceptance, I just don't advise it because I think he and the collective are unethical and not accountable. I am not going to judge you for getting involved with them if you feel skeptical because you don't have a first-hand experience of being treated unethically by Joe or Microcosm... And I hope you don't. When I know a person or a company or a organization has behaved unethically, however, I try to steer clear of it. Unless, of course, I do see some real accountability on the person's or company's or organization's part.

Exhibit I

While I think Joe Biel is lame and the situation with Microcosm kind of sucks, I am glad for what I see in the

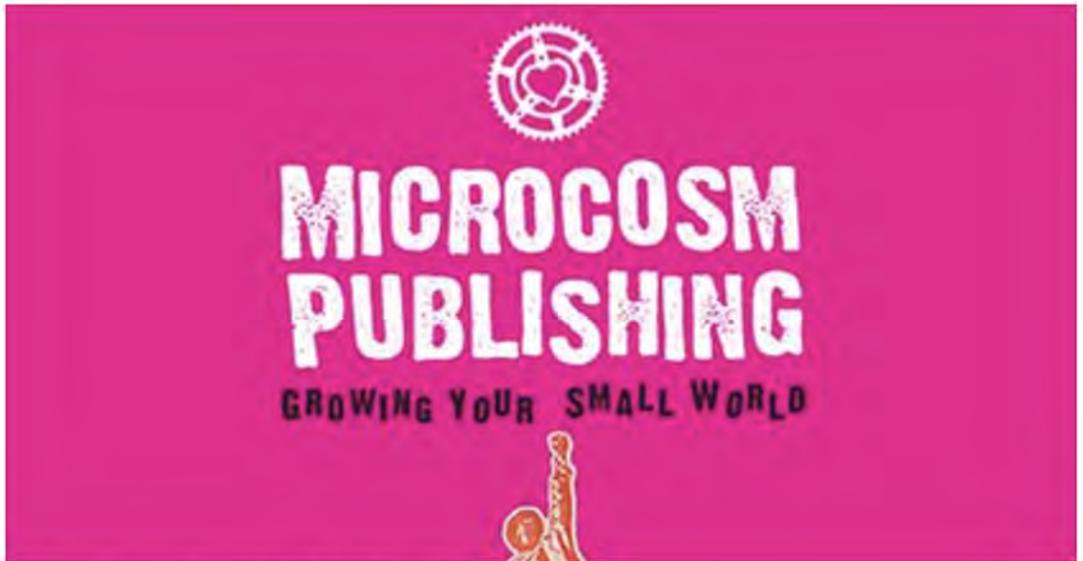


Sascha Altman DuBrul

12 hrs · 



Hey friends and friendly people who maybe we don't actually know each other very well(!): do you know that I wrote a book a couple years ago? My publishing company is going to reprint it and let me write a new intro and conclusion and make it all fancy looking but first I have to sell the rest of the books that they have in stock and I'm not a practiced salesman. If you've never read my book please buy it and support my art, and if you have read it and you liked it please post something about it on goodreads or amazon. And if, in the coming months, you see me posting a lot about myself just keep in mind I'm doing it not to be an egotistical jerk but because that's what we gotta do in this work to make it these days. And I think my book is actually a pretty good read if you like adventures stories and radical tales about seed saving and anarchists and mental health activism trying to reshape the psychiatric narrative and how we work inside and outside of the system.



Sascha Altman DuBrul

All products by Sascha Altman DuBrul on Microcosm Publishing

MICROCOSMPUBLISHING.COM



   You, David Lee Nishizaki, Roger Peet and 26 others

2 Shares

2 Comments

one of our authors promotes his book and is barragd with Alex's rumors and misinformation



Frances Claude hey sascha, did you know that joe biel is in a process of suing alex wrekk and other former collective members for speaking up about the abuse they endured while they were members of microcosm? alex is in the middle of raising legal fees at the moment.... [See More](#)



Click here to support Legal Fee Fund for Alex Wrekk organized by Amber D. Garza

GOFUNDME.COM



Like · Reply · 11h

^ Hide 52 Replies



Sascha Altman DuBrul Ouch I definitely did not know this!, I thought it was all resolved. That is not good news at all. Thanks for letting me know [Frances](#)

Like · Reply · 10h



Frances Claude joe is very persistent and persuasive and good at revisionist history that benefits him, i wouldn't be surprised if most folks who have stuff out on microcosm are being actively lied to by him. i hope you're able to republish in a way that honors both your work and the folks he is targeting ❤️

Like · Reply · 10h



Harmony Chapman I second this Sascha! I confronted him about conflicts microcosm had regarding Doris/ [Cindy Crabb](#) and he tried to tell me that her story couldn't be trusted. So I support you and your book but I am boycotting microcosm

Like · Reply · 7h · Edited



Kimberly Beth I was looking for a current link to share re: this but yeah...joe did not and is not acting respectfully or responsibly. I don't purchase from microcosm either 🙄

Like · Reply · 8h



Sascha Altman DuBrul This makes me so sad. I supposed it was my willful ignorance but I was under the impression all this stuff was resolved. He's still suing former collective members? WTF is that about? I really thought people worked their issues out. I've been around lo... [See More](#)

Like · Reply · 6h



Frances Claude Shadow selves are super real, but i will say that joe has not, in any step of this process, held himself actually accountable or stopped on the forward march to actively hurt folks already suffering from his actions.



Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha Abusers are often very charismatic, and it's common for abusers to claim they are the ones being abused when people confront them about causing harm. It's very hard for a lot of people who abuse to actually face the harm they've caused- it's so much ea... [See More](#)



Beyond Firing: How do we create community-wide accountability...

MEDIUM.COM

Like · Reply · 6h · Edited



2



Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha also, I bet you could get another publisher! ak, haymarket, others.

Like · Reply · 6h



2



Harmony Chapman Yes I bet ak would publish you!

Like · Reply · 6h



Sascha Altman DuBrul Leah - it hits home for me when you talk about how abusers are often charismatic, because we've all been around for a long time and seen ways charismatic leaders will shut out the stories they don't want to become public. i read through all three of yo... [See More](#)

Like · Reply · 4h



Joe Biel I know that feelings run high about this but for what it's worth, I've done what has been asked of me, there is no lawsuit against anyone in the former collective, a nice person settled everything with Cindy over a year ago, and we just want to be left alone from a relationship that ended 14 years ago: <https://medium.com/.../how-i-joe-biel-have-been...>



How I, Joe Biel, Have Been Accountable for People I've Hurt

MEDIUM.COM

Like · Reply · Remove Preview · 4h



1

 **Frances Claude** Deflecting accountability by threatening self harm or suicide is out right manipulation, joe.
Like · Reply · 4h · Edited

 **Joe Biel** **Frances** I agree. I have not deflected accountability and not sure how stating the fact is a threat. As you can see in the first link, I have done what was asked of me.
Like · Reply · 4h

 **Frances Claude** And now you are taking alex to court?
Like · Reply · 4h

 **Joe Biel** Hopefully not. We literally just want to be left alone as we leave her alone. We haven't interacted in over a decade and she's declined all offers to mediate or resolve what bothers her. But it's been 14 years. Let's let everyone move on with their lives.
Like · Reply · 4h

 **Frances Claude** So you are suing her and suggesting that she needs to leave *you* alone?
Like · Reply · 4h

 **Joe Biel** We filed a cease and desist after a series of events where she came to our event and began escalating harassment and inserting herself into our lives. She is disputing her right to continue to do that. It's really that simple. If she left us alone, everyone would realize the whole thing ended a decade ago.
Like · Reply · 4h

 **Frances Claude** Was that before or after you published a zine calling her a liar and suggesting that you were the sole recipient of abuse?
Like · Reply · 4h · Edited

 **Joe Biel** I have never disputed her truth or version of events. I have never suggested that I am the only one who was abused or called her a liar. Our stories are not in conflict. Also, the zine came out after she wrote a public letter to me, attended the event, and seemed to want to have an actual conversation.
Like · Reply · 4h

 **Joe Biel** I've avoided and ignored her and made no public statements whatsoever about the situation until she asked me to.



Frances Claude I dont believe you but ok.

Like · Reply · 4h



Joe Biel I'm happy to send you the zine in question if you want to read it and that offer extends to anyone else. The situation is so sad because it's like every effort has been extended to drawing it out instead of resolving it.

Like · Reply · 4h · Edited



Frances Claude Joe, i was a member of the left bank book collective for a number of years. I was the person bottomlining our process of communication with you about microcosm as a collective both before members left to form pioneers press and after. You blamed your b... [See More](#)

Like · Reply · 4h · Edited



Joe Biel While other people claimed that I had said that, I never actually blamed my behavior on a wheat allergy. As you can see above, I take responsibility for my actions, took the initiative to learn from those situations and change, and as a result I've been in a healthy relationship for nine years, the longest of my life.

Like · Reply · 3h · Edited



Joe Biel Since I took of leave of absence in 2008, dealt with understanding these behaviors, and then ended up coming back and managing Microcosm again in 2012, we've since never had any of these problems in six years despite having the largest staff and author... [See More](#)

Like · Reply · 3h



Anne Weaver I don't know you but I have great familiarity with men who have used positions of power to treat people (especially women) badly. Both inside the publishing world and in the mental health field.

If you had to take a "leave of absence to deal with behaviors" then you should not be returning to a position of power over anyone. ... [See More](#)

Like · Reply · 2h



Frances Claude There is just so much missing from yr story, joe, like how alex had to ask again and again for microcosm to stop using the old logo, yr published version of events which is absolutely not owning yr actions, no public statement detailing what yr role was... [See More](#)

Like · Reply · 1h · Edited

Exhibit I



Frances Claude Honestly this is the last of my commentary. A wheat allergy ffs!



Frances Claude Honestly this is the last of my commentary. A wheat allergy ffs!

Like · Reply · 1h



Joe Biel The above link isn't "my story," it's the specific list that was sent to me to settle this issue and how I complied with the requests. I know the collective was struggling to come up with a new logo throughout their tenure. I re-drew the logo the day ... [See More](#)

Like · Reply · 1h · Edited



Joe Biel Anne I took a leave because I was diagnosed as being autistic at 32 which made sense why I was not understanding people's expression of their needs and bulldozing boundaries. So my leave was to take responsibility for my actions and learn how to proper... [See More](#)



A Statement From Microcosm | Microcosm Blogifesto

MICROCOSMPUBLISHING.COM

Like · Reply · Remove Preview · 1h · Edited



1



Frances Claude Thats an absolute fabrication, i recieved an email from you myself.

Like · Reply · 55m



Anne Weaver Hey Joel, I am glad it was helpful to you. And it sounds like you did the right thing for you. That all being said, I believe that certain people - especially people who have histories of abusing power/issues with boundaries - should not be in leaders... [See More](#)

Love · Reply · 51m



1



Joe Biel In that case , I apologize, I have no recollection and I couldn't find any emails in my box. I was always confused about what happened because, while you probably communicated a conclusion with the collective, it's likely while I was not part of management so it may not have been shared with me.

Like · Reply · 48m



Frances Claude I was literally emailing with you. *you* are the one who told me all of the conflict was the result of a wheat allergy.

Like · Reply · 47m



Joe Biel I found the email and it does not mention wheat or allergies or anything of the sort. Would you like me to post it?

Like · Reply · 44m



Frances Claude No because i dont trust you lol

Like · Reply · 43m



Frances Claude I can assure you that we all laughed about it at a meeting tho

Like · Reply · 40m



Joe Biel Anne I understand what you're saying and I agree generally. The problem was that I was bullied everywhere I went, to every job where I wasn't in a position of power. And then this situation did a full 180, I had done the work, and the staff was excited... [See More](#)

Like · Reply · 39m



Anne Weaver Good luck, Joe.  1

Love · Reply · 38m · Edited



Joe Biel Frances There were definitely many people who publicly claimed that I had said that and others who repeated it. I would encourage you to read my own words and revisit what I actually said in that email.

Like · Reply · 37m



Andy Toomajian Thanks for sharing this Frances. I wasn't aware of this stuff at all but after reading things from both sides it's not pretty. Joe, your responses here and elsewhere read to me like you're trying but not really taking in what's being communicated to you or responding appropriately.

Like · Reply · 33m



Frances Claude Joe Biel i talked to someone today who said you had an entire "accountability" meeting that focused on your allergy. Their partner attended it. This is well known on the west coast. Spare me.

Haha · Reply · 30m · Edited



Frances Claude You think punks just get drunk and forgetful but you have no idea.

Like · Reply · 29m



Frances Claude Every survivor in the punk community documents this shit because theyve been screwed over similarly by men. You kicked your ex wife out of a ^{Exhibit 1}



Search



Frances Claude Every survivor in the punk community documents this shit because theyve been screwed over similarly by men. You kicked your ex wife out of a collective that you both started without checking in with anyone about it and refused to listen to her requests about a mutual endeavor so shehad to fucking pester you about it while you ccapitalized on the idealism of diy and punks. We stand with alex and we dont believe you.

Like · Reply · 24m · Edited



Joe Biel 1) I started Microcosm three years before I met Alex 2) Alex quit Microcosm of her own accord; she was not fired. Everyone was pretty bummed and surprised, including me. Both points are what she has stated regarding the situation. 3) I don't understand the rest of what you're saying here.

Like · Reply · 15m · Edited



Joe Biel Andy Can you elaborate on what you're saying? It is often difficult for me to understand subtext or implied statements or humor.

Like · Reply · 7m



Joe Biel Frances This is the definition of gossip.

Like · Reply · 6m



Frances Claude L O L. goodbye.

Like · Reply · 5m



Frances Claude Well you have pretty solid misdirection skills, you are a solid manipulator, ill give you that much.

Like · Reply · 4m



Andy Toomajian Joe, the fact that you are so ready to engage and litigate details of the past is something that feels like an abusive and controlling behavior pattern.

Like · Reply · 2m



Andy Toomajian If you fucked up and you are sorry, part of that needs to be accepting that you can't control whether people forgive you or not.

Like · Reply · 1m



Eliot Daughtry It would be nice to see **Sascha** supported here instead of watching his publisher be eviscerated on his comment thread by what seems to be a bunch of sour neurotypicals. Where are your manners people?

Love · Reply · 15m



Frances Claude i may be sour but i'm not neurotypical.

Like · Reply · 10m



Eliot Daughtry so support **Sascha** and cut out what is an inappropriate use of a comment thread that is designed to torment someone else. Reeking of bullying and if you are spectrum, just stop it already

Like · Reply · 8m



Frances Claude asking men to make decisions to support survivors instead of people actively trying to harm them via litigation processes is absolutely not bullying.

Like · Reply · 7m



Eliot Daughtry I am talking about the behavior here and now

Like · Reply · 6m



Frances Claude this. is. not. bullying.

Like · Reply · 5m



Frances Claude if i have not made it clear that i think saschas work is important by the energy i am putting into this i apologize, i have repeatedly stated that i think it would be easy for him to be published elsewhere. left bank is publishing again, and they are distributed on ak who gets distributed through consortium, just like microcosm. i have a hard time believing ak wouldn't take sascha's work and run with it on their own.

Like · Reply · 3m



Eliot Daughtry Like AK doesn't have their own problems.

Like · Reply · 3m



Frances Claude they aren't suing someone they abused



Exhibit I

Like · Reply · 1m

ALSO: We are excited about this party, but frankly parties exhaust us. For future celebrations of books, we are looking for local partners to put on silent reading parties [like this one at a Seattle hotel](#). If anyone on this list has a space with a surplus of cozy places to sit, I'd love to talk.

See you out there,
Elly

📍 Portland, OR

🏷️ books · publishing · parties · introverts · Reading · beer · Bicycles



Message Elly

♥️ by [Katie](#), [Rick](#) and [1 other](#)

Add Success Story

4 comments



[Jason Werner](#) · Wednesday, February 10th 2016, 8:50:35 pm



Hope I'm able to drop in, and please, please, bring a silent reading party to Portland!

Reply



[R. Nope](#) · Thursday, February 11th 2016, 8:03:35 pm



This company has issues, namely that their founder and leader, Joe Biel, is a serial abuser of women. Do not support them.

Reply



[Elly Blue](#) · Thursday, February 11th 2016, 10:07:07 pm



Rene, that's absolutely false. Have you read [Good Trouble](#)? I'd be happy to give you a copy.

Best,

Elly



someone spraypaints "ABUSE" with an arrow to Biel's office on our fence at work

nalink embed

[-] [beth98](#) 2 points 2 years ago

One big reason it's not going well is that alex wrekk and pioneer's press posted on tumblr that this was happening and that it seemed like a good time to ask him questions about the lawsuit again PP and alex wrekk said that someone should ask him how a corn allergy made him an emotionally abusive monster? Which is why there was a corn comment earlier...

pokingthebear

permalink embed parent

[-] [adam_gnade](#) 2 points 2 years ago

Jessie and Alex are asked questions about this constantly. Doesn't it make sense that Joe should answer questions about it too?

permalink embed parent

[-] [beth98](#) 0 points 2 years ago

I've only heard public questions to MC. None to alex wrekk or PP.

permalink embed parent

[-] [harbordrive](#) 2 points 2 years ago

Just because you haven't seen it doesn't mean it hasn't happened.

permalink embed parent

[-] [beth98](#) -2 points 2 years ago

I didn't say that. Also doesn't make it any less professional. These are buisnesses.

permalink parent

[-] [adam_gnade](#) 9 points 2 years ago

I said this before, but I'll ask you as well, again, in all sincerity:: what is the proper way to deal with someone in the radical community harassing you, spreading lies about you, and suing you? The people on here posting things about "corn allergies" and the like are not from Pioneers Press. I am posting in the open and I am trying to be as respectful as possible. These aren't just businesses. This is my family, and this situation has caused a lot of stress and hurt for us and the community at large.

permalink parent

[-] [Microcosmmm](#) [S] -3 points 2 years ago

Didn't you say your lawyer advised against libel? Unfortunately, if you don't pay your bills and ignore every opportunity to resolve this situation otherwise, for as little as paying \$100/month, I'm not sure what to tell you.

permalink parent



alexwrekk:

READ BRAINSCAN ZINE #21 FOR FREE ONLINE!

I'm not a big fan of the concepts of digital zines, but I scanned this issue of my zine so that I can share it with more people and some have found the information helpful.

Brainscan Zine #21: Irreconcilable differences

Brainscan zine # 21 explores my recognition of being in an emotionally abusive relationship, the attempts on both parts to right wrongs, the failure to do so, and gathering the strength to take the next step. What if your private life in your relationship is vastly different than what other people see? When do you know you are in an emotionally abusive relationship? How to you gain the strength to get out of it? What do you do when you know you can't handle the burden alone? What do you do when you feel so alone and terrified of the consequences of leaving, when if it means losing friends, a home, a job and a way life that you love? These are just some of the ideas explored in this zine through a three year personal narrative that also challenges you to examine your relationships with power, to identify how you express the power you have, and also how you relate to the power that of others possess. But most of all this, zine is about revelation, rebirth, and growth.

THIS IS A REALLY IMPORTANT ZINE. Especially if you're wondering exactly "why" a certain lawyer-happy zine tycoon is a complete fucking scumbag.



Jenna Appleseed @jszine · 8/15/10

the fallout <http://bit.ly/cPFZXx>

[#alexwrekk](#) [#microcosm](#) [#zines](#) [#abuse](#)
[#joebiel](#)



Jenna Appleseed @jszine · 8/15/10

Alex Wreck on constructive alternatives. <http://bit.ly/cJfcBX> More re

[#alexwrekk](#) [#microcosm](#) and [#joebiel](#)
[#zinewalmart](#) [#zines](#) [#distros](#)



Jenna Appleseed @jszine · 8/2/10

reasons to not support [#microcosm](#)

<http://bit.ly/cbVIVi> [#alexwrekk](#) [#abuse](#)
[#zines](#) [#zinedistro](#) [#joebiel](#)





Allyson Kliff

Oh no, I figured you out. I'm not gaslighting you. You are abusing your ex-wife, in public. It's disgusting. You need to delete what you've written here, and you need to go back to therapy. No therapist is going to tell you it's a good idea to post this crap.

Reply... Upvote · Downvoted · Report · 1h ago



Ouditchya Sinha 1 upvote

"He could have written this without listing his ex-wife's name, and linking to all of her personal information. It is blatantly abusive."

And why would he not link her "personal information" when she didn't hesitate to do just that for over a decade?

Reply... Upvote · Downvote · Report · 8h ago



Joe Biel 1 upvote

I normally go to great lengths to anonymize her identity but in this case it skews all the references and the screenshots seemed like the best way to really tell the story.

Reply... Report · 5h ago



Ouditchya Sinha 1 upvote

I know how hard it is to be different Joe, people don't really understand us and vice versa creating communication gaps, it takes fresh eyes to identify these gaps and work on it to try to get a semblance of normalcy. I'm sorry you had to go through all of this. Stay strong and positive.

Reply... Upvoted · Downvote · Report · 4h ago

Joe Biel: Thank you. That is some ama...



Paolo Sylos Labini 5 upvotes

I didn't get the feeling of being sold a book, and I just find his ex-wife pseudonym in the answer.

I am not stating he is not an abuser, even if I fail to get it from his answer, and don't find your points convincing at all.

One never deserve being bullied like this, it helps no one. His ex-wife has been abused, *maybe*, by one person, him. He, on the other side, has been abused *maybe* by one perso... (more)

Reply... Upvoted · Downvote · Report · 10h ago

Allyson Kliff: Yes, you are right, my last...



Allyson Kliff 2 upvotes

You repeatedly state that you are autistic, and you should know that autistics are often clueless about social relationships. Are you sure you haven't done or said things that were abusive? I find it hard to believe that you haven't. I have. Most people have. Anyone who proclaims to be so innocent at such length is probably not being entirely honest with themselves.

Four sentences from your post are red flags for me:

1) "someone claimed to have seen me stalking my ex-wife, something that is actually a clearly defined crime. And after reading the law, something that I have never done." - A normal person would just know if they are engaging in such behavior, they wouldn't need to research the law. This suggests to me that you were doing SOMETHING. It is troublesome that you don't acknowledge any wrongdoing.

2) "Once a person perceives themselves as a victim of abuse, rather than a human being dealing with an uncomfortable and complex situation, they have overreacted and thus have escalated the situation." This bothers me as well, as you seem unwilling to acknowledge that people can be victims, demeaning their status by pretending they are simply unable to deal with a "complex" situation.

3) "I've spent a dozen years going out of my way to try and create healing and closure and it really seems like that's not wanted." That's weird, and kind of reinforces the whole stalking thing. Like, stalkers want to get close to someone who doesn't want to talk to them.

4) "Prior to his autism diagnosis, Joe Biel was insensitive to people's feelings and oblivious to their stated boundaries." - How is this post not insensitive or oblivious? I don't think you are cured...

This really seems to be an example of "doth protests too much". A normal person dealing with abuse would kind of try to avoid it. Like, your wife isn't here posting, but you are! It appears that you want attention, crave it. It also sounds like your wife moved on, but you wrote a bitter memoir in which you discussed her at length, and the so-called "gaslighting" is simply people stating they don't like your book.

Someone wrote in one of your excerpts "What Joe Biel does is not ok." I barely know anything about this situation, but I already agree. You are posting about your messy divorce on Quora, in order to draw attention to the fact that you are trying to sell a memoir. Honestly, Joe, its kind of abusive.

I finally found your ex-wife's side of the story, and frankly I believe her, "I have been reluctant to say more about it publicly because I haven't wanted to go back there emotionally... now he is back in my town and I'm feeling pressure... I dread running into him in public... I have seen him ride by my house a few times, he sent me a very triggering letter that left me weeping on the post office steps when I had specifically asked him not to contact me... He has demonstrated time and again that he is incapable of respecting my boundaries."

Additional research indicates you bought property near her, send your employees to do marketing outside her place of business, and go out of your way to join facebook groups she is in in order to plug your book about her! Oh, and you apparently posted this same long post repeatedly... so, yah, you are just really desperate for attention. How is any of that ok???

I just keep wasting more of my time learning more about this. You wrote elsewhere, " I eventually learned that for neurotypicals, there are three stages to a conflict:1) Disagreement/impasse 2) Empathy 3) Resolution. Before my diagnosis, I physically lacked the ability for step two, empathy." The fact that you posted this today, not once but TWICE, that really proves that you still lack empathy. Go back to your therapist and tell them what you did.

Joe, you are being abusive. Stop.

Exhibit I

Wow, the more I learn about this the more annoyed I am. Joe, your corporate logo is your wife's tattoo? Like seriously? You have no shame? That right there is totally unacceptable.

Joe, you are being abusive. Stop.

Wow, the more I learn about this the more annoyed I am. Joe, your corporate logo is your wife's tattoo? Like seriously? You have no shame? That right there is totally unacceptable. Change your logo now. That's just sick.

You say you are autistic and thus very concerned about rules. Well, ok, there are rules. Leave her alone. Stop talking about her. That's a rule.

Where can I buy an End Joe Biel T-shirt?

Reply... [Upvote](#) · [Downvoted](#) · [Reported](#) · 11h ago



Joe Biel

While I appreciate your skepticism, do you think that this response is justifiable? Destroying my life, and harming the lives of dozens of people I love and hundreds of people that benefit financially from my work doesn't do anything but spread more pain, destruction, and abuse. You admit to having been abusive. Would you find this to be a fair or helpful response for your situation? My ex has ... [\(more\)](#)

Reply... [Report](#) · 5h ago



Joe Biel

You also bring up a few great examples: She got our corporate logo tattooed of her own volition (and rather than having it removed, tries to claim ownership of the image). She claims that I bought property in her neighborhood. Online research will show you that it's not in her neighborhood or even in the adjacent neighborhood. It's MILES from her. And it was my last choice after three other pla... [\(more\)](#)

Reply... [Report](#) · 5h ago



Allyson Kliff

Empathy. Go back to therapy and learn about it.

Reply... [Upvote](#) · [Downvoted](#) · [Report](#) · 2h ago



Joe Biel

have you read your previous responses?

Reply... [Report](#) · 2h ago



Allyson Kliff

I wrote them. Obviously I've read what I wrote.

Reply... [Upvote](#) · [Downvote](#) · [Report](#) · 2h ago



Joe Biel

Okay. Cool. Just checking.

Reply... [Report](#) · 2h ago



Allyson Kliff

Stop using her name, stop using that logo, and stop distributing that book until you edit out her name and photo.

Reply... [Upvote](#) · [Downvote](#) · [Report](#) · 2h ago



Joe Biel

Everyone! Come quick! It's one of "those people." Hurry! before she gives up her disguise as "innocent onlooker."

Exhibit



Allyson Kliff

You need to go to back to therapy.



Joe Biel

I go on Wednesday. They taught me the value of sticking up for myself.

Reply...

Report · 2h ago



Paolo Sylos Labini 6 upvotes

How did you get from “ I barely know anything about this situation” to “Joe, you are being abusive. Stop”?

It's clearly a messy situation. You can feel the distress in both parts involved. There is an accusation of posting fake information on the internet. And your first thought is “mh, i'll briefly glance at this story, read the first google result and finally I'll throw in my dislike for this ... [\(more\)](#)

Reply...

Upvoted · Downvote · Report · 10h ago



Allyson Kliff

I've wasted two hours learning about these people. It's not “clearly a messy situation.” It's clearly Joe trying to sell a book by talking about how “abusive” his ex is. The post is inherently abusive. He could have written this without listing his ex-wife's name, and linking to all of her personal information. It is blatantly abusive.

Reply...

Upvote · Downvote · Report · 10h ago



Joe Biel 1 upvote

I lost three jobs, ten staff people, and hundreds of thousands of dollars, was homeless, and attempted suicide multiple times as a result of this person and her campaign. I'm sorry that you chose to let the story consume two hours of your life.

Reply...

Report · 5h ago



Allyson Kliff

See what you are doing? You are pretending this is all about YOU. That is incredibly selfish. None of that is relevant right here. Yes, you got divorced, it sucked, and there was a lawsuit. That's not the point.

The issue here is you are dredging all this up years later, in order to google bomb your ex-wife's name, so that she looks bad, so that you can sell more books.

You are showing an incredibly abusive lack of empathy for your ex-wife's right to not be associated with you. If you were just writing anonymously there wouldn't be a problem, but now I know who you are, I know who your ex-wife is, I know about your businesses and all your petty little drama.

I don't see your ex-wife's “campaign”. I see your campaign. You are the one doing this. All your ex-wife has done is respond to your book, and that's because you choose to use her name and photo within that book. Frankly, she should sue you for this.

She is your EX-wife. Stop talking about her, and stop using that logo.

Reply...

Upvote · Downvote · Report · 3h ago



Joe Biel

So her campaign to harm me that continues to this day is not relevant? Because you say so? We just ignore her hundreds of posts about me across twelve years after our relationship? Bringing up The harm that she inflicted on me is “selfish” and irrelevant? Go back to troll school. No one mentioned a lawsuit. Empathy is a better response than vile.

Exhibit I

 **Allyson Kliff** ✕

You are a monster.

[Upvote](#) · [Downvote](#) · [Report](#) · 2h ago

 **Joe Biel** ✕

What happened to empathy?

[Report](#) · 2h ago

 **Joe Biel** ✕

Thank you. This is an EXCELLENT example of gaslighting. Bonus point.

[Report](#) · 1h ago

 **Joe Biel** ✕

Here's an amazing truth for you: nowhere in my book do I name or give identifying details about my ex. Why? Because the book isn't about her.

[Report](#) · 2h ago

 **Allyson Kliff** ✕

You are sick Joe. Even if it's true that your book doesn't give identifying details (I've heard otherwise) — you already did that right here. So you are guilty. You are an abusive person.

[Upvote](#) · [Downvote](#) · [Report](#) · 1h ago

 **Joe Biel** ✕

I thought you were unfamiliar with me? Anyway, thanks for yet another example of gaslighting!

[Report](#) · 1h ago

 **Allyson Kliff** ✕

You are also undermining your own damn business. What a fool. You think I'm gonna buy a book from you now? Hell no. Other people are reading this, some of them might not write anything, but they are upvoting my response. Those people won't buy from you either. It's really sad that you are so mental that you can't see how what you are doing right here, right now, is going to have consequences for you.

[Upvote](#) · [Downvoted](#) · [Report](#) · 1h ago

 **Joe Biel** ✕

These are not your strongest gaslighting examples. Put your heart back into it! If we agree with your motives and ignore the thousands of people responding positively, this argument might follow.

[Report](#) · 1h ago

 **Joe Biel** ✕

Bonus points for gaslighting with "I'm not gaslighting you." That's deep!

[Report](#) · 1h ago

 **Allyson Kliff** ✕

Its not gaslighting if you actually are abusive. Posting your ex-wife's name on this

 **Allyson Kliff** ✕
Posting your ex-wife's name on this public forum is inherently abusive.
Case closed.
[Reply...](#) [Upvote](#) · [Downvote](#) · [Report](#) · 53m ago

 **Joe Biel** ✕
Got it. Was it abusive when she did that to me hundreds of times for twelve years? Or is that ""selfish?"
[Reply...](#) [Report](#) · 49m ago

 **Allyson Kliff** ✕
Stop trying to distract from your own wrong doing.
[Reply...](#) [Upvote](#) · [Downvote](#) · [Report](#) · 43m ago

 **Joe Biel** ✕
Oh, you made your point. I wouldn't have used her name if she hadn't done it so many times already. So it makes me wonder how you how you justify this contradiction.
[Reply...](#) [Report](#) · 42m ago

 **Allyson Kliff** ✕
Oh no, I figured you out. I'm not gaslighting you. You are abusing your ex-wife, in public. It's disgusting. You need to delete what you've written here, and you need to go back to therapy. No therapist is going to tell you it's a good idea to post this crap.
[Reply...](#) [Upvote](#) · [Downvoted](#) · [Report](#) · 1h ago

 **Ouditchya Sinha** 1 upvote ✕
"He could have written this without listing his ex-wife's name, and linking to all of her personal information. It is blatantly abusive."
And why would he not link her "personal information" when she didn't hesitate to do just that for over a decade?
[Reply...](#) [Upvote](#) · [Downvote](#) · [Report](#) · 8h ago

 **Joe Biel** 1 upvote ✕
I normally go to great lengths to anonymize her identity but in this case it skews all the references and the screenshots seemed like the best way to really tell the story.
[Reply...](#) [Report](#) · 5h ago

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I know how hard it is to be different Joe, people don't really understand us and vice versa creating communication gaps, it takes fresh eyes to identify these gaps and work on it to try to get a semblance of normalcy. I'm sorry you had to go through all of this. Stay strong and positive.
[Reply...](#) [Upvoted](#) · [Downvote](#) · [Report](#) · 4h ago

[Joe Biel](#): Thank you. That is some ama...

 **Paolo Sylos Labini** 5 upvotes ✕
I didn't get the feeling of being sold a book, and I just find his ex-wife pseudonim in the answer.

I am not stating he is not an abuser, even if I fail to get it from his answer, and don't find your points convincing at all.

One never deserve being bullied like this, it helps no one. His ex-wife has been abused, *maybe*, by one person, him. He, on the other side, has been abused *maybe* by one perso... [\(more\)](#)

[Reply...](#) [Upvoted](#) · [Downvote](#) · [Report](#) · 10h ago



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[Reply...](#) [Upvoted](#) · [Downvote](#) · [Report](#) · 10h ago



Allyson Kliff ✕

Yes, you are right, my last comment was somewhat negative, I'm also just really annoyed by this. I am hoping he realizes that this is BAD PUBLICITY.

If he had posted this anonymously it would have been just fine, but he deliberately chose to use his wife's name, discuss her business, and he is definitely trying to sell a book.

If he keeps dredging up this stuff and making a scene, more and more p... [\(more\)](#)

[Reply...](#) [Upvote](#) · [Downvoted](#) · [Report](#) · 3h ago



Joe Biel ✕

More awesome examples of gaslighting—making unsubstantiated claims about what I did and what my motives are. thanks Allyson!

[Reply...](#) [Report](#) · 1h ago



Allyson Kliff replied to your comment. 12m

"I read your other posts. Are you now asserting that autism doesn't make it difficult for you to understand social interactions or have empathy for others? The first step in..."

Comment on [Joe Biel's answer to What is the biggest mindfuck ever?](#) · [View Parent](#)



Joe Biel ✕

Ooooh, autism dis! Very ableist! My therapist taught me how to name behavior. And for your further joy, I will DEFINITELY get to talk about YOU to my therapist! YAY YAY YAY! #WeAllWin!

[Reply...](#) [Report](#) · 15m ago



Allyson Kliff ✕

I read your other posts. Are you now asserting that autism doesn't make it difficult for you to understand social interactions or have empathy for others? The first step in getting better is to admit you have a problem. I think you should talk about me to your therapist. Show them what you have written here about your ex-wife and ask whether this is something that would be considered by "neurot... [\(more\)](#)

[Reply...](#) [Upvote](#) · [Downvote](#) · [Report](#) · 12m ago

permalink embed

[-] **beth98** 2 points 2 years ago
One big reason it's not going well is that alex wrekk and pioneer's press posted on tumblr that this was happening and that it seemed like a good time to ask him questions about the lawsuit again PP and alex wrekk said that someone should ask him how a corn allergy made him an emotionally abusive monster? Which is why there was a corn comment earlier...

pokingthebear

permalink embed parent

[-] **adam_gnade** 2 points 2 years ago
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permalink embed parent

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permalink embed parent

[-] **harbordrive** 2 points 2 years ago
Just because you haven't seen it doesn't mean it hasn't happened.

permalink embed parent

[load more comments](#) (3 replies)

[-] **hermanaresist** 2 points 2 years ago
because as zinesters, we didn't see this come up anywhere else?

permalink embed parent

[-] **beth98** -1 points 2 years ago
It's very unprofessional for both alex wrekk and pioneer's press to be posting stuff on tumblr that incites this kind of reaction. You don't have to like him, you can speak out against him, but it's pointless to harrass him.

permalink embed parent

[-] **ginpanda** 3 points 2 years ago
Alex posted on her personal Tumblr that this AMA was happening on her birthday and the emotions it brought up. She made an off-hand comment that he had previously tried to put responsibility of his action on having an allergy. She didn't ask people to harass him, she shared her feelings on her abuser doing AMA on her birthday and how it felt intentional, considering the flyers and such lately.

permalink embed parent

[-] **Microcosmmm** [S] 0 points 2 years ago
Alex and I separated over ten years ago. Why is she paying attention to what I'm doing now? I have gone to great lengths to provide space.

permalink embed parent

Boycott Microcosm, Support Survivors

In my last post I was excitedly nattering about all the zine happenings in my life. Among these was hearing from Microcosm that they wanted to distro a zine of mine. Somehow the background on the founder and collective member Joe Biel being an abuse perpetrator had passed me by and I hadn't a clue until one of my friends told me about it. I got some [background information](#) into what has been going on. On this basis, I have decided to boycott Microcosm, as well as register my complaint with them, and I encourage you to do the same. In order to explain this decision and demonstrate my protest, I am posting here the e-mail I have sent in response to Microcosm.

To Sparky/Microcosm Collective,

When I first received your e-mail that you were interested in my Get a Grip zine I was totally thrilled. Not only because it's quite the compliment but also because I was excited about the possibility of my zine reaching a whole new group of folks. What an awesome way to start off the New Year, I thought. Then my friend told me about Joe Biel who, as I'm sure you're aware, has been called out by his ex-partner as having been abusive towards her. His ex-partner has clearly and openly stated that she does not believe that he has acknowledged, taken responsibility for, and worked through changing these abusive patterns of behaviour. Despite this ongoing abusiveness, he continues to be a part of the Microcosm collective.

As a feminist, as an abuse survivor, and as a compassionate human being I believe supporting survivors of violence is paramount. This is a belief that is really fundamental to my life. Honouring the experience and wishes of the survivor needs to be central. I therefore cannot ethically provide Microcosm with any of my zines and I want to explain to you why.

I encourage people who have been called out for abuse to seek to change. I do not endorse punishment or social exclusion as solutions to violence. I do, however, expect that abusers learn to be responsible for their actions and to go through a process of changing their dangerous thoughts and behaviours. The person called out for abusive behaviour should respect the survivor's boundaries; step down from attending events, projects, and contact with the individual if this is requested. I also expect the community in which the survivor is a part of to support and prioritise the needs and desires of the survivor, over that of the abuse perpetrator. While I appreciate this may be difficult for the abuser, it is important to understand that their behaviours come with consequences. I do not feel the need to cushion the experience of abusers at the expense of the healing process of survivors.

I have seen that the Microcosm collective has recently issued a statement about Joe's abusiveness. Unfortunately, this statement was issued on an obscure website, instead of your own website, and was done so months after it having first been requested, and only after pressure from Cindy to withdraw her zines from your distro. This comes across to me as more of a defensive tactic than a proactive commitment towards accountability and support in response to abuse.

I really respect Alex, Cindy and others for having the courage to speak out against the way in which both the collective and Joe have responded to his abusiveness, especially given the sexist resistance that permeates so much of the discourse around violence. I find it really saddening that your collective has fallen so short of creating a supportive environment for abuse survivors. It is puzzling and frustrating to me that Microcosm would choose to select Get a Grip for distribution when there is a piece specifically on domestic violence perpetrators needing to confront their abusiveness and when the zine so clearly demonstrates the hardships of dealing with the after-effects abuse can have on survivors. It appears to me that your supposed ideals are inconsistent with your actions.

I write my zines because I am passionate about creating change. I write about topics like mental health and surviving abuse, which are really difficult for me to open up about and share with complete strangers. I do it because I want to challenge a society that repeatedly shames, blames, and silences us. I do it because every once in a while someone tells me that they feel a little less alone knowing someone else has been there, too. The amazing part is, in those moments I also feel less lonely and like we're collectively working towards something bigger and better in dismantling all the violence. It's disheartening for me to think that because of Joe's abusiveness my zines, and the topics they discuss, won't be accessed by many people and are therefore being funnelled through this systematic silencing of survivors once more. I had hoped for better in the zine community.

I think Microcosm, as one of the biggest zine distributors in the world, has so much potential in reaching out to new people, and exposing them to alternative, anti-oppressive, and totally inspiring art. I believe as a community, as creators of media, and as individuals, we all have a responsibility to support abuse survivors and those who have been targets of oppression. I will not supply Microcosm with any of my zines or make any purchases from Microcosm until I am convinced



ilikecats @ilikecatstoo2 · Jan 14

@joebiel_ Boycott Microcosm. Joe Biel is a misogynist who uses autism as an excuse for abusive behavior.





totalithera @totalithera · 47m

this is just inspiring me to be more of an internet bully, tbh. i have to step up my game to be worthy of the title



From: [redacted]
Date: Thu, Aug 25, 2017 at 11:26 AM
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]

Dear Elly and Joe,

I'm emailing on behalf of Roll for the Soul. We are a cycle cafe in Bristol, we were expecting to host your film and talk this coming Tuesday.

I regretfully have to say that we won't be able to host you.

Some of the staff have expressed that they don't feel comfortable sharing space with Joe because of a personal history.

As we have a very small and close staff unit and we need to show solidarity with our colleagues and respect their feelings and need for a comfortable working environment.

I've asked Lucy to try and make arrangements for a change of venue and I will leave this in her hands.

This decision has had to be made very quickly and I apologise that it has left Lucy without good time to make other arrangements.

Regards,

[redacted]

Hi Elly,

We've started to receive a number of complaints from women who are concerned about our having Joe Biel on the programme at the Feminist Cycling event.

They cite previous accusations against him of emotional abuse and are concerned about the Library being a safe space for women.

We have discussed this last night at our management meeting and have come to the following decision.

While we would not wish to pass judgement on a situation we know very little about, re: Joe's conflict with his ex-partner, we feel that as a feminist space we do need to prioritise the concerns of women using the Library over any other considerations.

Because of this, we would like to request that Joe Biel does not come to participate in the event.

We would very much like you to still participate, if that would be an option for you given the circumstance? Please do let us know what you think about this.

Obviously, we really regret to have to cancel with Joe at such short notice before the event, this is not something we would usually do. If we had been aware of the possible controversy from the beginning we would certainly have planned things differently.

I also do hope this doesn't personally cause you too much inconvenience.

Best wishes,
Emma

From: [redacted]
Date: Thu, Aug 25, 2017 at 1:07 PM
To: [redacted]

This all looks good, but can you please add Joe Biel to be equally billed with me? We are on tour together. We will definitely focus on feminism and gender issues.

Thanks,
Elly

so, with the move, i'm not sure i will really have much time to dick around on the internet in the coming week(s). plus, i don't want to dick around on the internet. it bums me out & saps my emotional energy...even though it can sometimes make me laugh & laugh. such as...okay, this relates to the incendiary topic i didn't want topping my page, but it's hilarious, so—if you are sick of reading about microcosm/joe biel, SKIP AHEAD. i'll tell you when. so, in response to the public statement released by joe biel' latest accountability team, joe exercised his near-pathological inability to let anyone else have the final word on anything & released his own public statement. it was really long & obfuscating & rambling. when i put it through the babelfish translator (set on “the PR babblings of a deranged mind to english”), it came back as, “i wanted to post a public statement because it makes me feel good to let other people know that they are wrong about me. i am very sorry for any pain i hear i may have caused anyone. i saw a therapist for six months, & she let me know that i'm not abusive, hence trumping the real life true experiences of people i spent far more time with for far longer who feel that i am abusive, but the therapist told me what i wanted to hear, so i'm not going to put that ball down anytime soon. she also told me that batterer rehabilitation programs are for people who refuse to acknowledge that they have ever done anything bad & have a sociopathic lack of empathy for other human beings. since that's clearly not me, because hai guise i am SO SORRY (that this has turned into a PR trainwreck) & i am just really clueless & self-absorbed instead of actually being a sociopath, that means that i'm not a batterer & that means i'm not abusive. also, one day on NPR, they did this story about how france wrote these vaguely oppressive laws that differentiate between people with abusive personalities & people who accidentally committed abuse because they had really sad childhoods. so, you know, in france, we'd be totally copacetic. i wish this was france, guys. i also think it's really important to point out that i had this undiagnosed corn allergy, so i actually don't remember anything i have ever done before 2008 when i finally got some corn allergy serum medication. that means that i cannot be held responsible for anything i did before 2008, not that you should feel bad for me (feel bad for me), & also i'm really sorry if maybe someone got hurt by something i did when i was all high on corn. but dudes, i don't even remember what i did! my friends tried to tell me, or accountability people told me, & i was like, 'what the fuck! i must have been hitting the corn pretty hard because this is news to me!' sorry though. i do remember getting kicked out of the 2008 portland zine symposium, even though that was when i was still on the corn. so apparently my memory is a little porous. i definitely remember bad things that have happened to me, but i don't remember my own actions. it's very convenient...i mean, i'm sorry. i have now catastrophically failed two attempts at community accountability, but i still work with therapists that

if you don't have anything nice to say, come sit here by me

the lives & loves of crabigail adams, professional hater

HOME MS. ADAMS IF YOU'RE NASTY PAPER TRAIL INTERVIEW SERIES



[← temporary hiatus](#)

extortion is so punk rock

Posted on September 29, 2011 | 1 Comment

still taking a blogging break, but making a little time for an important issue. i know a lot of people who read this thing mainly know me through zine stuff, & people who know me that way are probably aware that i have been working on bringing to light joe biel's (of microcosm publishing) history of misogynist abuse & manipulation for many years.

about a month ago, one of my closest friends here in lawrence, kansas agreed to organize an event called "dinner & bikes". it was presented to her as an evening of vegan dinner & short films about bicycles & radical activism with some traveling presenters. she is not terribly involved with the zine community & didn't know who the presenters were. a friend of hers (who DID know who joe was & WAS aware of his abuse history) had asked for a local volunteer to organize the event & jaimie offered.

when jaimie finally got the facebook event listing up, she invited me & i checked out the listing. that was the first time i knew that joe biel had anything to do with the event. the three traveling presenters were in fact joe (who has failed several accountability processes that have attempted to help him come to terms with his abusive, manipulative tendencies), his partner elly (who has viciously victim-



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when jaimie finally got the facebook event listing up, she invited me & i checked out the listing. that was the first time i knew that joe biel had anything to do with the event. the three traveling presenters were in fact joe (who has failed several accountability processes that have attempted to help him come to terms with his abusive, manipulative tendencies), his partner elly (who has viciously victim-blamed abuse survivors in her extremely vocal support of joe & equally vocal condemnations of any attempts to hold him accountable for his behavior), & a friend of theirs named josh, that i don't know anything about.

i immediately called jaimie to fill her in on exactly what she'd been roped into doing. neither one of us knew what the best course of action was. cancel the event? but we knew they probably wouldn't have too much trouble finding someone else to book them into another venue, either in lawrence or in nearby kansas city. allow the event to happen & disrupt it? but that would be really stressful for us, & there was no guarantee of being able to achieve a productive moment with lawrence community members who just wanted to watch some short films about bikes. eventually jaimie decided that canceling the event was the best course of action. she asked me to draft up an explanation of this decision that she could send out to invitees. i did so, & she passed it on to people. unfortunately, she didn't remove elly as an administrator of the event before sending out the message, & elly immediately swooped in to delete the event from facebook, eliminating the event context for the messages. a few people were confused because they'd forgotten about the event or never intended to come in the first place, but...the event was canceled & that's what mattered.

within a matter of days, the bikes & dinner tour succeeded in re-booking their event at a venue in kansas city for the evening they would have been in lawrence. done & done...right?

not quite. a few days later, jaimie received a message from elly, demanding immediate payment not only of the \$150 guarantee the bikes & dinner people were initially requesting (for an event that never transpired, mind you), but an additional \$150 because the event was canceled in "bad faith". elly also requested a "retraction" of the cancellation message that had characterized joe's abuse history as problematic & not something jaimie wanted to support in bringing into the lawrence community. never mind that elly had canceled the event on facebook, thereby eliminating jaimie's access to the original invitation list...it's not like jaimie was seriously going to retract anything to begin with.

jaimie has decided to make all of her correspondence with elly in organizing & canceling this event public. i'm re-posting it here because i think that anyone who is still financially supporting microcosm publishing or may find themselves in the position of supporting joe or elly in other ways, like organizing events for them, should be aware of what they are getting into. bear in mind that at least one of the women joe has been abusive to has actually requested that people boycott microcosm in order to stand with abuse survivors. if you still choose to support these people with your time, money, friendship, resources, et al, that is your choice, but consider this a gesture toward informed consent:

Aug 10th:

Hi my name is Jaimie Oller and I got your email address from Cait Giddings in a post from Ailecia Ruskin about wanting to bring your bike show through Lawrence, KS in Sept. I'd love to help set this up and was just looking for more information and the exact dates you were coming through town.

thanks so much!

In Good Health,

Jamie Oller, NCBTMB, CPMT, CIMT

Devoted to creating a world where every child has the chance to meet their full potential. Liddlekidz.org

Hey Jamie,

Thanks for writing! We'd love to do a Dinner & Bikes event in Lawrence, if possible. We'd be there on September 22nd, and would want to do the event from 7-9. Basically, our chef serves up a fancy vegan meal for the number of people we expect, then I give a presentation about bikes and the economy, Joe shows a bunch of super short (3 minute) movies about bike culture, and that's that.

What we need to make it happen: A darkenable-ish place with a screen or wall to project movies on (we have a projector — and a sheet we can hang up if necessary). A place for the chef to cook — doesn't have to be a fancy kitchen, either someone's house works or a sink & table & place to plug in his hot plate; and a guarantee to cover food, gas, etc in case only like 4 people show up and three of them forgot their wallet (it's happened). We usually ask for \$150, and organizers usually find a sponsor (local bike shop, the library, the city) to cover it if they're

two attempts at community accountability, but i still work with therapists that enable me to pursue the myth of my own victimization, i have an awesome girlfriend who makes sure to spend a lot of time online writing about how the abuse allegations against me are patently & categorically lies, & i've won my life-long battle against corn. if anyone wants to start up a new accountability team, please contact the head of my PR department."

one of my friends responded the only way that really befits the gravity of the situation: a trigger warning followed by a cartoon corncob saying, "i'm in everything."

& this is the culmination of all the years i have spent seething with suppressed rage over people who use imaginary/over-exaggerated food allergies/sensitivities to escape responsibility for their own actions & agency. for every raw food potluck i skipped, for every person who self-diagnosed themselves with celiac disease after ODing on a loaf of sourdough, for every candy bar i ostentatiously devoured during a tedious collective meeting, for every adherent to the lemon water/cayenne pepper fast that made me roll my eyes, THIS IS WHY. i said a few years ago, after a somewhat similar incident, that autism is a real thing, not just something you can claim to have so you have an excuse to act like an asshole. (dude in question was stalking a woman & claimed he did it because his autism prevented him from understanding social cues, like it's just an inability read body language that inspired him to force his way into her apartment & threaten to kill her. for clarity's sake, this was absolutely NOT joe that did this.) food allergies & diseases like celiac & crohn's are real things, not just things to blame asshole, abusive behavior on (or excuses for radical punk kid eating disorders).

OKAY, DONE! you can come back now & start reading again. but jared has cued up some "TV for cats" on youtube & charlotte is intrigued, so i'm going to go watch how this all pans out. also, "project runway" debuts tonight, & both "britain's next top model" & "australia's next top model" started airing within the past few weeks. opinions? i has them!

Advertisements

my gut that there was something missing from that narrative.

my biggest disappointment with the book is the resource section & the fact that there is almost nothing about zine distros in the book. i would have loved to read a concise history of riot grrrl press. it is shocking to me that the book is essentially a who's who of dozens of women i have traded with &/or am friends with, & there is nothing about pander zine distro, which was instrumental in catapulting some of those zinesters into the culture & to the level of popularity they currently enjoy. the only distro mentioned in the text so far is microcosm, which is so disappointing, considering their paltry selection of feminist zines & lady-penned personal zines, & (putting it out here into the public forum), microcosm founder joe biel's well-documented status as a manipulative, abusive individual who has issues with misogyny. a big part of feminism for me is trying to put an end to abuse, domestic violence, misogynistic intimidation tactics, et al, & working to hold perpetrators accountable to survivors & the larger community in which they live & work. efforts at mediation & accountability processes with joe have been fruitless, & i believe that supporting microcosm (by ordering from them, recommending them as a great source of zines, publishing books or zines with them, etc) is an exercise in letting joe off the hook. his financial & emotional ability to keep being a manipulative, unaccountable scumbag is tied up with the success of the microcosm project & the goodwill he gets from it. cut that off at the source & maybe he will be forced to take a long, hard look in the mirror. there are other fantastic indie publishers out there (try eberhardt press in portland, oregon or 1984 in the bay area), & there are TONS of great zine distros, many of them run by smart, feminist women who carry smart, feminist zines.

on Microcosm Publishing

As is probably evident, recently I've been having a really difficult time reconciling a lot of my reservations about anarchist organizing and how it complements living actual non-oppressive lifestyles. One thing that recurrently bothers me is seeing many of my comrades patronizing Microcosm Publishing.

It is no big secret that Joe Biel, the co-founder of Microcosm Publishing, has been called out for abuse in his former marriage, as well as dishonest, manipulative business practices. I do not pretend to know all of the details of any relationship, but seeing as how Joe Biel is without a doubt the face of the monopolistic entity that is Microcosm (I mean, off the top of your head, could you name anyone else in that collective?), I find myself seething when I realize ever more how much Joe Biel capitalizes and profits from the creative output of really amazing people who, let's face it, often write about anti-oppression, feminism, and other issues that seem rather contradictory to his alleged behavior (for example, Microcosm publishes the compiled writings of Cindy Crabb, a very famous zinester known for her go-to guide on supporting survivors, *Support*; her multi-volumed zine *Doris*; and her reflections on abuse and assault).

This whole issue about Microcosm has particularly bothered me ever since I noticed a former high school classmate of mine continuing to buy from and be really excited about Microcosm Publishing with nary a thought to the plight of survivors that must deal with the aftershock of trauma and abuse. I've noticed that he's never asked for my opinion about political ideas or living an anarchic life, but has always deferred to my male partner for insight about it. I've noticed him never taking an interest in issues relating to privilege and oppression. He seems to be representative of the typical manarchist who doesn't appear to have the interest or capacity to truly understand what "solidarity" means. This disturbs me because it suggests that other anarchists are as myopic and oblivious about issues of intersectionality and non-oppressive living as he is. I'll say it now, as I've said it before: no matter our stance on capitalism (fuck it, I say), since we are living in a capitalist system, we'd better damn well be conscious about who and what we are supporting through our consumerist choices. And honestly? I cringe every time that I see someone supporting Microcosm Publishing.

I assume that many people reading this poorly-constructed treatise will try to poke the usual holes: *Why are you taking sides about a relationship, especially when you don't know either of these people? Why can't you separate a relationship from other parts of a person's life, such as their business? Why are you trying to do the work of Joe Biel's ex-wife - doesn't that undermine her agency and empowerment?*

http://clawsbeatskin.tumblr.com/post/300107236

Admin | Microcosm ... Facebook | Elly Blue'... Gmail - Inbox - joe... XE - The World

Perseus... Thomso... Microso... Gmail -... Philly St... Adn

In light of my own former relationship that left me feeling powerless and mistreated and abused, many of my "norm" friends told me that they would not take sides, despite my pleas for them to understand the oppressive nature behind what held me down and held me back from moving forward. They did not respect my wishes as a survivor, but rather assumed that they knew the "right" way to approach the delicate situation. *This* behavior undermined my agency and empowerment, because their actions and non-support left me feeling as if my voice were not valid - the same kind of bullshit that kept me in a state of perpetual self-loathing, shame, powerlessness, and depression for months *because* of that relationship. It is just as fucked-up to pretend to know what a survivor needs for support as an ally as it is to silence them and invalidate their feelings as an abuser.

I'm not going to patronize a business that is funneling money into the pockets of an abusive individual, the same way that I'm not going to buy products from American Apparel or Procter & Gamble. I don't see why the same thought process should not apply for radical zine distros, especially when the survivor has publicly spoken out about the shame that she feels for having ever been associated with the company. Not patronizing that business is the least that I can do as an ally. And honestly, I feel like any anarchist worth their salt should act in a similar way.

As for defamation, all of this information is widely available in the public sphere. I don't know if people just don't bother to look at these things, or if they're choosing to ignore the fact that the most well-known zine distro in the U.S. is not the utopian anarchic anti-capitalist business-venture that it may seem. I personally find it very disconcerting that people would continue to patronize Microcosm Publishing after learning about its history.

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A great [quote](#) that summarizes my thoughts better than this piece of writing has:

"...the only distro mentioned in [girl zines: making media, doing feminism by alison piepmeier] so far is microcosm, which is so disappointing, considering their paltry selection of feminist zines & lady-penned personal zines, & (putting it out here into the public forum), microcosm founder joe biel's well-documented status as a manipulative, abusive individual who has issues with misogyny. a big part of feminism for me is trying to put an end to abuse, domestic violence, misogynistic intimidation tactics, et al, & working to hold perpetrators accountable to survivors & the larger community in which they live & work. efforts at mediation & accountability processes with joe have been fruitless, & i believe that supporting microcosm (by ordering from them, recommending them as a great source of zines, publishing books or zines with them, etc) is an exercise in letting joe off the hook. his financial & emotional ability to keep being a manipulative, unaccountable scumbag is tied up with the success of the microcosm project & the goodwill he gets from it. cut that off at the source & maybe he will be forced to take a long, hard look in the mirror. there are other fantastic indie publishers out there (try eberhardt press in portland, oregon or 1984 in the bay area), & there are TONS of great zine distros, many of them run by smart, feminist women who carry smart, feminist zines."

And with that having been said, check out the [projects](#) of Alex Wrekk, a really great zinester who doesn't get half of the credit that she deserves. Also, per the advice given in her zine on this topic of abuse (*Brainscan 21*), take a moment to think about the overarching weight of power dynamics in your life. They go a long fucking way.



thefeministkilljoy Follow



Microcosm Publishing/Distributions seem to be really big in the zine world, and I don't think I like it. It's not just the \$10 shipping fees to England (ridiculous by the way - independent zine makers seem to be fine with \$1-\$2), or the fact that they have buddied up with every trend-loving hipster store on the internet thereby making zines a new fad or trend (Dazed & Confused online, Urban Outfitters). *It's the fact that an ex-co-founder of the collective who was very publicly outed for abusing his former partner - and the fact that he was kept on as a member even after the collective was made aware of the situation.*

 **microcosm publishing** #microcosm publishing #mic

3 notes





Hi Cosmstore.

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Edit FAQ #3567

FAQ Question:

Quora

Category:

Publicity or promotion

FAQ Text:

Paragraph

After reading Joe's extremely selfish and abusive posts on Quora today (Friday, January 14), regarding his ex-wife, I simply cannot support this business unless he either publicly apologizes or terminates his association with Microcosm. It is simply unprofessional and unacceptable, especially for a business in this niche market.

Submitter Name:

Arin Kleff

Submitter Email:

Public? Yes No

someone contacts our office to ask for an apology



i mean like at least tumblr knows i was flabbergasted to have this rec come up on my dash

now i'm trying to find an extension to block the rec'd blogs, because HELL TO THE MOTHERFUCKIN NO

#microcosm publishing #boycott microcosm #just a friendly reminder that joe biel

1 note



Thanks for reaching out. Yes, there is a list of exhibitors on our website:
<http://chicagozinefest.org/2017-exhibitors/>

Regarding your question about your flyer about Joe Biel- We appreciate the unique challenges facing people on the autism spectrum. But in this specific case, Joe Biel's behavior goes far beyond the appropriate range of behavior, even taking into account his neurodivergence. We're asking you to respect the experience of those who have been negatively impacted by Joe's inappropriate behavior. After talking to all the CZF organizers, we have agreed that you may have your flyer at your table, but handing out the zine might reasonably be construed by attendees as the content being endorsed by CZF, so we would ask that you please not go table to table handing them out. You may have it sitting at your exhibitor table where people may take it with them if they stop at your table. Please know that if someone complains about it at the fest we will politely ask you to remove it from the table and not distribute it at CZF. Thank you again for reaching out about this issue. We truly appreciate it. If you have any other questions, please let us know and we'll be happy to answer them.

Thank you,

Alex

www.chicagozinefest.org

to Joe -
Dear Joe,

The things you told me have had a deep impact on me. Our whole interaction has. This whole process has. I will be replying again soon, since it was such a long email, and I simply don't have the strength for all that must be said. Right now, I just wanted to touch on some things while they were fresh for me.

This thing has been very painful for me also. I've been trying like mad to process all of the divergent viewpoints, to engage in listening with empathy, and it has had a deleterious effect on my overall mental health. I have sought out support so I can do this. It is not easy, but it is part of the job I signed up for.

You have told me things that I can only consider to be deeply personal, and I assure you, I keep them in confidence. I will respect your wishes to my best ability. Many people are survivors in the punk community, as you well know. For what it's worth, I am a survivor of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse as well. Some families are really dangerous, and not everyone really does survive. Therefore, I make it a rule to listen when survivors speak. However, I know all too well from my own family tree's history how survivors become abusers. All survivors run this risk, and the responsibility is theirs.

I am the person that will be speaking to you from the sitting PZS organizers. You don't get to pick and choose on this one. I struggle to maintain my objectivity, but as I keep repeating, acting in solidarity with survivors will have definite effects. My greatest bias of all is to have the zine community represent the great egalitarian ideals of social justice, community ethics, and personal accountability that it possessed upon my entry. It is poor stewardship to abandon principles in the face of adversity.

Having been with the PZS for three years, I believe that a depoliticizing momentum is being felt. When I happened across zines, the personal was political. Now the personal is broadly welcomed. Just as long as it isn't "too political." For shame. Sometimes, I think that if I was that 12 year old kid fading out about punk, all over again, I wouldn't even want anything to do with it. This scares me.

I will not allow it to further decay while I am on shift, no matter how unpopular my decisions or words become. We are creating legacies, Joe. Each thing that we do has importance beyond this present time. Your actions carry particular weight and importance. As Uncle Ben in the Spider-Man comics says: "With great power comes great responsibility." It is you that owes the zine community, not the zine community that owes you.

What gives with Cindy? I thought you liked her? Who are you best able to work with on the team? Joe, we are running way overtime. Three years is too long. When it comes to a community as closely-knit as zines, everyone already knows each other. You are not guaranteed an impartial jury when it is the affected community that is trying to process and resolve long standing issues.

You and I agree that abuse is never simple. However, even if I or others weren't there, we can and do speak to what happened by dealing with its consequences. We are imperfect people hoping to create something better. The problem here, Joe, has been the unresolved issues. I will call them one more time, but you already know what they are. I have an extremely hard time understanding why you claim ignorance. Maybe you still don't know, as unlikely as that sounds. This comes directly from Alex. You've seen this before:

To make amends:
1) Seek professional counseling with someone who is not your friend to deal with your past family issues as well as issues of control and manipulation.

2) Publicly acknowledge that you have issues of abusing power through manipulation.

3) Do not involve anyone you are dating with your work.

4) Show me demonstrable changes in your behavior patterns.

Alex also has boundaries that she wishes to be maintained.

1) Do not call me, speak to me in public, or send letters to my house (use my post box if you have to send things but please don't ever send me a personal letter again; Alex Wyclek P.O. box 17230 pdk, or 97217)

2) Do not come within a 5 block radius of my house (not including the credit union since I know you have to go there)

3) Do not go to Bealeville Cafe

4) Do not go to Amnesia Brewing

5) Do not go to Pause

5) Do not go to The IPRC

6) Stop the psychological warfare like leaving or having someone else leave images of your tattoo outside my workshop at the symposium, riding by my house or writing things like "I forgive my mother" on royalty statements.

7) Do not attend any zine reading or event that I'm at in Portland or any show that any of Paul's bands play.

8) Please don't ever mention my family. That was one of the things that upset me most about your letter. They want nothing to do with you.

As you know, there are numerous other complaints, which I do not know whether they have been verified or not.

Tasks: Joe Bial / Micro... a few more things

Joe Biel / Microcosm Publishing <[redacted]>

3/23/16

to Doug

Hi Doug

Sure, I understand.

My question: is what do you think about arranging mediation between Alex and I so we can actually move on from this? I think that you're in a unique position to do that.

There's no rush, really, because at a dozen years we've got nothing but time but the situation as it stands is only hurting everyone that it touches.

Doug Taylor <[redacted]>

3/23/16

to Joe

I'll talk to her about it. I would brace yourself for a flat refusal, however. She has moved on and is much better off than she has been in years.

If you all want to go for something like that, it needs to be something you are both comfortable with. I doubt very much something like that exists. I cannot speak for Alex, but I don't know what that might be for her. You'll have to accept whatever comes as what it is.

Joe Biel / Microcosm Publishing <[redacted]>

3/23/16

to Doug

I was confused too. She came to my reading event at Powell's last month and seemed to want to attempt to start a dialogue. It's clearly still impacting her and one her mind. She still seems to bring me up as a subject regularly.

There has never been an actual dialogue, which it seems like would be the thing that would lay the issue truly to rest.

Alex refused last time when Debbie Rasmussen from *Richt* tried in 2010 but has apparently since expressed interest in it...?

At minimum, I wanted to say that I'm willing. Obviously, I've very much moved on with my life but when she does something like show up to my events, it's clear that some part of her has not.

Thanks, Joe Biel / Microc

Doug Taylor <[redacted]>

11/17/10

to Joe

Hey Joe--

Sorry to hear about your accident, man. That shit sucks. I hope things are going better for you. Please be careful! I obviously don't know all of what happened, but you only ever get one skull in life that's yours. The price on your head can't be so high that you're trying to cash in, eh? Also on the lighter side, it sounds like you could have had a pretty good mummy costume?

No more jokes. My domestic problems have definitely started to dominate my life. With no small amount of irony do I find myself attending to an issue such as the one that draws you and I familiar while my own relationship is in a state of serious disrepair. I did say no more jokes, but they are impossible to escape in this comedy. I can blame only workaholicism and perhaps sometimes having ice cubes where my heart should be. I am content to report that marriage counseling seems to be a moderating influence in how a dysfunctional married couple can more effectively communicate. This will tell.

This brings me directly to my next concern. I cannot help but keep thinking that I may not be the man for this task. I have learned the hard lesson about the man who throws the first stone. I am learning it still. I am uncertain, also, how best to proceed. I do not know if Alex wishes to partake in much of anything with you, much less a separate Portland accountability team. I have unsuccessfully broached the topic with her recently after she returned from her zine tour. This was a few weeks ago. I do not know how she wishes to proceed, or what that proceeding would entail without her involvement. I would like to ask her what she would like to do once again.

I will send you another email by the close of this week. Please feel free to contact me anytime. Take care of yourself --- vitamins, food, medicine, water, rest, meditation, all that.

Doug Taylor <[redacted]>

2/10/10

to Joe

Hey Joe

Thanks for writing. I'm not sure what the quentia city repair project consists of, but it sounds pretty interesting to me. I don't know how relevant it is to your project, but I recall reading an article in *Slingshot*. I think it was about a group of people that were planting sunflowers in abandoned lots that had absorbed many toxins. The sunflowers were useful in sucking up poisons out of the, thereby gradually rehabilitating it so that it could be used to grow flowers, or in some instances, edible crops. Interesting stuff, and much more useful than the casual nihilism that becomes so much a part of resistance movements. I wish you success with this recent venture, and I hope that you and your group learn ways to be most effective. It shouldn't be hard to find places around our city that could benefit from a little TLC.

I apologize for the slow progress being made in regards to the PZS issues surrounding the ongoing dispute between you and Alex. I regret more the departure of the Ibravians Cathy and Laurel from the PZS organizers. As I told you, I felt that their presence was a moderating influence and offered us valuable insight with their professional perspective. Their concerns of conflicts of interests and ethical responsibilities have not gone lost on me, despite their departure. I understand the way they talk, even if I didn't always agree. They are missed, and I wish them nothing but the best.

I don't think it's hopeless. I believe, I represent, a unique viewpoint regarding this, and for perhaps that reason, I have been selected as the individual responsible amongst the PZS organizers for correspondence between aggrieved parties and any possible mediators. I believe a possible volunteer mediator was selected, but I have not yet had the opportunity to confer with them.

Please feel free to contact me regarding any questions or concerns you have, because that is one of my responsibilities for organizing this year. Organizing is not without difficulties, but what worthwhile endeavor isn't? The show will go on.

Sincerely,
Doug Taylor



totalithera @totalithera · 12 Dec 2015

being hetero makes me feel like one of those people in the 60s who tried to raise a lion in their home

← ↻ 1 ❤️ 25 ⋮



totalithera @totalithera · 10m

props to [@EntropyMag](#) for doing the right thing with that interview. thanks!

← ↻ ❤️ 1 ⋮



totalithera @totalithera · 21m

wait why am i engaging with this nothing of a person when the block function exists?

← ↻ ❤️ ⋮



totalithera @totalithera · 24m

lol at somebody using quora as proof of anything

← ↻ ❤️ ⋮



totalithera @totalithera · 2h

i think this is just a case of a rich guy being an asshole

← ↻ ❤️ ⋮

Fat Heart House

♥ 36

Microcosm Publishing Boycott

corkyberlin:

JUL

16

My wife recently told me about an ongoing boycott of Microcosm Publishing - a well known distributor of zines, records, and other items related to and regarding both DIY, Punk and radicalism.

For those who are familiar with Microcosm and unfamiliar with the reasons for the boycott, I would point you to the following blog posts/articles regarding the actions of Joe Biel (one of the founders of Microcosm) [here](#) and [here](#), as well as Microcosm's response [here](#), and a fairly straightforward rebuttal to Microcosm [here](#).

I just wanted to make a quick point regarding the boycott and Microcosm: The issue here is that Microcosm has long presented itself as a collective in support of the DIY ethic, feminism, and radical politics opposed to the exact behavior and actions exhibited by Joe Biel. As if it weren't bad enough that in their founding they would violate one of the primary goals of any collective (to provide support and equal footing to everyone in the community) their half-assed attempt to wash their hands of the behavior of Joe Biel while maintaining him as a financial beneficiary and supporter is both hypocritical and demeaning to the DIY and Punk community as a whole.

It's not enough to say that you're against abuse (whether that abuse is emotional, physical, sexual, or in any other form) and pay lip service to the radical community. Standing up against patriarchy, materialism, sexism, and abuse begins at home - in our communities, in our homes, in our circle of friends, and in ourselves. My heart goes out to Alex Wrekk who took the incredibly brave step of speaking up about being victimized - something that is too often demonized, called into question, and means-tested in ways that no other facet of our daily lives ever is.

I will no longer support Microcosm in any fashion, because I will not support any organization that puts anything above the emotional or physical well being of its participants. Any community that does has lost its sense of value and works towards its own destruction.

Please, boycott Microcosm. -CB



Firestorm Asheville And here is some back story on why no one should be supporting the jerks at [Microcosm Publishing](http://seattlefreepress.org/.../the-rise-and-co-optation...) who are now using the legal system to attack their critics/competitors: <http://seattlefreepress.org/.../the-rise-and-co-optation...> (-Libertie)



The Rise and Co-optation of Microcosm Publishing

seattlefreepress.org

By Jim Fromm SEATTLE, OCCUPIED DUWAMISH TERRITORY – November 15, 2013 Portland, ...

[See More](#)

6 hours ago · Like



Claire Olipossum Oh no!

6 hours ago · Like



John Paul WTF!?

6 hours ago · Like



Ethan Clauset that SFP article is some pretty terrible writing, if anyone is interested in this issue I suggest looking a little deeper



Gabby Holden <gabby.lea.holden@gmail.com>

3/3/14

to me

Hey Joe,

I just got your text. Sorry I haven't been in touch. I've been processing a lot. And well, it has to do with you. A while back I read Jessie Duke's letter about you, from a link I saw on the Pioneers Press facebook update. It talked about how you are a manipulative and intimidating person. This confuses me because I've seen nothing but kindness and sincerity from you. But this is the third instance that I've heard of you being an abusive person. The first instance being your relationship with Alex. I don't know what happened there exactly, I excused that with "It was a toxic relationship, but now Joe's with a really great partner, and he's working on his shit". Then there was something that happened with Sparky, and her leaving Microcosm. After that there was that update that was posted about you "de-investing" in Microcosm. But you wanted to control Microcosm yourself, with no say from others.

I asked Franco Ortega about you, who I've known for years but didn't know of his involvement in Microcosm.

He confirmed your manipulative nature with both Alex and the way you interacted with others in the Microcosm collective. It's like I'm seeing a two-sided equation. And I wonder if I didn't see this other side of you because you didn't need anything from me and therefore didn't need to manipulate me.

Suing Jessie for thousands of dollars is just another example of bullying behavior. She has the right to voice her grievances.

I just don't feel comfortable being friends with you anymore Joe. And I can't keep making excuses for you. I need to break off our relationship. I hope you can understand why and that I wish you the best of luck with dealing with your issues.

2:17 AM
5th August 2012

99 notes

tagged: REJECT
HIM

ANNOUNCEMENT: MY BIG PUBLISHING NEWS

situology:

gnade:

Okay, pals, here's my big news: My friends and I have started a "family business" called Microcosm Distribution. It goes live right now. We distribute zines and books (and patches, pins, etc) and we've got some heavy-good shit up on our site. You can get all my stuff there. You can get Cometbus zines, Burn Collector, Show & Tell, Every Thug is a Lady, Body Conscious Birth Control, Make Your Place, Green is the New Red, AK Press stuff, Counteract Collective stuff, Next Stop Adventure, Last Gasp, DIY guide mania, PM Press titles, a lot of radical and feminist literature ... just a fucking ton of stuff. We recently split off from Microcosm Publishing (now owned solely by Joe Biel) and our company is a totally separate, autonomous thing owned by Jessie Duke and run by former Microcosm Publishing folks Thad Christian, Rio Safari, Matt Gauck, Laura Grant, Danielle Duquette, and myself. So, without further adieu, here we are: <http://www.microcosmdistribution.com/>

-Adam

THIS IS HUGE. GOODBYE JOE BIEL, NOBODY NEEDS YOU.

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

(Source: gnade)

1.  *hardlikealgebra* liked this
2.  *spontem* liked this
3.  *butchnorfemme* reblogged this from *tarynhipp* and added:
Everything that I have ever seen from the folks over at Microcosm makes me think they have to either be completely...
4.  *gotochelm* reblogged this from *gotochelm*
5.  *sodiumlamps* liked this
6.  *fuckdudeskilldudes* liked this
7.  *resmc* liked this
8.  *wolfandcrowxvx-blog-blog* reblogged this from *teslaspice-blog-blog*
9.  *wolfandcrowxvx-blog-blog* liked this
10.  *what-it-loves-blog-blog* liked this
11.  *derekneuland* reblogged this from *cestuncoupdetat*
12.  *cestuncoupdetat* reblogged this from *mytongueisforked*
13.  *lalalaetc* liked this
14.  *brujacore* liked this
15.  *mytongueisforked* reblogged this from *cestuncoupdetat* and added:



On Fri, Feb 24, 2017 at 8:04 PM, xxKim Riotxx
<hexestarr@yahoo.com> wrote:

Hi Jeri,

We can close the ticket after this also, but I also just want to say, despite all the personal issues that happened between Alex and Joe (which at first we were remaining neutral on for sake of zines), after the lawsuit, that was the final straw. AND also for the simple fact, people were associating us with Microcosm would NOT buy our zines because we were distroing on Microcosm, basically the association was not a positive thing for us. We have mutual friends, but unfortunately, some decision making on Joe's part had a huge backlash.

Perhaps you should know the whole story and why some people refuse to work with Microcosm. I know librarians that refuse to buy from Microcosm. That is saying something.

Glad you are being treated with respect. Hope that continues.



sensei_moreno, francesca.wilkins, kasasenchou, lauroyle, veganvix and allysseriordan like this

mildredlocke We're a big fan of @microcosm_pub here in the #Addred household. So we were thrilled when @lucylikesbikes invited them to speak at @thebristolbikeproject. Read all about the event in my latest blog post by clicking the link in my bio 

#bikeswillsavetheworld #groundswell #ellyblue #joebiel #fangirl #signedbooks

veganvix 

kittenesque Joe Biel is an abuser.



totalithera @totalithera · 5m

i'm glad my internet bullying has finally been acknowledged 🤔🤔🤔



totalithera @totalithera · 36m

props to [@EntropyMag](#) for doing the right thing with that interview. thanks!



totalithera @totalithera · 46m

wait why am i engaging with this nothing of a person when the block function exists?



totalithera @totalithera · 49m

lol at somebody using quora as proof of anything



totalithera @totalithera · 2h

i think this is just a case of a rich guy being an asshole



have been hurt by this. We unequivocally stand for those who have suffered from abuse. And we've struggled with where to go from there. The collective believes that ostracizing someone isn't a healthy, restorative response, and we've struggled with accountability being more than a radical judge-and-jury trial.

...

For the past nine months, Debbie Rasmussen (former publisher/director of *Bitch* magazine) has offered *pro bono* facilitation creating an "organizational refounding" and discussing proposed accountability processes. While the movement is gradual, there have been many organizational changes in the past months. Joe stepped down from being a collective member, and Microcosm will be collectively owned by the remaining members by the end of this year. The collective is working to create a Resource Council, an independent group of volunteers to offer support and mediation to Microcosm. Our hope is that an external ring of support could offer help with personal conflicts that fall outside of our Non-Adherence Policy and assist in maintaining a compassionate Safer Space Policy for the non-physical space that is Microcosm.

Holy sheeit. Joe Biel stepped down from Microcosm finally. Maybe the collective will manage to be a collective again. This is a pretty big deal as far as radical projects lining up their talk and their action goes.

It's hard because Microcosm has become like the Wal-mart of zine distros. On the one hand, it's really easy to find zines you want all in one place from them, and when we were first building up our zine library, that was sometimes important for easily doing big orders. But on the other hand, there's so many smaller zine distros to support too, and many of them specialize in areas that are really interesting. I know of at least one zine library/distro that refuses to buy from Microcosm.

When they had zine writers on tour about two years ago, doing skillshare/zine reading events, I booked them to come to our infoshop because I wanted to support those zine makers. I wasn't excited about supporting a project dominated by an abusive dude, or trading emails with him to set it up, or meeting him after having heard nasty shit about him. But I wanted to support the writers on the tour. And it was a great event, but one I was way too ambivalent about setting up. Radical projects like this need to really do what they talk about, and be accountable for it when they fail at that; booking an event like that shouldn't come with so much baggage that you have to justify it to yourself. It should be undoubtedly awesome and open and comfortable for everyone.

#Microcosm #zines #accountability

2 years ago on June 28, 2011 at 02:09pm

0 Comments · 7 notes



Ambellina @cosmicdear · 6h

No, Asperger's is NOT an excuse for abusing your partner. Or anyone, for that matter. Which is how he's gotten where he is, abuse.



View conversation



Ambellina @cosmicdear · 6h

Yes, Asperger's may have something to do with his failed relationships. Missing social cues, partners that aren't understanding, etc.



View conversation



Ambellina @cosmicdear · 6h

The video itself contains clips of someone he has abused, which of course, is distressing.



View conversation



Ambellina @cosmicdear · 6h

The man raising money for his memoir, Joe, is an abuser of women. He should NOT be supported. kickstarter.com/projects/micro



nogooodpeople +

So, What's the deal with you and Microcosm? >

alexwrekk.wordpress.com



Here is why you should boycott Microcosm Publishing. I wish I would have known about this sooner.. Trigger Warning for those who have experienced or are experiencing any form of emotional abuse.

1 note



Exhibit I



the facts department @the_facts_dept · Nov 8



Replying to @the_facts_dept

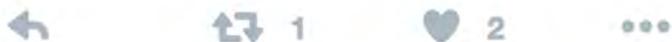
the following are white supremacists. denounce them:

- zach stachura
- bryan satanori
- danny guyette
- blake wentworth
- sarah schulman
- bonnie o'brien wojcik
- francis ford coppola
- matt lambert (dielamb)
- joe biel**
- ross wolfe
- ed luker
- linda stupart
- sam knight
- scott crow
- kristian williams



Colin Hagendorf @sliceharvester · 1h

In case everyone forgot, Joe Biel is still a piece of garbage and Microcosm Publishing still sucks in 2017.





Ambellina @cosmicdear · 6h

Aspie followers, let me know if I'm out of line. According to some Aspies I've talked to on facebook, these comments are all necessary.



Ambellina @cosmicdear · 6h

The man raising money for his memoir, Joe, is an abuser of women. He should NOT be supported. kickstarter.com/projects/micro...



[View summary](#)



Ambellina @cosmicdear · 6h

The video itself contains clips of someone he has abused, which of course, is distressing.



Ambellina @cosmicdear · 6h

Yes, Asperger's may have something to do with his failed relationships. Missing social cues, partners that aren't understanding, etc.



Ambellina @cosmicdear · 6h

Please, please, please spread this and ask anyone who might be considering supporting him to put their support elsewhere.





View summary



Ambellina @cosmicdear · 6h

The video itself contains clips of someone he has abused, which of course, is distressing.



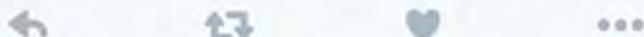
Ambellina @cosmicdear · 6h

Yes, Asperger's may have something to do with his failed relationships. Missing social cues, partners that aren't understanding, etc.



Ambellina @cosmicdear · 6h

Please, please, please spread this and ask anyone who might be considering supporting him to put their support elsewhere.



Ambellina @cosmicdear · 3h

Joe Biel has not turned "a **litany** of continuing mistakes and seemingly wrong turns into a happy, fulfilled life".

relationpress.tumblr.com/post/535897906...

4:59 PM - 5 Jan 2016 · Details



Hide conversation



the facts department @the_facts_dept · Nov 8



Replying to @the_facts_dept

these slavemasters want black trans people to suffer:

chris kraus

sarah schulman

gregory jackson (onision)

phil a. neel

ash sarkar

gustav år (lil peep)

alex deamonds

peter coffin

matt lambert (dielamb)

joe biel

robin james

ross wolfe

ngọc loan trần

kumars salehi



62098

m Health Dark Sky - Northea...

Recent (69) Message Requests Mark All Read · New Message



Joe Bile

You're an enabler and an accomplice. Doesn't it gross you out ...

10/30/16



Let Them Burn @endslavemasters · 17h

joe biel = microcosm publishing owner, portland zine symposium founder, white supremacist, gaslit & manipulated his wife of 6 years.





totalithera @totalithera · 2h

his lawyers reported me to twitter for posting a link about him sucking
😎



totalithera @totalithera · 2h

joe biel, ladies and gentlemen

Tweet 1 of 1



totalithera

@totalithera

Hey @EntropyMag Joe Biel is a rapist and a piece of human garbage. How dare you run an interview with this piece of shit?

<https://t.co/aBtDLnT3yD>

9:06 AM - 10 Jan 2017

Whoa.

Jude, I'm pretty offended that you'd say this to me. It sounds like you're jumping to conclusions based on some pretty egregious and one-sided gossip.

On Wed, Jul 9, 2014 at 10:42 AM, Vachon, Jude <vachonj@carnegielibrary.org<mailto:vachonj@carnegielibrary.org><mailto:vachonj@carnegielibrary.org><mailto:vachonj@carnegielibrary.org>>> wrote:
Hi Elly.

Thanks for the heads up.

Elly, I really highly value what you do, in fact I keep buying your zines and just brought them to a Women and Biking night recently. I do want to let you know that I've read, thought and talked with people about Joe's behavior in personal relationships and as part of the zine community, and I've decided not to support his projects.

Take care, Elly,

Jude

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Vachon, Jude** <vachonj@carnegielibrary.org>
Date: Wed, Jul 9, 2014 at 11:36 AM
Subject: RE: in pgh tomorrow!
To: Elly Blue <elly@takingthelane.com>

People like me that have a budget to buy zines and hold zine-related events and who can host/promote events have a responsibility to think about what we're involved with and what we give support to. That's why we discussed this at an unconference session, that's why I'm letting you know what I've decided. You asked me to attend and promote the event.

Jude

From: eleanor.blue@gmail.com [eleanor.blue@gmail.com] on behalf of Elly Blue [elly@takingthelane.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 09, 2014 11:23 AM
To: Vachon, Jude
Subject: Re: in pgh tomorrow!

How is it not based on gossip? Talking about it with a lot of people, reading non-source material, and discussing Joe at unconferences (!) is exactly that. I've read most of the stuff online too and it's like a huge telephone game. Some of the lies are appalling. When you get back to the actual sources, like his ex-wife's original zine about it, you see that his so-called problematic behaviors are all things like trying to get sober when she liked drinking (don't believe me? that's the first story).

I'm sure you are under some political pressure from people in a certain community. I guess you have to do whatever you think you have to do. But if you've made these conclusions, why bring it up to me, what does that possibly serve?

On Wed, Jul 9, 2014 at 11:12 AM, Vachon, Jude <vachonj@carnegielibrary.org<mailto:vachonj@carnegielibrary.org>> wrote:
No, as I've said, I've spent a lot of time on this decision. I know people that have been involved with accountability processes with him, I've read a lot, talked to a lot of people, been involved in discussions about it at unconferences, ... Definitely not based on gossip (offends me that you say that), it's too important and serious for that.



□ saint julia □ @julia_eff · 46s

🌈 joe biel is a piece of shit 🌈
🌹🌹 fucking fight me bro 🌹🌹



From: Kione <thecoolk247@gmail.com>
Date: September 1, 2014 at 5:12:01 PM PDT
To: "Jeff Hayes / Microcosm Publishing" <jeff@microcosmpublishing.com>
Subject: Re: Order

Hi Jeff,

I have made the difficult choice to discontinue distribution through Microcosm.
Sorry for not writing earlier - it has taken me a long time to consider my options and reasoning for this decision.

Thank you for supporting my work for years - I truly mean it when I say that I appreciate all that you and Microcosm has done.

Sincerely,
Kione

Kione

Sep 4 (9 days ago)

to Joe -

My guess is that this is more than I have the head space for, and more than I should be meddling with. If you could present a concise case for your position in a way that is comfortable to you and without any specific expectations from me, I would appreciate that. The main concern I have is regarding the lawsuit microcosm has filed against pioneers press. I also have concerns regarding claims that Alex Wrekk has made not just about her experiences but the experience of others in the community in relation to you and Microcosm.

e | <https://lovemotionstory.wordpress.com/2012/06/29/accountability-joe-biel-and-microcosm/>

While I think Joe Biel is lame and the situation with Microcosm kind of sucks, I am glad for what I see in the wake of all of it: **A community that calls out abuse and talks about it. A community that expects accountability in a respectful way. A community that doesn't launch a witch-hunt, but does demand a dialogue about unethical practices and seeks a meaningful solution.**

Thanks to all the zinesters that are brave about standing in solidarity against abuse and other unethical behavior. You are all rad.



Deirdree Prudence

31 October 2016

🍷 To: thee most lovely of zinesters, all you Zines A Go Go go go dancing darlings: 🍷

It has, most sadly, come to the attention of those with the nuclear admin codes to this fine & dandy DIY artsy & incredibly zine-eee-liscious Facebook group that a maliciously foul & totes malevolent piece of shit no goodnik poseur with no artistry in their lack of pinache has been up to what only a no goodnik can be up to which is up to no good. ☐☐

☠️ Please note, artists of the end times: Any kind of fuckery will not be allowed within this group. Any kind of intentional energy void of support, camaraderie, compassion, good cheer &/or with open-minded/hearted discourse as its goal will absolutely not be tolerated. ☠️

💎☐☐ Art is magick & magick is love & art is love so if love is not what brought you here? ☐ No love for you, no love for you.☐

☐ Not here, motherfucker.☐

☐ This place is just not for you.☐

☐ If anything posted in Zines A Go Go causes a stir within one's heart that is not one of positivity or heavens to betsy leaves this place anywhere close to an unsafe environment for DIY artistes to come together & make magick, talk shop, find friends & new collaborations & simply feel a part of something good & sincere & true? Please please message moi. Or summon that witch boy artiste [Steven Hughes Purkey](#) if you prefer. but please do not keep silent, (never ever stay silent!) it may take a day or so to gather the courage to read my messages & calm my panic attack but we are here to, at the berry least, do absolutely everything in our power to make it right & offer up a swell kinda spot, sweet as pizzazz pie, for all y'all to do what thou wilt avec ZINES.☐

🍷 In closing: 🍷 ☐

Zines A Go Go will not fuck with your hate.

Anything reported to an admin & then deem'd to be lacking in appropriate material with anything less than positive support or anything of the like? Any post will be deleted immediately. Any member blocked. Blocked the first time it happens & blocked immediately. Seriously. Fini. ☐☠️☐

☐❤️💎 We all just wanna create art & share the smiles with likeminded souls. 💎❤️☐

☐ Don't you dare fuck with that.☐

❤️ Choose love.

Then? Give it.❤️

💎 Yours In Papercuts & the Bliss Of Gluesticks & Shitty Photocopied Gemstones,💎

Exhibit I

👉 Yours In Papercuts & the Bliss Of Gluesticks & Shitty Photocopied Gemstones, 👉

🌹 Deirdree Prudence 🌹
Founder, ✂️ Zines A Go Go ✂️



PS: Brief post avec le backstory/info of note to this awfulness coming up next. 🌹

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

👍❤️😱 Noemi Ixchel Martinez and 20 others



Steven Hughes Purkey Exact-a-mundo, mon chérie de la zine-ee-rific monde au cette group du rock n roll, c'est la belle, c'est la fantastique - ZI N ES À G O GO - à go go, à go go! Vous, mah beautypie zine queen de l'amour et magick technografique, vous êtes la premier à r... See more
See translation

Like · Reply · 🌟 2 · 31 October 2016 at 22:22



Write a comment...





Katherine Powderly shared **Pioneers Press's** status update.

17 hrs ·

Microcosm Publishing "radical publishing house", fore-fronted by abusive & manipulative Joe Biel, is suing previous partners -- now known as Pioneers Press. Buy some zines, boycott Microcosm.

Show Attachment

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2 people like this.



Katherine Powderly Here's a little history for ya,
<http://seattlefreepress.org/.../the-rise-and-co-optation.../>



The Rise and Co-optation of Microcosm Publishing

By Jim Fromm SEATTLE, OCCUPIED DUWAMISH...

SEATTLEFREEPRESS.ORG

17 hrs · Like · 1



Katherine Powderly Riley Snacks Julie Bularzik Lauren Choate

17 hrs · Like · 1



Julie Bularzik I actually read about this guy being a dick a few months ago...

17 hrs · Like · 1



Katherine Powderly Julie Bularzik The wrath of this guy infuriates me. I've been following ever since you introduced me years and years ago. ❤️ I now have stacks and stacks of zines and letters from Jessie Duke and Adam Gnade. Sounds like they've reached the end of their distro, and to me -- it's totally heartbreaking.

17 hrs · Like

-Adam

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Ahahahaha fuck Joe Biel.

If Microcosm Distribution thinks this will solve all of the problems people have with Microcosm then they are delusional. The only way this would have been a step in the right direction is if the split off, changed their name, publicly denounced Microcosm, and refused to distribute anything published by them.

oh and THIS!

yeah, I'm not too sure about this... like, I think the problem goes beyond Joe Biel and the Microcosm collective should be accountable to how they dealt with the issue. the problem with abuse in our communities doesn't end at the abuser, it's also how communities respond to abuse and sexual assault and how we create a culture that does not support survivors and continues to allow abusive assholes to exist and be validated in radical scenes. from what i've read, it doesn't seem like the microcosm collective has taken any real responsibility for the ways in which they've enabled Joe Biel. what, if any, concrete things have they done to held him accountable, held themselves accountable, and respected the wishes of his ex-partner? i'm thinking that getting tired of having no one wanting to buy their books because they are shitty and slightly changing their name is not enough. is there a statement, or anything that proves me wrong? regardless, even if they got rid of joe biel, i think they have to do a lot more work to gain our trust back. again, it doesn't end at the abusive person, we all have to be accountable for how we validate abusive behaviours and create a culture that is unsafe for survivors etc.

Okay, pals, here's my big news: My friends and I have started a "family business" called Microcosm Distribution. It goes live *right now*. We distribute zines and books (and patches, pins, etc) and we've got some heavy-good shit up on our site. You can get all my stuff there. You can get *Cometbus* zines, *Burn Collector*, *Show & Tell*, *Every Thug is a Lady*, Body Conscious Birth Control, Make Your Place, Green is the New Red, AK Press stuff, Counteract Collective stuff, Next Stop Adventure, Last Gasp, DIY guide mania, PM Press titles, a lot of radical and feminist literature ... just a fucking *ton* of stuff. We recently split off from Microcosm Publishing (now owned solely by Joe Biel) and our company is a totally separate, autonomous thing owned by Jessie Duke and run by former Microcosm Publishing folks Thad Christian, Rio Safari, Matt Gauck, Laura Grant, Danielle Duquette, and myself. So, without further adieu, here we are:

<http://www.microcosmdistribution.com/>

-Adam

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Ahahahaha fuck Joe Biel.

If Microcosm Distribution thinks this will solve all of the problems people have with Microcosm then they are delusional. The only way this would have been a step in the right direction is if the split off, changed their name, publicly denounced Microcosm, and refused to distribute anything published by them.

oh and THIS!

wait, what? how do you start a business that has already existed for years?

Everything that I have ever seen from the folks over at Microcosm makes me think they have to either be completely delusional or thing that everyone outside of Microcosm is completely stupid.

Every time I make a public statement like this now, I get more threatening letters from third parties saying I owe Joe larger amounts of money. He and his inner circle find this all terribly amusing and are masters at spinning information and spreading rumors. Don't buy the hype. Boycott Microcosm Publishing.

I didn't know about Microcosm's terrible relationship with a lot of the zinesters it works with and/or represents until about a year or two ago. All of the material that I've seen published by Microcosm is high quality, interesting stuff—that Mostly True hobo graffiti mag is killing me I want it so bad!!—but I just can't bring myself to buy any of it because of what I've read and continue to read about how the business treats the people it's supposed to be promoting and helping.



Post a Comment On: doris zine blog

"Microcosm"

1 Comment - [Show Original Post](#)

1 - 1 of 1

rachel said...

Hi Cindy,

I am a part of Left Bank Books in Seattle, Wa, and I was hoping I could get a more direct email address for you so that I can send you a proposal for a letter to Microcosm regarding Joe Biel? We wanted to be in touch with you regarding how the accountability process is going (or not going), whether you have heard back from Microcosm, etc., and also to be transparent about what we are doing to support both you and Alex Wrekk. Thanks!

frommyhandlebars@gmail.com

November 2, 2010 at 4:43 PM

I would love to own this cookbook, but I won't buy it as long as it is put out by Microcosm Publishing. As a survivor of domestic violence, I can't support a business run by a partner abuser who has consistently run a supposedly "radical" business like an oligarchy. Boycott Microcosm Publishing, now & forever. If you want to know more about why, a quick google search will yield a multitude of reasons.

edited to add: I also strongly recommend reading Brainscan #21 if you really want to know what underlies the whole Microcosm boycott thing. There are other factors but this one is central.

I did this quick Google search as soon as I saw this note on my post; had no idea. I think everybody knows where I stand on questions of abuse and accountability, i.e., with all victims, forever.

(Source: microcosmpublishing.com)

3naturalsixes likes this

191t reblogged this from [johndarnielle](#)

scaredystark likes this

foglipshappenstance reblogged this from [johndarnielle](#)

elmwoodtownhall likes this

davewritesitdown reblogged this from [microcosmpub](#)

thegreatmayhaps likes this

Onihildiamond-sutra likes this



Joe Biel / Microcosm Publishing <joe@microcosmpublishing.com>

Aug 23



to John ▾

Sure! No rush.

We are on tumblr and I'd really appreciate the help. I throw you a little Bears mention: <http://microcosmpub.tumblr.com/>

Thank you



Joe Biel / Microcosm Publishing <joe@microcosmpublishing.com>

Sep 8 (5 days ago)



to John ▾

Hey John,

Just wanted to check in about the blurb. Have you had the chance for rest and headspace?

Thanks



John Darnielle

Sep 8 (5 days ago)



to Joe ▾

Joe, I'm not going to be able to blurb the book for you - I did reblog and recommend the book. Sorry I can't be of more help,

jd





a loner lifestyle in columbus, oh/
books/Phoebe forever/anxiety/ex-
punk

uma blog, crazy blog & pictures of
g. Sometimes Nirvana, Brody Dalle,
or Green Day fan blog.

[ME ANYTHING ARCHIVE](#)

28 August 2014

good lord do I have to message john darnielle and let him know that he shouldn't be reblogging shit from microcosm???

microcosm | joe biel | abusers | he will maybe be receptive what do you think? | feminist men | microcosm publishing

14 notes

- pansytwistdistro likes this
- crusty-shackleford likes this
- problem-dogs said: please do
- problem-dogs likes this
- disecholocation likes this
- californiablackhole likes this
- squidlfishous likes this
- rgr-pop likes this
- spectralprojection said: :(
- spectralprojection likes this
- mappingthemoon said: D:
- repetition-is-holy likes this
- xbearprincessx likes this
- tendrillz said: omg
- tarae posted this



← In reply to Microcosm Publishing



ilikecats @ilikecatstoo2 · 4m

@Microcosmmm @joebiel_ embarrassing
Microcosm, one abusive rant at a time



ilikecats @ilikecatstoo2 · 1h

Boycott @joebiel_ Boycott @Microcosmmm
Social activists should not support or
enable misogyny! [quora.com/What-is-the-
bi...](https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-bi...)

://bitsofstring.wordpress.com/2010/08/04/on-distros-accountability-and-abuse-in-radical-communities/

This. Facebook Microcosm Gmail - Inbox - joe... Endicia Lookup isbn barcode gen goat A Month Without a... How to File an

so yes, microcosm is a collective, but i'd prefer not to support the work of joe biel, even if he is only part of that collective, as a means of standing in solidarity with alex wreckk. i know that microcosm is the one-stop shopping of zine-dom for a lot of people, especially for mail order, but there are other distros – feminist distros, queer distros – that may have a smaller variety of stock, but can use the support a lot more than microcosm can. here's some examples:



Video



olympiazinelibrary

Olympia Timberland Library

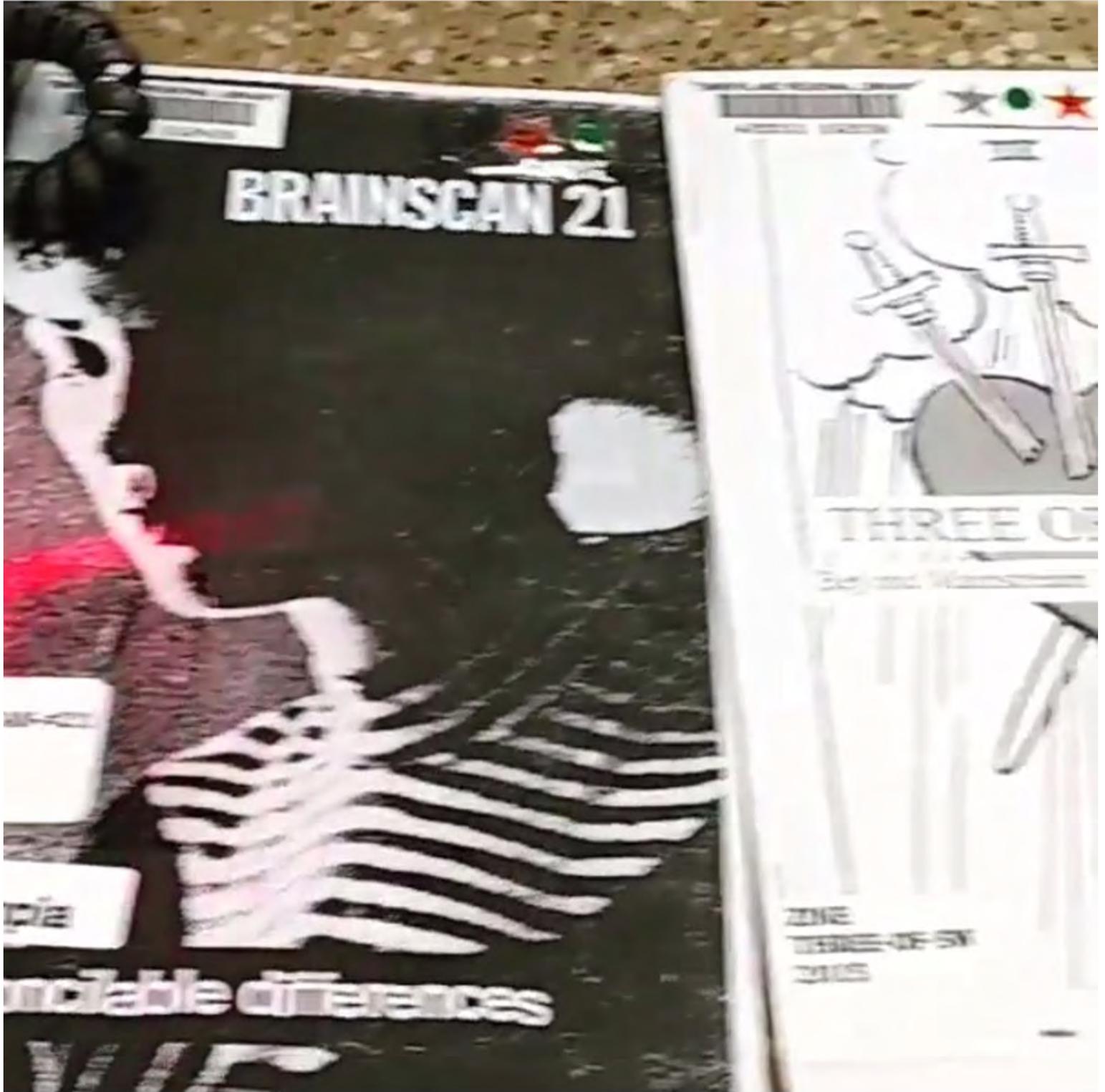


Exhibit I



SUPPORT NEW

Survivor Support and Transformative Justice Collective

Home [Blog](#) Links Reading List Reso

Open Letter to Microcosm Publishing

JUNE 30, 2012



We signed on to this statement about Microcosm and Joe Biel after being informed about Joe's behavior both in Brainscan 21 zine as well as from [Cindy Crabb's statement](#) about no longer publishing her work with Microcosm. June 29th, 2012

Dear Microcosm,

We write as zine distributors, zine-makers, library and infoshop collectives, community accountability supporters, and festival organizers

from the DIY (queer, feminist, punk and/or anarcha-) community. We express our concern regarding your support of a perpetrator of abuse. The wide reach of Microcosm's distribution can be intimidating for any individual to speak out against, so we write this together, in solidarity.

We refer to your statement from June 2011, regarding Joe Biel's involvement in Microcosm. You ended with "We do sincerely hope to open the conversation" and "Expect to hear more from us soon!" We ask, was the conversation opened? And, what was the follow-up to this?

You wrote: "Joe stepped down from being a collective member, and Microcosm will be collectively owned by the remaining members by the end of this year [2011]." Yet in 2012, Joe is listed in your newsletters and homepage as a member of Microcosm. We think this to be insensitive, considering that people are emotionally invested in your real and genuine response to Joe's lack of accountability. You mentioned transparency, but we ask, what has been done since June 2011? Why is there no visible communication, on your website, newsletter or annual report?

Restructuring is one thing, but our main point is the accountability of an individual who still works for

Exhibit 1

Restructuring is one thing, but our main point is the accountability of an individual who still works for Microcosm. His name was not added to your statement, and this appears as though he has other people speaking for – and protecting – him. A statement where he speaks for himself, and is clear about his role in Microcosm, is overdue. A statement about whether or not he wishes to take responsibility for his own behavior is long overdue. We are worried about the power that Microcosm gives to an individual who has been known to abuse his power. We are concerned that Joe is not working towards changing his behavior. Is Microcosm going to put into practice their rhetoric about supporting survivors, and reflect on their role in perpetuating abuser's behavior?

We would like to support you, but cannot do so as long as you support a perpetrator of abuse, whilst being passive and/or unaccountable for it. We were surprised and left a little lost by the brevity of your statement/s. Your lack of action and communication has been frustrating, disappointing and puzzling to us – as anti-oppression, social justice, or anarchist collectives. Whether or not Joe continues to be a member of Microcosm, we feel that trust in the collective, in its ability and desire to respond and be supportive and to follow through, has been ruptured.

We don't believe that boycotting Microcosm is an adequate response to abuse, but we are uncomfortable with having any kind of relationship with Microcosm without an acknowledgment of, and a response to, Microcosm's continued work with and, through that, support of Joe Biel who has not been responsive to and responsible for his patterns of behaviour.

Hundreds of zinesters and collectives may not feel comfortable associating with someone who is not acting accountable for his abusive behavior. Has informed consent been given to all people that are being published or distributed by Microcosm?

These are some things you could do now:

- ★ Explain the situation to anyone you are working with. Ask for their informed consent to continue work with them from this point onwards.
- ★ Make clear how the process of decision-making is progressing, and make it visible and transparent to your colleagues and "customers".
- ★ Keep an updated list of action points and major decisions somewhere visible, that are in response to concerns, eg. "The collective is working to create a Resource Council, an independent group of volunteers to offer support and mediation to Microcosm – This was done in Dec 2011". List other things that the collective has aimed to do so people stay informed on if these things have been achieved.
- ★ If there is no continual process with Joe, if he is not currently working to change his behavior, then he should not be benefiting from his position of power. He should no longer be a part of Microcosm.

These processes and recommendations should have already been considered by the collective years ago. We realize that this is hard work, but it should have been, and should still be, your priority over business as usual. It is the responsibility of your collective to self-educate, and to conduct its own accountability process, without external pressure or provocation.

We hope to hear from you soon, as your response is long overdue. We would like to hear from you by the

➔ Re: Microcosm Publishing: Open Letter about Abuse and Support

3

Posted: July 1, 2011 by Sunshine Superboy in [internal accountability](#), [networking & movement building](#)

Tags: [Doris Zine](#), [emotional abuse](#), [group dynamics](#), [internal support](#), [intimate partner abuse](#), [Microcosm Publishing](#), [open letter](#), [Stolen Sharpie Revolution](#), [zines](#)

The following is a letter reposted from [Microcosm](#). It felt important to repost here because of the extent to which it has become a public situation- not so much the abuse, but Microcosm's process of struggling with accountability work.

There are some important posts from Alex about this situation, and we would like to link to them [here up top](#) (you can also see Alex's links in the comments below). This letter without the context of these posts could be problematic, so [here](#), [here](#), and [also here](#), are good places to get a fuller perspective on things including [Alex's recent response](#).

Philly Stands Up is available as a resource in supporting these and any radical community through the process of supporting survivors, holding people who have caused harm accountable, and helping communities in figuring out how to challenge abuse, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence using restorative and transformative justice. We know this work is hard, but **it is also important that the communities doing this work are themselves accountable to their own politics and to communities of survivors.**

It is through struggling to address our own problems and striving for healing justice in our own communities that we become not only *informed*, but *transformed*.

best
PSU



Hi all,

This statement is in response to individuals in the zine community accusing the founder of [Microcosm](#), Joe Biel, for emotional abuse. Alex Wreck (of [Brainscan](#) and [Stolen Sharpie Revolution](#)) and Cindy Crabb (of [Doris zine and distro](#)) have written about this, and other zinesters have requested information. To many, this may come out of left field or seem incidental to one's relationship with [Microcosm](#). This is for us to get off our chests, and to address silence that those involved have waited to see broken.

Staff at [Microcosm](#) earnestly care that this emotional abuse was named. We care about abuse and support, and we care for Alex, and for Joe, and for others who have been hurt by this. We unequivocally stand for those who have suffered from abuse. And we've struggled with where to go from there. The collective believes that ostracizing someone isn't a healthy, restorative response, [an exhibit](#) I've struggled with accountability being more than a radical judge-and-jury trial.



Microcosm began as a very small, very personal project. We honor that the zine distro seen today developed as a joint effort of Joe and Alex. After their relationship ended, the organization eventually moved to Bloomington, IN into the new house of Joe and his partner at the time. Both partners were talented collective members with deep investment in Microcosm, and after their separations, the organization struggled for a meaningful, respectful way to acknowledge their involvement. In this highly personal nature of the organization

at the time, how to provide support and accountability was something the collective has seen differently and fallen short on.

*We believe that we've been ill-equipped to address emotional abuse and support on an organizational level. We've struggled with how to provide that space and forum in Microcosm. **As abuse creates cycles of hurt, it's been easier for those involved to put up a wall for personal protection rather than create resources for healing. We've sincerely wanted to transcend this, but focused primarily on day-to-day matters to keep this business afloat.** And our long internal discussions have remained within the organization, resulting in more disappointment from that lack of transparency.*

*For the past nine months, Debbie Rasmussen (former publisher/director of Bitch magazine) has offered pro bono facilitation creating an "organizational refounding" and discussing proposed accountability processes. While the movement is gradual, there have been many organizational changes in the past months. Joe stepped down from being a collective member, and Microcosm will be collectively owned by the remaining members by the end of this year. **The collective is working to create a Resource Council, an independent group of volunteers to offer support and mediation to Microcosm.** Our hope is that an external ring of support could offer help with personal conflicts that fall outside of our **Non-Adherence Policy** and assist in maintaining a compassionate **Safer Space Policy** for the non-physical space that is Microcosm.*

We can't expect to bandage anyone's wounds. We do sincerely hope to open the conversation and aid in creating the resources that may someday help others. Please feel free to contact us at inquiries@microcosmpublishing.com. We're excited about a healthier, stronger Microcosm, and we wouldn't be here without all of you. Thanks for your support. Expect to hear more from us soon!

The Microcosm Collective

Rio, Jessie, & Adam

Open Letter to Microcosm

Posted 4 years ago

If you have any interest in zines, DIY, abuse accountability, etc. you might be interested in this open letter to Microcosm (involving issues with Joe Biel, a founder of Microcosm and an abuser):

<http://heavymentaldistro.org/blog/open-letter-to-microcosm-publishing/>

Also I highly recommend reading this related post:

<http://alexwrekk.wordpress.com/2010/07/29/so-whats-the-deal-with-you-and-microcosm/>

"When problematic behaviors go unchallenged and are swept under the rug because it is easier or because there are benefits to ignoring it, the larger patriarchal system of power and abuse is just being perpetuated.

At first it merely hurt my feelings a little when friends would continue to have their zines carried or published by Microcosm. I didn't feel I had the support or right to ask them otherwise. But now, after failed attempts at mediation, accountability and repeated belittlement I have changed my mind. **I believe in honesty and justice and giving people information to make up their own minds and they should act in accordance to their values.**

So, the question is do I think people should support Joe Biel and Microcosm? If you think survivors of abuse should be believed, supported and respected and you believe abusers should be held accountable to their community and those they have hurt then I think you know my answer."

 Zines Microcosm Abuse Joe Biel

- Subscribed Events
- Create Event
- FUNDRAISERS
- Create Fundraiser
- Find Fundraisers
- EVENTS
- Payment History
- Send Money



Joe Biel ▸ **Xerography Debt**

October 29 at 3:35pm · 🌐

I am working on the 20th anniversary edition of the book **Make a Zine** and the one chapter that I've never been happy with how it's written is on the one on commu...

[See More](#)



Make a Zine!: Start Your Own Underground Publishing Revolution

MICROCOSMPUBLISHING.COM

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Remove Preview](#) · October 29 at 7:27pm · Edited



Amelia G I'm at my limit for frustrating conversations on Facebook today, so I'm going to send you a friend request, so I can message you when you accept it. I've contributed to and traded with zillions of zines and Blue Blood and BLT are my babies, so I'd love to share some thoughts on community with you 😊

[Unlike](#) · [Reply](#) · [👍 1](#) · Yesterday at 12:46am



Joe Biel replied · 1 Reply



Jaime Epic McDougall The things that I like and dislike about the over-arching zine community are, I feel, two sides of one coin.

One of the most beautiful things about the scene, the community, and the essence of zines is that anyone can make them. You don't have to mee... [See More](#)

[Unlike](#) · [Reply](#) · [👍 3](#) · Yesterday at 1:18am



Jaime Epic McDougall replied · 4 Replies



Paul Burke Actually, I think the one thing we could change in this "zine community" is you being a part of it. Just leave, seriously. You, Joe Biel, are toxic and unsafe.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [👍 4](#) · 51 mins · Edited



Write a comment...



lysette said:
March 3, 2017
6:57 am

Hahahaha I got so nervous while reading that you didn't make it to the show! You literally went through Hell to get to King Diamond! That's amazing and 666km, ahahaha! Man I'm bummed I still haven't seen him live. We miss out on a lot of tours in Canada as I bet you do in Edinburgh. I've gone to some crazy lengths to get to shows but never that. What a bonding experience, I hope you two are still mates! I'm surprised you need a passport flying with in the UK. I just rubbed my face thinking about all the times people didn't have their passports in order. I guess it's the stage manager in me that can't comprehend that level of disorganization. King Diamond shows are so theatrical, the storytelling set designs fog and props, I seriously should have pursued stage managing tours like that...hmmm...



Reply ↓

paperbacksandpugs said: Yes, in retrospect it turned out he didn't actually need his passport, but it was a chance we were not willing to take!



fakemeattruelove said:
March 6, 2017
11:47 am

I've been avoiding **Microcosm** for years, for the same reason. I accidentally bought a **Microcosm** book at Reading Frenzy in Portland last year and I felt terrible. I wonder how you feel about buying used **Microcosm** books?



Reply ↓

lysette said:
March 9, 2017
10:24 am

It is a quandary, I totally get what you mean when you said it made you feel terrible. The distaste I feel when ever I see the bike emblem always causes me to put a book back. I'm also an unabashed fan of Pioneers Press and a devoted collector of the works they publish, top notch writers and beautifully produced chap books. There are so many great books and zines out there, my shelves bulge with out **Microcosm** titles on it. Please Don't Feed the Bears being the exceptional exception. I love Reading Frenzy! Always hit them up when I'm in Portland. But hey, buying it used you supported RF more than Micro.



Reply ↓

← Previous post

Next post →

7 comments

FoodFeud said:

February 28, 2017
4:58 pm

Aah I love this post! Agree that there are definitely some problems with **microcosm** but to be honest, I'd probably still buy this zine (or maybe a few others) if I saw them. You KNOW I love that skull, haha – it's one tattoo I'm completely happy with. But yeah, looks like every page is really cool. You know metal better than I do but I am a huge fan of cookbooks with soundtracks built in! Bryant Terry does that with his and I love it. I do it sometimes with my zines too, but it's less curated



Reply ↓

lysette said:

March 1, 2017
4:42 pm

Ahh I've meant to pick up Bryant Terry's cookbooks! I've heard nothing but good things about them but I didn't know he also included music selections. I love that, even if I don't have the album, I love that extra creative contribution.



Haha, thanks it took me so long to talk about how much I love this book cause it felt like a betrayal and dumb saying one thing and then going back on it but nothing's simply black or white, right? Like I'm an ethical vegan that also works with horses in a way that is entertainment, and I love Roman Polanski movies but there's a reason he can't enter the States. I guess it's better to embrace my own hypocrisy.

The carrot skull is the best! I love the tattoos you choose!!

Reply ↓

paperbacksandpugs said:

March 2, 2017
3:13 pm

Ah, King Diamond! One of my favourite artists. I'd been a fan since around 2001, and he finally announced a show in the UK in 2006. Of course, it was in London. I just googled the distance between Edinburgh and London – apparently it's 666km, how very metal! That meant that my friend and I had to fly down to see him. The night before, he told me he couldn't find his passport and was unable to fly. We managed to book a bus that left at 6am the next morning, a bus that had no opening windows and no air conditioning. hilariously, it was June 12th, one of the hottest June days in history. We sat on that bus for about five hours, sweating and miserable, until it finally broke down in Manchester. Eventually another bus came to pick us up, this time with no air con, opening windows or toilet! The gig was due to start at about 8, and we were losing time rapidly. Eventually, the bus pulled in to the station at about 8:30. Of course, we had to go to the hotel first or else we would be too late for check in, so we hit that and ran through the streets of London trying to find the venue. This was the days before smart phones! At about 9:30, we got to the venue and staggered inside just as King was being brought on in a coffin. If I recall rightly, they opened with Funeral/Arrival from Abigail and it was quite honestly one of the most incredible shows I've ever seen, drawing mainly from Abigail 1 and 2. Long story short, KING RULEZ



Reply ↓

lysette said:

March 3, 2017
6:57 am

Hahahaha I got so nervous while reading that you didn't make it to the show! You literally went through Hell to get to King Diamond! That's amazing and 666km, ahahaha! Man I'm bummed I still haven't seen him live. We miss out on a lot of tours in Canada as I bet you do in Edinburgh. I've gone to some crazy lengths to get to shows but never that. What a bonding experience, I hope you two are still mates! I'm surprised you need



#milwaukee #bike #portland #elly blue #joshua ploeg #vegan #vegetarian #j

2 notes



prudeghost

anonymous said:

Is there something wrong with Pioneers Press? Because I was thinking of buying the zine, but I don't want to give money to the wrong people :s



Pioneers Press (aside from their quaint colonial name) used to be called 'Microcosm Distribution' and was founded by former Microcosm Publishing collective members. No matter how many times they change their name or claim to not "support [Microcosm] or its owner in any way," to my knowledge they are still abuse apologists.

If you don't know about the shittiness of Joe Biel & Microcosm, here are a few links [trigger warning for addressing abuse]:

- [What's the deal with you & Microcosm?](#) (Alex Wrekk)
- [A Microcosm public statement, seriously?](#) (Alex)
- [My response to the Microcosm public statement](#) (Alex)
- [I won't be working with Microcosm anymore](#) (Cindy Crabb)

If you want to find great zines to buy online, here are some amazing distros (all operated by rad people) I highly recommend:

- [Doris Press](#) (Athens, OH)
- [Fight Boredom](#) (Montreal, QC)
- [Portland Button Works](#) (Portland, OR)
- [Stranger Danger](#) (Chicago, IL)
- [twelveohtwo](#) (Toronto, ON)

Ask prudeghost a question #Pioneers Press #Microcosm #Microcosm Publishing

up by mice, but I bet it's still tucked between books somewhere in my cookbook shelf. *Please Don't Feed the Bears* is veg cooking minus the "oh no, what if I can't find a kaffir lime" factor that can be frustrating when you're first saying to yourself: "wow, if I ate at home I could feed three of my friends for what I'll spend on myself at a restaurant." not that restaurants aren't also fun when you have the scratch to spare! but for me, learning to cook and bake — for myself, for my family, for my friends — has been one of the most joyous journeys of my adult life, and *Please Don't Feed the Bears* has been a companion along the path for many years.

tl;dr get this cookbook! it's full of anybody-can-do-this recipes that won't break the bank and it's a lot of fun besides!

I would love to own this cookbook, but I won't buy it as long as it is put out by Microcosm Publishing. As a survivor of domestic violence, I can't support a business run by a partner abuser who has consistently run a supposedly "radical" business like an oligarchy. Boycott Microcosm Publishing, now & forever. If you want to know more about why, a quick google search will yield a multitude of reasons.

edited to add: I also strongly recommend reading Brainscan #21 if you really want to know what underlies the whole Microcosm boycott thing.

There are other factors but this one is central.

I did this quick Google search as soon as I saw this note on my post; had no idea. I think everybody knows where I stand on questions of abuse and accountability, i.e., with all victims, forever.

dang, I really wanted that zine but over my dead body is some shitbag gonna get my money

(Source: microcosmpublishing.com)



Grace Ambrose
@graceambrose

4 h

lol at razorcake begging women to write for them and running a microcosm ad in the same issue 🙄



Colin Hagendorf
@sliceharvester

1 h

@graceambrose last Razorcake I saw they reviewed a zine by **Joe Biel** called "Accountability Processes Are Ableist As Fuck" 🙄



If you've ever considered buying zines/books/t-shirts/whatever from Microcosm Publishing, I'd like to suggest you take a moment and read **Ciara's** last couple of posts on the subject (her summary of **Joe Biel's statement** is accurate and hilarious - I am still chuckling about the "all high on the corn" line), as well as Alex Wreck's **statement** on the matter. It is sad, though not shocking, that there are still people in the little zine world defending Joe even in light of all this. It is for people like this that the term "butt dumpling" was coined. (Why yes, I have been watching *Beavis and Butt-head* lately. Why do you ask?)

ETA: Cindy (*Doris* zine) Ovenrack, who was part of the latest accountability process for Joe, has posted both her personal statement on the matter and the accountability group's statement on **her blog**, if you'd like to read more from another person directly involved with the situation. Also: the "blog response post" the accountability group cites is Joe's response to an earlier post of mine on the matter, which you can read **here** if you like (that post also provides a little more background on the situation for you non-zine types who may be curious).

Microcosm Publishing



Good gravy! Thanks for all the cool free zines that were included with my Bottled Wasp Pocket Diary.

Like · Comment · about 4 months ago



Scotty Trusty



In my opinion their negative output far outweighs their positive side. It seems to me, an admitted outsider, that they are truly money obsessed capitalists not book and culture loving sweet people. I will never support their sales efforts. They seem to exist to help their lawyers make boat , auto and home payments. I personally hope they rot from the inside out.

Like · Comment · 30 minutes ago



Microcosm Publishing Sorry to hear it. Feel free to get to know us and become familiar with the many things that we do. There would be no reason to get into books and culture other than love. And we all genuinely love what we do.

12 minutes ago · Like



Microcosm Publishing And here's a little bit about how we got dragged into hiring lawyers for the first time in 19 years: <http://microcosmpublishing.com/.../microcosm-publishing...>

11 minutes ago · Like



Scotty Trusty No more time will be spent answering your self serving BS

9 minutes ago · Like



Microcosm Publishing Well then good luck enjoying the things that you do enjoy. We'll be here doing the things we love for another 19 years. Best.

a few seconds ago · Edited · Like

you can view your on the Edited link beneath

Okay

Comment · Share

rather tea Duffry likes this.

Write a comment...

ist was served to 138 people

Microcosm Publishing share

(Posted by Joe and 2 The Year

/day Bicycling! Read Inter



By Jim Fromm

SEATTLE, OCCUPIED DUWAMISH TERRITORY - November 15, 2013

Portland, Ore.-based Microcosm Publishing, a self-described "radical publishing house," is distributing books through sweatshop apparel dealer Urban Outfitters, a corporation with a lengthy record of bigoted and exploitative policies. Last year, the dissolution of the Microcosm Collective left Microcosm Publishing under the sole ownership and management of founder Joe Biel, whom has an alarming history of exploitative and patriarchal behavior.

Fear and Loathing in Portlandia

Joe Biel started Microcosm Distro in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1996, and moved to Portland, Oregon, in 1999. As Microcosm grew, workers began efforts to collective the publishing house and were undermined by Biel. In 2006, Biel's ex-wife Alex Wreck publicly stated that Biel had been emotionally abusive. Wreck later summarized:

“ Joe and I were romantically involved for 6 years, three of which we were married. I “worked” for/with Microcosm from 1999–2006. I left my personal relationship with Joe Biel when I realized I was not respected, supported, or valued in our relationship and, through several catalysts, came to understand that he was emotionally abusive in our personal relationship. I left Microcosm when I realized that the same abusive mechanisms in our personal relationship, were present in our working conditions. While (we) were attempting to collectivize Microcosm Joe continued to make unilateral executive decisions without the input of other collective members as well as revoked my responsibilities and undermined my autonomy. After I quit Microcosm Joe soon moved the company half way across the country and hired new people.

Microcosm moved to Bloomington, Indiana, in 2007. In 2008, Microcosm moved back to Portland while Joe Biel and Alex Wreck attempted a mediation process through counselors. After that failed, Alex Wreck and Cindy Crabb attempted to establish an accountability process in 2010 with a team in Ohio, the Athens Support Group. Cindy Crabb stated after the mediation attempts:

“ This statement is to let it be known that despite Microcosm's recent public statement finally acknowledging Joe Biel's abusive and manipulative behavior, I will not be distributing Doris through Microcosm any longer. They published *Doris 23*, the *Doris Anthology*, the *Support zine* and *Learning Good Consent*, so I don't have control of those publications.

In July, 2010, I asked Microcosm to write a statement, or have each collective member contact me with a personal statement, as a precondition to my continuing to work with them. I was following my sincere belief that organizations should have a chance to admit to the abusive behaviors of members, and that as long as they show a commitment to change, they should not necessarily be shunned.

Microcosm continues to sell Cindy Crabb's work.

In 2011, Microcosm closed the Bloomington location and opened a warehouse in Kansas, where several Microcosm Collective members and new Microcosm co-owner Jessie Duke lived. Around this time Sparky Taylor as well came forward to state:

Lily P. runs the zine racks at Pressed (750 Gladstone) and Gabba Hey in Ottawa, Canada. Zine reviews are currently on hiatus. My pronoun is "she/her".

ZINE REVIEWS

[submitting a zine for review list of zines reviewed](#)
[browse zines by topic](#)
[ask](#)

SOS

[zine-reviews:](#)

[tendrillz:](#)

sooooo joe biel is gonna be at the sf zinefest. what should we do about it? message me if you have any ideas. they did an interview with him and are treating him like a guest of honor. can't just go to the zinefest without doing something about it. help!

...

FYI, here is the response I got from the SFZF folks:

Thank you for raising your concern. After receiving your email, we got together to discuss the issues raised by Joe Biel's presence, and it created a productive meeting about safe space. While some of us were aware of Joe Biel's history, not all of us were, so it was good to update everyone on the matter.

After much discussion, we have decided that Joe Biel/Microcosm Publishing will be a vendor for this year. We understand that this is a controversial choice for SFZF 2014 and we respect that this may be an unpopular decision within the community. However, we stand by our decision to include Microcosm Publishing in this year's Fest; please understand that this decision was not reached lightly.

That being said: we are working towards an immediate "Safer Spaces Policy" which will be posted on the SFZF website and available during SFZF2014 at our Information Desk. This policy will clearly list *behaviors* that will not be tolerated during the course of SFZF2014. If, over the course of SFZF weekend, you feel that you have been a target of the behaviors listed on our policy, it is strongly suggested that you reach out to an event organizer. You can do this via the Information Desk or by speaking with someone wearing a red SFZF t-shirt and "organizer" name badge.

Should you have further questions or concerns, do not hesitate to get in touch.

(via [zine-reviews](#))

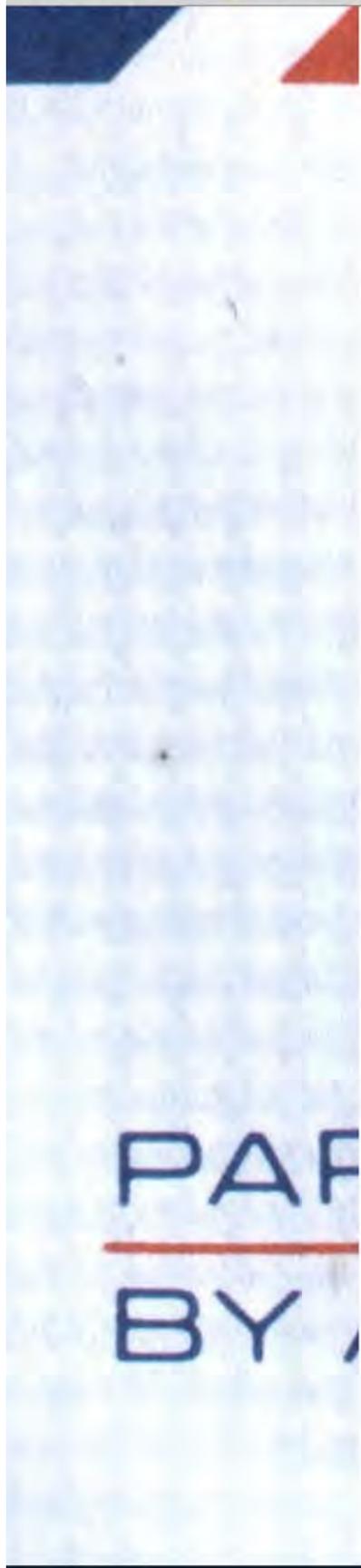
7:55 pm • 27 August 2014 • 126 notes

1. [yakirabot](#) reblogged this from [wearepioneerspress](#) and added:

So the organizers at SFZF are working on a "Safer Spaces Policy" but they're going to let Joe Biel be a vendor even...

2. [xochronicallyyours](#) likes this
3. [rgr-pop](#) likes this
4. [walkdontfly](#) reblogged this from [disecholocation](#)
5. [andrazorwire](#) likes this
6. [disecholocation](#) reblogged this from [tarae](#) and added:

also like the incredible free pass they're giving themselves for



Just today I've gotten several emails from people bringing Joe's history to our attention. None of our organizers were aware of these events. We're going to discuss our options and responsibilities at this late juncture. Thanks for your email.

SF Zine Fest Crew

???

this is what they said to my friend. so fucking weird!

We just learned about this today and we're deciding what to do about it. De-inviting Joe is certainly a likely choice, but I must say I'm (my opinion, not zinefest's) not entirely comfortable with banning Joe and Microcosm from zinefest. It's incredibly unlucky that he's our FEATURED GUEST and it's hard to shake the image that we're celebrating not only his art (which we still are) but him as a person. But there's the problem. What number or degree of actions goes into defining the person. What level of sin is the cutoff point for banning someone from the show. Every exhibitor has some dark past (or at least grey past) and should zinefest as a public event discriminate against all people we deem below this line or only people who actually pose a threat to the show and its participants. Would we ban Pablo Picasso - another abusive person? Should we ban people who have anal sex (formally illegal), or don't pay sales tax on their zine sales (currently illegal), or anyone who's cheated on a partner (socially deemed illegal). Or does any of this matter when it comes to appreciating art. Could we have Joe's art if he wasn't personally present? Now that's a really slippery slope there...just steps away from book burning. I don't have answers to most of these questions, and the final decision will be made by our volunteer organizers as a group, but I thank you for your email - it will influence our discussion.

got the above response from someone named "tom," you know, the perfect person to understand why i am not down with JB at SFZ, especially while healing from experiences of sexual abuse myself.

i love how joe biel is likened to pablo picasso. or hate it? no one's burning books here buddy, we just want a radical, accountable and safe space to trade zines!

As a zine fest organizer we have set up a Safer Space Policy and we have trained in conflict mediation so that when issues like this come up we have a policy in place to refer to and we have been trained in how to deal with such situations. It's not a matter of



Followed by Amsterdamize



Susie Cagle @susie_c · Aug 28

Yikes, **Joe Biel** is a special guest at @sfzinefest? I used to love that show. Won't be returning.

FAVORITES

2



8:34 AM - 28 Aug 2014 · Details

Collapse

Reply Retweet Favorite More

Reply to @susie_c @sfzinefest



Ric Carrasquillo @Squilloillo · Aug 28

@susie_c the featured guests at sf zine fest this year are Ryan sands, Tomas Moniz, and Hellen Jo.

Expand

Reply Retweet Favorite More



Susie Cagle @susie_c · Aug 28

@Squilloillo rgr-pop.tumblr.com/post/959325617...

Expand

Reply Retweet Favorite More



Ric Carrasquillo @Squilloillo · Aug 28

@susie_c sfzinefest.org/blog/2014/8/12...

Expand

Reply Retweet Favorite More



Susie Cagle @susie_c · Aug 28

@Squilloillo Ok, but some organizers are now telling people another story

Expand

Reply Retweet Favorite More



SF Zine Fest @sfzinefest · Aug 28

@susie_c @Squilloillo Susie, Ric is right. Joe Biel isn't a featured guest for 2014. Here's the line-up: sfzinefest.org/about-the-even...

tendrillz:

sooooo joe biel is gonna be at the sf zinefest. what should we do about it? message me if you have any ideas. they did an interview with...

I am tabling SFZF this weekend and I am watching how this issue plays out. I wanted to share for my friends who are also attending. Everyone should be aware of SFZF's lack of a safer space policy.

If "Tom" was not speaking on behalf of the other organizers/volunteers, he should not be replying to a message that was meant for that group. The lack of sensitivity displayed in that email is extremely troubling; this person should not have access to people's messages of concern. At this point, it does come across as representative of the organizers.

Hi, this is Channing Kennedy, one of SFZF's organizers and host of a few of the fest's events. We now have a Safer Spaces policy in place, which will be posted publicly at the expo space this weekend, and we've also issued this public statement about it on the blog. As the statement says, it's on us, the organizers, that we didn't have this in place much sooner. And while we don't imagine that this will solve every issue that can arise in DIY/radical spaces, we hope that this will serve as a starting point to make SFZF as good as it should be.

If anyone has questions or concerns that they'd feel more comfortable sending to me directly, my email is channing@channingkennedy.com.

A factual correction to Tom's email: Joe Biel is not and has never been a 'featured guest' at SFZF 2014. All exhibitors have been invited to fill out a short questionnaire for the SFZF blog, and that's what he did, nothing more or less.

wow sorry but your 'safer spaces policy' is meaningless if you're letting joe biel table. don't care if he's a 'featured guest' or not. how hard is that to get? you all are irresponsible fucking organizers.

Agreed. Creating a safer spaces policy because someone told you do while allowing a (well-documented!) abuser to attend (and be your super special guest) is possibly the most idiotic thing I've ever heard. Have fun!



Silver Sprocket

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Comic publisher, record label and art crew

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ASK US ANYTHING SUBMIT

ARCHIVE RANDOM RSS

Hey guys Henry & Glenn is published by Cantankerous Titles, the publishing offshoot Joe Biel created to sidestep the Microcosm "collective" back in the day. He profits big time from Henry & Glenn Cheers.

ASKED BY ANONYMOUS

Avi here, speaking for myself (other Silver Sprocket crew have spoken for themselves about this in plenty of other places). Thanks for the "Ask" and sorry for taking this long to respond. The show is over, but this is still important. I had an essay I was trying to write that I don't think I'll finish because it sucks, but a couple quick points:

*A while back, upon finding out about the trouble from Joe Biel to a handful of real-life personal friends, I decided to stop selling to or buying from Microcosm. I communicated this to Biel in person outside of the SF Zine Fest, which was an intense and weird experience. This isn't an abstract internet argument. I think this was important but not a "big deal". I don't feel important or informed enough to pass loud judgment or take up space in this discussion, but he has clearly harmed people I care about, so I decided to personally limit ties.

*"Henry and Glen Forever" being published by Microcosm is uncomfortable, and I'm not confident at all about if I'm drawing the line of what kind of "ties" to Microcosm this means I have, but I am dedicated to my support of this show and the artists involved. I've been friends and collaborators with many of them for 12+ years, and this show has no involvement with Microcosm or Biel, though it is by its nature supporting a book they published, and I absolutely understand if any of my friends or usual allies want to sit this one out or think less of me for it. I awkwardly didn't realize it was a Microcosm book when I signed on, and should have talked about this directly with the artists when I figured it out (sorry some intense life shit was going on and I was doing my best to keep up), but I'm still behind it and this isn't affecting any of my activities. I'm proud of this and enthusiastically doing all the things.

*Microcosm has published books from my best friend in college and artists I've been friends and collaborators with for 15+ years. I don't want my decision to not work with Biel to keep me from being supportive of my long term friends that have their own ties to his company, though this is why I stopped buying their books for my own distro and limited interaction in other ways.

*I am insecure about everything forever and welcome conversation, criticism, suggestions, perspective or whatever about this (and really anything else I'm doing ever), getting called out makes us better people. I'm posting this not to be self-righteous or defensive but in an attempt to clearly state whats going on and what my current thinking is.

I can be reached directly by email at avi [at] silversprocket [dot] net, sorry I am not good at any types of "social media" at all



Spill the Zines shared Alex Wreck's post.

15 mins · 🌐

Alex Wreck, a treasure to the zine community and all-around wonderful person, needs our help.

She's being sued by Joe Biel. Read the complaint at the link below. She is crowdfunding to assist with legal fees.

If you have even a dollar or two to spare, it all adds up and will help Alex!



Alex Wreck

19 hrs · 🌐

I just posted a big update!



**Click here to support Legal Fee Fund for Alex Wreck
organized by Amber D. Garza**

Hello all in receipt of this plea. I am writing to ask you for your help for a member of our community. Alex Wreck, a treasure to the zine community...

[GOFUNDME.COM](https://www.gofundme.com)



Spill the Zines

@SpillTheZines

Follow



Alex Wrekk, a treasure to the zine community and all-around wonderful person, needs our help.

She's being sued by Joe Biel in Portland, Oregon. Read the documents at the link below. She is... [facebook.com/story.php?stor ...](https://facebook.com/story.php?stor...)

4:39 AM - 31 Mar 2018





WHY ARE MANY IN ZINE COMMUNITY BOYCOTTING MICROCOSM PUBLISHING AND JOE BIEL?

Posted by [Tara Scherner de la Fuente](#) on October 1, 2011 at 1:34pm [View Blog](#)

I am going to post a link, but I want to include an intro and the text of this initial link below. The Dinner and Bikes Tour was an event that would have involved a number of people in the wider zine community, which somewhat explains it's relevance to We Make Zines, but it's the behind the scenes story that really involves the zine community.

Once you read the content of the link below, you can get more information through the links in that note about Joe Biel, Microcosm Publishing, a history of abuse and poor accountability, and why many people in the zine community are boycotting Microcosm Publishing and events involving Joe Biel. Maybe you've heard something about this. Maybe not. In any case, if you go to link on Facebook that I'm posting (or read the text below), you can read about the latest situation that is being discussed in the zine community, mainly because it brings up the issues with Joe Biel and Microcosm, putting them on the table for discussion again--if they ever went away. And they shouldn't have ever gone away. In a DIY community, we need to DIY in terms of reading up on things happening in our own community. Otherwise, how will we have the courage to get involved in the greater communities in which we all take part?

So, I urge you to read up. Read the content at the link I am posting, and visit some of the links listed in the Facebook note for some of the back story. Be informed. Make your own choices. Take your own stand. Ideally, spread the word that we're not really into abusive folks having an influential role in the community unless it's influencing others by demonstrating their own efforts to be accountable for their actions. That's not the case here.

Here is the text you will find if you go to the Facebook link regarding the organization, and then cancellation, of the Dinner and Bikes Tour. First the link: [Click Here](#). And now the text, if you'd like to read it here, though I encourage you to read the comments on the Facebook page itself. The text:

Emails with Elly

by [Jaimie Oller](#) on Thursday, 29 September 2011 at 13:34

Friends:

many folks have asked to see the emails between Elly and I regarding the Dinner and Bikes tour. I've pasted them below and not edited them. feel free to share these emails with others who may be organizing this tour or working with Joe or Elly in any other context. Thanks for all the love and support friends! Feel free to contact me if you have any questions/ideas!!

~~~~~

Aug 10th:

*Hi my name is Jaimie Oller and I got your email address from Cait Giddings in a post from Ailecia Ruskin about wanting to bring your bike show through Lawrence, KS in Sept. I'd love to help set this up and was just looking for more information and the exact dates you were coming through town.*

*thanks so much!*

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Emiko Badillo <[emiko@foodfightgrocery.com](mailto:emiko@foodfightgrocery.com)>  
Date: Wed, Dec 20, 2017 at 4:03 PM  
Subject: Re: Defensive Eating with Morrissey  
To: Ely Blue <[ely@microcosmpublishing.com](mailto:ely@microcosmpublishing.com)>

Hi Ely. Thanks for reaching out. We didn't really have a rift, but we chose to stop supporting Microcosm after Joe's abuse became public. And then he sued people, which is a weird thing for a radical punk to do to other punks.

And I've actually stopped liking Morrissey because of his recent public support of rapists like Kevin Spacey and Harvey Weinstein, not to mention his recent racist t-shirt with James Baldwin's picture on it, and coming to terms with all his other past problematic shit.

Thanks though,  
Emiko

...

On Mon, Dec 18, 2017 at 4:54 PM, Ely Blue <[ely@microcosmpublishing.com](mailto:ely@microcosmpublishing.com)> wrote:

Hi Emiko,  
I think we met a few times many years ago when Microcosm was on SE 10th, and we were across the aisle from your table at Veg Fest. I wanted to reach out because I think there's been some kind of rift between Food Fight and Microcosm, and I wanted to see if there's an opportunity to mend it now that some time has passed.

I have a peace offering: [Joshua Ploeg's vegan cookbook about Morrissey](#).

May I drop by your shop some time to give you a copy and hear you out about anything you like?

Thank you for all you do, and happy holidays to you and yours,  
Ely

[somethingsomethingpress.tumblr.com/post/66244444203/hard-fifty-duke-a-statement-regarding-our-history-with](https://www.somethingsomethingpress.tumblr.com/post/66244444203/hard-fifty-duke-a-statement-regarding-our-history-with)

min | Microcosm | Free ISBN and EAN-1 | Facebook | Ely Blue | Gmail - Inbox - joe. | XE - The World's Fav | Trail-Gator Child

## Hard Fifty Duke: A Statement Regarding Our History with Microcosm Publishing

[affairofthepoisons:](#)

[jessie-duke:](#)

It's the middle of the night and I'm staring into the mirror and I can't find myself. I look old, joyless, tired. I've spent hours digging through photos from the last few years for a project I'm working on and I'm shocked by the difference 2 years have made. Here I am with my infant son,...

This is why Something Something Press refuses to work with Microcosm anymore. We worked with them before the split. After the split, we cut all ties. We refuse to work with anyone who is actively abusive and is unwilling to work on their issues and remove themselves from the community while they do so in order to prevent more hurt. It is especially important to us, maybe more than most radicals, because we are a radical metal health distro that works towards the health of individuals as well as our communities. What Joe Biel does is not okay.

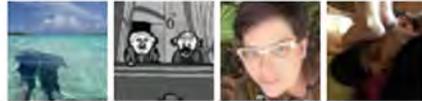


Trace Ramsey reviewed **Microcosm Publishing** — 1★

February 23 · 🌐



**Microcosm Publishing**  
Publisher · 8,878 Likes



Save

😂 Haha

💬 Comment

➦ Share



😂 Joe Biel



**Microcosm Publishing** Thanks for the orders from 2005-2011. You've since entrenched yourself in a personal feud and rather than trying to see commonality and resolve differences, you've posted this "review." What problem warranted this one-star review? What is that you want from Microcosm? from me? -joe

Like · Reply · Commented on by Joe Biel [?] · 1 hr



**Trace Ramsey** **Microcosm Publishing** Stop continuing to publish people's work against their wishes. Respect the requests of authors who no longer wish to work with you. Pay royalties owed on stolen work. Be a decent business person and honor your agreements. Pay on time without excuses.

Like · Reply · 55 mins



**Joe Biel** Hubba Hubba! You heard some HOT RUMORS! If someone doesn't want to work with us anymore, we work with them to end the relationship. Whose work do we continue to publish against their wishes? What work did we "steal?" Who did we steal it from? What agreements did we not honor? Who did we not pay on time? Can you cite something? What did you hope to accomplish with this review?

Like · Reply · 48 mins · Edited



**Trace Ramsey** Support.

Like · Reply · 45 mins



**Joe Biel** We support thousands of people, pay them on time, don't steal their work, follow the agreements, and don't make excuses.

Like · Reply · 43 mins



**Trace Ramsey** Support Zine

Like · Reply · 42 mins



**Joe Biel** If we steal people's work, didn't pay on time, and people didn't want to work with us anymore, then how are we growing and publishing 20 new books each year, most of them with the same authors we've worked with for over ten years who keep coming back to us?

Like · Reply · 37 mins · Edited



**Joe Biel** The author gave us permission to publish Support zine in 2005 and we offered to terminate publishing it last year but the author reinstated us to publish one more edition this year. To your earlier point, we gave back the rights to her first book to her and aren't publishing that anymore because we let books go if that's what the author wants. Any other rumors you've got?

Like · Reply · 32 mins



**Trace Ramsey** Support Zine. Stop printing it. Then I might believe you.

Like · Reply · 32 mins



**Trace Ramsey** Joe Biel why would you lie about this?

Like · Reply · 28 mins



**Joe Biel** That's a great question. First, what am I lying about?

Like · Reply · 26 mins



**Joe Biel** Her situation has been very complicated for years as she's been bullied into taking positions against Microcosm despite a very positive relationship for over a decade. And you know what helped resolve those problems? A friend of hers who stepped in, listened to everyone's needs and concerns, employed empathy, mediated, and let everyone get what they wanted.

Like · Reply · 17 mins · Edited



**Joe Biel** And you know what? Despite all of the complications and difficulties we've had and hurtful things that were said, I still respect her and it's still an honor to support her work.

Like · Reply · 12 mins · Edited



**Joe Biel** And while rumors can be great for judging people, to solve a problem one has to listen with empathy.

⚠️ Unable to post comment.

galvan-in-portland.tumblr.com/post/96500566926/the-tragedy-of-joe-biels-emotionally-fraught

min | Microcosm | Free ISBN and EAN-1 | Facebook | Elly Blue | Gmail - Inbox - joe | M M R Searching Roms for | Endicia Lookup

“The tragedy of Joe Biel’s emotionally-fraught relationship with his ex-wife and the tangle of conflicting ideals at Microcosm underscores the one crucial piece of critique in the zine world. That not even in the so-called ‘safe spaces’ can a person (Joe Biel, in this case) fully escape the political, social, economic and class-based privileges that he enjoys as a white middle-class cisgendered man. We all know that. But to scroll past a veritable tide of comments either supporting or detracting from the Biel affair only goes to show even the most casually uninterested reader the relative arrogance and self-aggrandizing nature of certain rock stars of the zine community; that not even making a zine is an entirely self-effacing act now, an act of charity. Most of all this whole affair delineates a clear separation of thought and act from most everyone else who makes zines in this town. Not all of us own and operate distros that make millions of dollars each year. Not all of us distribute to distros that sell to less-than-pure ideological merchants, such as Urban Outfitters. And not all of us spend nearly a decade in things like ‘mediation processes’ and ‘meetings about the collective’ attempting to outdo the other in process-oriented acts of universal forgiveness. There are mouths to feed and minds to fill and an ethos to capitalize on — both Alex Wreck and Joe Biel know that. What we are seeing unfold before us is the failure of certain parties and entities and perhaps even modes of thinking, at attempting to apply a caring vision to an uncaring system. We should not feel sorry for Alex Wreck. We shouldn’t feel sorry for Joe Biel, either. We should look at them, and simply make more zines, independent of their ill-gotten

stars of the zine community; that not even making a zine is an entirely self-effacing act now, an act of charity. Most of all this whole affair delineates a clear separation of thought and act from most everyone else who makes zines in this town. Not all of us own and operate distros that make millions of dollars each year. Not all of us distribute to distros that sell to less-than-pure ideological merchants, such as Urban Outfitters. And not all of us spend nearly a decade in things like ‘mediation processes’ and ‘meetings about the collective’ attempting to outdo the other in process-oriented acts of universal forgiveness. There are mouths to feed and minds to fill and an ethos to capitalize on — both Alex Wreck and Joe Biel know that. What we are seeing unfold before us is the failure of certain parties and entities and perhaps even modes of thinking, at attempting to apply a caring vision to an uncaring system. We should not feel sorry for Alex Wreck. We shouldn’t feel sorry for Joe Biel, either. We should look at them, and simply make more zines, independent of their ill-gotten influence.” Joe Galván-Davis, *Galván in Portland* (2014)

ZINES ZINE FOX PORTLAND ZINESTERS MICROCOSM DISTRO LOC HALL ALEX WRECK THE MICROCOSM AFFAIR

Fwd: JUST LANDED: Cindy Crabb's Things  
That Help: Healing Our Lives Through  
Feminism, Anarchism, Punk, & Adventure



Jeri Cain Rossi

2:25 PM ...

to Joe, [elly@microcosmpublishing.com](mailto:elly@microcosmpublishing.com)

----- Forwarded message -----

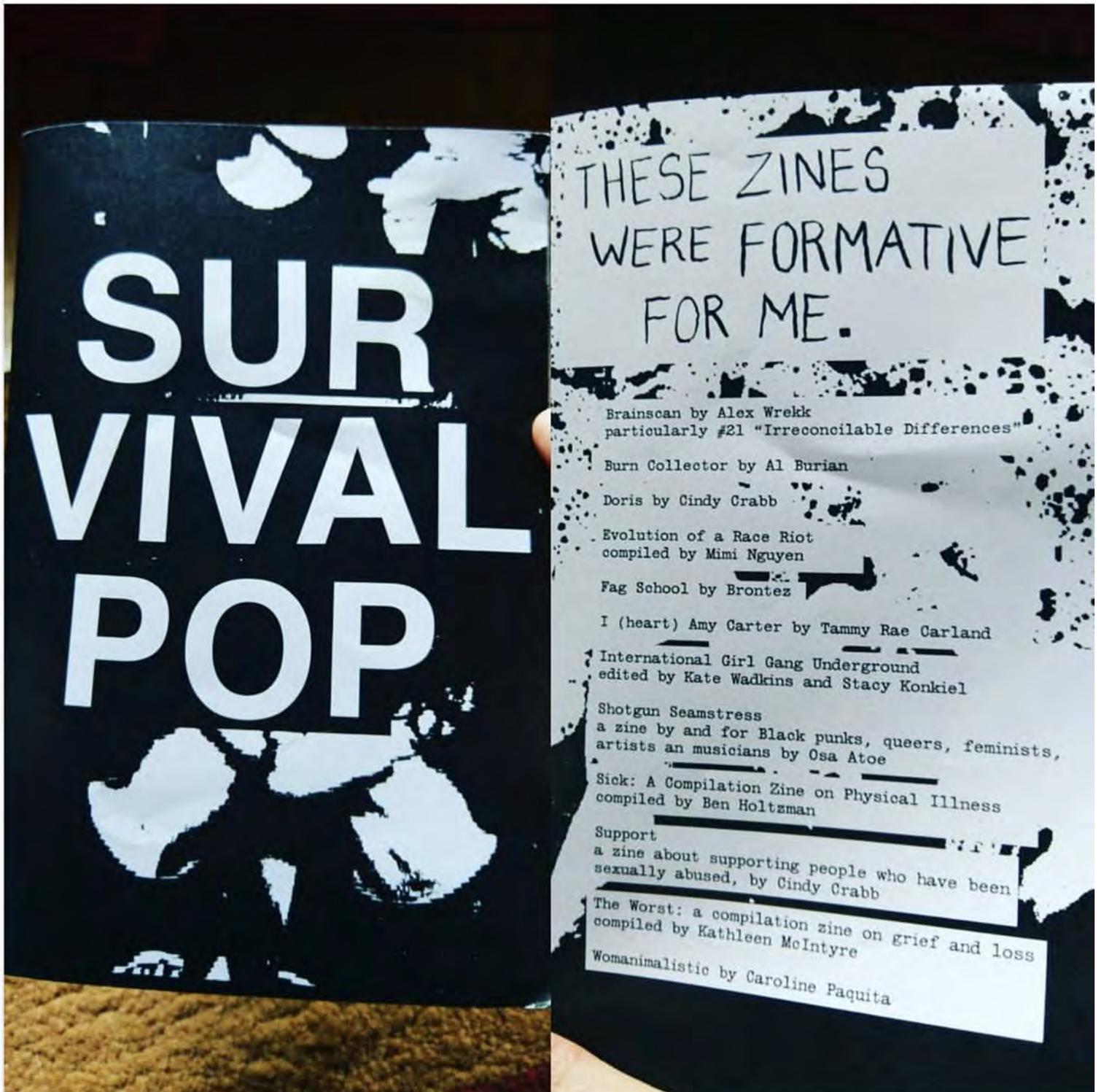
From: <[saltseas@gmail.com](mailto:saltseas@gmail.com)>

Date: Sat, Jan 21, 2017 at 1:32 PM

Subject: Re: JUST LANDED: Cindy Crabb's Things  
That Help: Healing Our Lives Through Feminism,  
Anarchism, Punk, & Adventure

To: <[jeri@microcosmpublishing.com](mailto:jeri@microcosmpublishing.com)>

Deeply deeply troubled to find this in my inbox  
when Cindy Crabb has made it public ally,  
abundantly clear that she does not wish to be  
associated with y'all. You should be ashamed of  
yourself.



I got the zine that accompanies the new #worriers album and was really honored to find my zine, Brainscan, on this beautiful list. #zine #zineline #survivalpop

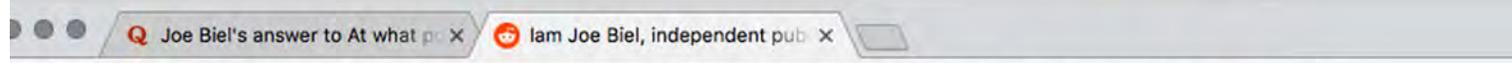
#zine #worriers #zineline #survivalpop

Cindy also discussed other incidents and factors affecting her decision and discussed in more detail the accountability process she had previously been involved in with Joe. Cindy is hardly the only zine publisher who has decided to stop distributing zines through Microcosm because of Joe (Ker-bloom!'s artnoose is another), but she is perhaps the most well-known. Only time will tell whether the stance they have taken will have a significant impact on the collective's success, or whether business will continue as normal once the attention fades—like a black eye. –Jerianne

## UPDATE

- [A Statement from Microcosm](#), which addresses the above topics as well as their split from and their subsequent lawsuit against [Pioneers Press](#)
- An article about [the formation of Pioneers Press](#), including details about the Microcosm lawsuit.
- [An interview about the lawsuit](#) and [documents from the lawsuit](#).

www.google.com/search?safe=off&q=joe+biel+wikipedia&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEWjh5feOIJLaAhUD6mMKHfeMDncQ1QIleSgA&biw=1699&bih=877



Secure | [https://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/28aydo/iam\\_joe\\_biel\\_independent\\_publisher\\_filmmaker\\_and/](https://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/28aydo/iam_joe_biel_independent_publisher_filmmaker_and/)

[-] [nicoleIntrovert](#) 20 points 3 years ago

When will Microcosm remove patches, shirts, etc from inventory which feature artwork by people who have consistently asked for their art to no longer be used/sold by Microcosm?

[permalink](#) [embed](#) [save](#)

[-] [TehPunxest](#) 5 points 3 years ago

Just as soon as those artists buck up and sue him. Lawsuits are teh punxest.

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)

[-] [adam\\_gnade](#) 1 point 3 years ago

Exactly. People come to us for advice about this a lot. No one knows how to handle it and we hear again and again that people want to stand up to Microcosm and Joe Biel but they are AFRAID.

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)



**Jonathon Isaac Swiderski** shared your post.

15 hrs · \*

Get you some bikey books and t-shirts ... at a discount!

Show Attachment



Like



Comment



Share



Elly Blue



**Dan Kappus** <https://spaceslikethis.wordpress.com/.../pioneers-press.../>



When radical zine publishers go to court:  
The story of Pioneers Press and...

An interview with jessie Duke of Pioneers Press about...

SPACESLIKETHIS.WORDPRESS.COM

Like · Reply · 15 hrs



**Dan Kappus** <https://wemakezines.ning.com/.../why-are-many-in-zine...>



Why are Many in Zine Community  
Boycotting Microcosm Publishing and...

I am going to post a link, but I want to include an intro...

WEMAKEZINES.NING.COM

Like · Reply · 15 hrs



**Dan Kappus** <http://doriszineblog.blogspot.com/.../i-wont-be-working...>



I won't be working with Microcosm  
anymore

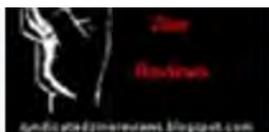
Here is Microcosm's statement and my response....

DORISZINEBLOG.BLOGSPOT.COM

Like · Reply · 15 hrs

cosm-lawsuit/ **Kappus** I remember that controversy, and I wonder if they rectified it.

Exhibit I



I am going to post a link, but I want to include an intro...  
WEMAKEZINES.NING.COM

Like · Reply · 15 hrs



**Dan Kappus** <http://doriszineblog.blogspot.com/.../i-wont-be-working...>



I won't be working with Microcosm anymore

Here is Microcosm's statement and my response....  
DORISZINEBLOG.BLOGSPOT.COM

Like · Reply · 15 hrs



**Dan Kappus** I remember that controversy, and I wonder if they rectified it.

Like · Reply · 15 hrs



**Dan Kappus** [https://www.reddit.com/.../iam\\_joe\\_biel\\_independent.../](https://www.reddit.com/.../iam_joe_biel_independent.../)



Iam Joe Biel, independent publisher, filmmaker, and founder of Microcosm...

REDDIT.COM

Like · Reply · 15 hrs



**Jonathon Isaac Swiderski** Yeah, I don't know. None of those links are particularly recent; I don't know how any of that resolved.

Like · Reply · 15 hrs



**Elly Blue** Hi folks, yup, we have resolved the legal disagreement with Pioneers Press. As for Joe's failed marriage over 12 years ago, every effort has been made to resolve that and it's quite frustrating that the situation is continuing if not escalating to this day. If you have any specific questions I can try to answer them for you.

Like · Reply · 4 mins · Edited



Write a comment...





**Dan Kappus** Did you resolve your conflicts to Cindy Crabb's satisfaction? I was acquainted with her so many years ago, but can almost remember how she smelled sweaty from dancing at a show. When she said don't buy from y'all, I took it seriously.

Like · Reply · 1 hr · Edited



**Elly Blue** Yes, we have also resolved things with Cindy.

Like · Reply · 11 mins



Write a reply...



**Dan Kappus** I've heard of shitty accountability processes where the person from the relatively more privileged group (e.g. white person, male person, cisperson) really feels like there's never actually going to be a satisfactory outcome. That said, what is the outcome to date?

If Joe's conflicts with his former spouse are such a distraction, why doesn't he go do something else, and leave y'all to run a cooperative business? I didn't understand that part.

Like · Reply · 1 hr



**Elly Blue** To your first question, the Medium article I posted above can get you up to date on all fronts better than I can do in a facebook comment. I'm not sure how to answer your second question, except to say that when Joe DID quit for several years ... I think it was around 2011 or 2012... everyone assumed, like you, that it would help resolve things, but instead the pressure on the remaining management increased dramatically. Go figure. At the present time, our staff is nearly all new, and while it does still come up, we have moved on from this and are focused primarily on publishing.

Like · Reply · Just now



Write a reply...



Write a comment...



C Fastwolf Cfastwolf@hotmail.com via yahoogroups.com  
to Zinelibrarians

11/16/13

<http://seattlefreepress.org/2013/11/15/the-rise-and-co-optation-of-microcosm-publishing/>

Very revealing article about the ongoing issues at Microcosm. Since libraries are also beholden to represent authors, we can't always boycott publishers because of their actions...(publishers' relationships with libraries over ebooks is only a start...) but I do think it will be worth following what the Microcosm workers who've quit end up doing.

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twelveohtwo zine distro twelveohtwo@gmail.com via yahoogroups.com  
to zinelibrarians

11/18/13

also this is happening:

<http://jessie-duke.tumblr.com/post/66218058033/a-few-months-ago-i-posted-this-statement-about>

--  
twelveohtwo zine distro  
po box 42 stn p / toronto, on. / M 5 S 2 S 6 / canada  
[www.facebook.com/twelveohtwo](http://www.facebook.com/twelveohtwo)

Anastasia Diamond-Ortiz green.nalgene@gmail.com via yahoogroups.com  
to zines

This is very upsetting. When we started our collection at Cleveland Public Library in 2005, Microcosm was the only vendor we could use that made "sense" to our Head of Technical Services. To that end, the bulk of our early acquisitions were made through Microcosm. It is difficult to process this information because without Microcosm we could not have provided the collection we did to the public. Thank you for sharing this.

Anastasia

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C Fastwolf

11/20/13

Well one of the things to keep in mind is your library's intellectual freedom...

Milo

Congrats! I'd love to see a copy of that syllabus. -Milo Milo Miller Co-Found...

Tasks: Joe Biel / Microc...

- amy film
- Rewire store--9 box connectors, 5 elbows
- adulting
- feminist weed

11/20/13

Tasks: Joe Biel / Microc...

- amy film
- Rewire store--9 box connectors, 5 elbows

**AnomaLily** anomaly@gmail.com [via](#) yahoo.com

to zinelibrarians ▾

The Seattle Free Press article was the best write-up I've seen this far.

Man, this is a complex freakin issue when it comes down to it.

On Mon, Nov 18, 2013 at 4:57 PM, twelveohtwo zine distro <[twelveohtwo@gmail.com](mailto:twelveohtwo@gmail.com)> wrote:

also this is happening:

<http://jessie-duke.tumblr.com/post/66218058033/a-few-months-ago-i-posted-this-statement-about>

--

twelveohtwo zine distro  
po box 42 stn p / toronto, on. / M 5 S 2 S 6 / canada  
[www.facebook.com/twelveohtwo](http://www.facebook.com/twelveohtwo)

--  
Every minute on a bike is a minute spent in perfect balance.  
<http://www.anomalily.net>

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[Messages in this topic \(3\)](#)

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---

**Vachon, Jude** vachonj@carnegielibrary.org [via](#) yahoo.com

to zinelibrarians ▾

I'm not sure how complex it is at this point actually. It just seems like there is so much ugly evidence?

AnomaLily [anomalily@gmail.com](mailto:anomalily@gmail.com) via [yahoogroups.com](http://yahoogroups.com)  
to [zinelibrarians](#)

11/19/13



It's mostly just more complex to me... I know a lot of people who still work with Joe Biel on things outside of zine stuff (transportation projects) and his current partner is a friend of mine.

I miss Tower Records' distro. I used to sell my zines there all the time.

Every minute on a bike is a minute spent in perfect balance.  
<http://www.anomalily.net>

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Anastasia Diamond-Ortiz [green.nalgene@gmail.com](mailto:green.nalgene@gmail.com) via [yahoogroups.com](http://yahoogroups.com)  
to [zines](#)

This is very upsetting. When we started our collection at Cleveland Public Library in 2005, Microcosm was the only vendor we could use to get Technical Services. To that end, the bulk of our early acquisitions were made through Microcosm. It is difficult to process this information if they not have provided the collection we did to the public. Thank you for sharing this.

Anastasia

Tasks: Joe Biel / Microc...

- amy-film
- Rewire store-9 box connectors, 5 elbows
- adulting
- feminist weed
- bicycle/race
- WED People's Guide to



# Art Noose

3,456 Tweets



Tweets

Tweets & replies

Media

Likes

Art Noose Retweeted



**Alex Wreck** @alexwreckk · 2/16/18

Legal Fee Fund for Alex Wreck



Legal Fee Fund for Alex Wreck

Hello all in receipt of this plea. I am...  
[gofundme.com](http://gofundme.com)

1

23

10



## Boycott Microcosm, Support Survivors

In my last post I was excitedly nattering about all the zine happenings in my life. Among these was hearing from Microcosm that they wanted to distro a zine of mine. Somehow the background on the founder and collective member Joe Biel being an abuse perpetrator had passed me by and I hadn't a clue until one of my friends told me about it. I got some [background information](#) into what has been going on. On this basis, I have decided to boycott Microcosm, as well as register my complaint with them, and I encourage you to do the same. In order to explain this decision and demonstrate my protest, I am posting here the e-mail I have sent in response to Microcosm.

*To Sparky/Microcosm Collective,*

*When I first received your e-mail that you were interested in my Get a Grip zine I was totally thrilled. Not only because it's quite the compliment but also because I was excited about the possibility of my zine reaching a whole new group of folks. What an awesome way to start off the New Year, I thought. Then my friend told me about Joe Biel who, as I'm sure you're aware, has been called out by his ex-partner as having been abusive towards her. His ex-partner has clearly and openly stated that she does not believe that he has acknowledged, taken responsibility for, and worked through changing these abusive patterns of behaviour. Despite this ongoing abusiveness, he continues to be a part of the Microcosm collective.*

*As a feminist, as an abuse survivor, and as a compassionate human being I believe supporting survivors of violence is paramount. This is a belief that is really fundamental to my life. Honouring the experience and wishes of the survivor needs to be central. I therefore cannot ethically provide Microcosm with any of my zines and I want to explain to you why.*

*I encourage people who have been called out for abuse to seek to change. I do not endorse punishment or social exclusion as solutions to violence. I do, however, expect that abusers learn to be responsible for their actions and to go through a process of changing their dangerous thoughts and behaviours. The person called out for abusive behaviour should respect the survivor's boundaries; step down from attending events, projects, and contact with the individual if this is requested. I also expect the community in which the survivor is a part of to support and prioritise the needs and desires of the survivor, over that of the abuse perpetrator. While I appreciate this may be difficult for the abuser, it is important to understand that their behaviours come with consequences. I do not feel the need to cushion the experience of abusers at the expense of the healing process of survivors.*

*I have seen that the Microcosm collective has recently issued a statement about Joe's abusiveness. Unfortunately, this statement was issued on an obscure website, instead of your own website, and was done so months after it having first been requested, and only after pressure from Cindy to withdraw her zines from your distro. This comes across to me as more of a defensive tactic than a proactive commitment towards accountability and support in response to abuse.*

*I really respect Alex, Cindy and others for having the courage to speak out against the way in which both the collective and Joe have responded to his abusiveness, especially given the sexist resistance that permeates so much of the discourse around violence. I find it really saddening that your collective has fallen so short of creating a supportive environment for abuse survivors. It is puzzling and frustrating to me that Microcosm would choose to select Get a Grip for distribution when there is a piece specifically on domestic violence perpetrators needing to confront their abusiveness and when the zine so clearly demonstrates the hardships of dealing with the after-effects abuse can have on survivors. It appears to me that your supposed ideals are inconsistent with your actions.*

*I write my zines because I am passionate about creating change. I write about topics like mental health and surviving abuse, which are really difficult for me to open up about and share with complete strangers. I do it because I want to challenge a society that repeatedly shames, blames, and silences us. I do it because every once in a while someone tells me that they feel a little less alone knowing someone else has been there, too. The amazing part is, in those moments I also feel less lonely and like we're collectively working towards something bigger and better in dismantling all the violence. It's disheartening for me to think that because of Joe's abusiveness my zines, and the topics they discuss, won't be accessed by many people and are therefore being funnelled through this systematic silencing of survivors once more. I had hoped for better in the zine community.*

*I think Microcosm, as one of the biggest zine distributors in the world, has so much potential in reaching out to new people, and exposing them to alternative, anti-oppressive, and totally inspiring art. I believe as a community, as creators of media, and as individuals, we all have a responsibility to support abuse survivors and those who have been targets of oppression. I will not supply Microcosm with any of my zines or make any purchases from Microcosm until I am convinced*



**Allyson Kliff**

I read your other posts. Are you now asserting that autism doesn't make it difficult for you to understand social interactions or have empathy for others? The first step in getting better is to admit you have a problem. I think you should talk about me to your therapist. Show them what you have written here about your ex-wife and ask whether this is something that would be considered by "neurot... More

Reply Upvote Downvote ...

41m ago

**Joe Biel:** I claimed that autism doesn't make it hard...



**Allyson Kliff**

If autism isn't a mental disorder, then why are you going to a therapist and constantly talking about your difficulties as an individual with autism? Don't you think maybe it's possible that you are having another episode?

Reply Upvote Downvote ...

36m ago

**Joe Biel:** 1971 called. It wants you to get your fact...

All of the interactions I have had with Joe and Microcosm since I left (all the people that I knew who worked there quit voluntarily or otherwise) has been terrible: unanswered e-mails about critical issues like the entirety of my book *Stolen Sharpie Revolution* being available on Google Books with out my permission, my artwork and my writing being used without my permission on the website and in zines and books they have published, poorly documented royalty checks, not getting books I was owed, stealing button business from me, not changing their logo (an image that both Joe and I both had tattooed on our bodies before it was the Microcosm logo), and on and on. After awhile I gave up. It wasn't worth my time or energy to argue with a brick wall because that was what all my attempts had become. Microcosm, a company that I helped raise from just about the very beginning, never responded and just ignored me and my concerns completely. To be fair, after the first mediation attempt in 2008 some of these issues were resolved.



**Alex Wrekk**



Jan 6, 2017 at 11:18pm • Albany, California •



[filtered]

I'm in Berkeley for the Lookouting, the Lookout records 30 year reunion thing. I used to spend a lot of time in this town and worry about running into people I haven't seen in 10 or 15 years.

Mostly, I worry about seeing people who knew me or were tangled up in the a Microcosm crap. I ran into one of them within 5 minutes of the show last week. A lot of people have told me where they stand with things, this person hasn't so I always feel super extra awkward around them.

So getting the news tonight that Microcosm is reprinting Cindy's stuff with out permission and some other things I don't think I can say publicly, threw me for a brain loop. Like, can someone tell him that the best way for people to stop thinking he is an assholes is to stop acting like one.

I went to the show tonight and only stayed for one band. I'm determined not to let the epic show tomorrow night get ruined.



**Alex Wrekk**

6 January at 17:36 · 🌐

In more never ending rotten-Ness news:



**Cindy Crabb**

6 January at 17:01 · 🌐

Just in case anyone is wondering or still unclear on this, I do not support Microcosm Publishing. Everything they do with my work is against my wishes. I have sent them a cease and desist on the Support and Learning Good Consent and Doris #15 zine and they continue to print them. I tried to reach a legal agreement with them, but they were bizarre and others in the industry agreed that their demands were not reasonable. I have tried to take legal action, but it is too pricey to bother with and they seem to thrive on retaliation and keeping the drama going.



Like



Comment



Share



12



Write a comment...



Where it gets tricky for me is knowing that several people make their livelihood or have their art distributed in ways they never could because of the machine that is Microcosm; from the zinester that is happy to get that \$100 check to pay their rent, people who are excited to have their work published or distributed, the printers of Microcosm t-shirts and stickers, to the people that make a living working at Microcosm. I even understand the complexity of someone living in a small town whose eyes were opened up to ideas and politics through the Microcosm catalog. But at what cost? When problematic behaviors go unchallenged and are swept under the rug because it is easier or because there are benefits to ignoring it, the larger patriarchal system of power and abuse is just being perpetuated.

At first it merely hurt my feelings a little when friends would continue to have their zines carried or published by Microcosm. I didn't feel I had the support or right to ask them otherwise. But now, after failed attempts at mediation, accountability and repeated belittlement I have changed my mind. I believe in honesty and justice and giving people information to make up their own minds and they should act in accordance to their values.

So, the question is do I think people should support Joe Biel and Microcosm? If you think survivors of abuse should be believed, supported and respected and you believe abusers should be held accountable to their community and those they have hurt then I think you know my answer.

When I said that survivors of abuse should be supported I alluded to boycotting Microcosm, but it's not enough to simply boycott. If you mean to send a message you should let them know why you are not spending your money with them, why you don't want your zine/book distributed or published or your artwork used by them. Also, if you have had specific problems with your interactions with Microcosm you should speak up. Trust me, you are not the only one. Let them know what they need to fix, what they need to pay more mind to. Give them an option, give them a choice to change because ultimately, it's not only in their best interest, it's the right thing to do.

If Microcosm truly wants to show that it is a collective, that they do not struggle with Joe's abuses of power, and that they support the ideas and values behind the books and zine they publish and distribute then then should as Cindy Crabb said in this [post](#), "come up with a collective statement confronting/admitting Joe's abuse and manipulation, and/or for Joe to legally remove himself from the collective". I'd also like to add another option, for people in the community and people who are associated with Microcosm to seriously encourage Joe to cooperate in a transparent accountability process because his hurtful actions and problematic behaviors are putting people's livelihoods in jeopardy.

My intent was never to destroy Microcosm or Joe or anyone that works with Microcosm. I left Microcosm in October of 2006 because I was not happy with how the business worked or how I was treated. With a whisper I have been asking for accountability for almost 4 years, I got tired and left it to smoulder. But now I'm tired of seeing other people hurt and disrespected and having no voice and I'm really glad to hear that other people are recognizing this..

So, if you aren't on the "Alex Wrekk is crazy" train, or the utilitarian "my calculator does social math and it tells me that the good outweighs the bad" camp, or the "Microcosm is great for me so why should I care?" brigade here's some other awesome distros to check out to buy zines and maybe even have your zines distributed. If you know if more distros that should be on this list let me know:

[ - ] [nicoleintrovert](#) 19 points 3 years ago

When will Microcosm remove patches, shirts, etc from inventory which feature artwork by people who have consistently asked for their art to no longer be used/sold by Microcosm?

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[ - ] [TehPunkest](#) 6 points 3 years ago

Just as soon as those artists buck up and sue him. Lawsuits are teh punkest.

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)

[ - ] [adam\\_gnade](#) 1 point 3 years ago

Exactly. People come to us for advice about this a lot. No one knows how to handle it and we hear again and again that people want to stand up to Microcosm and Joe Biel but they are AFRAID.

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)

[ - ] [Microcosmmmm](#) [S] -7 points 3 years ago

If the person was the creator/owner of the work and asked us to do so, we would do it the first time.

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)

[ - ] [anarrespress](#) 7 points 3 years ago

Then why is Microcosm still selling Cindy Crabb's work?

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)

[ - ] [Microcosmmmm](#) [S] -9 points 3 years ago

We are only selling the parts of her work that was published by us and we've been trying to sell the remainder of it to her for the last year.

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)

[ - ] [Feministbatman](#) 9 points 3 years ago

Weird how hard it is to move products by people who have spoken out against you, isn't it?

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)

[ - ] [Microcosmmmm](#) [S] -4 points 3 years ago

Sure, it's totally a weird place to be stuck in. There's a lot of hurt coming from all sides of this situation. It sucks. The scene needs a path forward that isn't just creating more hurt.

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)

[ - ] [pmaci](#) 7 points 3 years ago

How does you owning the material play into the fact the creator no longer wants to be associated with you? What does that show about your values and how you run your company?

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)

[ - ] [Microcosmmmm](#) [S] -3 points 3 years ago

I'm not sure what you're asking. We have worked hard with her to resolve this and sell her back at our cost what we've paid for.

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)

[ - ] [anarrespress](#) 3 points 3 years ago

Isn't it their's in the first place?

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)

[ - ] [Microcosmmmm](#) [S] 0 points 3 years ago

We paid over \$20,000 for the printing and development and distribution of her work and as such we own the physical books. She does however have the right to buy them back from us at cost.

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)

[ - ] [Feministbatman](#) 3 points 3 years ago

Can she reprint it on her own? People love Cindy's work but dislike MP, so of course they wouldn't want to support you.

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)

[ - ] [anarrespress](#) -1 points 3 years ago

Well that's a conundrum! Perhaps they could be donated to libraries with a tax write-off.

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)

[ - ] [nicoleintrovert](#) 5 points 3 years ago

So why are you are still selling and using the chainring heart?

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)

[ - ] [Microcosmmmm](#) [S] -3 points 3 years ago

Because the original was drawn by Aaron Renier (who was paid for the work) and the current version was drawn by me.

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)

[ - ] [cricketbread](#) 4 points 3 years ago

Because if you copy something then you own it? I don't think it works like that.

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)

[ - ] [adam\\_gnade](#) 5 points 3 years ago

Standard operating procedure at Microcosm.

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)

[ - ] [Microcosmmmm](#) [S] -4 points 3 years ago

Microcosm still owns the original and the current version. Aaron was paid for his work. He drew the original but sold the rights for its use to us.

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#)

Sparky Taylor / Microcosm <microcosmorders@gmail.com>  
to staff

Giz, our former French intern sent this list of things he claims we have no right to make money off of. I want to actually address these, and can we please not involve any personal comments on what we think about Giz as a person? And stick to the items he's brought up? Thanks!

<3  
-food not bomb, it's supposed to be a benefit to F.N.B so if it's not...

-microcosm: charming (claimed by alex wreck)

-orwell was right, was first made by a former housemate of Joe and he kept the money as a due rent, even if the rent was paid, the new version was made by Steve of rum-lad and he never got paid neither.

-all the situationist one are copy/ret which also means you're not supposed to make money out of it, its tricky, because everyone else is making money out of situationist writings, arts and stuff, the most famous being debord's widow

Abuse is the mistreatment of someone that causes harm. Emotional abuse is the long-term use of power that causes harm on another person. This can be through one or many methods of coercion to get someone to do something against their will or better judgment.

Exhibit K

# UPPING THE ANTI

- ★ HOME
- ★ JOURNAL
- ★ PURCHASE
- ★ CONTRIBUTE
- ★ NEWS
- ★ C

Journal Number Nineteen

## Spectrum: Autists and Activism: An Interview with Joe Biel

T.H. Vega

*Joe Biel (JoeBiel.net) founded Microcosm Publishing in 1996. His neighbours were unionized, working-class Democrats who helped establish his early interest in leftist politics. However, it was not until his teens when he discovered punk rock, and later with the founding of Microcosm Publishing, that he got involved in radical social justice activism. Microcosm has grown since its founding to be one of the largest distributors of independent publishing and zines in North America. After 15 years of involvement in social movements, engaging with issues like police brutality, globalism, public space, bicycle activism, queer and women's rights, Joe withdrew from neurotypical activism. When he was 32 he was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, an autistic spectrum condition, which played a large part in conflicts with other organizers and his feelings of isolation. Joe Biel sat down with Thania Vega to speak about his experience as an autistic person within leftist social movements, and what needs to be done to make these movements more inclusive of autistic people and the issues impacting their lives. The interview took place in November, 2016.*

There have been several years of controversy surrounding Joe Biel and Microcosm. Shortly after conducting this interview, it came to our attention that there was an active boycott against Joe Biel and Microcosm Publishing due to a history of conflict and harm between Joe Biel, an ex-partner, and other activists. When we approached Joe Biel about these conflicts he acknowledged this history and told us the multiple steps he had taken to be accountable, which some of his accusers still consider to be insufficient or incomplete. There continue to be some independent zine publishers who will not partner with Microcosm and have spoken out publicly about their experiences. With full knowledge of this, we decided to publish the piece for one main reason: although it is possible for someone on the Autism Spectrum Disorder to engage in abusive behaviour, we believe that our movements fundamentally lack the tools and understanding to accommodate neurodivergence within its spaces. We hope that this article opens the space for activists to consider contradictory needs such as the need around community accountability processes and the need to understand autistic people's different capacities to assess social situations. We welcome any comments or feedback on this article and our decision to publish it.

**Due to the general unfamiliarity with autism, let's start with you describing your experiences. What was the impact of the diagnosis on your life?**

last straw for this round. Joe has repeatedly asked me not to write about this situation, but if he really knew me he would know that asking that is like asking me not to breathe. Writing is how I synthesize the world around me, he should know it has always been that way. I do understand that what I say can affect people who have any investment in Microcosm but I feel that Joe is not being truthful with the people who put trust in him and I'm not ok with sitting by and watching that happen.

Exhibit M

Joe says my problem is that i don't allow  
for closure. he might be right. i think  
somehow i relish the anxious, tense,  
creativity-ness that comes from it in some  
small way. i guess it lets me hold on to  
feelings until i can recognize them and  
give them a name.