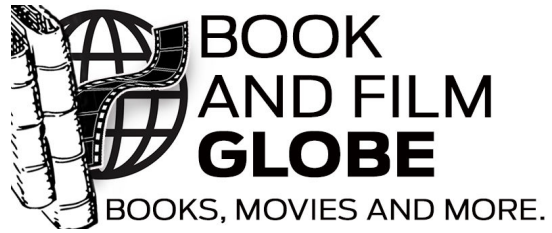
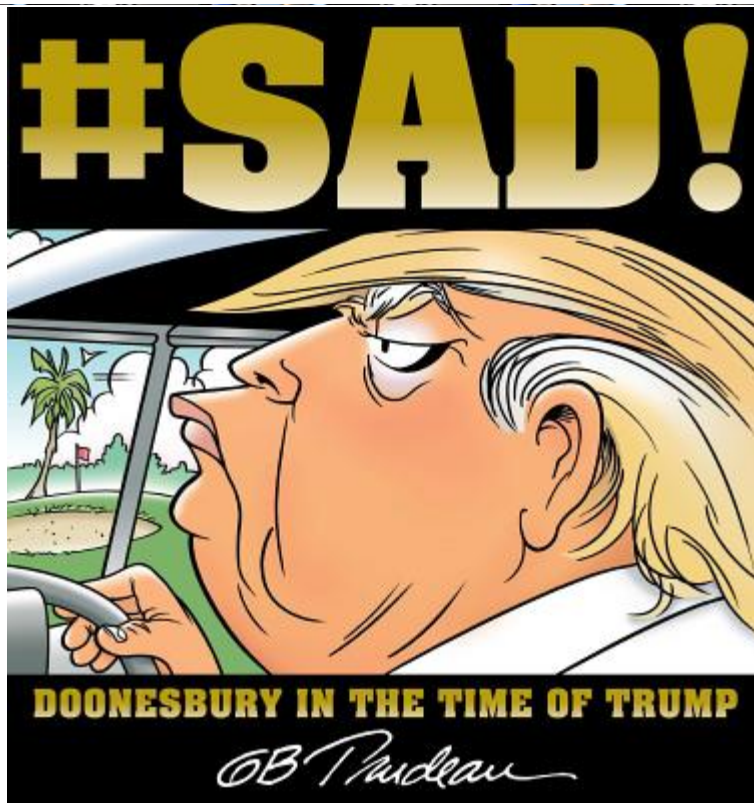


Wednesday, September 26, 2018





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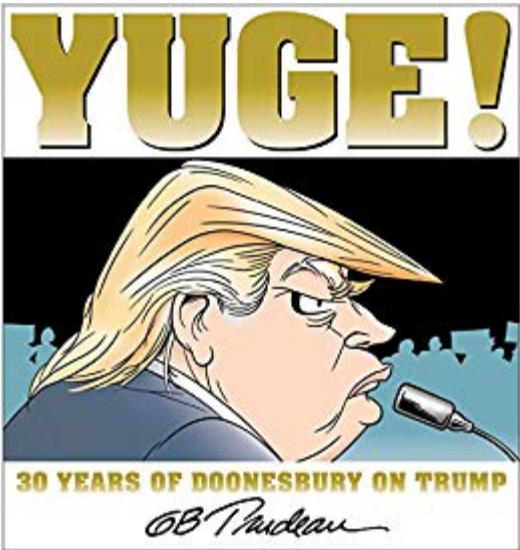
#SAD! 'Doonesbury' Takes On Trump

Garry Trudeau Transcends Late Night's Tepid Satire

September 26, 2018 Michael Glitz 0 Comments

September 2018 marks the 50th anniversary of *Doonesbury*, the first comic strip to win the Pulitzer Prize. It began as a football-centric goof at Yale (see, not all the news out of Yale is bad!) and now exists mostly online. You know a comic strip is in good shape when it's nimble enough to make savvy jokes about micro-aggressions and at the same time get rueful laughs via flashbacks. "*Peanuts*" had reruns but *Doonesbury* gets playfully meta with the passage of time. Comparing Watergate to Trumpgate is easy. But who else could do so by flashing back to a character's younger self taking down Nixon on the radio some 40 years ago?

It's not the politics that make *Doonesbury* both relevant and enduring. *Saturday Night Live* gets a few chuckles from its on-target but simple-minded sketches. Trudeau's creation is much richer and always grounded in character. Consider the scene showing a mother and her college-age daughter discussing gender pronouns. The mom, Boopsie, is worried she'll mess up and offend her daughter Sam's friends when they visit. It's genuine, amusing dialogue and the kicker is when Sam reassures her mom not to stress by saying: "He, she, they and it are all totally cool!" The slightly clueless might think this punchline is about the "absurdity" of those pronouns. But Trudeau never uses humor to mock the vulnerable. Pause a moment and you'll realize Sam is just teasing her mom, the way kids always do. That turns a topical reference into something timeless.



I almost referred to that moment as a “joke” but changed it to “scene.” And that’s the greatness of Doonesbury. It’s not a collection of jokes and gags and topical humor. It does feature major events of the day, pop-cultural and world figures and even surreal satire, all of it very funny. But the heart of the strip are dozens of real characters grappling with the joys and frustrations of daily life. Trudeau is telling their story and it grows richer and more complex with each passing year.

Clearly, not every strip is focused on Donald Trump. This collection tackles marijuana growers, feminism and, without making too much of it, the constant presence of smart phones is

its own running gag. But Trudeau has been making hay of Trump for decades and few can skewer the President like “Doonesbury,” whether it’s tweets from journalist Roland B. Hedley mocking the White House by delivering slavish praise or mocking the media itself by showing it breathlessly covering the President’s endless golf games with live coverage and counting down to Trump’s 500th mulligan. As Trudeau explains in his introduction, satire rarely changes minds. It strives only to humorously afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted. Success! Though the fact that we still need Trump skewered? #SAD!

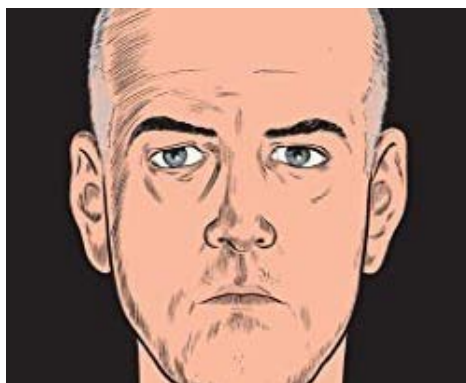
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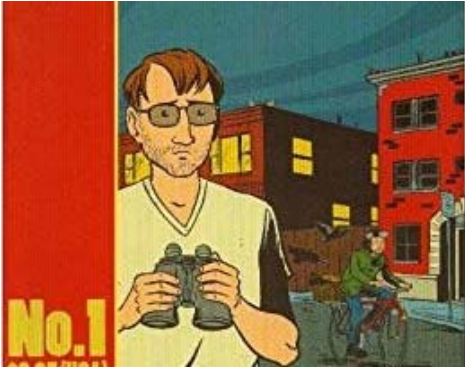


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