Derek Parker Royal: Let's begin with your new book, *Woman Rebel: The Margaret Sanger Story*. This is something different for you and definitely a departure from your work on *Hate* and the other fictional works you've done for Dark Horse and Vertigo. What's the genesis behind this foray into biography, or even the very idea behind writing on Sanger?

Peter Bagge: Well, I'd been doing nonfiction work for quite a while—almost fifteen years now. And I'd already done some biographical pieces: A twelve-pager on Isabel Paterson for *Reason*, the *Founding Fathers Funnies* pieces for Dark Horse, plus various one-pagers on musicians and scientists. It all was definitely leading up to something more ambitious. The only question was who the first subject for a full-length bio comic should be. Drawn & Quarterly was very interested in such a project, and after some back and forth we settled on Sanger for a number of reasons—first and foremost, that she had more name recognition than the other possible candidates I had in mind. She also had quite a life, and her changing the course of human history was a major factor as well!

DPR: You're right about her being a major force of change, and one who might easily be overlooked, especially for people who might take reproductive rights for granted. But who were some of the other biographical subjects you considered? Or another way of putting it, what about Sanger drew you specifically to her, and not to other significant historical figures, as a full-length book project?

PB: I was primarily interested in female literary figures from the mid-twentieth century, specifically Rose Wilder Lane (daughter of Laura Ingalls Wilder),
Zora Neale Hurston, and Isabel Paterson (whom I’ve already covered). Besides being talented writers, these women also helped define a political philosophy—one that celebrates freedom and autonomy—that I very much share, and they also all lived their lives accordingly. This was also at a time when women had less freedom—legally and socially—than they do now, yet these women weren’t encumbered by unwanted pregnancies either. So that got me interested in what kind of birth control was available at the time, and how available it was. This research led me to Sanger.

**DPR:** Over the past year or so there has been a lot of news on women’s reproductive rights and the creeping infringements from certain state legislatures and political leaders on these rights. I know that your ideas for *Woman Rebel* began before Todd Akins and the recent antics of the Texas state senate, but do you find the timing of your new book curiously appropriate . . . almost in an uncanny way?

**PB:** I think that if it came out a year ago I would have found the timing uncan­ny. That’s when things got very heated on the subject. I don’t relish getting drawn into these debates, however, since so much overheated BS is spouted by both sides of the abortion debate, in particular, that I’d hate to have to “take sides” with anyone. I’m totally pro-choice myself, but I don’t like the way people who are against abortion are demonized, or have their motives questioned. The comments Akins made of course were absurd, and they rightfully cost him the election, but he in no way was speaking for all pro-lifers. Meanwhile, I was stunned by the testimony of Sandra Fluke, who is either a liar or an idiot or both, yet now she’s being sold as a spokesperson for the left. The left sure does a lousy job of picking its heroes and martyrs!

**DPR:** It’s interesting that you mention the overheated chaos surrounding reproductive rights. You point out in your book’s concluding essay, “Why Sanger?,” that there are similarly charged misunderstandings regarding Margaret Sanger. Do you see *Woman Rebel* as an opportunity to give some evenhandedness to Sanger’s story, and by association, some of the issues commonly associated with her work?

**PB:** Yes, that was a huge motivator. To help right an ongoing wrong. Still, I’m finding that some people will still cling to their negative assumptions about her, even after reading my book. I failed to even get them to wonder where their assumptions came from! People simply derive too much pleasure in assuming moral superiority over someone else. It’s way too hard to let go of.
DPR: Let's talk a little about the reaction to your book. Has the reader response been noticeably more pointed, perhaps even more confounding, than the kind of reviews you got on your other recent works, such as *Apocalypse Nerd* and *Reset*? Or for that matter, the recent hardcover release of *Everybody's Stupid Except for Me*. . . , which I'm sure generated its share of comments?

PB: The Sanger book has just been released, so almost all the comments I've received so far are from people who received advance copies—reviewers, mostly. And most of them have been extremely positive, although several still can't shake these notions that at best, Sanger was a big-mouthed jerk, and at worst, was a genocidal maniac. It's hard for me fathom that they actually read the book, though they refer to enough specifics from it that it appears that they have . . . sigh . . .

My *Reason* collection received a lot of press when it first came out as a trade paperback—and the responses were mixed. Naturally. I didn't receive nearly as much response from my three graphic novels. Not controversial enough, I suppose.

DPR: I guess you'd expect the more controversial comics to generate more response, like the *Reason* pieces and of course the Margaret Sanger biography. But what's been the deal with *Reset*, *Apocalypse Nerd*, and *Other Lives*? I think that all three of those titles were centered around topics that were, if not overtly contentious, then capable of generating lively debate. The themes of those books, survivalism, individualism, and the darker sides of technology, are ripe and timely.

PB: So you'd think! They were all deeply personal for me, too. But it also made me rethink my use of fiction. For one thing, I have little use of fiction these days, at least when it comes to reading material. I read nonfiction almost exclusively now. I like facts. Or presumed facts, at least. So I wonder: does this bias for nonfiction come across in my own work? And should I stick with it because of it? Who knows. Probably!

DPR: So given your pieces in *Reason* and the Sanger biography, not to mention the *Founding Father Funnies*, do you think the road down nonfiction lane is the direction that your art is taking? And is this something more inadvertent than intended? I ask this, given what you just said about the evolution of your own reading habits.

PB: It is the general track my work is taking, but it's not the end of my fiction work. I'm working on a new Buddy Bradley story at the moment, in fact. And the change has been largely inadvertent. It's certainly been a gradual thing.
DPR: I want to get back to your new Buddy stories in a little bit, but let’s talk more specifically about the way you tell the story of Margaret Sanger. The narrative of her life is revealed episodically, where we have a telling or significant glimpse into one moment of her life, and then we are quickly carried to another important event. Most of the time these episodes are contained within one densely packed page of comics storytelling, although there are occasions where an incident unfolds over more than one page, such as a two-page spread. Did you plan on laying out Sanger’s story in this way, brief episodes that function like narrative building blocks?

PB: Yes, I did. It was the only way I could see conveying such a long, busy life in seventy-two pages, and there was no part of her life that I wanted to ignore. The few scenes that are longer than one page simply morphed into longer scenes by necessity. To cram them into one page would have not given those events proper justice.

DPR: So you did have a general page count in mind when you began the project? Earlier we were discussing the reviews the book has received so far, and one criticism I’ve noticed concerns its length. Several readers have said that they like Woman Rebel, but they wanted there to be more there. But you wanted Woman Rebel to be contained in this way?

PB: The publisher wanted to limit the art to seventy-two pages before I even started (a lot of comics publishers request specific page counts for economic reasons). I agreed, assuming at the time that would be plenty. I soon realized it could’ve been a thousand pages long! But I felt I captured the gist of her life well enough in seventy-two. People can always read more about her if they choose to.

DPR: I think the shorter format works with Woman Rebel. It’s like we have a series of snapshots of her life, that reading the book is like looking through a series of photographs. It gives us clear images of Sanger at certain points in her life, but it doesn’t provide a complete portrait, leaving it up to us, the reader, to fill in those gaps with our own research. And as you pointed out earlier, thoroughly researching Sanger is something that many people, even professional writers and journalists, haven’t done adequately enough. Was this part of the impetus behind the “Who’s Who and What’s What” section at the end of the book, not only to serve as footnotes to your own work, but something like a suggested reference list for readers?

PB: Yes, exactly. This was especially true with the many other players in the story. I couldn’t just, say, drop Mary Ware Dennett into the picture without...
Margaret Sanger and Havelock Ellis enjoy a private and frank conversation about sexual matters.

providing some background as to who exactly she was and why she was important. Many of these other people are worthy of their own graphic novels, being such characters in and of themselves.

**DPR:** Some have referred to your work as “ugly art,” not in any negative or pejorative sense—and not directly referencing your “Ugly Art” series from the early 1980s—but in terms of its cartoonish exaggerations or grotesqueries (as opposed to more realistic or “beautiful”) that are clearly a part of the “Bagge style.” How do you think your art style contributes to, enhances, or furthers Sanger’s story?

**PB:** Some people are being negative when they describe my art as “ugly,” sadly. It clearly isn’t for everyone, but then, whose is?

Many people have also said the idea of a bio comic being drawn by the likes of me is unlikely, but then the way I draw is the way I draw, so there’s little I
can do about that. I also like the way I draw. If I didn’t, my art style would have evolved very differently, obviously. It allows me to tell a story and express emotions that suit my purposes to a tee. So I don’t think it hindered my telling Sanger’s story in any way.

**DPR:** I actually think your style accentuates the tone of story, allowing you to tell the Sanger’s biography in a way that adds to the drama. I’m thinking in particular of the several places where you use the various *symbolia* (in the Mort Walker sense) to reveal anxiety, frustration, surprise, etc. Plus, the exaggerated actions underscore the significance of the events. So in this way, your style does add to Sanger’s life story.

**PB:** Thanks! Only I thought Mort Walker referred to those emo symbols as “dingbats”! That’s what I call them, anyway.
DPR: Outside of the publisher-mandated page number limitations you mentioned earlier, what other kind of challenges did you run into when creating Woman Rebel?

PB: The massive amount of fascinating information I was gathering on her was one huge problem. What to leave out? And how to make what I did include fit without overcrowding the pages?

DR: What was some of the information that you decided not to use? Are there any examples that particularly pained you to leave out?

PB: Many! Especially various “character shaping” anecdotes from her childhood, all of which were very visual (such as her daring herself to cross a railroad bridge alone when she was eight or so years old). But I had to get to her adulthood and her “mission” as soon as possible, so it all went to the wayside. There were other events in her adulthood that had visual appeal as well, but they generally made the same point that other pieces I used were making, so I scrapped them as well. I don’t think the book suffers due to my not including these scenes. In fact, I often think limiting it to seventy-two pages was beneficial in the long run. It forced me to get to the point in every instance.

DPR: Let’s talk a bit about the limited format and your work. Your contributions in Reason are also short, targeted pieces. And you’re dealing with some complex issues in these comics. Obviously the Hate or Buddy stories come in short installments, but over the long run those story arcs continue for quite a number of pages. Do you find brief and more targeted lengths an appropriate format for your more expository or editorial comics? Would you consider, for example, doing a longer book on a political or social topic?

PB: I often wished I had more than four pages to work with on many of those Reason pieces. But maybe it’s a good thing I’m always limited to four. It helps me keep focused.

I never considered a whole book based on a social or political issue. Not to say that I wouldn’t, but it would depend on the subject.

DPR: If you could do a longer work of this sort, what kind of topic (or topics) would be more sustaining for you? What issue might interest you enough to devote to such a book?

PB: I have no idea! Not now, anyway. And I’d prefer to have a lead character to humanize the work. Myself, perhaps? Oy, that’s a grim thought!

DPR: What about yourself as a lead character, since you just opened that
door? Obviously every writer of fiction instills bits of his or her own experiences into their works, and your Buddy Bradley stories may be an example here, but it's still fiction, not autobiography. And you've used yourself as a character in many of your *Reason* comics, but it's been as a framing device to your observations and critiques. Would you ever consider doing the kind of memoir or autobiographic long-form comic? And as a corollary to that, what are your thoughts on this popular comics genre?

**PB:** I've long enjoyed many autobiographical comics—Robert Crumb's in particular—though I'm still a bit uncomfortable with using my actual self for the most part. Perhaps I lack the right amount of narcissism, but I definitely do not want my life to be an open book. Using myself as a focal point of sorts for my *Reason* strips is a handy narrative device, and my original editor there has always encouraged it, so it became something of a habit with those strips. Still, an entire book with myself as the main character makes me very uncomfortable. I really doubt I'll ever do it.

**DPR:** We've brought up your *Reason* strips a few times, which are collected in *Everybody Is Stupid Except for Me, and Other Astute Observations*. Fantagraphics has just released a hardbound edition of that book, and that's one of several collections of yours that have recently been published. Earlier this year we saw Peter Bagge's *Other Stuff*, and not long ago both *Yeah!* (with Gilbert Hernandez) and *Bat Boy: The Weekly World News Comic Strips* were released. Is all this coincidental, or are all the stars aligned for Peter Bagge collections?

**PB:** No, these were simply all released when the rights were either reverted back to me or the various publishers had room on their production schedules.

**DPR:** What was your experience like writing *Yeah!* for DC? How was the transition going from *Hate* to working for a mainstream, corporate publisher?

**PB:** What always enticed me to do the work I did for DC was, first and foremost, their generous page rates. The only negative is the restrictions on creative freedom, but I knew what those were going in and designed the work so that it wouldn't be an issue. The editors are also much more hands-on than alternative publishers are, but again, that wasn't much of an issue either, since I dealt with fair, reasonable people.

**DPR:** *Yeah!* came out through DC's Homage imprint. Had there been any discussion on the title being released through Vertigo?

**PB:** A Vertigo editor, Shelley Bond, originally approached me about doing a title for that line way back when. After a lot of back and forth, the idea morphed into *Yeah!* which seemed unsuitable for an adult line.
**DPR:** Do you think, though, that adults might have been the primary readership for that title? After all, you did create *Yeah!* with Gilbert Hernandez, and many comics fans of the time would have to have known what kind of material you guys usually created. As far as you know, did *Yeah!* reach a wider audience, at least in terms of age?

**PB:** That was the problem. Yes, Gilbert and I had an adult audience. But no, *Yeah!* was *not* for adults. It was for kids. I still hoped adults would appreciate it on its own terms, but they didn’t.

**DPR:** What kind of reaction did you get from adult readers?

**PB:** They were disappointed. They thought at the very least there’d be something subversive about it, or that I’d at least give winks and nudges to them, which I didn’t. They were irked that this comic really and truly was for kids, though I don’t know why they couldn’t appreciate it regardless. I was happy with it and proud of it, but not many others were.

**DPR:** What was the experience like going from the irreverent Buddy Bradley to a Spice Girls/Josie and the Pussycats–inspired, all-age title for DC? Was it a challenge switching creative gears?

**PB:** No, not a challenge. It was something I wanted to do, in part to make a comic to entertain my own daughter. I enjoyed working on that title.

**DPR:** Is this something that you’d like to do again, creating another all-age title, something that could be enjoyed by younger readers?

**PB:** Ha! No, not really. Lesson learned.

**DPR:** Let’s talk about something that you *are* doing again. You mentioned earlier that you’re working on a new Buddy Bradley book. What can we expect here?

**PB:** The new Buddy book is called *Buddy Buys a Dump.* It collects all the Buddy stories from the nine issues of *Hate Annual,* plus a brand new twenty-page story. It completes a story arc of sorts.

**DPR:** What are your thoughts on the general evolution of Buddy and the direction his life has taken since the first *Hate Annual* in 2000?

**PB:** I’m slowly placing Buddy farther and farther on the edges of American society (without making him a criminal, that is). He starts out in the relatively appealing pop culture collectables business, but for purely practical reasons gradually moves into the far less “sexy” scrap metal business. Scrap metal yards are those kinds of places your mind doesn’t even register when
you walk or drive past them. They’re almost willfully unappealing, visually. They’re invisible, and yet they’re right there. It struck me as a perfect business for a cynic and misanthrope like Buddy.

**DPR:** It’s ironic, isn’t it, that Buddy has become more of a family man over the years, and yet he’s shoved to the boundaries of respectable society? Might this be a fictionalized version of your social commentary comics?

**PB:** Yes. He’s a good person that the average American, circa 2014, would never identify as a “good person.” He hurts no one. He wants to be left alone. But that’s enough for most people. Most people say, “gimme gimme gimme.” Thus, he wants to be invisible. Writing this makes me feel like I’m doing a huge disservice to scrap metal dealers everywhere!

**DPR:** It’s been fifteen years since *Hate* went from coming out several times a year to being an annual. Has this change in the publishing schedule worked out well for you, or is there a part of you that longs for the semi-regular periodical days?

**PB:** I do miss doing a regular series, I’ll admit. One with a five or so year run would be nice (I was hoping both *Yeah!* and *Sweatshop* would last that long). But that is so economically unfeasible these days that I no longer think in those terms. Just doing a *Hate Annual* annually proved to be impossible over time. Everything else I was working on takes precedence over them simply because every other job paid better.

**DPR:** When you think about it, almost all of the “alternative” comic books are gone, at least in semi-regular periodical form. *Hate* (and of course *Neat Stuff*), *Palookaville*, *Love and Rockets*, *Yummy Fur*, *Acme Novelty Library*, *Peep Show*, *Eightball*, and *Angry Youth Comix* are no longer published as comic books. If they come out at all, it’s in the “graphic novel” format. *Optic Nerve* and *Tales Designed to Thrizzle* are about the only ones out there coming out as periodical comics. What are your thoughts on this trend?

**PB:** I’ve already addressed this trend many times over the past ten to fifteen years. It’s regrettable, but I’m done bemoaning it. It’s nice to see folks like Kupperman and Tomine sticking with the format, though. God bless ‘em!

**DPR:** So what are your general thoughts on the state of comics publishing today? Despite the aforementioned graphic novel or long-form trend, what’s going on in the business that you find particularly annoying and detrimental . . . or even aspects that leave you hopeful?
PB: Creatively, comics—especially alternative comics—are exploding. There are so many talented young artists out there that I can't keep up with them all.

One discouraging trend is the easy way people can download high-quality versions of just about any title online for free now. This has definitely been cutting into my royalty statements, and I can only see it getting worse. The one "growth" part of the business is comic conventions. People still want to get out of their house and do stuff, and the same folks who download my work for free are suddenly quite generous when I deal with them face to face.

DPR: When you refer to the downloading of free comics, are you talking about the pirated material that people scan in and share?

PB: Yes.

DPR: Have you considered doing digital comics on a semi-regular basis? Other than your work being available on ComiXology, what kind of Bagge material is out there digitally?

PB: I didn't even know my work was available on ComiXology!

I did some web-only work back in the dot com boom days when people were throwing money around like lunatics. Since then, web comics equals no money, it seems. If I can figure a way to solve that, I'll let you know!

DPR: In addition to your upcoming Buddy Buys a Dump collection, are there any other projects or ideas on the horizon? Any new miniseries like Reset or Apocalypse Nerd?

PB: A collection of my DC Sweatshop series is sure to come out eventually (I just signed the rights reversion today). I might do a sequel to Reset. Dark Horse is on the fence about that. They're also on the fence about doing a collection of Founding Fathers Funnies comics. Apocalypse Nerd might become a movie. A Kickstarter campaign should start for it any day now. And I'm definitely doing another bio book for Drawn & Quarterly. The next one will be about Zora Neale Hurston.

DPR: There's a lot here to respond to. What's the story behind Apocalypse Nerd as a movie? Was this something you had considered early on, as you were writing the miniseries?

PB: I envisioned all of my graphic novels as potential movies, to be honest. Not that that was the point of making them, or that I had unrealistic expectations, but they all seem quite movie-esque to me.

A British director originally intended to make Apocalypse Nerd as a miniseries, and even made the pilot, which was surprisingly good. He was unable
to fund the rest of the miniseries, however, and is now reformatting it as a movie. He wrote the script himself, and it’s based in the UK, so it’s a bit different than my original comic.

DPR: So this UK-based Apocalypse Nerd evolved from the director’s original idea of a TV miniseries? From what you’ve seen of the script, how has your original story morphed into, first, an idea for television, and then as something for the big screen? What changes or additions has it undergone so far?
PB: It’s nothing huge, plot wise. Just the different locale (the UK) and different regional dialect, mostly.

DPR: Tell me more about the Zora Neale Hurston project. Will this be similar to the Sanger book, as you hinted at earlier in the interview?
PB: Yes, very similar. Though I’d like to format it somewhat differently, if possible. “Air it out” more. More splash panels and such. I think her story will be better served that way. But I’ll have to see how it shapes up.

DPR: I believe that Woman Rebel has been your first book with Drawn & Quarterly, right? What kind of opportunities does this publisher provide that you might not have found with others?
PB: I was told that they offer generous advances—or at least more than a token advance! And I needed an advance to do something as research heavy as a full-length bio comic book.

DPR: Approximately how much more time do you spend on a project like the Sanger book, and the nascent Hurston biography, than you would in creating a longer Buddy Bradley book, or even something like Reset?
PB: I spend as much time on the art as any other project. It’s just all the researching and fact-checking that makes the bios (and most of my Reason pieces) extra laborious. That alone makes them at least 50 percent more work.

DPR: Do you plan on continuing to do the short pieces for Reason?
PB: Yes. They’re difficult and time consuming, though, so I now wait until I (a) have a strong idea; and (b) have time to execute it.

DPR: With the editorial comics, is it a matter of finding a topic that you feel strongly about at the moment?
PB: There are plenty of topics I feel strongly about. It’s more of question of finding one that I can shape into a timely and engaging comic strip. There are many at the moment—too many. Something has to jump out at me as “the
one." And then I have to share Reason's editors on the idea. They don't always share my sense of urgency.

**DPR:** So I would guess in this way, you feel a kinship with Margaret Sanger, that there are causes to champion in your work, even if your public (readers or editors) is unresponsive or resistant to your ideas?

**PB:** Heh. Well, the folks at *Reason* are certainly a lot more receptive to my causes than the public at large! And I also feel a bit pompous comparing myself to Sanger in this regard, since I've never willingly risked my life and liberty for any particular cause. Not yet, anyway.

* *

**DPR:** I'm here with Peter Bagge. How has the Con gone for you?

**PB:** It's gone fine. How much money I make barely varies from convention to convention. It's always pretty much the same. It's definitely worth my while to go to shows. I have no complaints.

**DPR:** Your latest project is *Reset*, which was recently released as a trade book. What are you going to be working on next?

**PB:** *Reset* was originally a miniseries, and I had finished with that quite a while ago. Since then I've been working on another project that's finished, but won't be out until September. It's for Drawn and Quarterly, and it's a biography of Margaret Sanger, the birth control advocate. It sounds like dry stuff, but actually she led an incredibly wild and tumultuous life. And when I was reading about her, I kept thinking, "This would make for a pretty good comic book."

**DPR:** Will this be the first thing you've done with Drawn and Quarterly?

**PB:** Yes, it is. I've done short-form bio comics, but I've never done anything this ambitious. Which is problematic in that, as always, I'm spending a lot of time on the art, and the writing, but also with biography you have to do a ton of research. So I sure hope it does well. I would gladly do it again, but man it's a lot of work for only so much money.

**DPR:** So is it a little different kind of research than the "historical" comics that appeared in *Apocalypse Nerd*?

**PB:** The *Founding Fathers Funnies*?
DPR: Those were great.

PB: It was the same amount of research, but with those are short strips, whereas *Woman Rebel* is a full-length book. Also, Margaret Sanger did so much with her life. It doesn’t seem possible that one person could have done all of the things she did in her long life. And she was active right until the end. There’s also a lot of conflicting information out there. Some people try to make her out to be a saint, and a lot more people have tried to demonize her, you know, for political reasons. It was really hard to separate the wheat from the chaff. Even her own autobiography is full of crap. She tended to whitewash her life and her past. She was a lobbyist by that time, and so it was as full of crap as any politician’s autobiography.

DPR: With both *Reset* and *Other Lives*, and to some extent *Apocalypse Nerd*, theme-wise it seems as if you are fascinated by recent technology. With *Other Lives* it’s social networks and gaming, while with *Reset* it is something fairly similar. Obviously this would have to be a personal fascination or interest of yours.

PB: It is something that I think about a lot, because I, like almost everyone that I know, spends an awful lot of time on the computer, either working or goofing off. The moment I had access to the Internet I noticed that people, including friends of mine, had become somebody completely different once they were online. They had that anonymity. Even people I knew who were writing under their own name on the Internet were different; it was like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. They seemed completely different from the person I had met. And a lot of people pretended to be somebody else. A lot of guys I knew would even admit to me that they would go online and pretend to be girls. And these were straight guys. A lot of that is what fed into *Other Lives*. I tried to think of people who not only clashed in their real lives but in one form or another have virtual lives as well. They have other personas. It’s a book about four humans but it’s also eight lives that are clashing.

With *Reset* it was different in that it revolves around a middle-aged man who was kind of down on his luck. The story is about what happens when some scientists approach the main character to find out whether he would be willing to virtually relive his life, to play what-if with this new technology that they’ve come up with. And that’s something I’d think about a lot. Like all people I have regrets. I don’t have massive regrets, but you’d always think, “what if?” If I went back in time, what if? And how would that come to pass? And that’s what I did with that book. I created an alter ego and had him at
least attempt to try to do that. And of course it turns out to be impossible and all hell breaks loose.

A project I'm hoping to start on now is a sequel to *Reset*, because in the book the main character, a guy named Guy Krause, it ends with him reluctantly agreeing to be on a reality show, and so the sequel would be about him being on the reality show.

**DPR:** I was wondering about that, because Guy is not the most attractive of protagonists, and that's one of the things that makes him so fascinating. Knowing at the end that he caves in and says, "Yeah, I'll do that," and wondering how he's going to handle that. So we are going to get some more information.

**PB:** Yes. Again, it's very ironic about reality TV shows because they are anything but. Once again Guy will be put in a situation where, just like *Reset*, he was set in an artificial environment. In the first book the technology was trying to help him relive his past. Now it's a similar thing—it's a totally artificial framework, and they try to frame him in a certain way. They're going to try to portray him, once they've edited it down, as this kind of one-dimensional character. And of course it's going to be awful. [laughs]

**DPR:** As with *Apocalypse Nerd*, and *Reset*, you're not only dealing with contemporary technology but you're dealing with contemporary *media*, and what happens with the wackiness and the strangeness that is associated with this new media.

**PB:** Right. I agree. I have nothing to add! [laughs]

**DPR:** Now, I would be remiss if I didn't ask you what's in store for Buddy, and *Hate*. For a number of years now, it's been an annual. I love the annual, but I have to tell you, I miss *Hate*. Do you miss working with Buddy and the Bradleys?

**PB:** Yeah, sure, and I feel terrible that I stopped doing *Hate Annual* annually. I'd like to keep that going. It's just that all these other projects that we've been talking about—they wind up taking over my life. They pay better, and they've become all-consuming, so I just can't find the time to do Buddy Bradley stories justice. What I've been trying to do to rectify that is that I've been trying to figure out with Fantagraphics how to make that possible.

**DPR:** Do you think that the answer is something akin to what they've done with *Love and Rockets*? For the past few years they've been publishing it in
the form of a graphic novel. They aren't doing as much with the periodicals anymore. It's a rarity.

PB: Yes. *Love and Rockets* has turned into an annual book. That may be what we end up doing. I still would like to do a comic book, and let them collect it eventually into a book. Keep it as *Hate Annual*. I wouldn't be surprised if Fantagraphics tells me that they'd rather do it in book form. We just have to do some number crunching.

DPR: Personally I'd like to see a lot more of Buddy, if for no other reason than because, not only is he funny, but you have carried him from his early days until middle age. It's rare when you find a character developed over that long a period.

PB: Yes, I know. He's always aged in real time, and his life has always taken wild and wacky turns. I continue to have him experience all kinds of weird twists. I worry and wonder if once I start Buddy again, if his long-time readers would even recognize him. He'd be an old guy now! I do have a lot of ideas for him but I think people will be thrown through a loop once I draw him again.

DPR: Something to look forward to.

PB: Yeah, just as soon as I can find a way to afford to do it, and put everything else off on hold. For example, it almost seems certain that I'll be doing this sequel to *Reset*. And with the *Reset* sequel, as with *Apocalypse Nerd*, I'll be inserting *Founding Fathers Funnies* as back-up stories.

DPR: Might there be a separate volume somewhere down the road?

PB: Yes, we're working toward having a collection of *Founding Fathers Funnies*. There just have to be enough of them.