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ìDoonesburyî abortion comic not fit to print for some papers

Brian Roewe | Mar. 13, 2012 NCR Today

The decision to print a controversial comic strip lampooning a recent Texas abortion law has been no laughing matter for many newspaper editors.

Garry Trudeau, creator of the popular strip ?Doonesbury,? offered a storyline this week revolving around a Texas law requiring physicians to provide a sonogram to a woman before performing an abortion [1]. The law went into effect in early February.

Editors at multiple newspapers, including the Arizona Republic and the Indianapolis Star, decided not to run this week?s strips in their papers, electing instead to print a substitute ?Doonesbury? provided by the syndicate. Some, like the St. Louis Post-Dispatch [2], chose to place the comic online but not in the paper.

Not all print editions are abstaining from the controversial strip, though. Some, like The Kansas City Star relocated ?Doonesbury? to the Opinion page for the week.

Other papers decided well before this latest strip to place the comic outside its funnies pages. The Tulsa World places it on the editorial page, as does the Knoxville News Sentinel [3], who explain that its content is often inappropriate for the comics page, but printing a potentially offensive strip like the abortion-law comic addresses ?an important public policy matter on which there is sharp disagreement.?

Over the weekend, the Washington Post interviewed the Pulitzer-Prize winning Trudeau [4], who said to ignore the ultrasound law ?would have been comedy malpractice.?

MSNBC commentator Rachel Maddow defended the comic [5], calling editors not running it ?cowardly,? and saying that censorship often has the effect of bringing more attention to a topic.

Is this week?s ?Doonesbury? too offensive? You can judge for yourself by viewing it here [6].

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Links:
[1] http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/article/Texas-sonogram-law-goes-into-effect-today-3085314.php
[2] http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/columns/editors-desk/doonesbury-strips-held-from-post-dispatch/article_1e4ef73a-6a3c-11e1-a7cc-0019bb30f31a.html
[3] http://blogs.knoxnews.com/editor/2012/03/why-were-running-controversial-1.shtml
[4] http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/comic-riffs/post/the-doonesbury-interview-garry-trudeau-says-to-ignore-abortion-debate-would-have-been-comedy-malpractice/2012/03/09/gIQAjTHy1R_blog.html
[5] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/13/rachel-maddow-doonesbury-comic-garry-

trudeau_n_1341406.html?ref=media
[6] http://www.gocomics.com/doonesbury/2012/03/13