

# The Deck of Many Things: Be Like Gandhi



by j. a. DOHM

Welcome to the end of the year. We've seen a lot of action this year, now it's time to close out 2018 with serious profit-

## Where do we start?

Retail sales have been clipping along all year. The economy is good to go, people are employed, and money is finally being spent. After years of writing gloom and doom prophecies for the Christmas Season, this year looks like the first real moneymaker since 2008. The Millennial generation finally has some pocket change and they are looking to buy. I expect people to start getting into high end gaming gear like miniatures and premium versions of board games.

One of the big trends amongst board gamers is to bling out games that they play a lot. Gamers are tossing their wooden pawns and cheaper organizers off to the side, and replacing them with more expensive hand-crafted figures and sturdier organizers. It's creating an interesting niche in the market. The only companies taking advantage of this niche prior to the last few years were *Broken Token* with their game box organizers, the various companies upgrading *Axis and Allies*, a few token makers, and *Catan Studios* with its premium versions of *Catan*. These days, there are plenty of companies generating game pieces for all sorts of products. This leads to a brand new problem-

## Where does IP Infringement begin and end?

It's unclear as to where the line is drawn, primarily because so few companies in the Gaming Industry hold patents on their components. Sooner or later, companies are going to realize how much money they are leaving on the table and seek to add that revenue back to their coffers. This should, at some point, ignite a battle between publishers and component makers for consumer dollars, and at this moment, I can't forecast a clear winner. Retailers should keep a close eye on 2019 to see how this develops because it could lead to a cornucopia of new products hitting the market.

## Now, for something a little more serious- Gen Con 51

I told friends in the Industry that I would reserve my commentary on an incident that occurred at *Gen Con* till September. Well, it's after Labor Day, so here we go-

According to witnesses outside the *Tin Roof* bar, where the *Diana Jones Awards* had just taken place, game designer *Matt Fantastic* allegedly came up behind *YouTube*er *Jeremy Hambly* and punched him repeatedly. Witnesses broke up the attack, and *Matt* left the scene. Later on, the incident was confirmed by the *Indy Star* and a full account was made public when *Jeremy Hambly* read off the police reports on his *YouTube* show *The Quartering*. Since then, *Matt Fantastic* has been off social media and *Jeremy Hambly* continues to give updates on the status of the police investigation. *Hambly* has also raised \$31,000 on a Go-Fund-Me Campaign to pursue a law suit against *Fantastic*.

I was asked to comment on this several times by friends and colleagues, and I've generally refused other than to say "I don't support violence or lawless behavior in any form." However, after I've seen how things have shaken out and I am a little displeased with some folks reactions to this.

## I think I'll weigh in now. Let's deal with Hambly's situation first-

I didn't know he existed until he became a victim of this attack. After he received a thrashing, I watched his content to see why someone might be inclined to pummel him. I'd heard all sorts of things about him: he's a racist, a misogynist, a bigot, and a Nazi. Very little of his posted content supported those accusations, and the segments that did, were implied and not overt. However, there is one clear thing this guy did that was both ignorant and offensive-

He clearly, publicly instigated the incident by disparaging the social ideologies of others.

On *The Quartering*, *Hambly* openly mocked anyone he deemed a 'SJW' or a 'Social Justice Warrior'. He ridiculed and shamed certain individuals within that group to the point of cruelty. *Hambly* more or less proved how certain Internet personalities are disintegrating the fabric of society. His sensationalist behavior was outright disgusting prior to the incident.

He reminded of that really annoying 3rd Grader which we had all at one point inevitably met in our lives on elementary school playground. *Hambly* is the archetypical bully who verbally abuses everyone at recess without being able to

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back it up. And then, one day, he made fun of the wrong person and ended up with a bloody nose. This primitive pack-like mentality worked great for maintaining the peace in elementary school-

However, we are not in 3rd Grade anymore, and we can't just beat up a bully to shut him up.

This brings me to *Mr. Fantastic*. While I appreciate that he checked the playground bully, I think the how he checked him was both an act of barbarism and ill-thought out. Let me start by saying:

### **Violence is unacceptable within a civilized nation.**

There are no justifications for violence between citizens within a singular national entity that has specifically outlawed it. I don't care if you are violent in a heroic act of civil justice. I don't care if you are being violent as retribution for injustice. I don't care if you are simply in a bar fight over double-dipping a chip in salsa-

### **Violence is unacceptable within a civilized nation.**

The entire reason we have laws is so people can live with one another without fear of violence. It's worked this way since *Hammurabi* laid out the first set of laws, and every time we've strayed from the course of peaceful co-existence we've descended into chaos. In regards to the Gaming Industry, gamer-on-gamer violence takes on a whole different connotation because it represents a serious contradiction in base cultural ideology.

In the pre-2000 era, when tabletop gaming wasn't mainstream, the vast majority of gamers experienced some degree of bullying, physical or otherwise, from guys like *Jeremy Hambly*. How did we all deal with it? We became successful and strived build a gaming culture where all individuals could be in a safe space. By initiating a physical attack on this particular bully, we have somehow de-evolved to become our old oppressors. Anyone who is involved in the Gaming Industry should strive to be better than the bullies we once feared.

### **Violence should be unacceptable in the Gaming Industry.**

Ironically though, the violent nature of the incident isn't the biggest issue here for me. What irritates me far more than the violence aspect of the incident is the fact that I now know who *Jeremy Hambly* is! The second *Hambly* got attacked and broadcasted it, he became an Internet superstar. A wave of *YouTubers* talked about *Hambly* non-stop for a week. It was all advertising for *Hambly* as an Internet personality. *Hambly* effectively doubled his audience, and now has a

platform whereas before he was an embarrassing anecdote to the gaming world-

Handing a digital megaphone to a bully is the absolute worst possible way of making him think twice about his actions.

The end game of this incident is pretty much a win for *Hambly* and a black-eye for the Gaming Community in the long run. *Hambly's* mixed messages, some of which are targeted at degrading activists, has spread to a wider audience and grew the power of his platform. Worst of all, like-minded people have rallied around him to support his message. The incident has truly turned a standard-bearer into an officer.

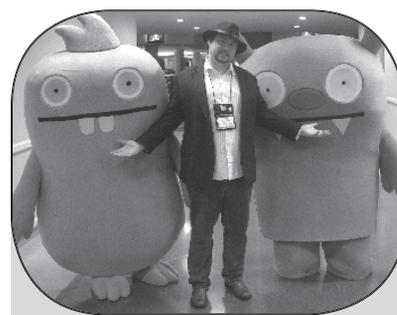
So, there it is.

To conclude, I feel like I need to reference the teachings of *Mahatma Gandhi*. He dealt with similar situations when he freed India from British rule and later, dealt with a difficult conflict between the *Hindu* and *Muslim* cultures. *Gandhi* offered us this gem on violence to consider:

*"I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent."*  
- *Mahatma Gandhi*

Be Gandhi.

Do not give power to your oppressor by attacking them.  
Peace.



*J.A. "Dread" Dohm has been a fixture in the Adventure Gaming Industry since the 1997. He has experience in every area of the*

*Industry, but most notably in publishing, game design, screenwriting, and retail asset management. Dread owns Industrial Dream Mills, makers of Steamfortress Victory RPG, and is currently serving as Greater Games Industry's Brand Manager. If you have questions, he can be contacted at [ggicadsales@gmail.com](mailto:gadicadsales@gmail.com).*