

Emails Related to 2023 Hugo Awards Censorship

All emails provided by Diane Lacey related to censorship of the 2023 Hugo Awards are contained in this PDF. The emails were proved to Chris M. Barkley and Jason Sanford for their report *The 2023 Hugo Awards: A Report on Censorship and Exclusion*, which was published simultaneously on File770 and Genre Grapevine.

Personal email addresses of the people on the Hugo Award administration team have been redacted out of privacy and safety concerns. In addition, the name of one Hugo administrator who was cc'd on the shared emails but didn't respond to any of the emails was redacted. Otherwise the emails haven't been altered or edited in any way.

The authors of this report initially received these emails in a printed format. Some of the emails in this combined PDF are from a scanned version of these printed copies.

Fwd: Hugo research

Diane Lacey <[REDACTED]>
To: Jason Sanford <[REDACTED]>

Tue, Feb 13, 2024 at 6:28 PM

Found it. I've sent it to Chris separately.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **GrandUniversalDave** <[REDACTED]>
Date: Mon, Jun 5, 2023, 00:55
Subject: Hugo research
To: Kat Jones <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED], Diane Lacey <[REDACTED]>

Hey folks. This is us, the group of folks that are validating the Hugo finalists.

I am still finishing validating the canonicalization, so only about half of the categories are ready to start, but the other half should be ready by Monday evening or Tuesday morning.

I am creating a spreadsheet showing the top 10 items in each category. I would like **all** of the top 10 items (in English) checked for each category by at least 2 different people. The spreadsheet will have two locations to fill in who validated the item and if it passed or had an issue that needs discussion.

In addition to the regular technical review, as we are happening in China and the **laws** we operate under are different...we need to highlight anything of a sensitive political nature in the work. It's not necessary to read everything, but if the work focuses on China, taiwan, tibet, or other topics that may be an issue **in** China...that needs to be highlighted so that we can determine if it is safe to put it on the ballot of if the law will require us to make an administrative decision about it.

I would **like** to be in a position to start finalist contacts by Friday, so this is somewhat timely work.

The categories will be self service...so if you can help sooner, you get the benefit of picking the categories you like the best.

Thank you so much for helping, the spreadsheet should be in the dropbox in an hour or so.

--

Dave McCarty

Fwd: Hugo research emails from Diane

Chris M. Barkley <[REDACTED]>
To: Jason Sanford <[REDACTED]>

Tue, Feb 6, 2024 at 8:07 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Diane Lacey** <[REDACTED]>
Date: Tue, Feb 6, 2024, 6:53 PM
Subject: Fwd: Hugo research
To: Chris M. Barkley <[REDACTED]>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Kat Jones** <[REDACTED]@com>
Date: Wed, Jun 7, 2023 at 5:37 PM
Subject: Re: Hugo research
To: GrandUniversalDave <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Diane Lacey <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED]

Fan Writer potential issues:

This category has the potential to be problematic, under the constraints you've listed, for most non-Chinese fan writers. I'm not sure whether "critical of the Chengdu Worldcon" or "critical of the idea of holding a Worldcon in China" would count as "negatives of China" - I'm pointing out examples of both that I find for these fan writers out of an abundance of caution, because I'm assuming we're talking about the safety of our Chinese con-running friends when we're making these evaluations. Maybe any fan writer concerns can be mitigated by asking them to curate their voter packet materials with our Chinese friends' safety in mind?

- Jason Sanford
 - "Look, there are legit political and other concerns that can be raised about holding Worldcon in China." Note the majority of the twitter thread is supportive of Chengdu.
Source: <https://twitter.com/jasonsanford/status/1472212171643838465> - not posted during the year of eligibility
 - Article about Chinese science fiction, also before the year of eligibility. It reads positively to me, but flagging out of abundance of caution since it does mention the Chinese government and talks about Chinese history, and I don't have knowledge of what would be problematic: <https://www.patreon.com/posts/look-at-science-23678627>
 - In a Genre Grapevine update on Chengdu Worldcon: "I'm well aware of the current tensions between the U.S. and Chinese governments, and I also understand the reasons many SF/F fans have said they can't consider going to this year's Worldcon. But I also spoke with many of the SF/F fans from Chengdu who went to last year's Worldcon in Chicago. We all love science fiction and fantasy and it remains my hope that, despite the disagreements I have with many of the actions of the Chinese government, that this Worldcon can help bridge and bring together our shared international fandoms." Source: <https://www.patreon.com/posts/genre-grapevine-79355392> - posted this year (not in the year of eligibility)
 - Mention of the Polish fan petition calling on the 2023 Chengdu Worldcon to revoke Sergey Lukyanenko's invitation as a guest of honor in a Genre Grapevine. Source: <https://www.patreon.com/posts/genre-grapevine-76590909> (within the year of eligibility)

- From that same December 22 Genre Grapevine, "This video of Taiwan 7-Eleven mascot Openchan flying away to freedom always bring a smile to my face." (video is just an inflatable mascot blowing away in the wind, but you said any mention of Taiwan)
- Mention in a Genre Grapevine that "Archive of Our Own has been blocked in China by new censorship rules." Source: <https://www.patreon.com/posts/genre-grapevine-34677537> (not in the year of eligibility)
- Mention of a writer based in Taiwan in a Genre Grapevine (section titled The Harassment of Climate Fiction). Source: <https://www.patreon.com/posts/genre-grapevine-43785916> (not in the year of eligibility)
- Paul Weimer
 - Traveled to Tibet and tweeted pictures and talked about food. When activists gave him a hard time he said he didn't think it was unethical to travel there and asked to not talk about the politics, so doesn't seem problematic, but you asked for any mention of Tibet. (not in the year of eligibility)
 - Brief Twitter discussion with Jeannette Ng about Hong Kong: https://twitter.com/jeannette_ng/status/1054760139977383941 (not in the year of eligibility)
 - Brief Twitter mention of Hong Kong and reference to Tiananmen Square: https://twitter.com/meg_evonne/status/518007429779685377 (not in the year of eligibility)
 - Review of SL Huang's *The Water Outlaws* goes into Chinese history and praises Huang for "tak[ing] one of the pillars of Chinese literature and reinvent[ing] it as a queer, feminist retelling of an important and nation-defining story." Not sure whether any of this is negative of China or no. Source: <http://www.nerds-feather.com/2023/05/review-water-outlaws-by-s-l-huang.html> (not in the year of eligibility - posted last month)
 - Support of the Chengdu Worldcon but negatives about the Chinese government in a Patreon article in December 2021, so not in the year of eligibility (barely): "So now I am going to talk about China and its forthcoming Worldcon. There has been a lot regarding the Chengdu (now winning) bid. Some of it has been racially ugly as sin. The apparent attempt by members of the Winnipeg (the competing bid) to push an interpretation of the WSFS constitution regarding voting information in order to potentially disqualify a large number of ballots for the Chinese bid is, frankly, reprehensible. Other areas of the SFF internet have just gone full bore Red Scare racist, implying or saying that the CCP (Communist Party of China) has "bought" a Worldcon. That in and of itself is nonsense. There are a LOT of Chinese SF fans and this year, they mobilized. So 2023, Worldcon will be in China. Shockingly, this will only be the second ever East Asian Worldcon. Now here is where I cross the streams. 10,000 (just pulling a number out of my hat as to the size of this Worldcon but it's not unreasonable) people gathering in one place, at one time, IS going to draw the eye and attention of the Chinese Government and not in a good way. Authoritarian governments tend to watch large gatherings very carefully. They *have* to, to help maintain their own power. Plus, it may already be "too late" if there are, and its dollars to donuts that there are, fans of SF within the CCP. The CCP may not be content with just the already horrible prospect of monitoring the 2023 Worldcon closely. What if they decide to, say, sponsor the Hugo Award ceremony a la Raytheon and Google? Or some other aspect of the con? Chengdu is not going to be able to say no. It is literally an offer they can't refuse. I feel bad for my fellow fans in Chengdu. I do not envy their position in trying to put on a Worldcon in such a country, such an environment, with such a looming shadow. Ordinary Worldcons are stressful and difficult enough to pull off as it is.(4)" Source: <https://www.patreon.com/posts/60266480>
 - Review of Shelley Parker-Chan's *She Who Became the Sun* also delves into Chinese history, not sure whether it's problematic: <https://www.patreon.com/posts/patreon-review-50478281> (not in the year of eligibility)
 - There's apparently some talk about Tibet and China in this podcast, which I'm not going to take the time to listen to unless you need me to: <https://www.sffaudio.com/the-sffaudio-podcast-404-readalong-the-call-of-cthulhu-by-h-p-lovecraft/>
 - Shared the 'open letter to Worldcon Committee to revoke Chengdu bid' but was not a signatory: <https://twitter.com/PrinceJvstin/status/1500974323959361537> (within year of eligibility)
- Bitter Karella (Midnight Society):
 - A number of tweets making fun of people (mostly politicians) who are trying to fear-monger over China or being sarcastic about China, but there's potential that the 'making fun of' aspect might not translate. Samples: <https://twitter.com/bitterkarella/status/1421577729334411266>, <https://twitter.com/bitterkarella/status/1185763919647793152>, <https://twitter.com/bitterkarella/status/1137896167314825216>

- I don't follow anything on Twitter really, and Bitter Karella is prolific. It's possible there are veiled references to things that could be negatives about China in the little stories that don't show up in word searches, but word searches only show up a handful of the sarcastic things mentioned above.
- Chris Barkley:
 - Has shared a lot of news related to China which may or may not be viewed favorably by the government, some samples: <https://m.facebook.com/groups/many.jofs/posts/5741790102582699/>,
 - Commentary on Chengdu winning the bid: "A lot of fans were openly lamenting that the 81st World Science Fiction Convention was going to be held in what many, including myself, consider a totalitarian, one party police state. On the other side, the Chinese government has not only been encouraging people to read, they have been vociferously promoting the reading and writing of science fiction. Chinese fandom has grown exponentially in the past twenty years and the group that put together the Chengdu bid has been working towards this year's Site Selection for the better part of a decade. ... The biggest obstacle for everyone involved is whether or not the government of the People's Republic of China will be involved with the Chengdu Worldcon. Because if the powers that be in Beijing decide to interfere with the programming, who may or may not attend or the administration of the Hugo Awards, I can pretty much guarantee that fandom will make sure that the first World Science Fiction Convention on Chinese soil will definitely be the last, at least in my lifetime." Source: <https://file770.com/barkley-discon-iii-reporters-notebook-and-observations/> (not in the year of eligibility)
 - Another article on Chengdu is largely positive and a call out to everyone to come together to make Chengdu work, but includes: "Complicating and confounding the situation even further is the geopolitical tensions between the United States and the PRC. Among the many burning unanswered questions I have to ask is to what extent the local, provincial and/or the upper echelons of PRC's government are involved with the Worldcon? Because that is what numerous commentators were afraid of happening during the campaign between Winnipeg and Chengdu leading up to the Site Selection election at DisCon III. Do they see the Worldcon as a possible propaganda coup or as a political nuisance? Is it possible that they are completely indifferent? No one knows." Source: <https://file770.com/barkley-so-glad-you-didnt-ask-73/> (not in the year of eligibility; published this year)
 - Mentioned Hong Kong in his Windycon Fan GOH speech: <https://file770.com/barkley-so-glad-you-didnt-ask-a-column-of-unsolicited-opinions-46/> (not in the year of eligibility)
- O. Westin (@MicroSFF):
 - Didn't find anything problematic! Not very easily or reliably Google-able though.
- Alex Brown:
 - Multiple brief book reviews on her blog (linked in the spreadsheet) that mention China in reference to the books that are about China, but nothing editorial, just stating what the books are about.
 - Brief reviews about articles which cover China's campaign against Muslim minorities: <https://bookjockeyalex.com/2021/01/31/reading-round-up-for-january-2021/> and <https://bookjockeyalex.com/2020/08/31/reading-round-up-for-august-2020/> and <https://bookjockeyalex.com/2019/10/31/reading-round-up-for-october-2019/> (not in the year of eligibility)
 - Twitter comment that it's not safe for them to go to Chengdu (without elaboration): <https://twitter.com/QueenOfRats/status/1472986466649198592> (not in the year of eligibility)
 - Agreed with Jeannette Ng's comments on Hong Kong: <https://twitter.com/stevenhalter/status/1163219804381036545> (not in the year of eligibility)
- Camestros Felapton
 - A three-part blog post that may be really quite problematic if writing that was done prior to the eligibility year is important to the evaluation: <https://camestrosfelapton.wordpress.com/2019/11/26/how-to-talk-about-china-part-3/>, <https://camestrosfelapton.wordpress.com/2019/10/11/how-to-avoid-talking-about-china/>, <https://camestrosfelapton.wordpress.com/2019/06/01/how-to-talk-about-russia/>
 - "Obviously, there are major concerns about the current Chinese government, including the degree to which China is safe to visit for fans who have expressed opposition to the government's policies, as well as other substantial points of concern." Source: <https://camestrosfelapton.wordpress.com/2021/12/19/2023-worldcon-to-be-in-chengdu-china/> (not in the year of eligibility)

- Commentary on that "open letter" which might be viewed as negative towards China: <https://camestrosfelapton.wordpress.com/2022/03/09/on-site-selection/> (published in the year of eligibility)
- Has some book reviews about books set in real or alt-history China (like the Shelley Parker-Chan) but without much editorializing in a way that seems negative about China.
- Twitter thread that doesn't actually say China is bad, but implies it: <https://twitter.com/CamestrosF/status/1502556041485045760> (within the year of eligibility).
- There's more; let me know if you need me to keep going
- Alasdair Stuart
 - Some stories/author bios that mention Hong Kong or Taiwan have been on his runs of Escape Pod a few times over the years
 - Refers to John Cena as a "semi-pro China apologizer" in <https://alasdairstuart.files.wordpress.com/2022/05/the-full-lid-2022-voter-packet.pdf> (not in the year of eligibility)
 - Several references to Hong Kong in a story here <https://us8.campaign-archive.com/?u=a0e2b590b7db9ab7d2927942c&id=5e2a4c3aec> (not in the year of eligibility)
 - Wants to go to a Batman hotel in Taiwan, but I think it's more about Batman than Taiwan. But you asked for any mention of Taiwan. <https://twitter.com/amalthya/status/276020888346968066> (not in the year of eligibility)

On Tue, Jun 6, 2023 at 6:36 PM Kat Jones <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Best Novel potential issues:

Babel has a lot about China. I haven't read it, and am not up on Chinese politics, so cannot say whether it would be viewed as "negatives of China" - plot description is here: [Babel, or the Necessity of Violence - Wikipedia](#)

The Daughter of Doctor Moreau - there's talk about importing hacienda workers from China. I have not read the book, and do not know whether this would be considered "negative." Source: page 7 and 8 here: [THE DAUGHTER OF DOCTOR MOREAU Book Club Kit by PRH Library - Issuu](#)

Hopefully for the novels it will be an easy check while you're in China - perhaps Chinese fans can see whether these novels are offered for sale in China? That might mean they're safe?

Thanks,
Kat

On Tue, Jun 6, 2023 at 4:32 PM GrandUniversalDave <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Just put a flag like *issue* in the spreadsheet and then send one email per category to all of us detailing the issues you identified.

On Tue, Jun 6, 2023 at 12:25 PM Diane Lacey <[REDACTED]> wrote:

I have figured out that there is one spreadsheet, and have edited to show I picked the category. Thank you for your patience.

I am unclear, however, as to where to send any issues I may have identified.

Diane

On Tue, Jun 6, 2023 at 12:06 PM Diane Lacey <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Apologize, but I'm new to this method. I have been able to download to my own dropbox, but have not been able to edit or show how I may have picked a category.

I'm currently looking at Babel, and I have thoughts.

Any help would be appreciated.

Diane

On Mon, Jun 5, 2023 at 12:55 AM GrandUniversalDave <[REDACTED]> wrote:
Hey folks. This is us, the group of folks that are validating the Hugo finalists.

I am still finishing validating the canonicalization, so only about half of the categories are ready to start, but the other half should be ready by Monday evening or Tuesday morning.

I am creating a spreadsheet showing the top 10 items in each category. I would like *all* of the top 10 items (in English) checked for each category by at least 2 different people. The spreadsheet will have two locations to fill in who validated the item and if it passed or had an issue that needs discussion.

In addition to the regular technical review, as we are happening in China and the *laws* we operate under are different...we need to highlight anything of a sensitive political nature in the work. It's not necessary to read everything, but if the work focuses on China, taiwan, tibet, or other topics that may be an issue *in* China...that needs to be highlighted so that we can determine if it is safe to put it on the ballot of if the law will require us to make an administrative decision about it.

I would *like* to be in a position to start finalist contacts by Friday, so this is somewhat timely work.

The categories will be self service...so if you can help sooner, you get the benefit of picking the categories you like the best.

Thank you so much for helping, the spreadsheet should be in the dropbox in an hour or so.

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Dave McCarty



Diane Lacey <[REDACTED]>

Hugo research

Diane Lacey <[REDACTED]>

Wed, Jun 7, 2023 at 12:46 PM

To: Kat Jones <[REDACTED]>

Cc: GrandUniversalDave <[REDACTED]>

Astounding award possible issues:

Xiran Jay Zhou: The Iron Giant is described as a reimagining of the rise of the Chinese Empress Wu Zetian. Including it because I don't know if that would be a negative in China. Zhou is also active on social media, described on Wikipedia as an "internet personality".

Naseem Jamnia - Author openly describes themselves as queer, nonbinary, trans, (And again, good for them), and frequently writes about gender, particularly non-binary. The cited work also relies on these themes. I include them because I don't know how that will play in China. (I suspect less than well.)

Sue Lynn Tan - Again, Daughter of the Moon Goddess, is inspired by Chinese mythology. No idea if it might be viewed as a negative in China.



Diane Lacey <[REDACTED]>

Hugo research

Kat Jones <[REDACTED]>

Mon, Jun 5, 2023 at 9:57 PM

To: GrandUniversalDave <[REDACTED]>

Cc: [REDACTED] Diane Lacey <[REDACTED]>

Thanks, Dave. Do let us know if there are other specifics you'll need us to flag to be able to make your decisions.

Also, just confirming we're still waiting for the spreadsheet? I see two Dropbox folders but haven't found a research spreadsheet, so just wanted to make sure I haven't missed it.

Safe travels and rapid jetlag recovery!

Best,
Kat

On Mon, Jun 5, 2023 at 7:18 PM GrandUniversalDave <[REDACTED]> wrote:

At the moment, the best guidance I have is "mentions of Hong Kong, Taiwan, Tibet, negatives of China".

I will try to get better guidance when I have a chance to dig into this deeper with the CHinese folks on the committee.

I should be *in* Chengdu in about 5 hours and the rest of my day is open, so the balance of the categories *should* finish final muster today.

--
Dave

On Mon, Jun 5, 2023 at 8:09 AM Kat Jones <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Thanks, Dave, and hi [REDACTED] and Diane!

Dave, do you have a list or a resource you can point us to that elaborates on "other topics that may be an issue *in* China"?

Thanks,
Kat

On Sun, Jun 4, 2023 at 11:55 PM GrandUniversalDave <[REDACTED]> wrote:

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Thank you so much for helping, the spreadsheet should be in the dropbox in an hour or so.

--
Dave McCarty

Fwd: Status update from me - Chengdu hugos

Chris M. Barkley <[REDACTED]>
To: Jason Sanford <[REDACTED]>

Tue, Feb 6, 2024 at 12:32 PM

Message 3...

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Diane Lacey** <[REDACTED]>
Date: Mon, Feb 5, 2024 at 8:33 PM
Subject: Fwd: Status update from me - Chengdu hugos
To: Chris M. Barkley <[REDACTED]>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **GrandUniversalDave** <[REDACTED]>
Date: Wed, Jun 7, 2023 at 6:18 PM
Subject: Status update from me - Chengdu hugos
To: Kat Jones <[REDACTED]>, Diane Lacey <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED]

Just to keep you guys in the loop.

Short Story, Series, Graphic story, and the BDPs are still not fully canonicalized yet.

I should finish those tonight. though I am going to **try** to get short story finished in the 45 minutes I have left before I need to get going for today's meetings.

Tomorrow I have a 4 hour meeting with my Chinese counterpart to look at ballot detail and determine if any ballots are to be voided (which happens with frequency so that it's not **really** that controversial if we determine we need to do it) as well as what things we need to move categories. This means it would be **really** helpful if we could do the short fiction research in the next 24-36 hours because that's the place where "need to move category" seems most likely.

Once we deal with category moves and voids, we'll re-run EPH. If something new pops on the radar (i.e. makes it to the top 6 without having been in the top 10 to this point), I'll do my best to highlight that **immediately**.

The chairs and the administrators will review the items we've highlighted in research Friday evening if we have enough time after the ballot review...otherwise we'll be looking at it on Saturday (China time, of course, so we're about 13 hours ahead of you).

My goal at this point is to get invitation emails going in principle this weekend and we're tentatively looking at a ballot announcement around June 20 to 22. If we need to push a week for the announcement, we can. Voting will open June 30. As long as we make the announcement before we're ready to open voting, I will feel a great sense of accomplishment.

Thank you guys so much for your help.

--

Dave