

## = Fuck : Word Taboo and Protecting Our First Amendment Liberties =

Fuck : Word Taboo and Protecting Our First Amendment Liberties is a nonfiction book by law professor Christopher M. Fairman about freedom of speech , the First Amendment to the United States Constitution , censorship , and use of the word fuck in society . The book was first published in 2009 by Sphinx as a follow @-@ up on the author 's article " Fuck " , published in 2007 in the Cardozo Law Review . It cites studies from academics in social science , psychoanalysis , and linguistics . Fairman establishes that most current usages of the word have connotations distinct from its meaning of sexual intercourse . The book discusses the efforts of conservatives in the United States to censor the word from common parlance . The author says that legal precedent regarding its use is unclear because of contradictory court decisions . Fairman argues that once citizens allow the government to restrict the use of specific words , this will lead to an encroachment upon freedom of thought .

The book received a mostly favorable reception from news sources and library trade publications . Library Journal described the book as a sincere analysis of the word and its history of censorship , Choice : Current Reviews for Academic Libraries called it stimulating , and the San Diego Law Review said it was thought @-@ provoking . One reviewer said that the book , like the article , was a format for the author to repeatedly use " fuck " , rather than actually analyze it from a rigorous perspective . After the book 's release , Fairman was consulted by media sources including CNN and The New York Times , as well as the American Civil Liberties Union , on issues surrounding word taboo in society .

## = = Background = =

Christopher M. Fairman graduated from the University of Texas at Austin . He taught high @-@ school level history for nine years before returning to his alma mater where he ultimately received his Juris Doctor degree . He worked as a clerk on the Texas Court of Appeals for the Third District for Justice J. Woodfin Jones . Subsequently , he was a clerk on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit for Judge Fortunato P. Benavides , and worked for the law firm Weil Gotshal in their office in Dallas . Fairman became a professor at Ohio State University 's Moritz College of Law in 2000 . He specialized in areas of freedom of speech and word taboo , and earned a reputation as an expert on the subject of legal ethics .

Fairman was motivated to conduct research on " fuck " after learning of a Columbus , Ohio , man who was arrested for using the word in an email to a judge in 2004 . Fairman delayed writing the article until he received tenure because he was concerned its publication would adversely affect his professional reputation . Nevertheless , his supervisors did not try to convince him to cease research into the topic . Government funding helped finance Fairman 's scholarship .

His original 2006 article " Fuck " is an analysis of forbidden speech from linguistic and legal perspectives . It covers use of the word in case studies about sexual harassment and education . The article is 74 pages long , and the word fuck appears over 560 times . According to author Jesse Sheidlower in his book The F @-@ Word , Fairman 's work is the first academic article with the title of simply " Fuck " .

Fairman made his article available as a working paper on the Social Science Research Network website on April 17 , 2006 . Initially the author unsuccessfully tried to have the article published by providing copies to multiple U.S. law reviews . The Kansas Law Review rejected his article 25 minutes after receipt . It was published by the Cardozo Law Review in 2007 . The author wrote a follow @-@ up piece in April 2007 titled " Fuck and Law Faculty Rankings " . Fairman died on July 22 , 2015 . At the time of his death , Fairman 's 2007 Cardozo Law Review article , " Fuck " was still classed with the 20 top downloaded works on the Social Science Research Network .

## = = Content summary = =

Fuck cites studies from academics in social science , psychoanalysis , and linguistics . Of the

sixteen chapters in the book , eight use the word " fuck " in their titles . He discusses uses of the word from the 15th century onwards . Fairman establishes that most current usages have connotations distinct from its denotation of sexual intercourse , and asserts that rather than having sexual meaning , the word 's use is most commonly associated with power .

Fairman discusses the efforts of conservatives in the United States to censor the word from common parlance in the country , and says these acts are opposed to the First Amendment to the United States Constitution . Fairman warns against a tendency toward self @-@ censorship . He explains that those who choose to silence themselves tacitly encourage a process by which speech is forbidden through the legal process . He argues that this passivity has an impact of increasing the taboo nature of the word .

Fairman writes that legal precedent regarding use of the word is unclear because of contradictory court decisions . He presents case studies of these contradictory applications of the law , and uses them to analyze public perceptions surrounding freedom of speech . He provides examples of exceptions to the First Amendment , such as speech intended to cause violent acts , and discusses the manner in which federal and state governments sanction these exceptions . Fairman draws parallels between protection of comedians ' usage of taboo language to the ability of individuals in society to express ideas freely . He argues that once citizens allow the government to restrict specific words that can be used in speech , this will lead to an encroachment upon freedom of thought .

= = Reception = =

Fuck : Word Taboo and Protecting Our First Amendment Liberties was first published in 2009 in paperback by Sphinx Publishing , and in an electronic format for the Amazon Kindle the same year . The Seattle Post @-@ Intelligencer called Fairman 's paper compelling and amusing . The Horn Book Magazine described the paper as a contemplative scholarly work which was simultaneously an engaging read . Writing in the San Diego Law Review , Orly Lobel called Fairman 's article a thought @-@ provoking analysis into how the law and the First Amendment address issues of sexual language . In a 2011 article for the Federal Communications Law Journal , W. Wat Hopkins was critical of Fairman 's article and subsequent book , writing that both appeared to be formats for the author to repeatedly use the word " fuck " , rather than actually analyze the subject from a rigorous perspective .

A review of the book in Publishers Weekly called it a vibrant extension of his article , and described it as educational and assertive in its promotion of freedom of speech , particularly in the face of the controversial language discussed . Choice : Current Reviews for Academic Libraries reviewed Fuck and called it a stimulating book . The review concluded , " [ h ] ighly recommended . All readership levels . "

Library Journal described the book as a sincere analysis of " fuck " and its history of censorship . The review characterized the book as of a higher quality than The Compleat Motherfucker : A History of the Mother of all Dirty Words ( 2009 ) by Jim Dawson . Ian Crouch of The New Yorker praised the cover design for the book . Crouch observed that the word Fuck was shown partially obscured by correction fluid but was still clearly evident in full . He concluded this was an appropriate image for a book on free speech and word taboo .

After the book 's publication , Fairman was consulted by media sources , including CNN , on issues involving word taboo . The American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio invited Fairman to host its forum " Word Taboos " in 2010 ; his presentation was titled " Putting the ' F ' in Free Speech " . In a 2012 article on the word " fuck " , The New York Times characterized Fairman as the foremost legal scholar in the United States on the word " fuck " .