

Acceptance Speech for Emperor Norton Award by Cindy Cohn on behalf of Cory Doctorow



One of the highlights of the Tachyon 13th Anniversary Party was Cindy Cohn's acceptance speech for Cory Doctorow's Norton Award. Cindy Cohn is the Legal Director of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, and we were lucky to have her talk about Cory, *Little Brother*, and the EFF's lawsuit against the NSA:

Acceptance Speech for Emperor Norton Award on behalf of Cory Doctorow

By Cindy Cohn

September 21, 2008 @ Borderlands Bookstore

Thank you so much. I received a somewhat frantic call from Cory Friday night telling me that he'd won this award and asking if I could accept it on his behalf. He was so honored to have been chosen and very sad that he could not attend in person. He gave me both a small statement to say and instructions to tell you about a case that we launched this week at EFF, which relates well to Cory's amazing book. Here's what Cory asked me to say:

Many, many thanks to Tachyon, Borderlands and the city and readers of San Francisco for all that you've done over the years to nurture and inspire so many writers and so many activists -- and so many writer/activists! I'm deeply honored by this, and by the chance to join the ranks of the writers who've made San Francisco their homes and muses.

When Cory first told me about *Little Brother*, I told him that if anyone figured out what he was really doing here -- teaching the next generation of kids how to make technology work for them instead of against them -- it would be likely banned. I figured that as the Legal Director of the EFF I'd be the one he'd call first when it got banned, so I asked him to send it to me as soon as it was written, which he did. Luckily, I think he's still in the clear, in part because the people who are likely to be most concerned don't often read science fiction aimed at young adults. But I also think he's in the clear in large measure because he wrapped all the teaching in such a great story.

I also think that the link to San Francisco is important. Personally, I can no longer walk through the Civic Center without seeing vampires, visit the Sutro baths without thinking of key signing, or go to Dolores Park without wondering if someone is going to gas us. Cory changed the way I look at the city I live in and love, something only great stories can do.

And here's where EFF comes in. Cory's work and EFF's mission have long been intertwined, not just because he was with us for so long and drank so much of our Kool-Aid, but even before that. And the same is true for *Little Brother*. While we thankfully haven't yet had the next terrorist attack, the use of digital technology against ordinary people by an overreaching government is well underway. This week at EFF we filed a new lawsuit, called *Jewel v. NSA*, aimed at stopping one such invasion of our privacy, the NSA's dragnet surveillance of all of us, especially those of us in San Francisco.

That's because the strongest evidence in the case is about San Francisco, specifically the installation of a fiberoptic splitter in an AT&T facility on Folsom Street that is making copies of all of the internet traffic that goes through that facility and giving it to the NSA. Those of you who watch EFF know that we filed suit against AT&T with this same evidence in 2006, but in the last year AT&T and the Administration bullied Congress into passing something called "retroactive immunity" for the telecommunications companies, trying to let them off the hook. We're fighting that immunity in court, but this week we opened a second front, suing the government and government officials directly. This includes Bush, Cheney, and the other architects of this dragnet surveillance of millions of ordinary Americans, you, me and Marcus Yallow alike.

I know Cory sends his heartfelt thanks to Tachyon and Borderlands and to all of those who chose his work to honor today. And I add my thanks to Cory for allowing me to accept this on his behalf. I'm truly honored and I think you made a wonderful choice.
