



Discussion Guide

Scenes from a Bookstore: Free Speech Vignettes

Act I: Customer Complaint

- Scene 1: What could the bookseller have done differently?
- Scene 2: What did the bookseller do well?
 - Remain calm and listen to the customer's complaints.
 - Explain the store policy for ordering books.
 - Explain that it would be unfair to stop selling a book to other customers simply because some may find it objectionable. If necessary, politely offer to get the manager so that he/she can talk with the customer about the complaint.
- What other potentially controversial material does your store carry that could prompt complaints from customers?
- **TIP:** Be sure your store has posted [ABFFE's "To Our Customers" statement](#) where customers can read it.
- **TIP:** If your store does not do so already, consider participating in Banned Books Week this year by creating a display of books that have been banned or challenged in the past. Banned Books Week helps educate customers about the need to protect First Amendment rights. Take a look at [ABFFE's Online Banned Books Week Handbook](#) for suggestions on simple but effective Banned Books Week displays.

Act II: Censorship vs. Selection

- Scene 1: How else could the bookseller respond to the customer's queries?
- Scene 2: What did the bookseller do well?
 - o She offered to order the books and/or call other stores to find them for the customer.
 - o She explained that the store stocks a wide variety of materials and makes an effort to cater to the needs and interests of the community.
 - o She explained that the store doesn't regularly order the books because they don't tend to sell well, not out of any ideological or political bias.

Act III: Customer Privacy

- Scene 1: What did they do wrong? Why is it important to keep customers' personal information private?
- Scene 2: What would you do in this situation?
 - o If you are asked for customer information by a law enforcement official, say "I need to talk to my attorney," and call ABFFE.
- **TIP:** Does your store have a privacy policy in place explaining that you will not give information about customers' reading choices to law enforcement without a subpoena? We recommend that you post [**ABFFE's "To Our Customers" Statement**](#) in a place visible to customers.
- **TIP:** Distribute [**ABFFE's Guide to Protecting Customer Privacy in Bookstores**](#).
- **TIP:** Post [**ABFFE's First Amendment emergency card**](#) by the store phone.

This discussion guide and YouTube versions of the film are available online at <http://www.abffe.com/dvdguide.htm>.