

# ARCHIE'S BETTY

**An independent documentary search for the real-life people behind the characters in *Archie* comics.**

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

The filmmaker, a devoted *Archie* fan, makes an independent documentary search for the real-life people behind the characters in the ever-popular *Archie* comics. Were Archie, Betty, Veronica, Moose, and Jughead based on actual students whom Bob Montana, the original Archie cartoonist, knew in high school in the 1930s in Haverhill, Massachusetts?

## SYNOPSIS

*Archie's Betty* is an independent documentary search by journalist and filmmaker Gerald Peary to determine if the characters in *Archie* comics—Archie, Betty, Veronica, Moose, Jughead, etc.-- were modeled on real-life people. As an *Archie*-obsessed child, Peary believed that somewhere in America there was a real town of Riverdale, where Archie and his teen friends went to school. As an adult, he found that his fantasy might have basis in fact. Riverdale could be the city of Haverhill, Massachusetts, where Bob Montana, the original cartoonist of Archie, attended high school in the mid-1930s.

Did Montana love Haverhill High so much that he based *Archie* characters on students in his classes? Was Archie inspired by a girl-crazy Haverhill High cutup? Was Veronica modeled on the most popular girl at the high school? Was Betty based on the girl living next door to young Bob? And what of Moose and Jughead?

For *Archie's Betty*, Peary meets with Montana's surviving classmates, a veteran *Archie* cartoonist, and Archie experts to unravel the real story. The search culminates at a senior living facility in Edison, New Jersey. Might a 91-year-old woman living there, far from Haverhill, be the basis for one of Archie Comics' immortal characters?

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As an *Archie*-obsessed child, a Jewish boy growing up in the 1950s segregated South, I dreamed of living in the real "Riverdale," the All-American, mythic town depicted in *Archie* comics. Many years later, as an adult, I discovered that my childhood fantasy was not absurd at all. In 1988, I read a letter in a newspaper asserting that *Archie's* Riverdale was modeled after the real town of Haverhill, Massachusetts. That's where Archie's original cartoonist, Bob Montana, had lived and gone to school. Riverdale High was actually, the letter claimed, Montana's Haverhill High.

That was "a Proustian moment," taking me instantly back to my childhood, where I had lived for *Archie* comic books. I just couldn't believe that, residing in Haverhill,

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were people who had inspired the *Archie* characters. A real Archie? A real Veronica and Betty? A real Moose and Jughead? I was commissioned by the *Boston Globe* to write about the “Haverhill Connection” and *Archie* comics. I spent many weeks in Haverhill speaking with those who’d gone to high school with the late Montana, and also with Peg Bertholet, the cartoonist’s widow. As for Haverhillites, they were eager to suggest real-life people--students, teachers, and administrators of Haverhill High—who inspired the *Archie* characters.

My April 10, 1988, *Boston Globe Sunday Magazine* story was the first major article to argue for the validity of the Haverhill-is-Riverdale theory. The character of Archie Andrews seems to be based on a girl-crazy Haverhill High cut-up. Veronica could be the most popular girl at the high school. Betty appeared to be the girl who lived next door to young Bob. I also proposed Haverhillites for Jughead, Moose, Miss Grundy. In 1988, I left Haverhill behind for more than 20 years, convinced that I’d solved the *Archie* mystery.

In 2010, a comic book expert named Shaun Clancy contacted me. He said that my *Globe* research was not entirely accurate. It needed updating. So, decades after the newspaper article, I renewed my investigation of the origin of the Archie characters — this time making a documentary film. Clancy and I become producing partners.

In *Archie's Betty*, I incorporate Clancy’s detective work, meet with *Archie* experts and Montana’s still-surviving Haverhill classmates. My 25-year journey culminates at a senior living facility in Edison, New Jersey. Might a 91-year-old woman living there be the basis for one of *Archie Comics*’ immortal characters?

## WEBSITES

Official Website

[www.bigsleepfilms.com](http://www.bigsleepfilms.com)

IMDb

<http://www.IMDb.com/title/tt4584822/>

Social Media

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Archies-Betty/1638526546375839?fref=ts>

## TECHNICAL DETAILS

BIG SLEEP FILMS, LLC.

Bigsleepfilms.com

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# ARCHIE'S BETTY

Running time: 79 minutes

Picture: Color + B/W

Aspect Ratio: 1.78 (16x9 VIDEO)

Shooting Format: HDV

Screening formats: DCP, BLU-RAY, HDCAM, .MOV (Quicktime), DVD

Main Dialogue Language: English

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## CREW BIOGRAPHIES

**Gerald Peary (WRITER/DIRECTOR)** made his debut as director-writer with the acclaimed 2008 feature documentary, *For the Love of Movies: the Story of American Film Criticism*. He was a featured actor in the 2012 fiction film, *Computer Chess*. He has been a film critic for more than thirty-five years. From 1996-2012, he was a weekly reviewer for the *Boston Phoenix*. Currently, he is a film critic for the website, *The Arts Fuse*. He is a member of the National Society of Film Critics, and FIPRESCI (the International Film Critics Association). A Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin, Peary has taught film studies at Suffolk University, Boston, since 1980. He was a Fulbright Scholar, studying Yugoslavian Film Comedy in Belgrade, and Acting Curator of the Harvard University Film Archive. Since 1997, he has been the curator of the Boston University Cinematheque. He is the General Editor of the University Press of Mississippi "Conversations with Filmmakers" series. His nine books include co-editing the anthologies, *The Classic American Novel and the Movies*, *The American Animated Cartoon*, and *Women and the Cinema: A Critical Anthology*. His latest book is *Samuel Fuller: Interviews*.

**Shaun Clancy (PRODUCER, RESEARCHER)** has been reading and collecting comic books since age 8, and has spent the last 20 years investigating the history of comic books. He has interviewed countless people who have worked in the comic book business, in print and on radio, and has been published in *Alter Ego Magazine*, *Back Issue! Magazine*, *The Comics Journal*, *Comic Book Creator*, and *Comic Book Artist*. He has contributed his research to a dozen books, and appeared on the PBS series, *The History Detectives*. A native New Englander, Clancy resides in the state of Washington.

**David Reeder (EDITOR)** A long-time filmmaker, David Reeder has worked as a producer, editor and cameraman on films such as *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Fried Green Tomatoes*, *Ace Ventura 2-When Nature Calls* and *RoboCop3*. Reeder is an active documentarian and on the Board of Directors of Visionaries, Inc., producer of public television programming related to the nonprofit world. Reeder is also a Professional-in-Residence in the Department of Communication and Journalism at Suffolk University, where he teaches digital filmmaking and post-production courses. He is a native of Southern California who has lived and worked in Miami, New York, Los Angeles & Atlanta.

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**Aleksandar "Sasha" Lekic (CINEMATOGRAPHER/EDITOR)** has been an all-around video production person for the past 13 years. His documentary shorts have appeared on PBS, WorldlinkTV, at film festivals, and on Serbian National Television. His recent short, "Letter to my Grandchildren," about an artist trying to reconcile with his family, premiered at the 2014 Boston International Film Festival. Lekic is a production partner in Life Skills Productions, for which he has shot and edited numerous profiles of non-profits which make a difference in the world. His film and video work has taken him to Armenia, Ghana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and across the USA. Lekic has edited several episodes of *The Visionaries* PBS TV series, and was the co-editor of *For the Love of Movies: the Story of American Film Criticism*, a previous collaboration with filmmaker Gerald Peary.

**Allie Humenuk (CINEMATOGRAPHER)** is an award-winning filmmaker and much-employed director of photography, who was nominated for an Emmy as a cinematographer on the PBS Series, *Design Squad*. She has taught film and video production at Harvard University and the Massachusetts College of Art and for 15 years produced media about public health issues as the Executive Producer at Vida Health Communications. She is the director of the feature documentary, *Shadow of the House*, about the photographer, Abelardo Morrell. Currently, she is co-directing, co-producing, and shooting the feature-length gay rights documentary, *The Guys Next Door*.  
[www.asquaredfilms.com](http://www.asquaredfilms.com)

**David Lefkowitz (SOUND DESIGN/SOUND MIX)** A graduate of the Berklee College of Music, Lefkowitz has worked for many years around Boston in the recording business and as a recording engineer on music projects featuring regional and international artists. As a university professor at the New England Institute of Art and Bay State College, he has taught cross departmentally over 16 courses including Sound Design, Music Theory, Audio Technology, and Advanced Mixing. Lefkowitz has been composing music for twenty years. Recently he has become a playwright, a stage director, a multimedia artist. *Unyfi*, his audience-centered comical rock arts show, premiered in 2013. He is in process of producing a second rock-based show called *Inspyre*.

**Lucia Small (STORY EDITOR/POST-PRODUCTION PRODUCER)** is a 20-year veteran independent filmmaker. *One Cut, One Life* (2014), Small's most recent documentary feature, co-directed with Ed Pincus (1938-2013), played at Full Frame and the New York Film Festival, and is being theatrically distributed by First Run Features. Small's directorial debut, *My Father, The Genius* (2002), about her visionary architect father, won the Grand Jury Prizes for Best Documentary and Best Editing at the Slamdance Film Festival. She first teamed with Pincus to co-direct *The Axe in the Attic* (2007), a story about the diaspora of Hurricane Katrina. Earlier in her career, Small helped produce documentary projects for PBS, ITVS, and American Public Television. Now, when not directing and editing her own work, she works principally as an editor and story consultant. [www.smallangstfilms.com](http://www.smallangstfilms.com)

**Rob Ribera (ASSOCIATE PRODUCER)** is a Ph.D. candidate in the American and New England Studies program at Boston University. He is currently writing his

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dissertation on the works of Walt Disney, John Huston, Jacob Lawrence, and Bill Mauldin during and post-WWII, and is also editing a book of collected Martin Scorsese interviews. He earned an M.A. in English from St. John's University and an M.F.A. in Film Studies from Boston University. He is filming a short documentary with The Preservation Hall Jazz Band. He was an Associate Producer on Gerald Peary's 2009 film, *For the Love of Movies: The Story of American Film Criticism*.

**Kelly Ribera (ASSOCIATE PRODUCER)** earned an M.F.A. in Film Production from Boston University and is a co-creator of Sleepover Shows, an online music magazine featuring artists like Deer Tick, Nels Cline, Amanda Palmer, Trampled by Turtles, Frightened Rabbit, and OK GO. Sleepover Shows has received coverage by *The Boston Globe*, *The Boston Phoenix*, *Spin Magazine*, and *NME Magazine*. She is currently editing and producing short documentaries and has worked for several years in educational and publishing production work.

## ARCHIE'S BETTY CREDITS

### Written and Directed by

Gerald Peary

### Produced by

Shaun Clancy and Gerald Peary

### Co-Producers

Ellen Poss

David Reeder

### Edited by

Aleksandar Sasha Lekic

David Reeder

### Research Supervisor

Shaun Clancy

### Cinematographers

Allie Humenuk

Aleksandar Sasha Lekic

### Animation, Graphics, and Colorist

David Reeder

### Sound Design and Mix

David Lefkowitz

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## **Story Editor and Post-production Producer**

Lucia Small

## **Associate Producers**

Kelly Ribera  
Robert Ribera

## **Field Producer**

Amy Geller

## **Vocal Coach**

Lewis Wheeler

## **Additional Camera**

Mason Marino  
Joseph Shacar  
Robert Ribera  
Michael Clancy  
Reyan Martinez

## **Copyright Research**

Motion Picture Information Service (MPIS)

## **Transcriptions**

Kristina Michael

## **Graphics Assistants**

Alexandra Martinez  
David Lawlor

## **Post-production Assistants**

Anthony Mangini  
Joseph Shacar

## **Sound Recording Assistant**

Zanini "Zen" Cineus

## **Participants (in order of appearance):**

Natalie Pendergast  
Jeet Heer  
Gerald Peary  
Mark Murphy  
Charles Hayden  
Jane Murphy  
Ernie Greenslade

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Tom Moore  
Shaun Clancy  
Sandra Clancy  
Jonathan Merrifield  
Adele Jankovich  
Betty Tokar Jankovich  
Gabrielle Jankovich  
Barbara Lucey Tancredi  
Amy Geller

## **Narration**

Gerald Peary

## **Voices**

Lauren Berube  
Molly DeLisle  
Juliana Gale  
Nina Huntemann  
Gerald Peary  
David Reeder

## **Special Thanks**

Jason Carter  
**and**  
Steven Ascher  
Steven Barghusen  
Bill Cantwell  
Michael Clancy  
Veronica Clancy  
Phillip Clancy  
Charles Dixon  
Goldie Eder  
Amy Geller  
Dean Kenneth Greenberg  
Tim Jackson  
Sandra Jaffe  
Jeanne Jordan  
Gregory Klymkiw  
Eric Masunaga  
Don Montana  
Lynn Montana  
Paige Montana Kuether  
Ray Montana  
Sarah Moser  
Rhonda Moskowitz  
Robb Moss

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Danny Peary  
Suzanne Rafer  
Dr. Robert Rosenthal  
Rich Rubinfeld  
Elias Savada  
Karen Shatzkin  
Howard P. Stern

## **Additional Thanks**

*The Boston Globe*  
Connect the Docs  
The Haverhill Public Library  
The Heritage at Clara Barton, Edison, New Jersey  
*The Lawrence Eagle Tribune* Company  
The New England Institute of Art  
Northern Essex Community College, Haverhill, MA  
Pentucket Bank, Haverhill, MA  
Suffolk University Communications and Journalism Department, Boston MA  
The Sun Media Corporation  
The Uptown Café, Boston, and Adele Cataldo  
Web Head Comics, Wakefield, MA

## **Thanks**

Louis Alvarez  
Jay Cleary  
Garth Donovan  
Ken Edwards  
Peter Flynn  
Justin Freed  
Linda Gaines  
Judy Geller  
Mark Geller  
Elysia Hamelin  
Nancy House  
Robert Jaret  
Rob Lehmann  
Stanley Koubek  
John Kusiak  
William Lurie  
Jeff Linehan  
Jack Lynch  
Ruth Moore  
Chris McKenzie  
Annie Nocenti  
Janice Page  
Carl Russo

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Alice Stone  
Steven Thompson  
Jean Tremblay  
Lisa Tuite  
Charles Turner

The comic book art and characters in this film include: *X Men* published by Marvel Entertainment, LLC; *Superman* published by DC Entertainment; and Archie, Veronica, Betty and the rest of the Archie gang published in comics worldwide by Archie Comic Publications, Inc. — still going strong after almost 75 years!

## **Archival Footage and Materials**

Diaries by Bob Montana, 1936-1938,  
courtesy of the Montana Estate  
and courtesy of  
the Trustees of the Haverhill Public Library,  
Special Collections Department  
Prelinger Archives – Internet Archive  
Film clips from  
*The Birth of a Nation*, David W. Griffith Corp.  
*The Ropin' Fool*, Hal Roach Studios  
*Ecstasy*, Elektafilm  
*Love Finds Andy Hardy*, MGM Studios  
*Mother*, Mezhrabpomfilm

## **Archival Collections**

Shaun Clancy Collection  
Arnold Daggett Estate  
Ken Edwards Collection  
Barney Gallagher Collection  
Haverhill Public Library Special Collections  
Charlie Hayden Collection  
Elizabeth Tokar Jankovich Collection  
Jeff Linehan Collection  
Barbara Lucey Tancredi Estate  
William Lurie Collection  
Don Montana Collection  
Lynn Montana Collection  
Ray Montana Collection  
Tom Moore Collection  
Northern Essex Community College, Haverhill, MA  
Gerald Peary Collection  
Arthur Tremblay Estate  
Elizabeth Walker Bostwick Estate

## **Publications**

BIG SLEEP FILMS, LLC.

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*The Boston Globe Sunday Magazine* (April 10, 1988)

*The Merrimack Valley Evening Tribune*

Photos of Arnold Daggett, courtesy of *The Lawrence Eagle Tribune* Company

Cover of *The Haverhill Gazette*, courtesy of *The Haverhill Gazette* (May 16, 1989)

## Music

*Brightly Fancy, Clear Waters, Easy Lemon 60 Second, Eternal Hope, Feeling Good, Fluffing a Duck, Happy Boy End Theme, Heartwarming, Midsummer Sky, Mister Exposition, No Good Layabout, Olde Timey, One-eyed Maestro, Royal Banana, Shades of Spring, Super Circus, Sweeter Vermouth, and Take a Chance* by Kevin MacLeod  
(incompetech.com)

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*Blue Circles* by unreal\_dm 2011

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*nightingaleRemixed* by Airtone; 2010

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*Shaun's Song* written by Justin MacDonald

*Crusin'* composed by David Lefkowitz

with Mitchell Abel, guitar & Eglito Cheristin, keys

*Vintage TV Music Diddy* by David Lefkowitz

*Dixie* by Daniel Decatur Emmett of Mount Vernon, Ohio Reproduced by David Lefkowitz

## Legal Services Provided by

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