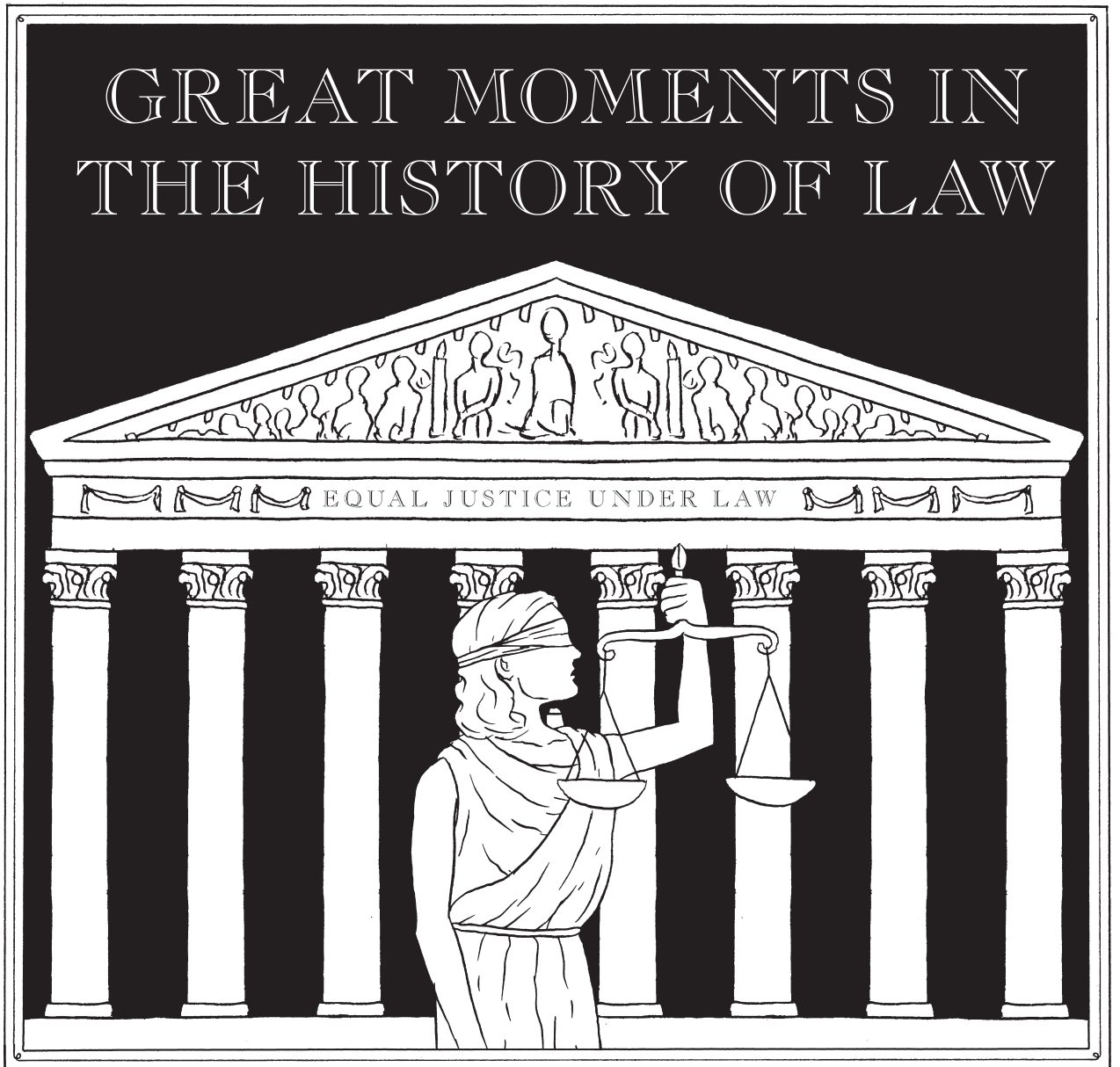
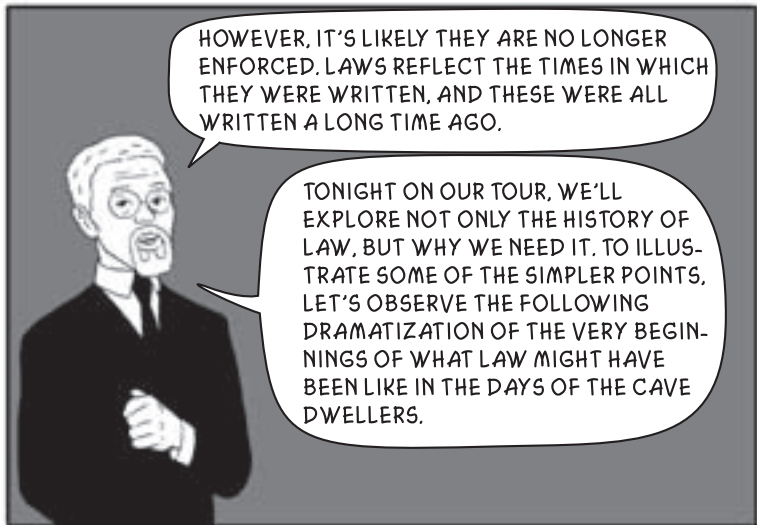
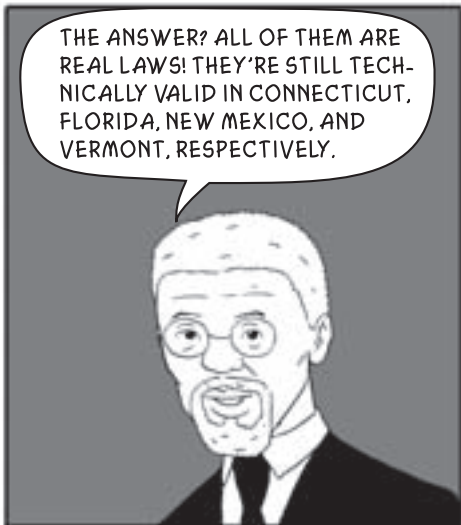
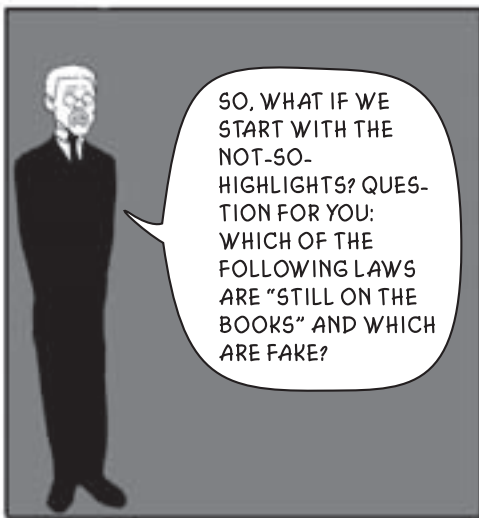


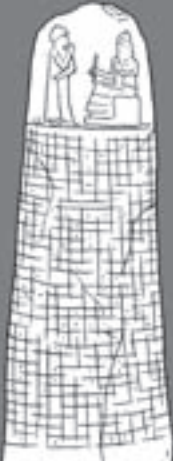
GRAPHIC NOVEL

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THE "CODE OF HAMMURABI" IS A COLLECTION OF WRITTEN LAWS COVERING FOUR FIELDS: ECONOMICS, FAMILY, CRIME AND CIVIL MATTERS.

THIS 2.2 METER HIGH BLOCK WAS EXCAVATED IN 1901 AND CONTAINS MOST OF THE GUIDELINES IN THE CODE, WRITTEN IN CUNEIFORM.



THE CODE ITSELF WASN'T WRITTEN BY HAMMURABI, BUT WAS PROBABLY A CONTINUATION AND RECORDING OF OLDER LAW SYSTEMS.



WHILE IT MAY NOT BE THE FIRST SET OF LAWS EVER WRITTEN, IT IS DEFINITELY ONE OF THE OLDEST SURVIVING EXAMPLES.

SO LAWS ARE SOMETHING THAT ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE FAIR IF "SET IN STONE," AS WE HAVE SEEN. WHAT ABOUT LAWMAKING? IF YOU DON'T HAVE A RULER OR KING WRITING LAWS, HOW DO THEY GET WRITTEN AND ENFORCED?

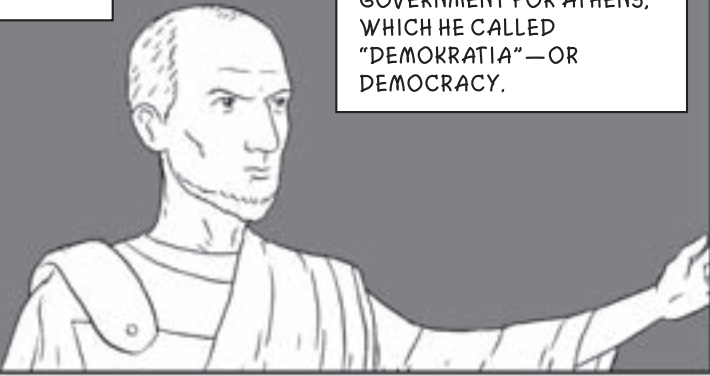


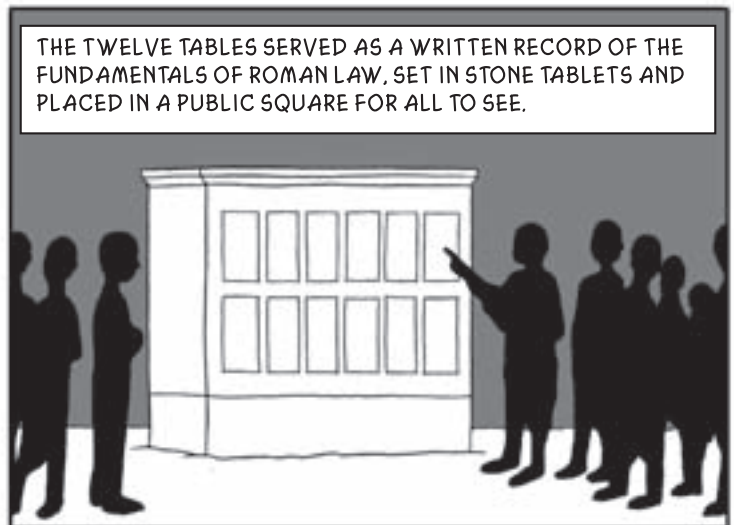
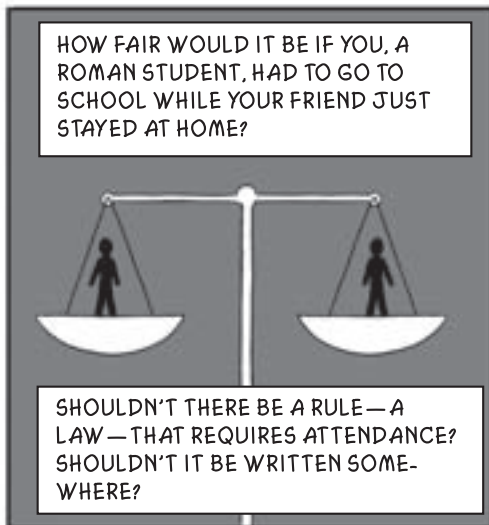
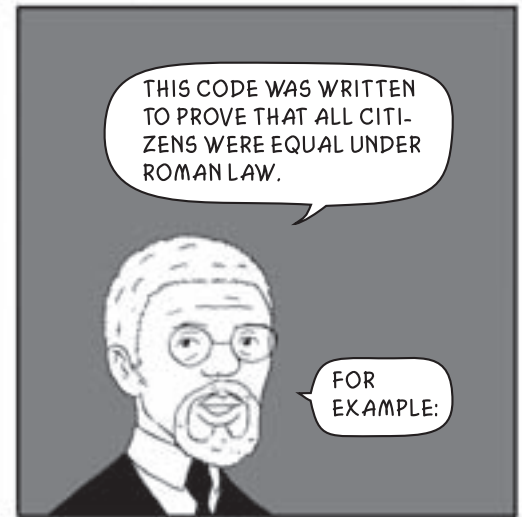
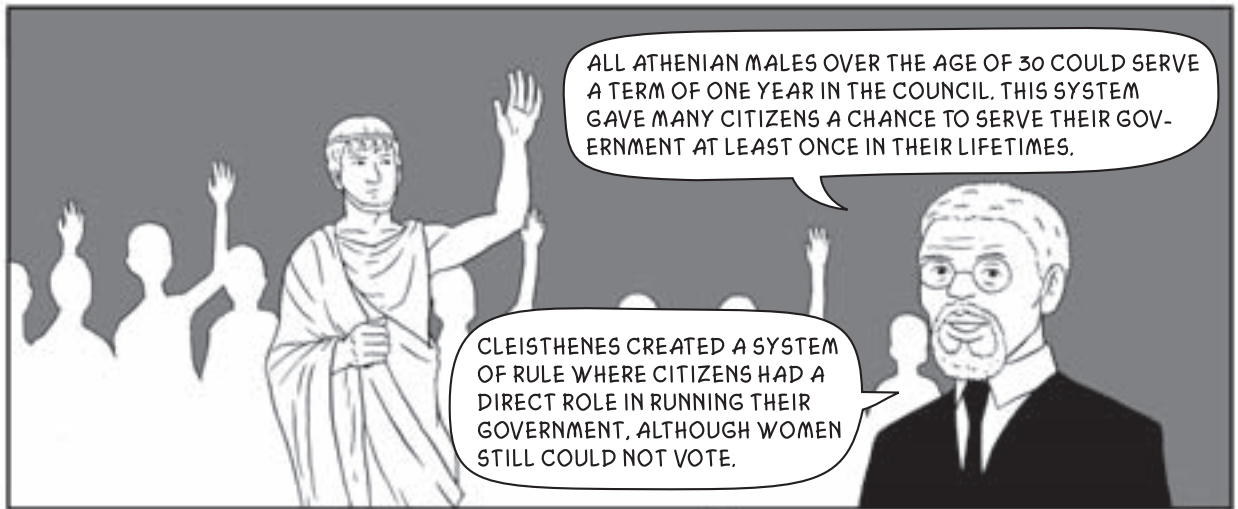
LET'S JUMP AHEAD IN TIME A COUPLE THOUSAND YEARS, TO THE GREEKS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO LAW HISTORY.

AROUND 508 BC, ATHENIAN STATESMAN CLEISTHENES FORMED A GROUP: THE COUNCIL OF 500. ONE OF ITS ROLES WAS TO PROPOSE LAWS VOTED UPON BY THE MALE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY.



THE COUNCIL WAS AN IMPORTANT PART OF CLEISTHENES' NEW SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT FOR ATHENS, WHICH HE CALLED "DEMOKRATIA"—OR DEMOCRACY.

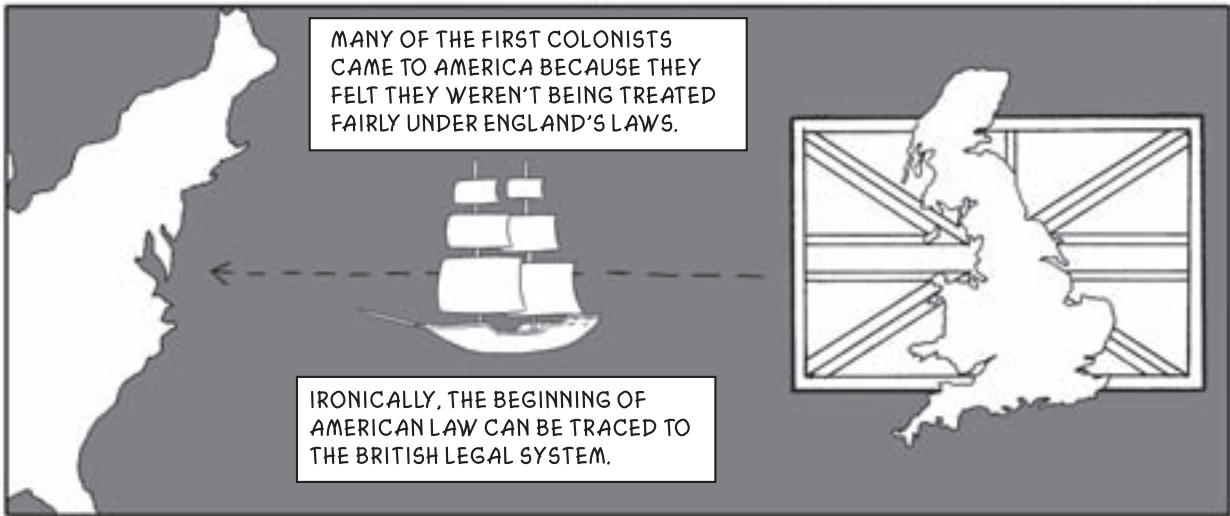






SO, NOW WE HAVE A FEW EXAMPLES OF RECORDED LAW AND HOW THEY DEALT WITH NOTIONS OF EQUALITY AND DEMOCRACY. HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO US AND OUR LAWS?

IN THE 1700'S, SIR WILLIAM BLACKSTONE PUBLISHED COMMENTARIES ON THE LAWS OF ENGLAND, WHICH BETTER ORGANIZED BRITISH LAW. THIS MADE IT MUCH EASIER FOR FUTURE LAWYERS AND LAWMAKERS TO REFERENCE ENGLAND'S LAWS.



MANY OF THE FIRST COLONISTS CAME TO AMERICA BECAUSE THEY FELT THEY WEREN'T BEING TREATED FAIRLY UNDER ENGLAND'S LAWS.

IRONICALLY, THE BEGINNING OF AMERICAN LAW CAN BE TRACED TO THE BRITISH LEGAL SYSTEM.

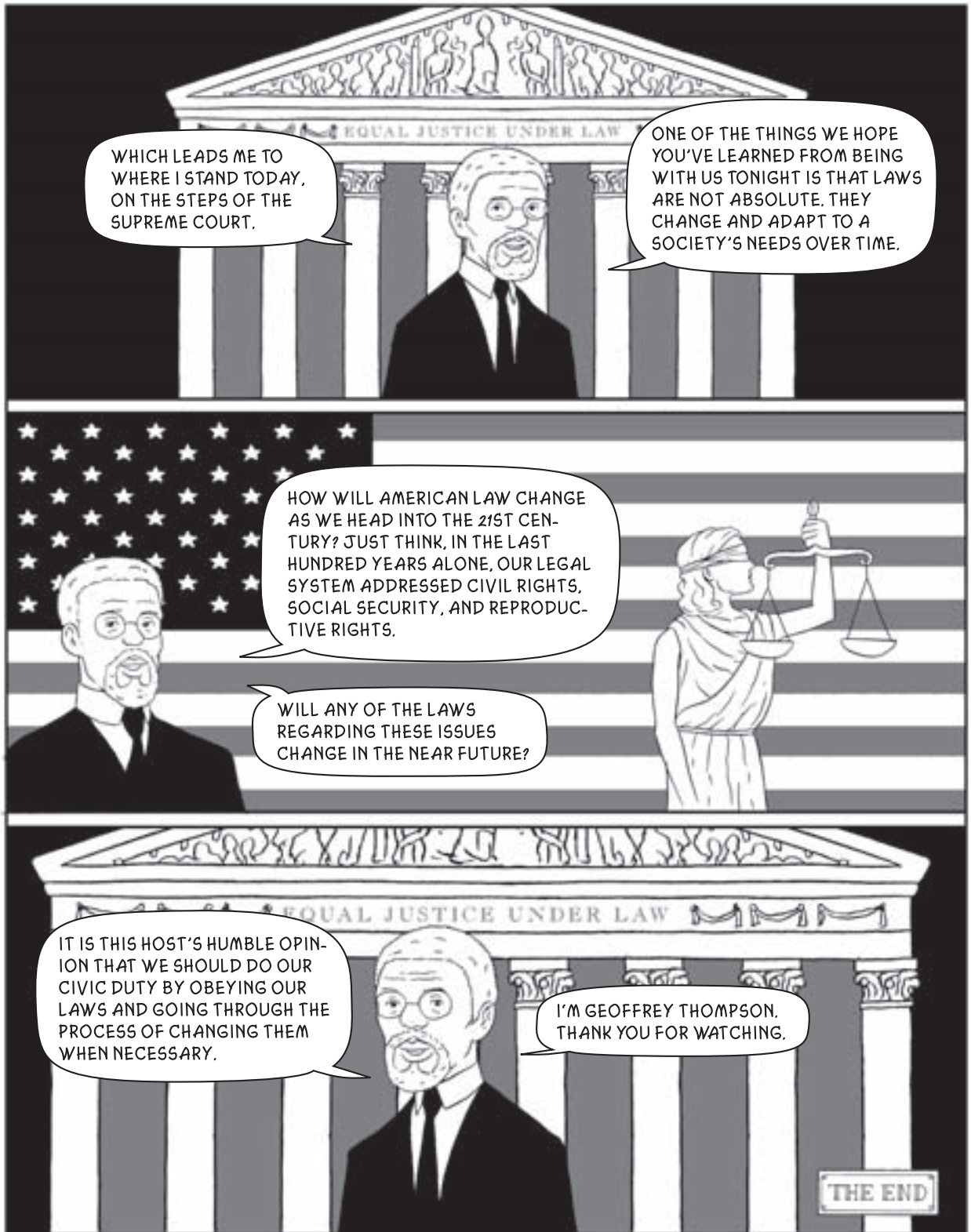


AMERICANS WANTED FAIR LAWS. THEY DIDN'T THINK IT WAS FAIR TO BE THROWN IN JAIL FOR STEALING A LOAF OF BREAD. THEY DIDN'T THINK IT WAS FAIR THAT A MAN COULD BE HANGED FOR NOT PAYING HIS RENT.

THOMAS JEFFERSON— AND OTHERS— WROTE THE U.S. CONSTITUTION AS A BASIS FOR FAIR LAWS. THE SUPREME COURT WATCHES OVER THESE LAWS.



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GRAPHIC NOVEL

Background Summary

The writers of the Constitution based our country's legal system on ideas that have been passed down through generations. Laws set rules for acceptable behavior that help people live together peacefully, and laws also establish punishments that discourage criminals from committing acts of violence such as robbery, murder, and assault. Laws also set guidelines for resolving civil disputes such as disagreements over property boundaries and contracts. Laws are constantly being changed and updated to reflect changes in society.

Through a narrator, this story shows us how early laws developed and how they have changed through the centuries. Beginning with the cave-people, the story covers the highpoints of legal history. It examines the Code of Hammurabi, the first written code of law, and then moves on to cover the Chinese Legalists, Greek law, Roman law, and British law. The novel ends with a brief look at American law and speculates on how our laws might change in the future.

Activities**Illustrating**

This graphic novel suggests that even cave-people must have had some unwritten laws in order to settle disputes among themselves. Ask students to imagine a disagreement that might have come up between neighboring cave-people and to write a law that would resolve the problem. The dispute might be about who gets to live in a particular cave or who invented the hammer. Encourage creativity and let them have fun with it.

Opinion Writing

Have students refer to the textbook and make a list of the ways government Web sites can be used to help citizens learn about their government and how they can get involved in it. Then have them access a state government Web site and use it to research a new law currently under consideration by their state legislature. Ask them to summarize the law in a paragraph or two and to indicate how the law will affect them.