Ron Jones (teacher)

Ron Jones (born 1941) is an American writer, teacher in Palo Alto, California, and San Francisco, California and storyteller. He is internationally known for the adaptation of the classroom experience he started, called The Third Wave. In 1981, The Third Wave was made into a TV film *The Wave*, including a famous novelization by Todd Strasser, and a theatrical film in 2008, for which he won the Emmy and Peabody Awards. His books *The Acorn People* and *B-Ball* have also been made into TV dramas. Jones lives in San Francisco, California where he performs regularly as a storyteller.

Life and work

Jones was raised on 46th Avenue in the Sunset District during the 1940s and 1950s. In the mid-1960s, while working as a high school teacher in Palo Alto, Ron Jones created a project with his 15-year-old World History students in which they experienced the growth of a fascistic movement in their class, which was called The Wave. It was intended as a week-long experiential project. Jones designed lesson plans which created a movement, including a salute, a slogan and a secret police force. The experiment spiraled out of control and was ended by Jones after complaints from teachers and parents. Jones then revealed that it was a hoax intended to give students a direct experience of how easily they could be misled into behaving like fascists, drawing parallels to the rise of the National Socialist movement in Germany. Jones says that he was refused tenure at *Cubberley High School* because of his anti-war activities two years after the experiment. There were huge student protests against this decision.

He has spent the past 30 years working with people with mental disabilities.

He lives in the Haight Ashbury of San Francisco with his wife Deanna. He also wrote the story entitled "The Acorn People." It is a story of Jones' experience as a camp counselor.

The Wave

1967 - "The Wave," a classroom experiment. Ron Jones created a week-long project for his sophomore History class at Cubberley High School in Palo Alto that was studying Nazi Germany. The experiment was designed to explore the question of how was it that the people of Germany could allow the rise of Fascism under National Socialism and claim ignorance of the atrocities that were committed by them to neighbors and friends. Jones called the classroom experiment "The Wave," which simulated how a movement aimed at eliminating democracy can be created, even in a free society.

1976 - *Take as Directed*, a short story by Ron Jones about the experiment was published in *Whole Earth Review*. In the 1981 book *No Substitute for Madness* the story was titled *The Third Wave*.


2008 - *Die Welle (The Wave)*, A German film, directed by Dennis Gansel based on Jones' writings, this adaptation is set in a German classroom of 2008.


2011 - *Lesson Plan, the story of The Third Wave*,[^4] a documentary film, featuring Ron Jones, by Philip Neel, State of Crisis Productions. Philip Neel was an original Third Wave class member. The film has won numerous awards and now has worldwide distribution with Mercury Media International.


**Awards**

- Christian Book of the Year for *The Acorn People*
- Pulitzer nomination for *Kids Called Crazy*
- 1985 American Book Award for *Say Ray*,
- *When God Winked and Fellini Grinned* self-published book was recently recommended by Oprah Winfrey on her show about autism.

**Works**


**Other films based on Ron Jones writings**

- *One Special Victory* Starring John Larroquette

**References**


**External links**

- Ron Jones's website
- The Cubberley Student Newspaper (the Catamount) did an interview with Ron Jones from 1969 after he left Cubberley.
- Ron Jones’ account of The Wave
- Ron Jones on IMDb
- The Wave Home Third Wave info website: story history FAQ, links, etc. by Jones’ original Wave students
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