



# Charlesbridge

## talks to Author and Illustrator David Biedrzycki

**Your newest book *Breaking News: Bear Alert* uses a fun news report style and a crawl along the bottom of the pages to follow the bears' adventures. What gave you the idea to use that format?**

I was playing around with a story idea of two bears coming into a downtown area, mistaking the townspeople's terror for friendliness, and eventually becoming media darlings when they save the day.

Then one day I turned on the midday news and lo and behold a bear had found its way downtown in a suburb of Boston. The local TV station had a Skycam helicopter flying overhead, reporters interviewing people on the street, all the while the bear slept peacefully in the tree behind them. It was so over the top and funny I knew that was the way I wanted to tell my story.



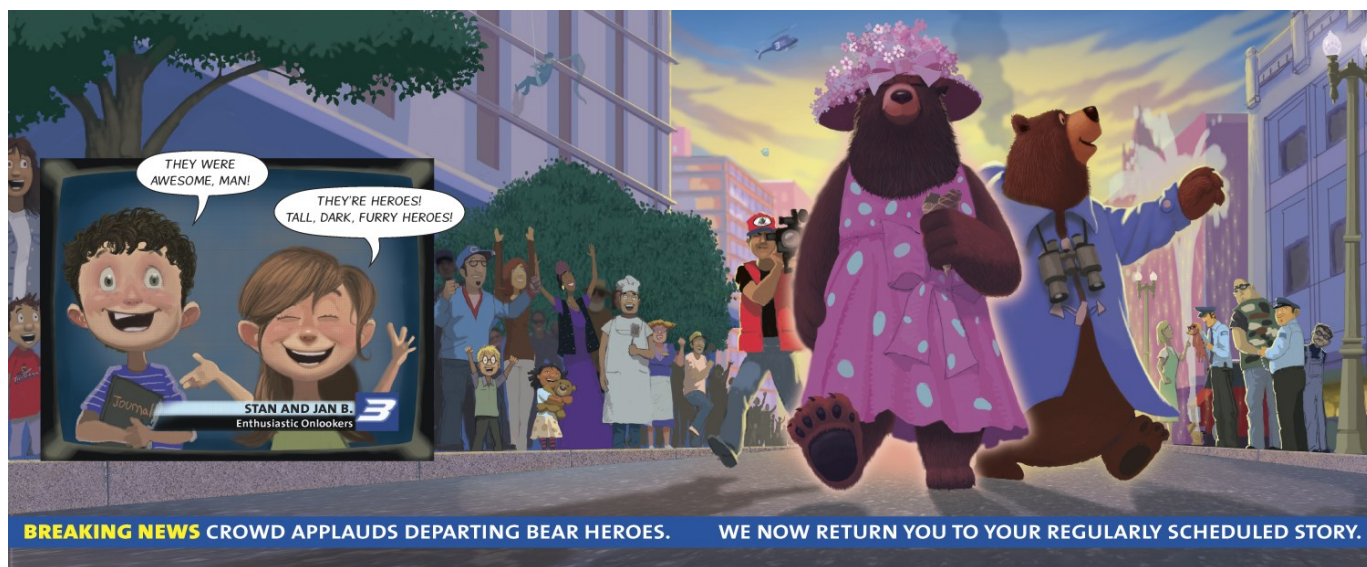
[Breaking News: Bear Alert](#)

**When you set out to create a story, what are some things you first take into consideration?**

It usually starts off with a concept. And it's all about taking that concept and communicating it into something that will excite and entertain those who read my stories. The hardest thing to do is to take a concept and make it simple. That's why I'll revise a story sometimes up to thirty times before it feels right.

**There are great references to other stories and characters throughout *Breaking News: Bear Alert* (Paddington's department store, with all suitcases on sale). What are some of your favorite references in the book?**

Adding little puns and references throughout the book I think adds warmth and fun to the story. I gave a shout out to a lot of bear stories, authors, and characters I grew up with. I think having "Goldie" as the waitress in Teddy's diner and subtly naming the two kids giving their opinion on live TV Stan and Jan B. might be my favorites.



**Your illustrations in this book and others are so wonderfully detailed. How do you want readers to interact with them, and what do you want readers to take away?**

I spend so much time on art in my books that the visuals are the story. The words act as support for the pictures. When the words and art come together I hope it works as an overall experience. I also hide an icon on each illustration that runs with the theme of the book. In *Bear Alert* there is a bear paw hidden on each illustration.

**You've had an accomplished career as an illustrator creating for book publishers, advertising agencies, magazines, and design firms. At what point did you add author to the resume?**

When I was a kid I loved creating my own comic books. I wrote my own stories and created art for them. Then I Xeroxed and stapled them together and sold them to my friends for twenty-five cents each. Later I went off to college and pursued illustration. Even when I was doing a lot of illustrating for ad agencies and design firms I always dreamed of writing my own book.

I had a couple story ideas but I never pursued getting them published. When Jerry Pallotta approached me about illustrating his books it rekindled that desire to write my own.

While researching several insect books for Jerry Pallotta I learned a lot about bugs. One day a lacewing ended up in my office. I put him under a magnifying glass and did a very detailed sketch of him. Then for fun I added a fedora and trench coat and voila, *Ace Lacewing Bug Detective* was born. Since I had done so much research on insects I had no problem creating characters for the story based on insect biology. It was a lot of fun. I was very fortunate to know editors and art directors at Charlesbridge and showed them the idea. They signed on for three books and that's when I added author to my resume.

**You visit a large number of schools across the country each year. What do you enjoy most about these visits? Any visit in particular that has stuck with you over the years?**

I most enjoy traveling all over the world and meeting students who read my books. It's one of the most rewarding parts of my job. It invigorates me and helps me create my stories. I'm always showing students new ideas for potential stories and seeing their reaction to those ideas. It's like test marketing. Also when I discuss the process I go through to create my books I understand myself better. Pretty cool, huh?

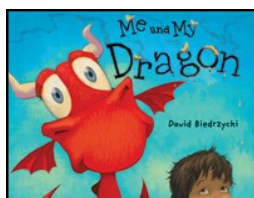
As far as a memorable school visit, there have been many. I've been very fortunate. But the ones that stand out are those where the people responsible for bringing you in really have the whole school excited for your visit.

**You started to draw at a very young age. What advice would you give to aspiring artists on how to hone their craft?**

Draw everything and experiment with many different medium. Learn the basics of design and composition. Creativity is a muscle that you have to exercise and feed. Reading feeds your creative side and practice exercises it.

To learn more about David, visit his website: [www.davidbiedrzycki.com](http://www.davidbiedrzycki.com)

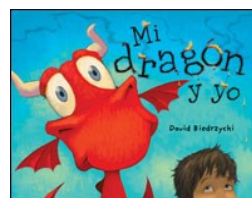
### *Other books by David Biedrzycki*



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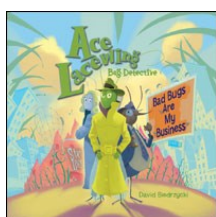
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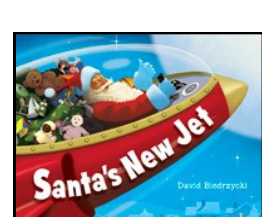
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