

THE BEACON TO INDEPENDENT STORYTELLING

CATALYST



ISSUE 01 - OCT 2020

**EMERITZ
GIBSON - NOHELY
PRIJIC - ZUJOVIC**

**COMICS
PROSE
GALLERY
INTERVIEWS
TIPS**

LATE, BUT FREE, SO CAN YOU EVEN COMPLAIN?

CATALYST

CATALYST MAGAZINE BROUGHT TO YOU BY NEXUS STUDIOS, INC.

Welcome to Catalyst! This is something that's been in the works for literal years, and I'm so excited to finally see it completed.



The idea started as Write My Epic. It was a website and app specifically for independent distribution of everything from comics to games and everything else you could think of.

This is my curse—wanting to fly fighter jets before I have even managed to crawl out of my crib.

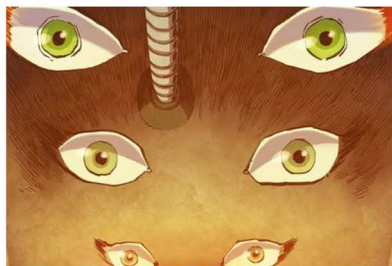
Over time the entire thing got pushed into the background, and I finally realized the whole point of it was to help independent creators get their work out easier and get new eyes on their work.

So here we are. A magazine that will bring you great stories to read, and beautiful images to look at, interviews with creators, and even more as we go forward.

We will come to you quarterly, and maybe one day even on time.

Enjoy!

-Dalibor Zujovic



COVER ART: Mike Emeritz

Writer and Editor: Dalibor Zujovic

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Michael Emeritz



As he was so gracious to bless the cover of this first issue with a sneak peek into the universe of Sisyphian Complex, it's only fair we give the spotlight to the man himself and get a sneak peek into what makes him tick!



Dalibor Zujovic: *We'll get right into the promotion, of course - give us the elevator pitch. What are you working on currently?*

Mike Emeritz: Currently, I'm working on the cover for this magazine. But if you're reading this and the cover isn't just a blank page that says "Insert cover here. P.S. Screw Mike Emeritz." Then, cheers to that, I must be on to the next task!

Right now, I'm developing character designs and fleshing out the general aesthetic for a comic called "Calamity Jane," by my buddy, Marshall Lee of Donkey Jaw Projects. It's a genre-bending pioneer adventure story about the legendary frontierswoman and her exploits in the old west, as well as her lesser known encounters and subsequent battles with extraterrestrial invaders throughout the cosmos. That last part we made up, but you know, sometimes you have to tweak history a bit to make it more engaging for a modern audience. It's in development though, so I can't say more than that right now.



What I can say more about is my personal project, Sisyphian Complex, which Dalibor has graciously featured on the cover of this inaugural issue. What is Sisyphian Complex?... Well... it's kind of like... The



Count of Montecristo meets Invasion of the Body Snatchers with a splash of Rocky Horror, a sprinkle of The Manchurian Candidate and just a pinch of Blade Runner, sauteed with magic mushrooms, sexy lingerie and an old civics textbook, poured over a steamy plate of 80's horror Films, and served with a side of trashy pulp fiction novels and a department store manakin with one eye and a missing foot... In comic form. If you can process all that, you're halfway there. There's a little more to it, but I may have already spoiled too much.

When will this be available, and where?

That's a very good question. My original plan was to submit the comic to Heavy Metal Magazine, then collect it in short volumes as it's completed. But Covid has changed everything.

I have a friend who's published several books with them, great guy, great artist, and the word right now is that it's just not a good time to be pitching brand new material. Most publishers are trimming down to stay out of the red right now. But it sounds like there's an interest in the book. It's just that I may have to wait out the pandemic if that's the route I want to go with it.

Regardless, HM's terms are very creator-friendly anyway, so I am considering other options that could get the story out into the world a little sooner. Something like releasing pages on Patreon or through a similar subscription system on my own site.



Speaking of which, very soon... we'll say... by end of year... I'm relaunching my art blog on my site to share news and updates about the progress on the comic. If you hit up my site now, join the newsletter, that's the absolute best way to know exactly when you can get your sticky little mittens on my comics. And you get a free digital comic just for signing up. oof... shameless. **[That's what we're about here!]**

What is your favorite part of your art or writing process?

This is going to sound horribly cynical, but the part when it's done. Oh man... Art, writing, anything creative. It takes such an intense amount of mental and emotional energy out of me, that most days I have to really psyche myself up to even get started. It's like Rocky Balboa in the ring against Clubber Lang, every day, over and over again. "You want to get punched in the head today?" Well, no, but this is my life. So yeah, my favorite part is the end. I know. Terrible answer. Despite this, I do still love what I do, and I continue to get up and take those punches to the head every day, so that has to say something, right?



You've worked on films, animations, games, and comics. When did you know - like really know - that you were going to create for a living?

This is going to sound so ridiculous and melodramatic, but, honestly, always. Art, storytelling, creative thinking, entertaining, all of it has just always been a major part of who I am as a person. I tried to be and do other things, but none of it stuck, none of it ever made sense. When I was 2-years old, I would make these weird illegible comics with speech bubbles and everything. I could barely talk, but I had stories to tell. Haha...

When I was still in elementary school, my mom would get called into meetings because I was constantly drawing in class and I refused to do my homework. My mom would say, "I don't know what to tell you. He insists he's going to be an artist. He doesn't understand why he needs to learn all this other stuff." And it was true, I didn't get it. I got into so much trouble throughout my childhood and adolescent years for constantly trying to buck the system because, "F-you. I need to be drawing. None of this is helping me be a better artist."

I've just always needed to be creating. It's something I'd say has actually been quite a struggle to adapt to the "normal" way of living life. I can't even grab a cup of coffee with a friend without at least doodling at the table. I honestly don't know what else I could do with myself but to just constantly create.

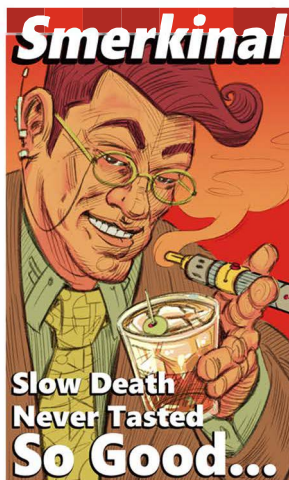
What has been the most difficult hurdle to overcome in your creative endeavors?

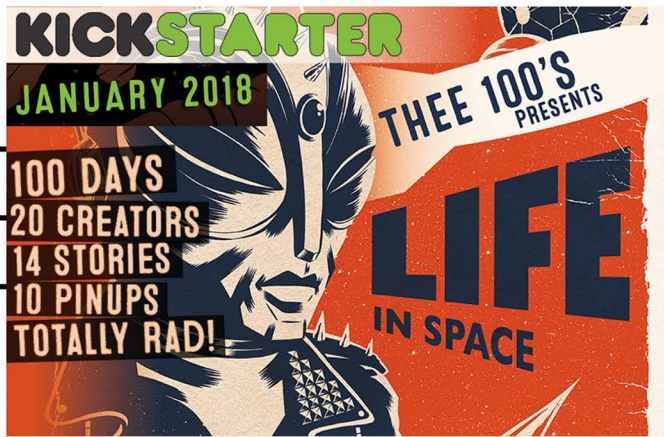
Phew, I almost prefer not to comment on this one. Well, relentlessly debilitating mental struggles. Some that can be helped, some that can't. It's quite a daily battle. My Rocky analogy is very real. The ring is my own mind. I don't think it's something I've overcome either, or ever will. It's something I learn to bob and weave with and chip away at my goals when I can seize the opportunity.

As a special treat, and to show the extent of Mike's hard work, these are some of the banners that are featured on the cover.

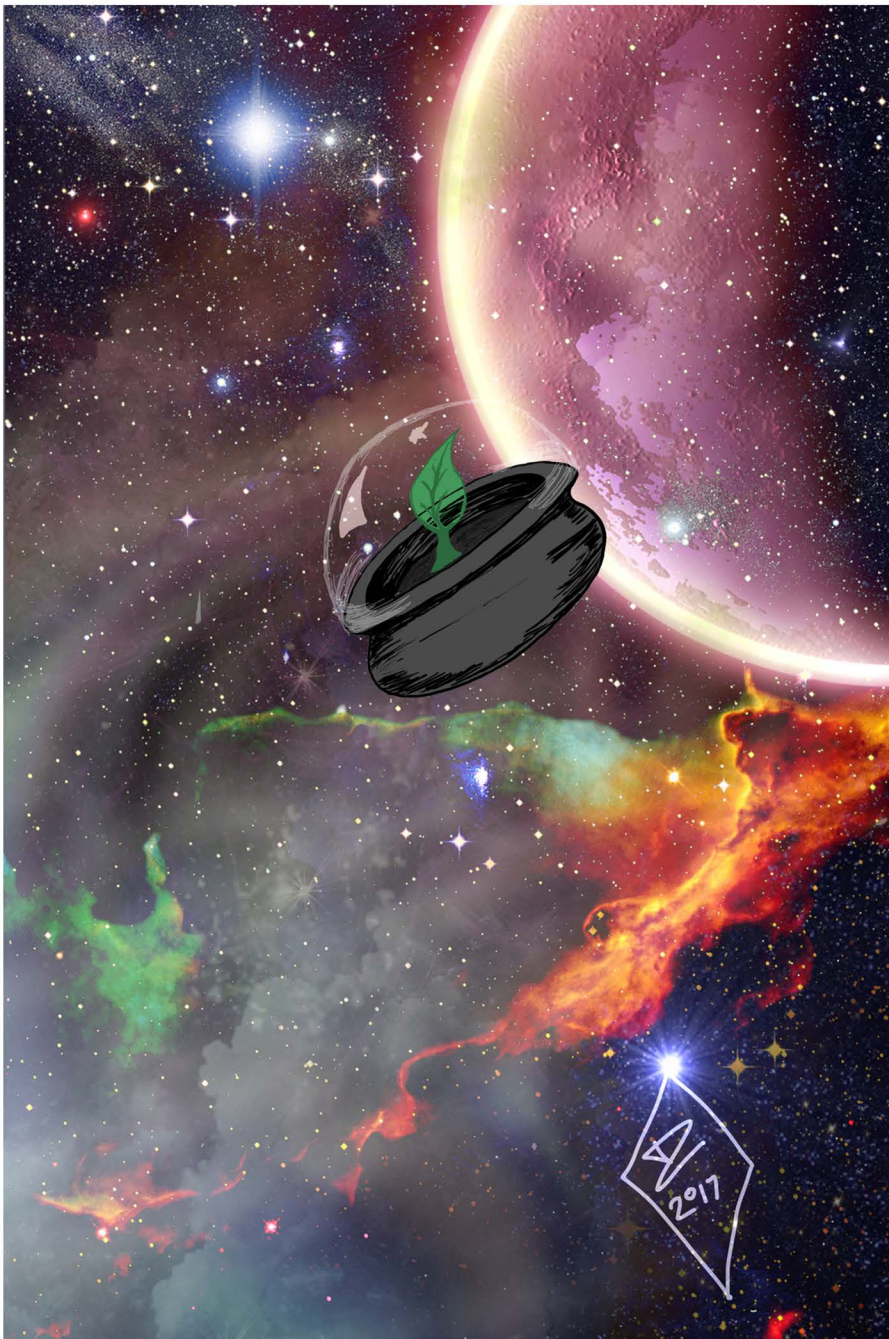
Check out Mike's work at

www.sisyphcancomplex.com





In 2017 I decided to participate in an internet challenge where you work on your own project for 30 minutes a day for 100 days. I was successful in my first attempt,



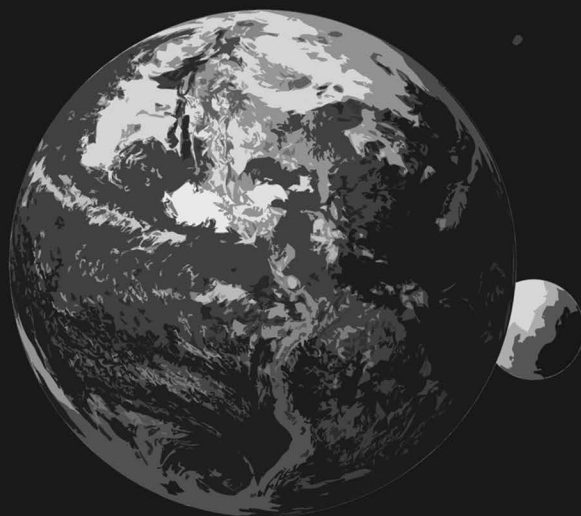
so when talk of an anthology book featuring a selection of our work started, I was in. I had never made a complete comic book before, certainly not one for public consumption. I ended up coming up with the theme for the book, "Life in Space" and we were off to the races. I also contributed a pinup. That's what you're seeing here, in color for the first time! We'll call that the "cover" for my part of the book.

In the next pages, you'll see that first comic book I ever produced. Hope you enjoy!



B&W version as originally published in the book. >

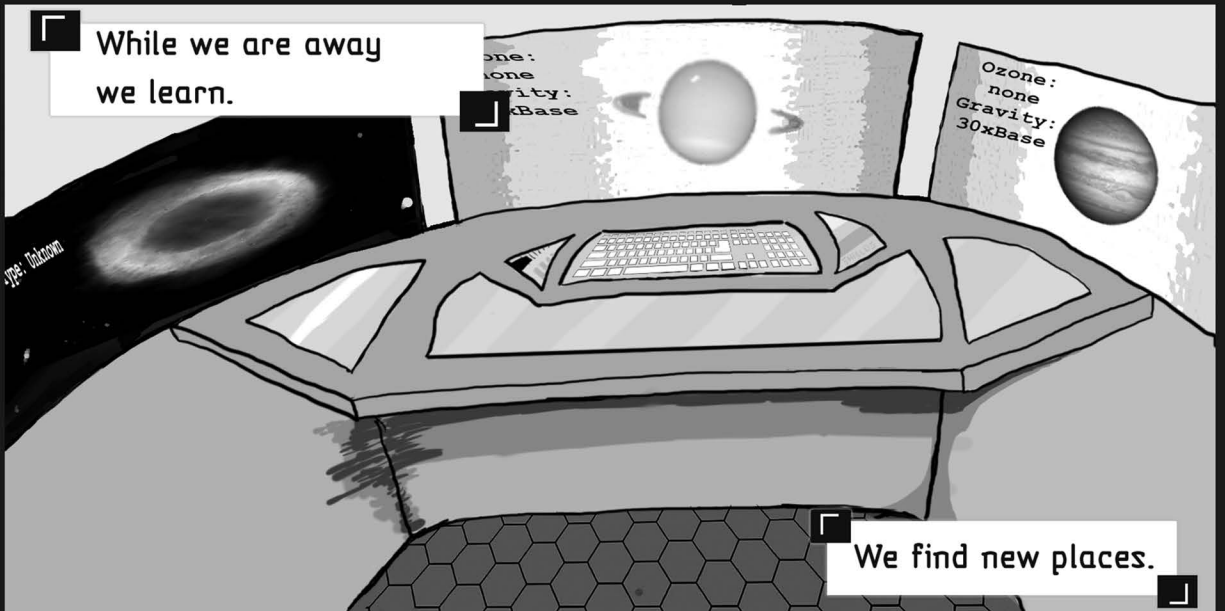
Funny thing about *home*.



Whatever the reason,
we always leave home.

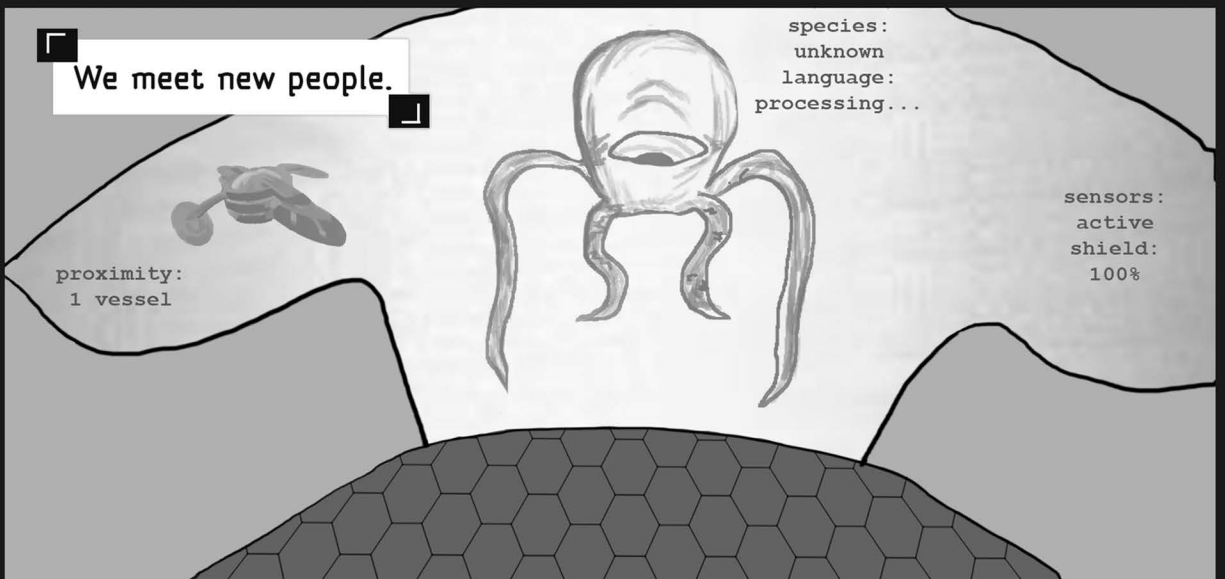


While we are away
we learn.



We find new places.

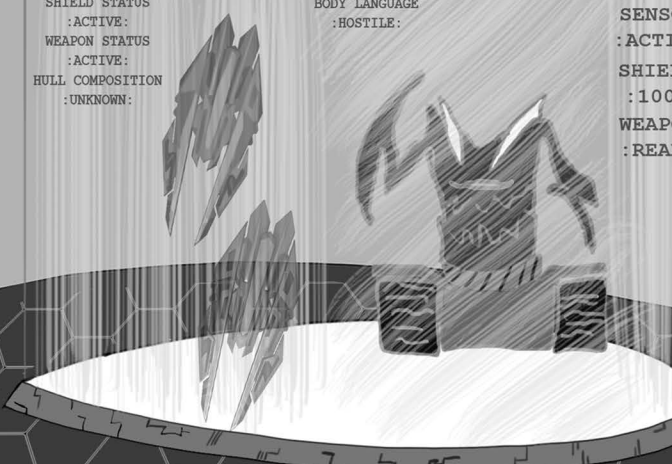
We meet new people.



VESSEL COUNT
:3:
SHIELD STATUS
:ACTIVE:
WEAPON STATUS
:ACTIVE:
HULL COMPOSITION
:UNKNOWN:

LANGUAGE
:UNKNOWN:
BODY LANGUAGE
:HOSTILE:

SENSORS
:ACTIVE:
SHIELDS
:100%:
WEAPONS
:READY:



Not all are good people.

::TRANSMISSION::
::LOST::

::ALERT::
INCOMING
PROJECTILE

SENSORS
::ERR::
SHIELDS
::ERR::
WEAPONS
::ERR::



Some hurt us deeply.

Some save us when we
feel there is no hope.



┌ We change while we
are away. ┐

<<System Boot>>

┌ Change more than we
ever thought possible. ┐

>>Appendage Check

┌ We grow as individuals. ┐

<<COLLISION>>

<<ALERT>>

┌ We become stronger. ┐

>>Power diverted
to right
appendage

>>Language:
Unknown.

>>Body Language:
Celebratory.

┌ If we are lucky, we
are loved. ┐

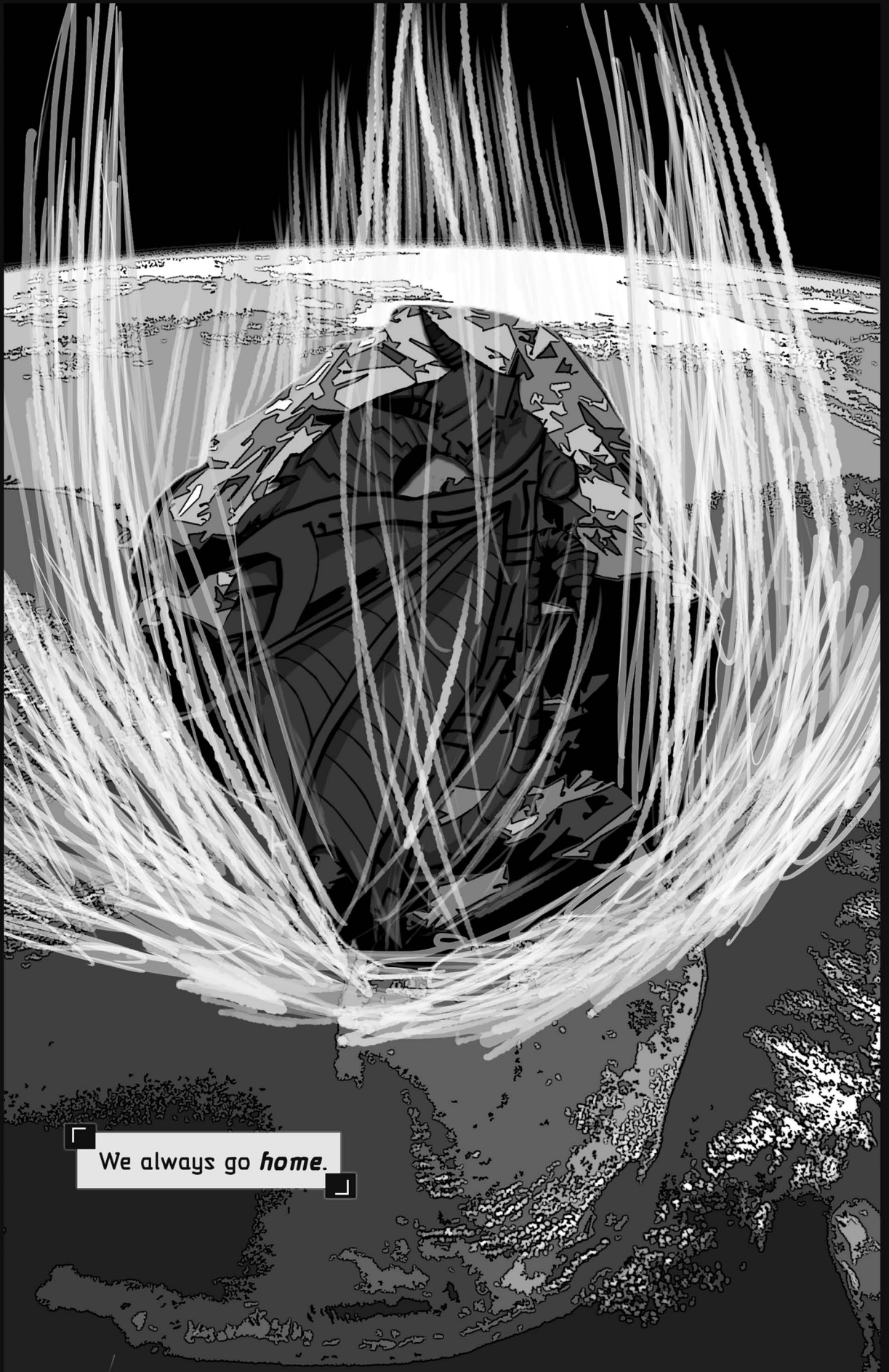
But no matter how
we change...

POWER LEVEL:
84%
SHIELDS:
73%

No matter what life
throws at us...

ERROR
SPACIAL ANOMALY
ERROR

We always return.



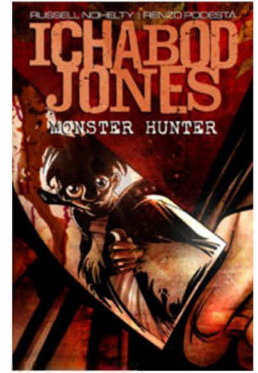
「 We always go *home*. 」



Years ago I met a man in Artist Alley at a convention, as you do, who was promoting a book on Kickstarter named "Cthulhu is Hard to Spell." As I agree with that statement and was looking for a way to dip my toe into Lovecraftian lore, I had to buy it. I have just recently started reading it, but what I have partaken in in the interim is the continued efforts from our next featured creator.

Russell Nohelty.

An author and mailing list expert, he's been promoting his work through the internet for a long time, and has mastered the art.



Dalibor Zujovic: *We'll get right into the promotion, of course – having just successfully Kickstarted Volume 2 of Ichabod Jones, where can people buy the book once it's released? Or can they? Is this a Kickstarter-only deal?*

Russell Nohelty: The books always make their way to Amazon eventually and digital reading platforms. However, the hardcovers are exclusive to our webstore at www.wannabepress.com and Kickstarter, along with shows, assuming they ever come back. If you are reading this in the future when shows HAVE come back, then woohoo, you can now get them at any shows that Wannabe Press attends.

Is there a project that you've never gotten around to, but still want to write?



The great thing about owning a publishing company that mostly only publishes my own work is that I am able to follow any weird tangent I want to take, which is what I've been doing for the past five years and, thankfully, people have followed me. So, no, there isn't a project I've really wanted to write but have never gotten around to yet.

The one thing that does happen is I have a really cool idea, but I don't have a way into the book yet, and that is frustrating. I have a lot of half-baked ideas that are a piece of a book, or half a book, but it's not strong enough to dig in and write yet.

It takes me about 1-2 years of development before a project is ready to write, so there are things I'm developing now that I'll start writing in 2021 or 2022, depending on when they are ready.

What usually happens is I have multiple ideas that I smash together to make one cohesive project in the end, but they need to collide around in my head before they fuse together into something cool. Once they coalesce, though, I am generally off like a rocket.

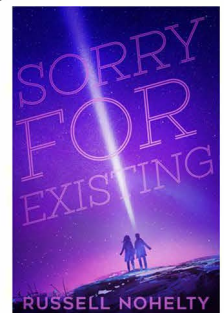
What is your favorite part of your writing process?

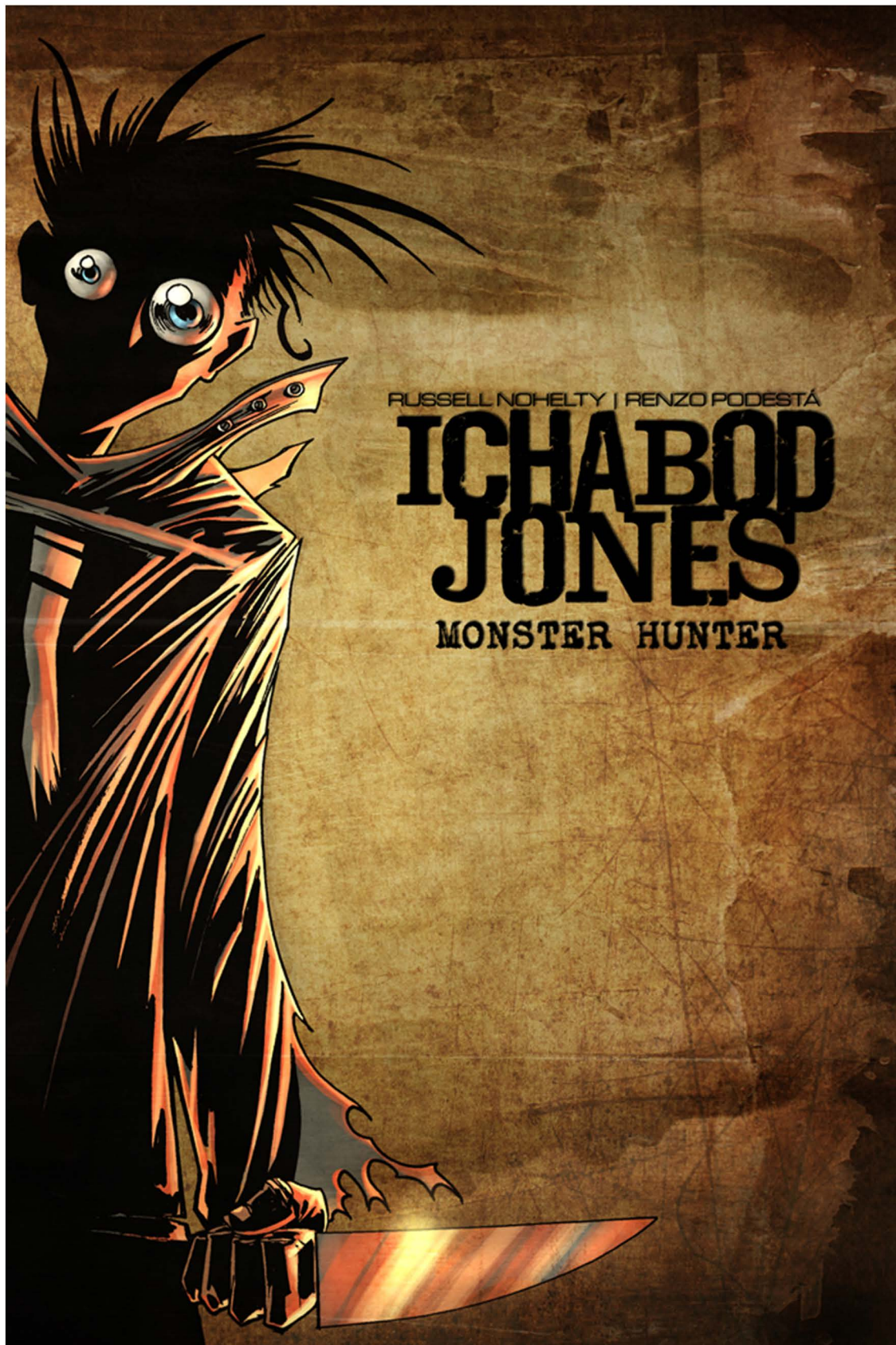
Having a complete project that I can share with fans. The writing process itself is cathartic and soothing and interesting, but the best part is easily having people read and enjoy it.

When did you decide that writing was your future? Were you the storyteller kid in school, or did it just come out of nowhere?

It didn't come out of nowhere, but writing books definitely came out of nowhere. I moved to Los Angeles to write movies and tv, and it wasn't until my manager at the time shared with me what indie comics had become since I stopped reading them in the 1990s that I fell in love and dove deep into writing them.

I originally wanted to be a director or a cinematographer, and both of those skills are critical to being a good comics writer.





Ichabod isn't about some mental patient who's ruthlessly killing people. It's about a broken man, who was cast off by society, and whether that person, a person who nobody wants, can be a hero. Can he find his place in the world? Can he come to terms with everything that he's done? Can he become a hero? Turn the page and find out!

ICHABOD JONES

MONSTER HUNTER

WRITTEN AND CREATED BY
RUSSELL NOHELTY

ART BY
RENZO PODESTA

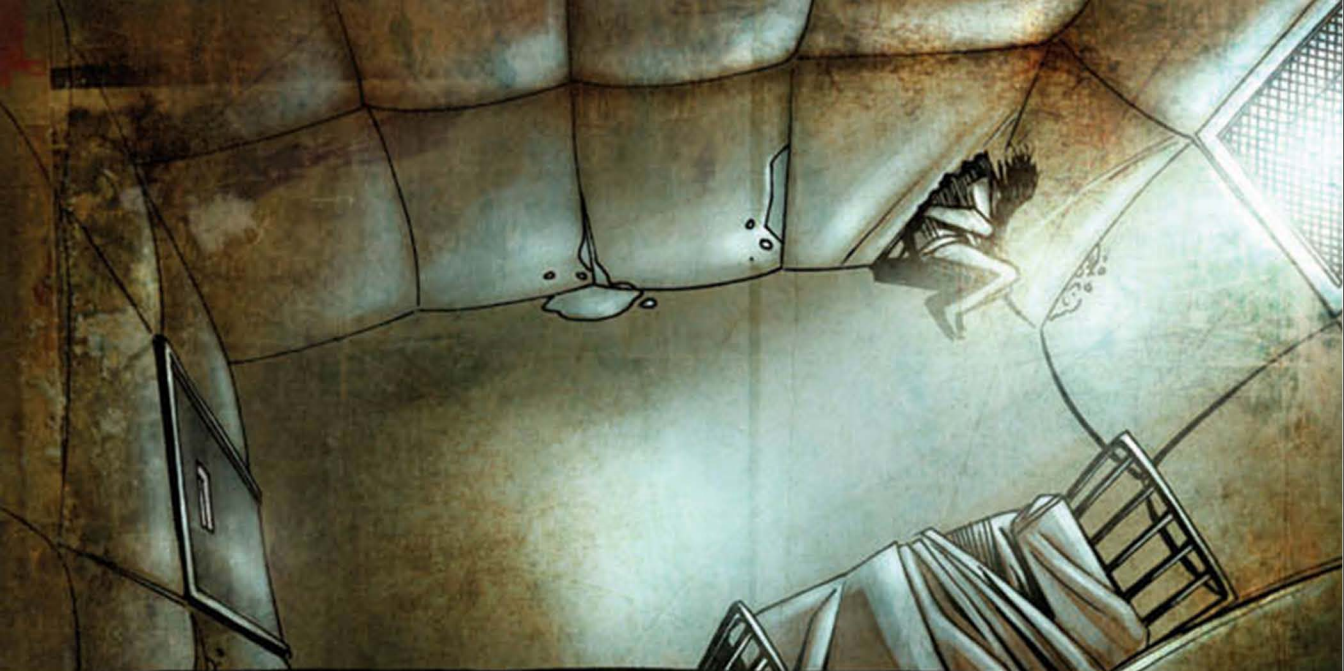
COVER ART BY
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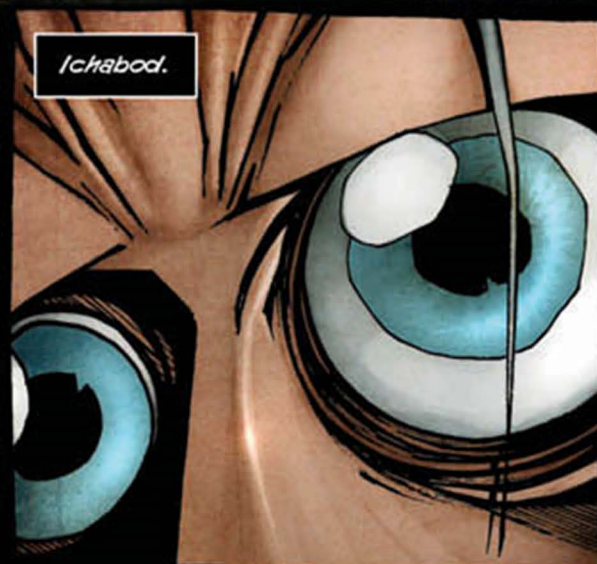
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Ichabod.



Ichabod.



ICHABOD!

YES?

CLICK

It's time
to go.

You have
much work
to do.

I know you're
scared, Ichabod.

But we've been
preparing for
so long.

Countless bodies.
Eviscerated.
Brutal. Merciless.

The blood.

The gore.

The Horror.

Just practice for
our new work.

MUNCH
MUNCH
MUNCH

Move
closer.

WHAT IS
THAT?

MUNCH
MUNCH

Look.

I DON'T-

gulp

LOOOOOK!

Your mission
has begun.





What are you doing?

R-R-R-UNNING.

BOOM

It will never stop. It always feels the hunger.

BAM

Good.

Now ready your knife.

W-W-W-WHY?

You must cut yourself free.

NOW!

Stop asking stupid questions and ready your goddamn knife!

You must defeat him.

You are humanity's last hope for salvation.

You are *the* monster hunter.

G-G-G-GREAT.

CRASH!



Move left.



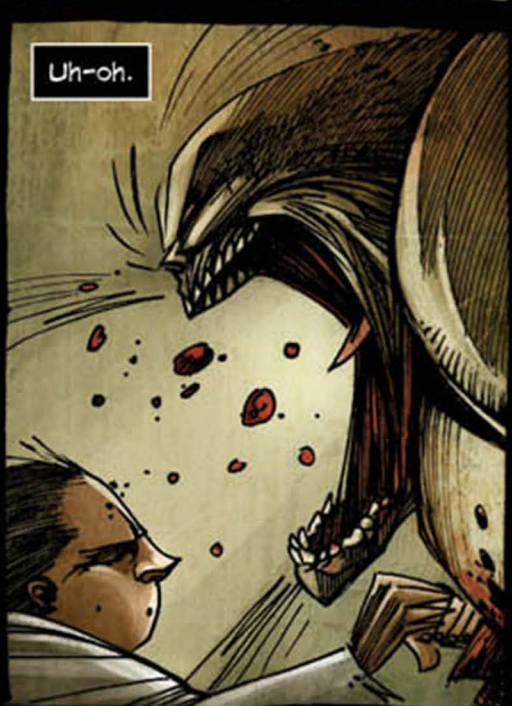
Duck!



Jump!



STAB! STAB! STAB!



Uh-oh.



BAM!



WHAT NOW?!

Umm... throw something?

SERIOUSLY?

DO YOU DOUBT ME?



N-N-N-NO.



PING

PING

PING



Only one thing to do now.

WHAT'S THAT?

Stick your head between your legs and kiss your ass goodbye.





THIS IS YOUR LUCKY DAY.

Don't listen to them.

WE'RE HERE TO SAVE YOUR LIFE.



They tried to kill you.



I DON'T HAVE MUCH OF A CHOICE.

You always have a choice.




MOVE SO WE CAN GET A CLEAR SHOT.



TOAST THAT MOTH!

Their bullets are useless.

RATATATATATATATATA




They are wicked.



Only you can defeat it.

WHY?



Because Ichabod...

SPLOCH!



...You are an instrument of God.



We have to move. NOW!



THIS CAN'T BE REAL.
IT'S ALL A FIGMENT
OF MY IMAGINATION.



BOOOM!



ANY MINUTE
I'LL WAKE UP.



Maybe
you will.

But until
then... Up
the stairs.



Faster. Unless you want
to be ripped to shreds.

IT'S JUST MY
PSYCHOSIS.



If that's true, you have
one hideous psychosis.





I'M GONNA DIE,
I'M GONNA DIE,
I'M GONNA DIE!

You're not
going to
die.



YOU'RE RIGHT.
BECAUSE THIS IS
ONLY A DREAM.

Wrong
again.



You'd
better
hurry.




Not a
moment to
spare.




He's nipping
at your heels.



I... NEED A
MINUTE... TO
CATCH... MY
BREATH...



No time.
He's right
behind you.



You have to slow
him down. Throw
the Bible.

HOW'S THAT THING
GOING TO KNOCK
OUT A MONSTER?



It's a holy book.
To him it weighs
thousands of
pounds.



Now we
have time
to devise
a plan.

NO. YOU'RE
WRONG. THIS IS
ALL IN MY MIND.
THAT THING IS
DEAD AND NOW
I'M GOING TO
FIGURE OUT HOW
TO WAKE UP
FROM THIS
NIGHTMARE.




IT WORKED.
HE'S DEAD.

He's only
stunned. He
will soon rise
again.



What do
you mean
"no"? You
can't say
no to me.



bONK

YES I CAN.
I SHOULD
HAVE STOPPED
LISTENING TO
YOU LONG
AGO.



He's going to rip you in half.

SHUT UP.



What's your plan then?
Hide in the bathroom
for eternity?

MAYBE.



It will never work.
He is insatiable.

LEAVE ME
ALONE.



Perhaps you
don't remember
what I've done
for you.



What we've done
together.



Remember.

Why do you think I
molded you into a
cold blooded killer?

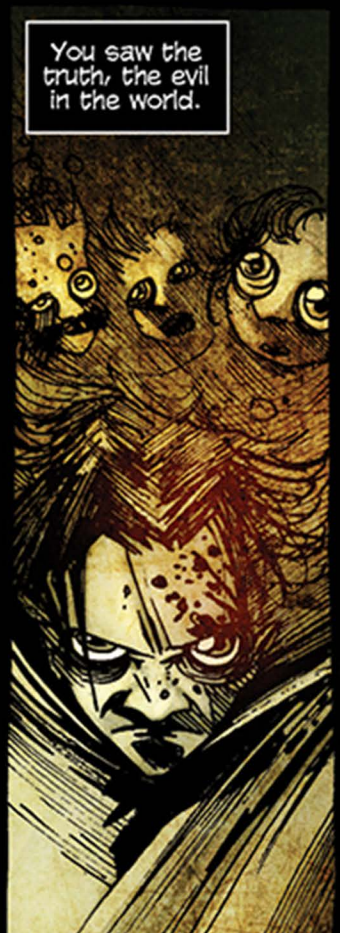
You were
such a pussy.



It took years
to make you
the perfect
killing machine.

But you
became more
than I could
ever imagine.


You saw the
truth, the evil
in the world.



It was all leading up to this
moment. Everything we've
done has led to this.



Give up now and you
will not be a righteous
instrument of God. You
will just be a murderer.




So I ask you, is this a nightmare?

NO.

Now you have a choice. Will you run or will you fight?

I WILL FIGHT.

Good boy.



Are you ready?

YES, I'M READY TO FIGHT.

JUST NOT TODAY.


growl

Wipe first.



So you can bend steel now?

MAYBE. I AM THE CHOSEN ONE.



You are an idiot.

AN IDIOT WOULD TRY TO KILL THAT THING.



You're wasting valuable time.

WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT.



Told you.

SNAP



It is a fine weapon though.



growl

The only way out is through the horror.



Gulp

Jesus Christ, man. You're humanity's last hope. Show some backbone.



creak

phew





Have faith.

I DON'T THINK THIS STAKE'S GOING TO DO MUCH.



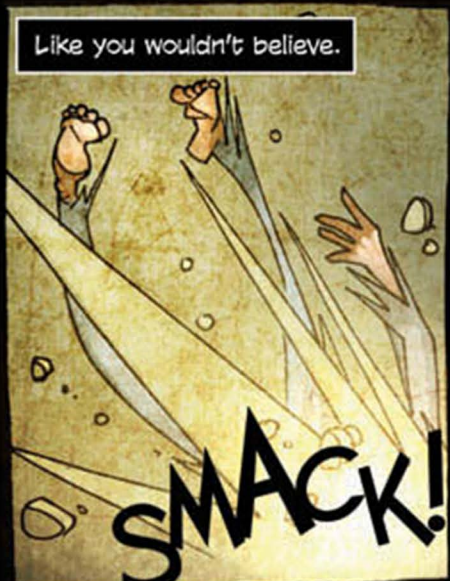
Brace yourself.



BOOOOOOOOM



THIS IS GONNA HURT, ISN'T IT?



Like you wouldn't believe.

SMACK!



This is your best shot. Hold out the stick.

ARE YOU SERIOUS?

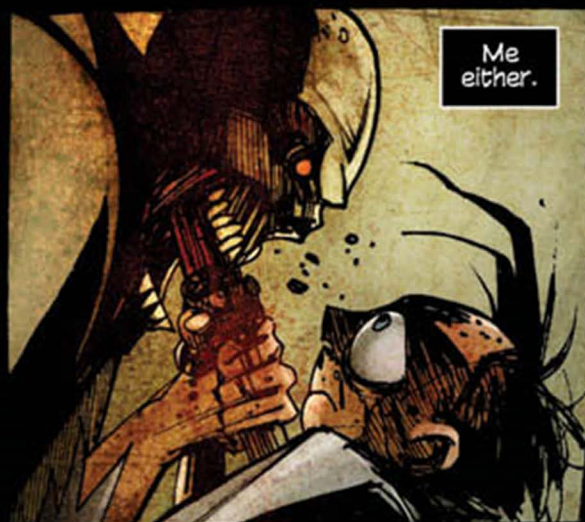
It's worth a try.



SQUISH



I DON'T BELIEVE IT.



Me either.



CRACK!

Did you enjoy the book?

Go to

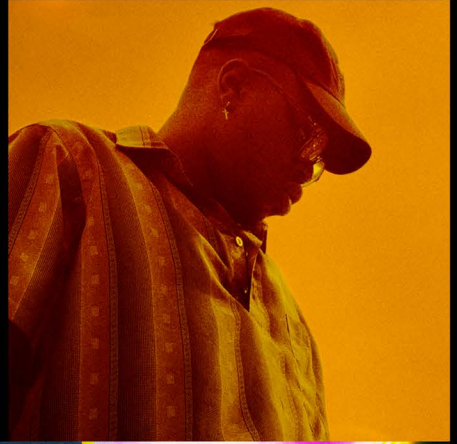
www.wannabepress.com


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volume in hardcover!

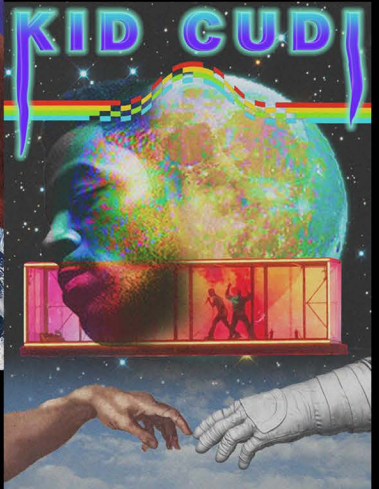


I think when you have an opportunity to promote others, you are obligated to include family. As such I proudly give you the design and photography of my cousin.

Dino Prijic



 @dinerochopped



MONOTONY

/məˈnɒtnē/

lack of variety and interest; tedious repetition and routine.



MONOTONY IS ALSO KNOWN AS THE DEVIL MONOTONY IS ALSO KNOWN AS THE DEVIL MONOTONY IS ALSO KNOWN AS THE DEVIL MONOTONY IS ALSO KNOWN AS T

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Sexual Themes
Strong Language
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LETHAL ATTRACTION

A DANGEROUS FEELING

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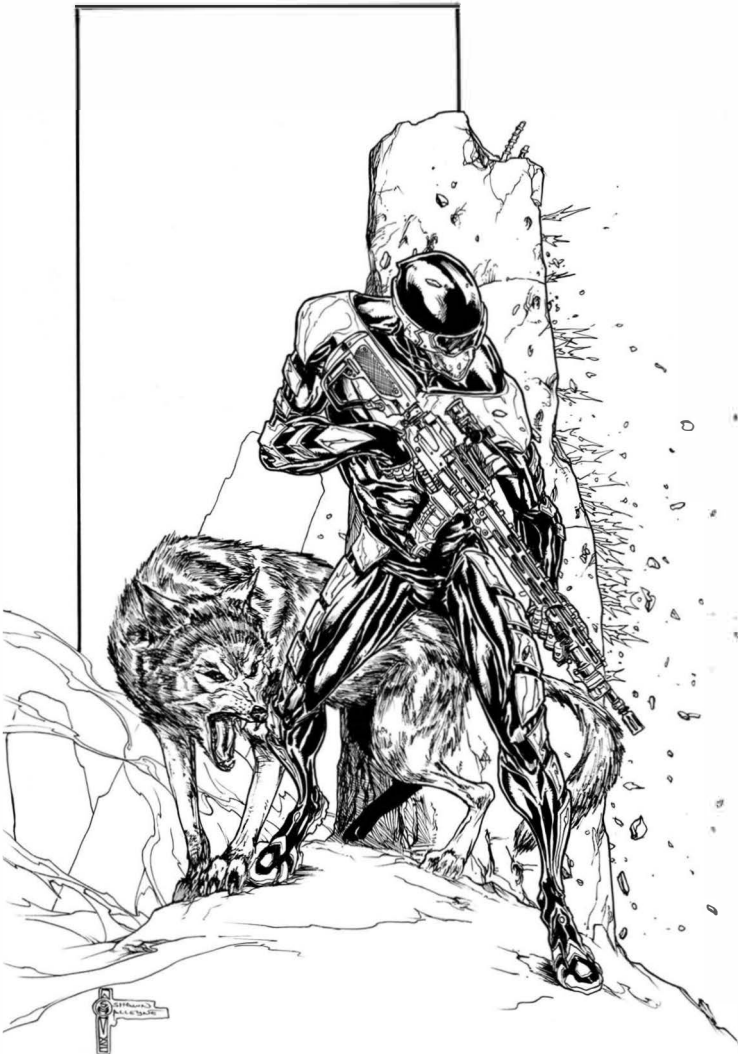
WOLFPACK



The Cost of Information Ch 1 (Catalyst Exclusive Series)

Written by Dalibor Zujovic

The family and I have been working on this series for ages. The script is done and ready for the first six issues of Wolfpack, but until artists can be afforded, I bring you the first glimpse into the universe of Wolfpack.



Commissioned art for Wolfpack
by Shawn Alleyene

June 7, 2011

A well-dressed young man walks into a tidy Pentagon office entry and nods to the Admin. Before she can say anything, she sees a light flash on her console, indicating to send the visitor in, so she waves him in. As he enters the main office, he sees everything in its place. Almost fake in how few items appear to have any use.

"General. I have the research report you asked for." A lie said loudly enough for the Admin's benefit.

A seasoned veteran looks up from his desk and smiles. "Lock the door." He presses a button on his phone and says "Denise, I'll be in a meeting for a while. Hold my calls and ask any visitors to come back later."

"Yes, sir. Visual privacy?" He sees Denise put on her headset through the window and reach to a control panel.

"Unnecessary, but thank you." He leans back in expectation. "This conversation is overdue, Brian. You better have what I'm looking for."

Brian sits down in front of the General, and places a briefcase on the table. He begins unlocking it as he begins to speak. "The story that I'm going to tell you is at best hearsay, and at worst proof of the darkest secret the American government has ever had." He sits with a two-foot-tall stack of folders and files visible in the briefcase.

"We all know what happened in September 2001. In response to this tragedy, in secret, and before the sun fell on that day, America sent an elite group of soldiers to address the problem. Despite the publicized "hunt" that would take over a decade, in reality the people responsible for the attack were dead less than 24 hours later. That's when the actual theatrical performance that the world saw on their television screens America eventually dubbed "The War on Terror" began."

The General has a clearly skeptical look on his face. Brian sees this and responds, "If that's hard to believe, this is going to get a lot more difficult for you as I continue. This is my wheelhouse. The research is impeccable. So far, I've only said facts. We'll get into some more speculative details shortly."

The General, frustrated, beckons him to speak. "Alright. As you might imagine, the leadership of the world looked at the elimination of those who gave the orders and they got concerned. America's allies didn't like it, but of course it was a secret mission, so they could only voice their displeasure in secret. As such America's secret team disappeared. What came next for them is the mystery. This is where the rumors come into play."

"A specific General who argued strongly for continued decisive actions suddenly seemed to fall in line. Now he still spoke up enough to not raise suspicions, but his fire was gone. Many observers said that they felt he was just going through the motions. Simultaneously, this same General started working closely with a group of Senators who shortly thereafter presented a new project to the Energy Council for the investigation into clean power sources - an easy sell to the Council. The project was fast-tracked for the optics - the Democratic Senate was working hard to resolve the pending doom of Global Warming, and this was proof. As it goes, funds got earmarked with a military spending bill that was sure to pass, and that money went to this new project. Now what the project really was is a bit difficult to decipher, but I did manage to get some details between all the redaction.

The covert strike team that was activated in 2001 became involved in what was to be a new method of triple-black extreme action. Now by this point we're in 2003, and the "war on terror" is in full swing. Nobody's looking at home, and on the rare occasion they are, there's suddenly a terror threat on American soil. Color coding threat levels was truly a stroke of genius. Simplify the threat to make people do what you need them to do on your schedule.

"You're aware of course that many suspected terrorists were taken to Gitmo and held without hearings or trials or any sort of due process. Well while that shit show was happening, other people were also taken. Shamans started disappearing. I am confident that you have not been living in a cave the last 20 years, and you know that at the turn of the century we saw a resurgence of mysticism. It's hard to determine what is factual, but the most consistent details are as follows. Because the war and the terror threat was the most important thing on everyone's minds, the magic users were old news. So those who were curious and wanted to learn or even improve started niching into groups. The best among them became Shamans of their covens. The highest-skilled of whom were subsequently disappeared. If any missing persons reports were filed, they were most often dismissed due to misinformation and data

mining that was in play for the cover. Eventually people stopped asking or were scared off."

"Since this was an energy project, the other half of their equation was much easier to acquire. Energy projects require engineers. Nobody questions the hiring of Engineers for this type of thing. It only starts to look suspicious when you see the *kind* of Engineers that were brought on. Nanotechnology pioneers. Basically everyone who was anywhere near the final expected form was hired on under the pretense that their work would be used to create the next era of energy."

The General stands and walks to a small cabinet near the window. He opens the top in a way that is straight out of a spy thriller, and a snifter of brown liquid appears from inside. "Tennessee's best," he says and pours two glasses. He offers one to the young man and sits back at his desk. They politely clink glasses and the General nods to continue.

"Thank you sir. So now we have the ingredients together in one place. What place? Well that's still part of the mystery. But I'm getting close. What happens at this place? That - that's the interesting part here."

"Based on a few keywords that were not redacted in this stack of black bars, along with some experimental and creative investigative methodologies which I will keep out of your ears for plausible deniability, I think I've figured out what was being done. They were working on somehow pairing elite soldiers with wild animals, wolves specifically - through a blend of technology and mysticism." He lets that breathe for a while while he takes another sip of his drink.

The General's eyes widen and he blinks almost excessively, as if processing the information.

The young man continues, "as I said, this is cobbled together information and I could be way off base. But if I'm being honest, I have never felt more sure about an investigation in my life. And you know my track record."

The general finishes his drink. "I do. How soon will you have the location?"

"I don't have specifics but I'm leaving for a trip to Brazil tomorrow, so I should have it narrowed down to a state at least by the time I come back."

"Brasil? Do you need a **guide**?"

"No sir, I've been before. I know my way around."

"This is very interesting stuff indeed. I look forward to your next report."

"You'll know the moment I have something for you, sir."

June 8, 2011

Before the sun is up, a young man steps onto a 747 and walks up to Business Class. He sits next to a woman with a blanket and a pillow all set up for a nap, enjoying some champagne. "First time in Business Class?"

"Can you tell?" She smiles bashfully, her braids falling forward slightly.

"Well it's more like I can remember my first time. I was the same way. You'll get used to it."

He reaches out a hand. "Brian."

She shakes his hand saying, "Ayobami. I can only hope to get used to it. Business was very good this year and my family bought me this trip in celebration."

"Name like that you're bound to see more success and much more Business Class. Yoruba, right?"

She looks at him shocked. "Most white people don't know that."

He laughs. "Most white people don't spend as much time as me researching, well, just about everything. I've spent a lot of time in Nigeria."

"What do you do, if you don't mind me asking?"

"I am a research consultant. I find things out about cultures, cities, products, whatever my clients want to know about. Good money when you take into account that most people don't want to do the leg work. Take today, for instance. My clients usually don't have the patience for a 15-hour flight just to take a survey of Rio's fountains." He chuckles politely.

"Sounds boring. I'm glad it pays well though! I'm a baker. I own a small chain of bakeries in the DC area. We make the best cupcakes."

Brian leans closer to her, very intrigued. "Now you're speaking my language! Cupcakes are great, but how are your muffins? Muffins are my lifeblood!"

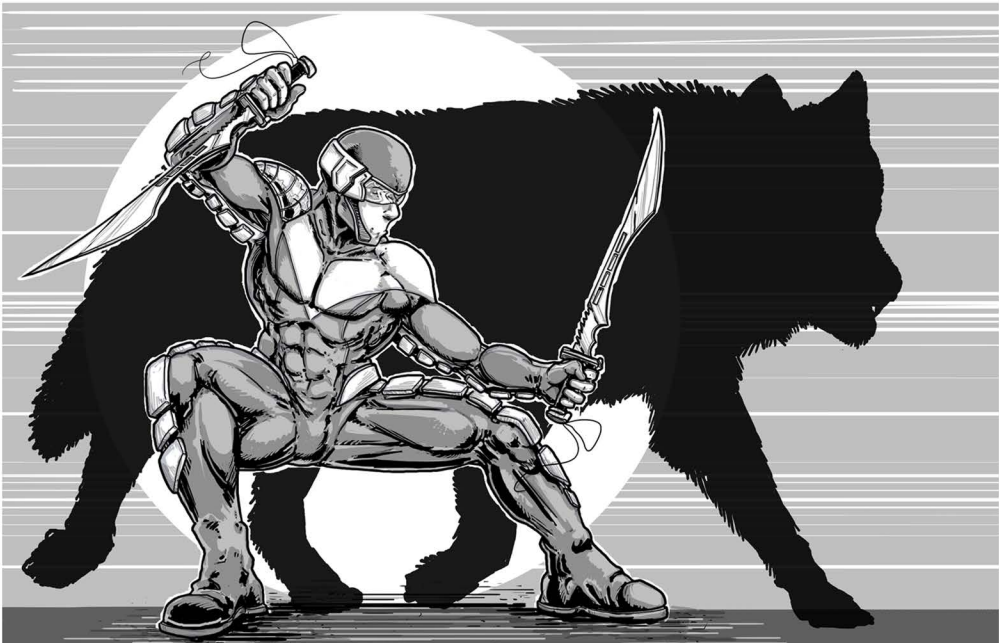
The conversation continues for the entire flight until they both fall asleep. Ayobami wakes up to the shuffle of people getting their baggage from the overhead compartment and moving to the door. She turns to Brian's seat, expecting him to still be there.

"Didn't realize the seats would be so comfy..." Her words trail as she realizes he's no longer there. His stuff is all gone. He must have been one of the first people off. "...comfortable. Probably wants to get his boring work done as soon as he can." She starts collecting her stuff, going through her mental checklist so as not to forget anything. As she closes her carry-on bag the third time, she wonders if she might be able to sneak another champagne before disembarking. She's the last person off the plane as the Flight Attendants welcome her to sunny Brazil.

Meanwhile in the shadows of Brazil, Brian wakes up groggy. The last thing he remembers was stepping off the plane and getting into a taxi. He realizes he's on the floor somewhere and tries to stand. He's hit with the fact that he cannot move his legs or his arms much. As his awareness returns, he notices heavy ancient metal bars on the other side of the room.

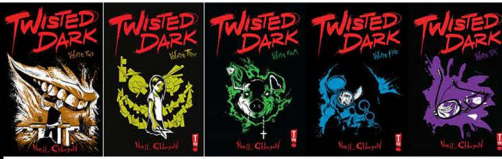
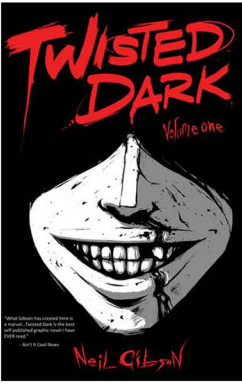
"Oh, fuck."

To Be Continued...



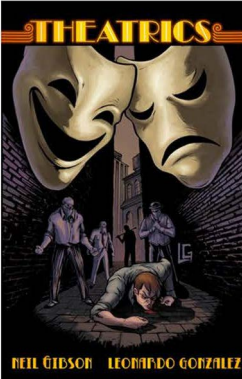
Commissioned art for Wolfpack

by Gaz "Gazbot" Gretzky



Neil Gibson

This introduction will likely get old, but I was at a convention one day, and walked up to a table in the first aisle. We were recording C2E2 for the T3G Media YouTube channel and were interviewing creators. We got our next creator on video, and when we were done, he said I had a great on-camera presence and I will take that compliment to the grave! When I met him that day he had already produced at least four volumes of his acclaimed anthology series Twisted Dark, and yet I had never read it. This type of thing is exactly why this Magazine exists. People need to learn about incredible creators like Neil.



Dalibor Zujovic: I'm a self-promotion guy, so let's start there. What is the latest and greatest project coming out from TPub Comics?

Neil Gibson: Ooof! We have been pretty quiet during COVID but a lot of new things coming out.

Theatrics Vol 2 has been finished for a while, but we haven't released it yet. It is the conclusion to the story and has my favourite ending I have done. If none of your readers have read it, they can read the first chapter here: <https://www.tpub.co.uk/product/theatrics/> just click on the 'look inside' button. **[It's great, go read it!]**



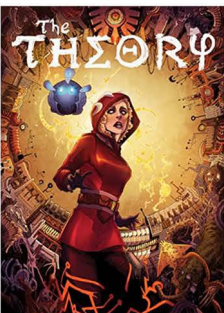
If they like it, email us at info@tpub.co.uk and we can send them more.

Amputation Capital is a fun ride. Written by newcomer Raymond Tyler and myself, the first two issues have been illustrated by André Risso and are now being coloured. It is set in a world where people can buy and sell 'skin' (body parts from celebrities). Basically what if our culture was even more messed up!



Here is a look at the cover. I think it's intriguing. >

Other than that, we are working on several other projects and in theory have some titles in development for TV, but again COVID has put a spanner in the works!



Main titles coming out next year include:

- The Theory Vol 2
- Twisted Dark Season2, Vol 2
- Tuned - basically Heroes meets SE7EN

Will this be available through Amazon/Comixology/DtriveThru as well as your own website - tpub.co.uk ?

Yes and as many channels as we can.

What is the best thing about publishing independently?

It is harder to get publicity for the works, but it also means we can publish what we want, instead of having to fit a set criteria or relying on the whims of an editor.

Why comics instead of novels or other prose mediums?

Oh this is a big one. I love books, I love podcasts, I love plays, TV, films, games. Any-way medium that tells a story I am pretty much a fan of. BUT, comics are my pre-

ferred medium.

Why? Because of their efficiency. A picture says a thousand words and you can spend as little or as long as you like on a panel. You get the instant understanding of TV/Film, with the control of consumption of a book. There are plenty of rubbish comics, but good ones are amazing!

What has been the greatest moment of your publishing career?

Greatest is honestly producing comics for talented writers and making their material better. I really like writing comics, but I LOVE editing/producing comics for others. Helping something really good become great is an enormous pleasure and privilege.



Now that we've heard from the creator, I will invite you, as Neil has hundreds of thousands of people at cons, to take the Twisted Challenge!

In the next pages, you'll see the first two stories from both the Twisted Dark series and The Theory from TPub Comics. The challenge is to read those two stories and walk away—and people rarely do. The stories are that good!

When you are ready, visit www.tpub.co.uk or your preferred digital comics online store. Twisted Dark Volume 1 is not even a whole dollar!

TWISTED DARK

Volume one



"What Gibson has created here is a marvel...Twisted Dark is the best self published graphic novel I have EVER read."

- Ain't It Cool News

Neil Gibson

TWISTED DARK

Volume 1

By
Neil Gibson

Suicide...

Online chat rooms allow complete anonymity

Complete anonymity

**You can tell strangers things that you wouldn't ever
want to reveal to your friends or family**

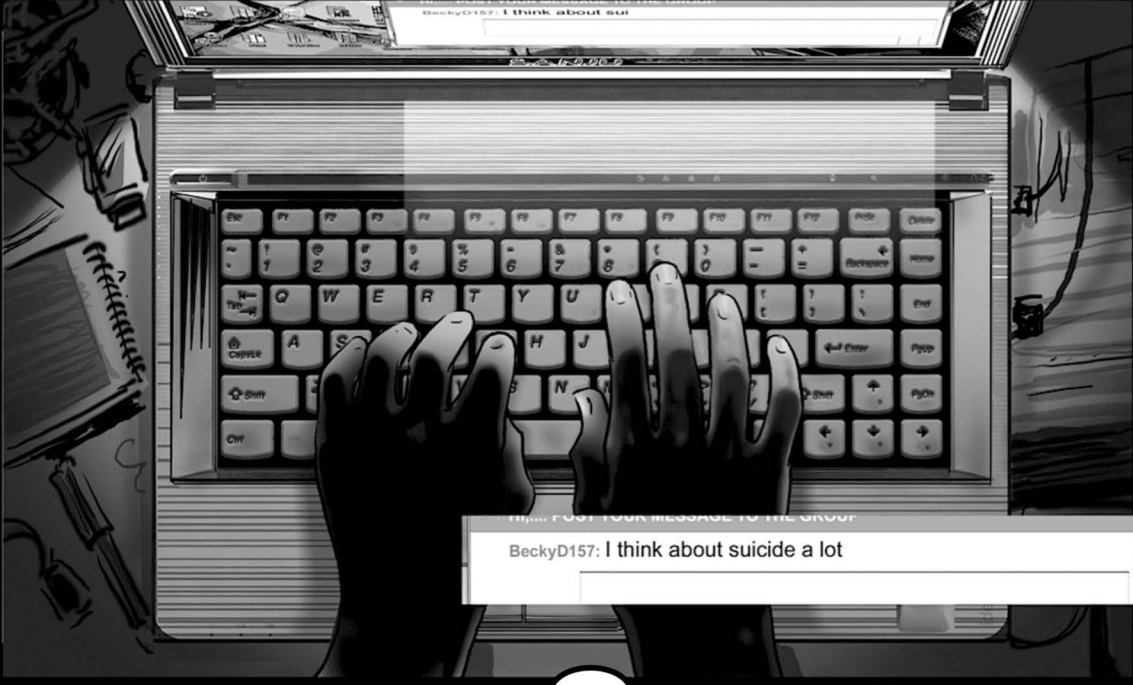
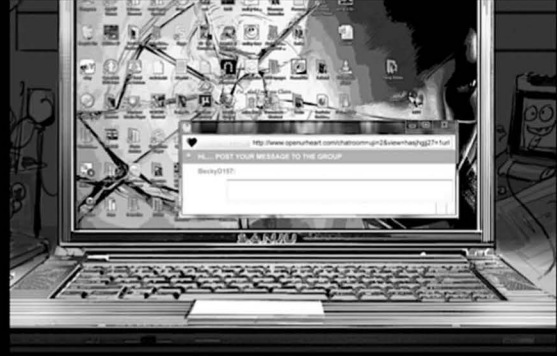
**You can release years of guilt and have the cathartic
feeling of confessing**

Or...

You can just talk about how you really feel...

Writer/Creator
Neil Gibson

Illustrator
Atula Siriwardane





Supposedly I am "normal" weight, but nowadays normal is the new fat.

Also.....
i have a bumpy nose.



I think I am so gross.....
and that I will never find love.

BeckyD157: I read that suicide is a call for help
or a call for attention

I don't believe that though
because I don't want attention.

I just want to be left alone..



I just want everything to stop



I can't really see the point of carrying on
when life is like this.



People say that life gets better
when you are older.
But people also say.....

they wish they were kids again
with no responsibilities



BeckyD157: I don't know. I don't care.
I just want it all to end

The thing that worries me though...



...is that I am only 10.

Story Neil Gibson
Art Atula Siriwardane

WWW.NEILGIBSONCOMICS.COM

Routine...



Writer/Creator
Neil Gibson

Illustrator
Caspar Wijngaard

ASBJORN AND HIS SON HAD A ROUTINE...



KOLL!, YOU HARDLY TOUCHED YOUR FOOD!



SORRY DAD, NOT HUNGRY!



WHEN HE DIDN'T HAVE SCHOOL, KOLL WOULD TAKE THE DOG AND GO HUNTING,



WHILE ASBJORN WOULD WRITE IN THE CABIN.

DON'T DAWDLE OR THE DAY WILL BE GONE!



IT WAS A SIMPLE PEACEFUL LIFE AND THEY LIKED IT.

THEY LIVED IN A VERY ISOLATED PART OF NORWAY ON THE ISLAND OF VAEROY.



THE CLOSEST NEIGHBOURS WERE IN THE LITTLE FISHING VILLAGE OF MÅSTAD.



NO ONE BOTHERED THEM AND THAT SUITED ASBJORN JUST FINE.



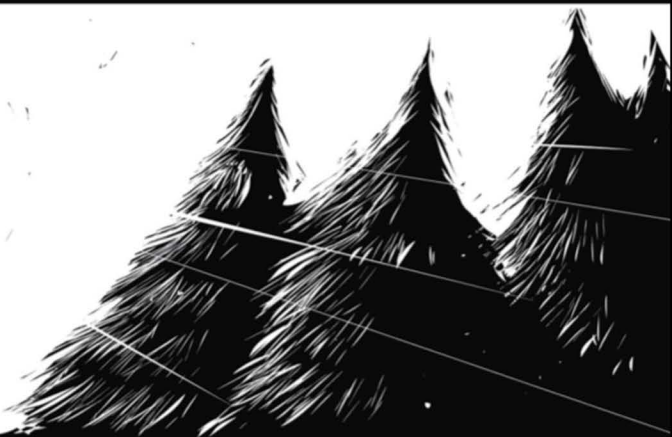
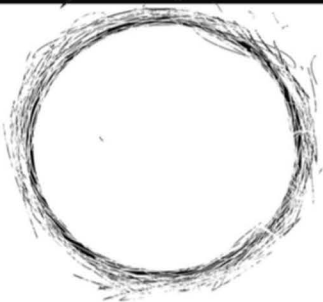
HE KNEW THAT THIS PLACE WAS TOO SMALL. IT WOULDN'T HOLD HIS SON FOREVER.



KOLL WOULD GROW UP, START HIS OWN FAMILY AND ASBJORN WOULD BE LEFT ALL ALONE.



BUT NOT JUST YET.



SUNNY DAYS WERE THE BEST FOR HUNTING. THEY DIDN'T GET TOO MANY OF THEM - KOLL WOULD BE HAPPY.

IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY KOLL.



I KNOW!



ASBJORN WATCHED HIS SON'S EXCITEMENT AT THE WEATHER AND HIS HEART GLOWED AT HIS SIMPLE PLEASURE.

NOT A CLOUD IN SIGHT!



HAD HE KNOWN FATHERHOOD WAS SO PLEASANT HE WOULD HAVE STARTED SOONER AND HAD MORE.



BUT THEN AGAIN HE MUSED, PERHAPS HE HAD JUST BEEN LUCKY TO HAVE HAD KOLL.

TRUE THEY HAD ARGUED IN THE PAST, BACK WHEN HE DRANK...

...PLEASE..

GET UP AND PICK ONE BOY.

NO? THEN IT'S THE BELT FOR YOU.

GET OUT OF THE WAY DOG!

FLAKS!

AROWE

GRR!

THE LAST TIME KOLL HAD EVEN TRIED TO RUN AWAY.

ASBJORN WAS ASHAMED
OF THOSE TIMES.



KOLL MUST HAVE HATED IT
WHEN HE DRANK, HATED HIM.



BUT THAT WAS IN THE PAST.
NOW, THINGS WERE BETTER.



HE SMILED AND WATCHED HIS
SON GET READY. HE TREASURED
THESE SIMPLE MOMENTS.



KOLL TUCKING IN HIS
LUMBERJACK SHIRT,
TYING HIS SHOES LIKE
HE HAD TAUGHT HIM.



COUNTING OUT THE
SHOTGUN CARTRIDGES.



AND FINALLY REACHING OUT FOR
HIS BELOVED SHOTGUN. HIS
FAVOURITE THING IN THE WORLD.

THE GUN HAD BEEN ASBJORN'S PRIZED POSSESSION. HE USED TO GET UPSET IF HE CAUGHT KOULL EVEN LOOKING AT IT.



SO YOU READY TO GO HUNTING?

BUT NOW ALL HE FELT WAS JOY THAT HE COULD GIVE IT TO HIS SON WHO CLEARLY LOVED IT.

YES DAD!



YOU EXCITED

YES DAD!



PROMISE TO BRING BACK BIRDS FOR DINNER?

I'LL TRY

HEH! YOU PROMMMISE?

I...I PROMISE.



GOOD STUFF! WE'LL TAKE FLAKS WITH YOU. HE IS A GOOD LUNDEHUND.



UMM...

AREN'T YOU GOING TO TELL ME TO BE CAREFUL?



OH YES, I NEARLY FORGOT. AND YOU ARE GOING TO BE SAFE AND CAREFUL?

YES DAD!!



OK OK, NOW GO HAVE FUN!



DON'T BE LATE, I NEED HELP IN THE GARDEN SO COME HOME BY LUNCHTIME.

THEY HAD A SIMILAR CONVERSATION
EVERY TIME KOLL WENT OUT HUNTING.



BUT ASBJORN
NEVER TIRED OF IT.



HE LIKED THE
ROUTINE.





TIME TO WORK.



ASBJORN NEVER HAD TROUBLE WRITING.



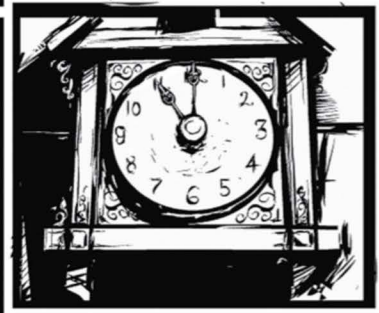
HE COULD EASILY IMAGINE EVERY SCENE IN HIS STORIES.



BANG

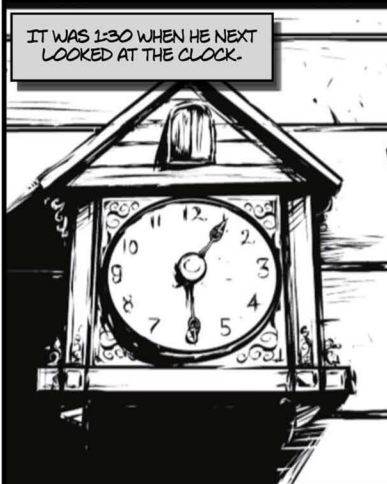
BANG

TWO FAINT SHOTS AT 11 BROKE HIS CONCENTRATION.



TWO SHOTS MEANT KOLL HAD MISSED WITH THE FIRST SHOT. HE GRINNED KNOWING KOLL WOULD BE UPSET. HE'D TEASE HIM LATER.

IT WAS 1:30 WHEN HE NEXT LOOKED AT THE CLOCK.



KOLL SHOULD HAVE BEEN BACK A WHILE AGO...

ACK, HE WAS PROBABLY HAVING FUN. THE GARDEN COULD WAIT TILL TOMORROW.



BUT THE SEEDS OF DOUBT HAD STARTED IN ASHEJORN'S MIND.

HE FOUND IT HARDER TO FOCUS AND STRAINED TO HEAR ANY SIGN OF HIS SON.



HE STARTED GETTING UP TO LOOK OUT THE WINDOW AT EVERY IMAGINED SOUND.



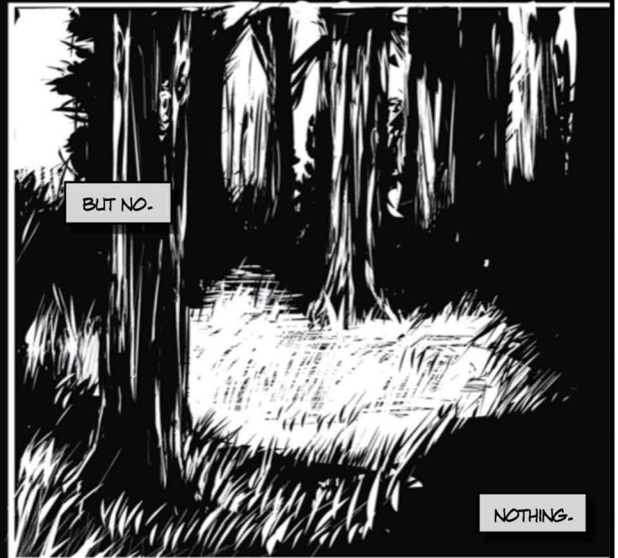
BUT THERE WAS NO SIGN OF HIM.



JUST SILENCE...



AND SO WITH A LITTLE DREAD,
HE STARTED WALKING.





WHY WAS THERE NO RESPONSE? WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM?



OH GOD. THOSE GUNSHOTS! WHAT IF THERE HAD BEEN AN ACCIDENT? WHAT IF...



NO NO NO! STOP THINKING LIKE THAT.




DON'T PANIC.


IT WILL BE OK.

DON'T PANIC.







ANIMALS TAKE THE EASIEST ROUTE ACROSS A LANDSCAPE. AS THEY REPEAT THEIR JOURNEYS, NATURAL PATHS FORM.



WHILST SEARCHING FOR HIS SON, ASBJORN STARTED FOLLOWING ONE OF THESE PATHS WITHOUT REALISING IT.



HE HAD BEEN WALKING FOR NEARLY AN HOUR AND A HALF NOW - FAR FURTHER THAN KOLL SHOULD EVER HAVE GONE.



BY NOW HIS VOICE WAS HOARSE AND HE COULDN'T SHOUT ANYMORE WITHOUT IT HURTING.



HE KNEW HIS VOICE WAS BECOMING QUIETER.

AND HE KNEW THAT WITH QUIETER SHOUTS THERE WAS LESS CHANCE THAT KOLL COULD HEAR HIM.

KOLL...?

IF, THAT WAS KOLL STILL COULD HEAR...

NO! HIS SON WAS ALIVE AND HE WOULD FIND HIM.

DESPITE THESE FORCED POSITIVE THOUGHTS, HE FELT A SUDDEN CHILL.

DEEP DOWN HE KNEW THAT HIS SON WAS DEAD. THE GRIEF THREATENED TO OVERWHELM HIM.

BUT AS HE ENTERED A CLEARING AND SAW A DEAD TREE, HIS HEART LEFT.



DAD?

KOLL WAS ALIVE!!
BUT HE INSTANTLY
SAW SHAME IN HIS
SON'S FACE.



WHICH QUICKLY TURNED TO
CONCERN WHEN KOLL SAW
HIS FATHER'S FEATURES.



DAD
ARE YOU
OK?

WHERE HAVE YOU
BEEN? WHAT
HAPPENED??



I TRIED ALL DAY
DAD, BUT I COULDN'T
FIND ANY BIRDS.

I DIDN'T WANT TO COME
HOME WITH NOTHING...I...I
PROMISED YOU....



I PROMISED

AND YOU NEVER BREAK
PROMISES.

WHAT USE ARE BIRDS IF YOU
AREN'T HOME SAFE? I WAS SO
WORRIED. IF ANYTHING HAPPENED
TO YOU I...



OH KOLL,



HE HELD HIM FOR A
WHILE. ENJOYING
THE RELIEF.



HIS BOY
WAS SAFE.

KOLL

HE SENSED KOLL GETTING UNCOMFORTABLE WITH HIS EMOTIONS SO HE BROKE OFF THE HUG.



AND WIPED AWAY HIS TEARS OF RELEASE.



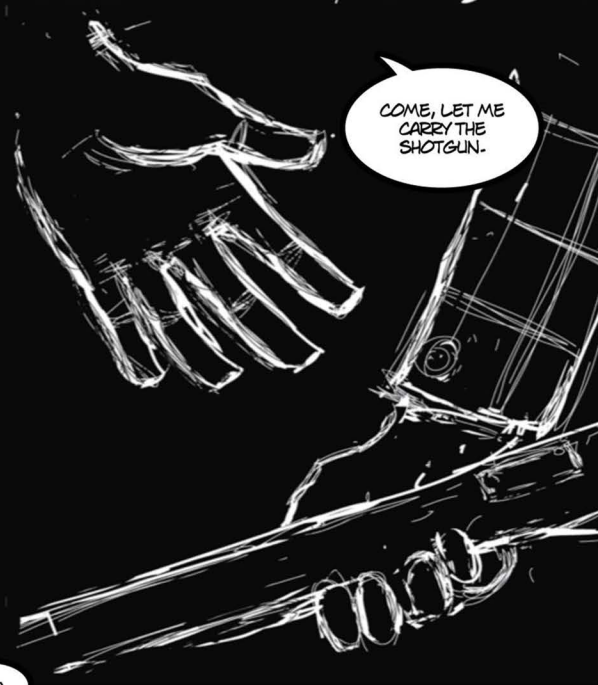
COME ON, LET'S GO HOME.



I FELT LIKE TUNAFISH TODAY ANYWAY.



COME, LET ME CARRY THE SHOTGUN.





ASBJORN KNEW THAT KOLL DIDN'T LIKE HOLDING HANDS, BUT ASBJORN DIDN'T CARE. HIS SON WAS ALIVE AND HE WAS HAPPY.



AND ALL THREE WALKED BACK HOME WITH ASBJORN CARRYING THE GUN IN ONE HAND AND TIGHTLY SQUEEZING KOLL IN THE OTHER.

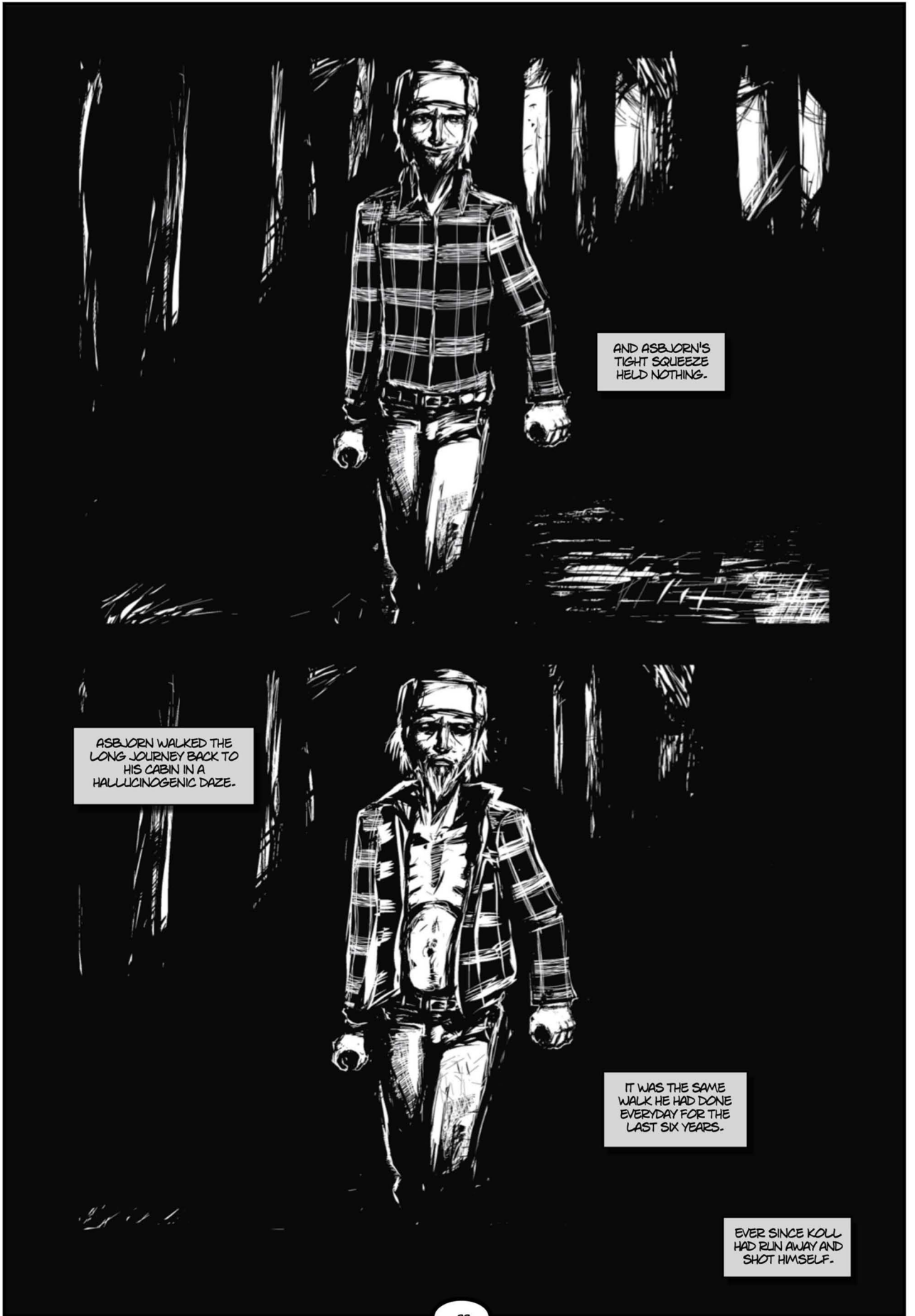
ONLY...



ONLY THERE WAS
NO SHOTGUN.



THERE WAS NO
LUNDEHUND.



AND ASBJORN'S
TIGHT SQUEEZE
HELD NOTHING.

ASBJORN WALKED THE
LONG JOURNEY BACK TO
HIS CABIN IN A
HALLUCINOGENIC DAZE.

IT WAS THE SAME
WALK HE HAD DONE
EVERYDAY FOR THE
LAST SIX YEARS.

EVER SINCE KOLL
HAD RUN AWAY AND
SHOT HIMSELF.



ASBJORN AND HIS
SON HAD A ROUTINE...

The THΣΘRΨ



Neil Gibson's Twisted Sci-Fi

Neil Gibson's Twisted Sci-fi

The Theory

Volume 1

Written by: David Court, Forrest Helvie, and Neil Gibson

Illustrated by: Amrit Birdi, Atula Siriwardane, Cem Iroz, Davide Puppo, Jake Elphick, Jim Terry, Phil Buckenham, and V.V. Glass

Covers: Abigail Harding and Vince Sunico

Additional artwork: Chelsea Ambrose, Rob Banbury and Cornelia Abfalter

Coloured by: Liezl Buenaventura

Lettered by: Justin Birch

Edited by: Sarah Meeks with Neil Gibson

Additional story edits and special thanks to: Nieros

Graphic Design by: Jed McPherson and Sarah Meeks

Accidental Financier: A.C.: DMWH

Intentional Investor: M.V.H.

Deal Maker: Kenny Diack

Science Advice: Kian Momtahan and Mark Maslin



Obsession

"Without Obsession, life is nothing"

John Waters



Writer/Creator
Neil Gibson

Story
David Court

Illustrator
Phil Buckenham

Colourist
Liezl Buenaventura

Letters by
Justin Birch



ANY LEGACY STRUCTURES?

I CAN'T DETECT ANY LINDA. THE CITIES ARE DECAYED BUT INTACT. SHALL I HEAD TO THE CENTRE OF THE BIGGEST CITY?

SURE.

I AM DETECTING THE REMAINS OF HUMANOID FORMS ALL OVER THE PLANET.

DAMN.

WHAT'S WRONG?

HMM? MOST CIVILIZATIONS THAT KNOW THEY'RE DYING LEAVE MESSAGES, SO ANY VISITORS CAN LEARN ABOUT THEIR CULTURE AND WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM.

BUT IF THE CITIES ARE ALL INTACT, AND THERE ARE BODIES STREWN EVERYWHERE IT SUGGESTS A SUDDEN CALAMITY AND IT IS MUCH HARDER TO LEARN ABOUT THE SPECIES.

LINDA, I HAVE SOMETHING THAT MAY BE INTERESTING.

IN THE CITY PARK, THERE IS THE REMAINS OF A FARM, BUT THE REST OF THE PARK WAS CLEARLY ORNAMENTAL. IT SUGGESTS THERE WERE SURVIVORS OF THE CALAMITY!

GREAT! LET'S HEAD THERE.

LA DI DA DA!

YOU REALLY LOVE THIS DON'T YOU.

YEAH! IT'S MY PASSION. THANK YOU FOR COMING, CONOR.



I WONDER
HOW LONG
IT'LL TAKE?

HOW LONG BEFORE
SHE WORKS OUT THAT
EVERYONE'S DEAD

NO...

EVERYONE.

I'LL HAVE TO
GO OUT SOON
AND FIND HER.

CONSOLE
HER.

CATCH HER
BEFORE SHE DOES
ANYTHING DESPERATE
OUT OF PANIC.

THE VIRUS THAT WIPED THEM ALL OUT HAD TO BE SO SPECIFIC. IT TOOK AN AGE AND A FORTUNE TO DEVELOP.



YOU COULD SAY IT WAS MY PASSION.

"I WOULDN'T GO OUT WITH YOU IF YOU WERE THE LAST MAN IN THE WORLD", SHE'D SAID.



WELL,

WE'LL SEE...

OH GOD THAT'S HOW THIS WORLD ENDED? BECAUSE OF MISGUIDED PASSION?



NOT PASSION.

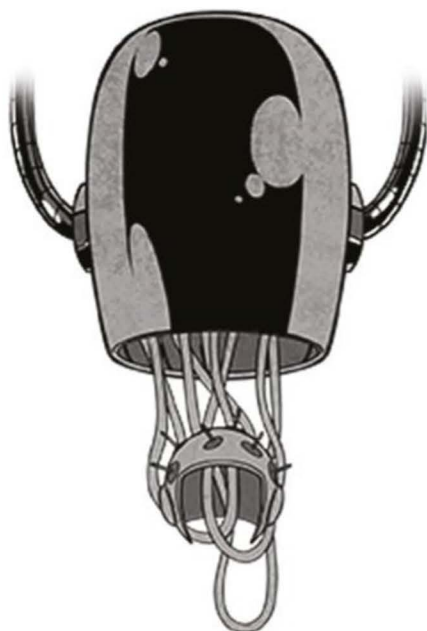
OBSESSION.



TO BE CONTINUED...

Pandora

"There is only one happiness in this life,
to love and to be loved"



George Sand

Plot
Forest Helvie/
Neil Gibson

Writer/Creator
Neil Gibson

Illustrator
Phil Buckenham

Colourist
Liezl Buenaventura

Letters by
Justin Birch



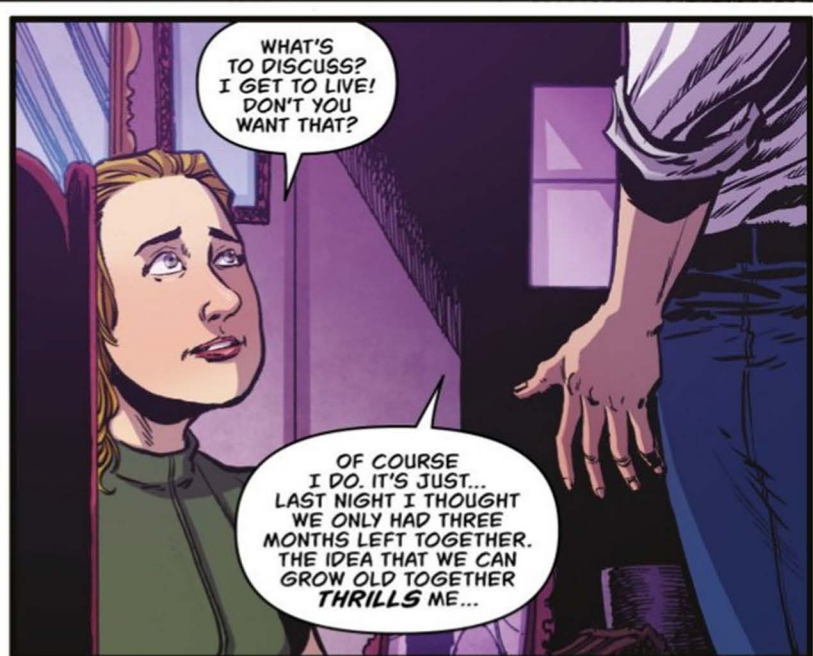


IT'S THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME -- LITERALLY.



IT'S A CHANCE FOR MY LIFE.

I KNOW. I JUST THINK WE SHOULD TALK ABOUT IT.



WHAT'S TO DISCUSS? I GET TO LIVE! DON'T YOU WANT THAT?

OF COURSE I DO. IT'S JUST... LAST NIGHT I THOUGHT WE ONLY HAD THREE MONTHS LEFT TOGETHER. THE IDEA THAT WE CAN GROW OLD TOGETHER THRILLS ME...



BUT WILL IT STILL BE YOU?



OF COURSE, SILLY. I STILL LOVE YOU WHEN YOU HAVE A BEARD AND WHEN YOU DON'T, RIGHT?

YEAH... BUT THAT'S DIFFERENT.

HOW? IT **RADICALLY** AFFECTS HOW YOU LOOK, BUT YOU'RE STILL THE SAME PERSON AND I LOVE YOU EITHER WAY.

BUT YOU'RE ONLY SEXY WITH IT...



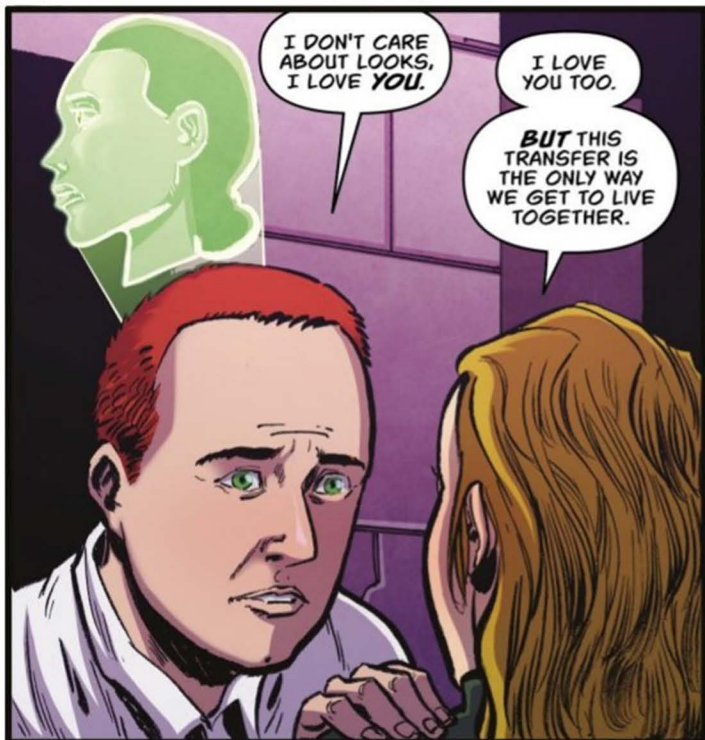
IF WE DO THIS, YOU'LL BE IN A **DIFFERENT PERSON'S BODY**. IT...IT WILL TAKE SOME GETTING USED TO.

IT'LL STILL BE ME.



THE WAY I SEE IT, YOU GET AN **UPGRADE**.

NOT ONLY IS SHE **HOTTER** THAN I WAS AT MY BEST, THIS NEW HOT WIFE OF YOURS WILL HAVE ALL THE AWESOMENESS THAT IS **MY** PERSONALITY.



I DON'T CARE ABOUT LOOKS, I LOVE **YOU**.

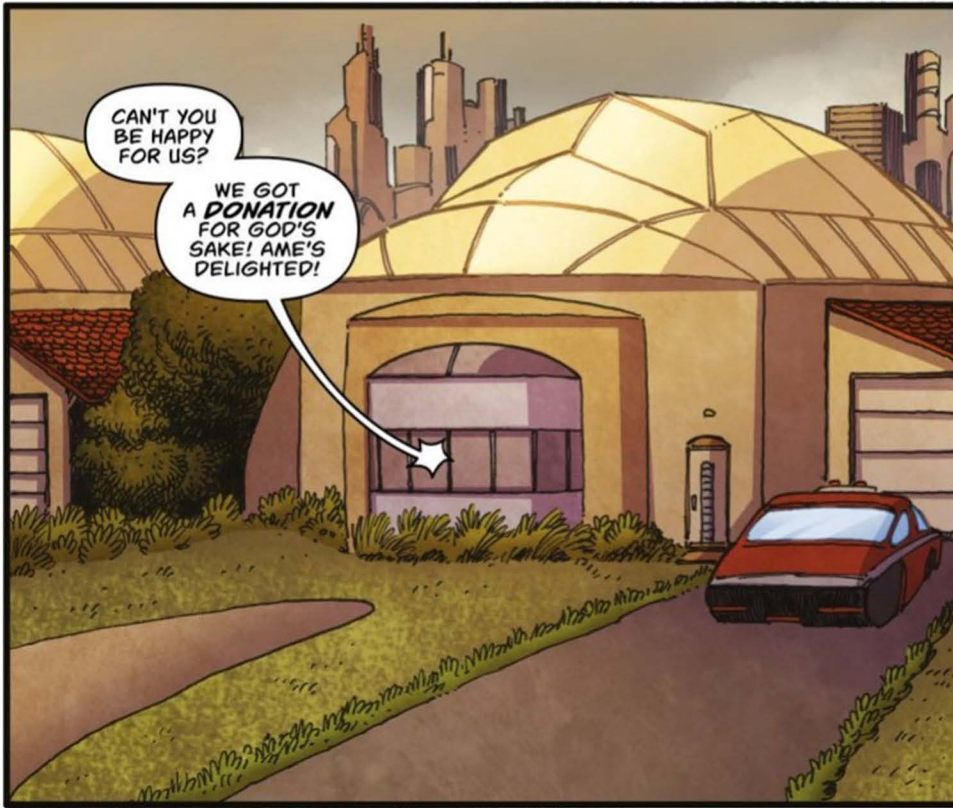
I LOVE YOU TOO.

BUT THIS TRANSFER IS THE ONLY WAY WE GET TO LIVE TOGETHER.



OK. OK.

LET'S DO IT.



CAN'T YOU BE HAPPY FOR US?

WE GOT A DONATION FOR GOD'S SAKE! AME'S DELIGHTED!



OF COURSE SHE IS.

CLIP



YOU RUSHED INTO A WEDDING WITH NO PRE-NUP. "MIRACULOUSLY" YOU HAVE A MATCHING DONOR DAYS AFTER YOUR WEDDING.

SHE WILL LIVE FOR A LONG TIME AND CAN SPEND ALL OF YOUR FORTUNE.



HOW COULD YOU EVEN THINK THAT?! THE DONOR PASSED THE PSYCH EVALUATION AND IS WILLINGLY TERMINATING HER OWN LIFE.

EXACTLY! WHY WOULD A TWENTY FIVE YEAR OLD WHO LOOKS LIKE THAT WANT TO END HER LIFE, HUH?



I DON'T KNOW. PEOPLE GET UNHAPPY AND DEPRESSED FOR DIFFERENT REASONS.

MAYBE SHE HAD A MOTHER LIKE YOU.

JOKE ALL YOU WANT, BUT THIS IS NEW TECHNOLOGY. IT'S NOT REVERSIBLE.



HOW MANY MONTHS DID YOU DATE AME BEFORE SHE GOT SICK? FOUR? YOU ENTERED INTO THE MARRIAGE **THINKING** SHE HAD MONTHS TO LIVE, BUT **SUDDENLY** THINGS CHANGED.

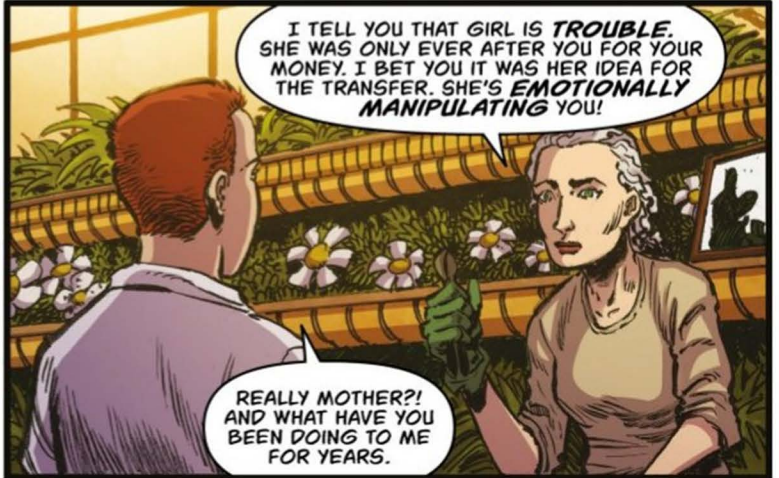
THE DONOR PUT IN THE EUTHANASIA REQUEST **FIVE DAYS** AGO, SO SHE HAS TWO MORE DAYS BEFORE A TRANSFER IS ALLOWED. WHY NOT TAKE THE TIME TO GET A PRE-NUP.

OR BETTER YET, AN ANNULLMENT. **THEN** CARRY ON WITH THE PROCEDURE.



WHY EVEN INVOLVE YOURSELF IN SOMETHING AS...**UNNATURAL** SUCH AS THIS TO BEGIN WITH?!

BECAUSE I LOVE HER!



I TELL YOU THAT GIRL IS **TROUBLE**. SHE WAS ONLY EVER AFTER YOU FOR YOUR MONEY. I BET YOU IT WAS HER IDEA FOR THE TRANSFER. SHE'S **EMOTIONALLY MANIPULATING** YOU!

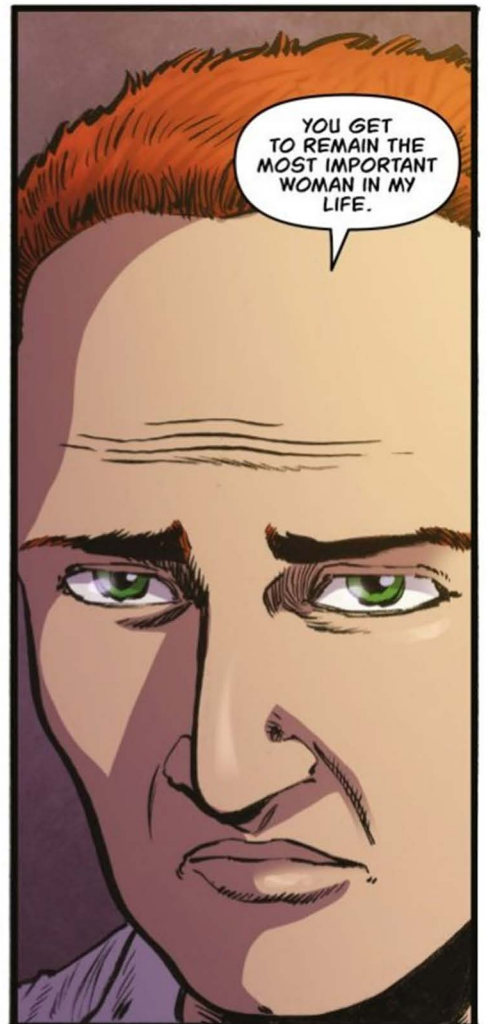
REALLY MOTHER?! AND WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING TO ME FOR YEARS.



I TRY TO **HELP YOU!** ALL YOUR LIFE I'VE GONE OUT OF MY WAY TO PROTECT **YOUR** BEST INTERESTS.

YOU SABOTAGE EVERY RELATIONSHIP I HAVE!

YOU THINK YOUR FEELINGS FOR HER ARE ANYWHERE **CLOSE** TO THE LOVE I HAVE FOR MY SON? WHAT DO I HAVE TO GAIN BY WRECKING YOUR RELATIONSHIP?



YOU GET TO REMAIN THE MOST IMPORTANT WOMAN IN MY LIFE.



BUT NO MORE. I LOVE MY WIFE AND I WILL DO **ALL** I CAN TO SAVE HER.



HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THAT IT WAS **FATE**?



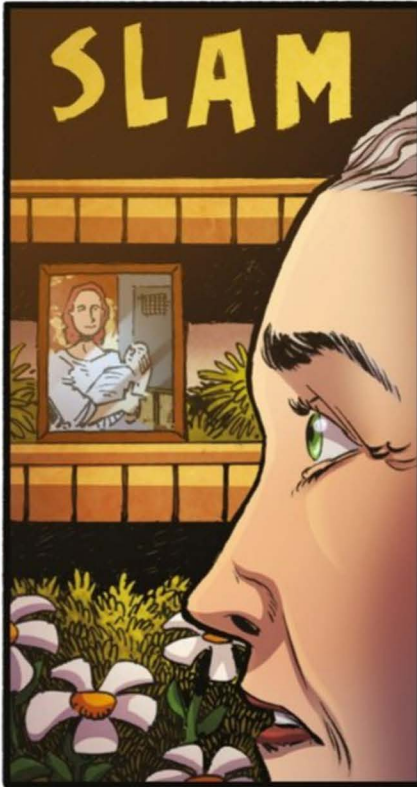
WHAT?

WHEN SHE GOT SICK, IT WAS **FATE**.

THE UNIVERSE WAS TRYING TO HELP YOU. SHE IS NOT **MEANT** TO LIVE. SHE'S **POISON**.



SHE'S **POISON**, AND I'M TELLING YOU BECAUSE **I** LOVE YOU. REALLY, **ANY** OTHER GIRL WOULD DO. JUST NOT THAT ONE.





SHE PICKED HEROIN?

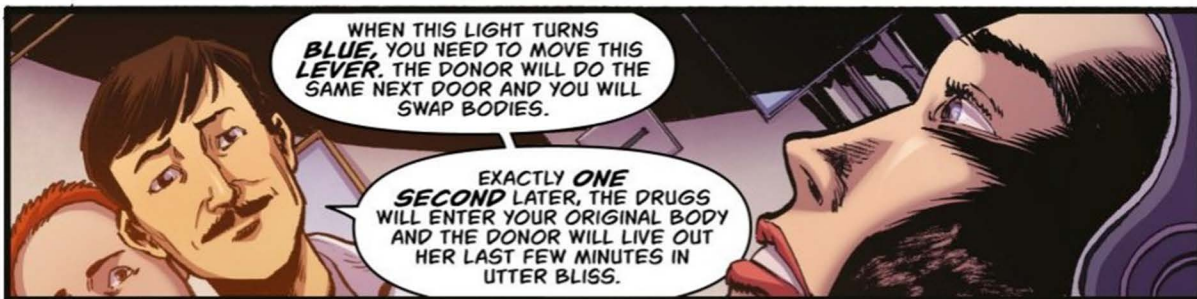
WE OFFER PEOPLE THEIR DRUG OF CHOICE, BUT MOST PICK HEROIN.



IF YOU ARE GOING TO GO, YOU MIGHT AS WELL ENJOY YOUR LAST MOMENTS.

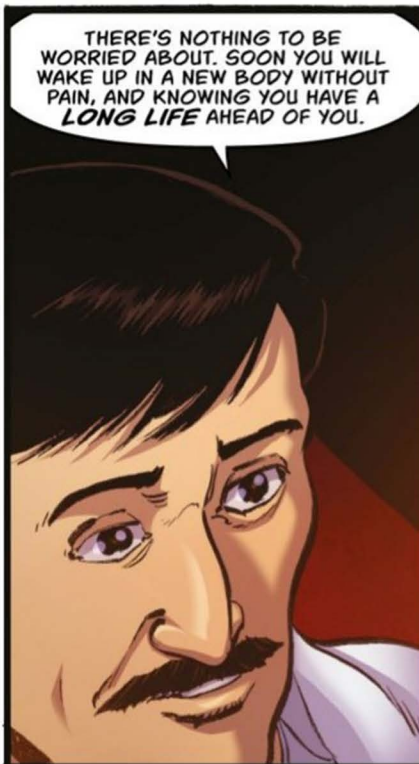
WILL...WILL IT BE INSTANTANEOUS?

OH YES, THERE'S USUALLY MOMENTARY DISORIENTATION, BUT NOT FOR LONG.



WHEN THIS LIGHT TURNS **BLUE**, YOU NEED TO MOVE THIS **LEVER**. THE DONOR WILL DO THE SAME NEXT DOOR AND YOU WILL SWAP BODIES.

EXACTLY **ONE SECOND** LATER, THE DRUGS WILL ENTER YOUR ORIGINAL BODY AND THE DONOR WILL LIVE OUT HER LAST FEW MINUTES IN UTTER BLISS.



THERE'S NOTHING TO BE WORRIED ABOUT. SOON YOU WILL WAKE UP IN A NEW BODY WITHOUT PAIN, AND KNOWING YOU HAVE A **LONG LIFE** AHEAD OF YOU.



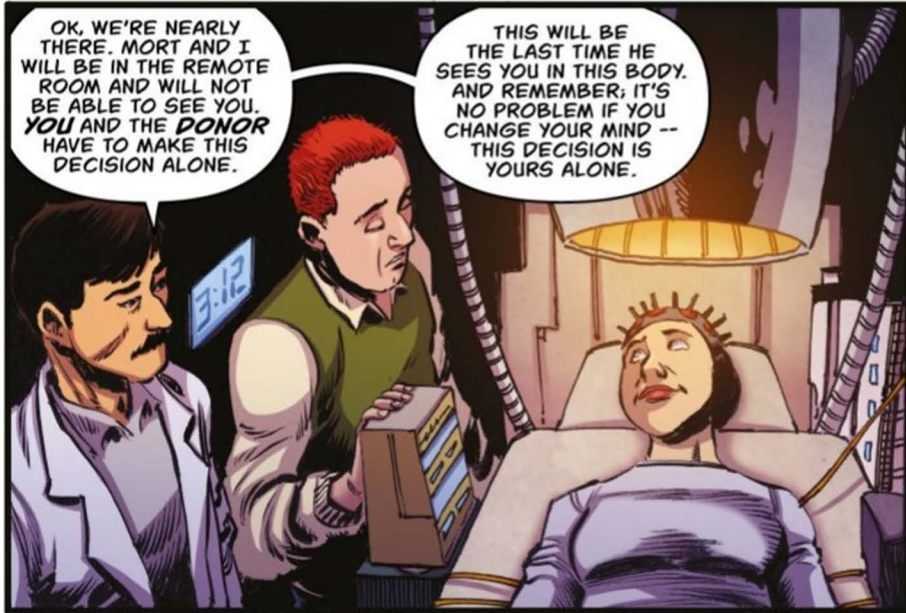
THANK YOU DOCTOR KUN, YOU SAVED HER LIFE.

NOT AT ALL, IT IS ALL THANKS TO THE DONOR. I'M JUST GLAD I CAN FACILITATE THIS TRADE...

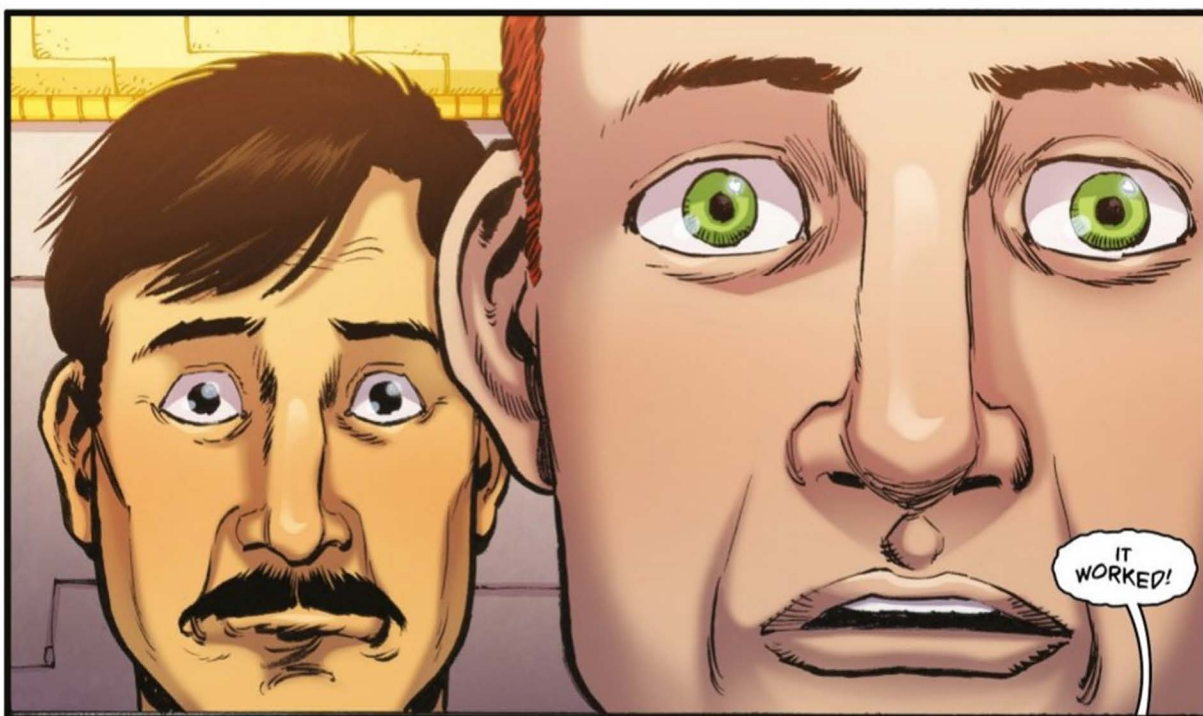














IT WORKED!
I'M NO LONGER
IN PAIN!



WHAT'S
WRONG?



HONEY,
IT'S OK, IT'S ME.
AME! NOTHING'S
CHANGED.



I KNOW IT'S
OVERWHELMING,
BUT WE CAN BE
TOGETHER NOW. I
LOVE YOU. WE
CAN GROW OLD
TOGETHER.



WE'LL
NEVER BE
APART.

What good is building up your brand, publishing independently, and scraping enough money together to barely survive if you don't get badgered by some almost-was, maybe-will-be, kinda-sorta writer about what makes you great and how someone trying to be your direct competition might start on the journey to making your job even harder? Well each one teach one is what this almost-one says. Our creators share three tips and/or tricks for aspiring creators.

TIPS 'N' TRICKS

Mike Emeritz says



Remember this always: You're not as bad as you think... You're not as good as you think either. The general idea is to keep your ego in check. Don't be so hard on yourself that you lose faith in your ability to improve. Anyone can improve with consistent dedicated practice. On the flip side, don't let compliments go to your head either. Being arrogant is the best way to not get hired, not make friends, and not improve your work. Has anyone asked you to paint the Sistine Chapel recently, Mr. Michealangelo? No? Then shut up and keep drawing. There is ALWAYS more to learn and more challenging work to create. Focus on the work. That's all that matters.

Do thumbnails. Even for pinups and covers. Do thumbnails. I see so many artists struggle for hours, days, even weeks sometimes trying to get a pose right, or trying to figure out how to block a scene, or not knowing what else is going to be in the image... Do thumbnails. The whole composition, all the blocking and the figure placement, what's going where and whether it might be cool can be figured out in under 5-minutes. THEN decide if you want to spend 5,10, 20, 100 hours drawing or painting that idea. I bet you don't! I bet the second, third, fourth, fifth idea is better. Just give it a shot. Go do some thumbnails.

Be kind to people. Just in general. It sounds like it has nothing to do with art and comics but it does. Being kind permeates into every aspect of your life. Kindness begets kindness as well, so even if you're an inherently selfish person it still pays to be kind to people. So, give it a try. I promise it will help you in ways you don't even realize and that, in turn, will filter through your art as well.



Neil Gibson keeps it simple:

Continually improve.

Trust your gut.

Be tenacious - you will have a lot of downs to go with the ups!



Neil Gibson

HOW TO BECOME A SUCCESSFUL AUTHOR



Hard won lessons from life in the writing trenches

✓The Complete Creative

RUSSELL NOHELTY

Last but not least, **Russell Nohelty** blesses us with some wisdom.

You're going to suck at first, and that's okay. Most people stop before they have done a fraction of the work necessary to get good at something. It takes years to hone your craft enough to be acceptable, and even longer to become good, and then even longer to find a point of view and become great, because that's what separates the good from the great, having a strong point of view and voice that is unique to yourself.

It's okay to fail. Even now most of my time is spent failing. You won't see that failure if you're not paying attention, and a lot of it is behind closed doors, but even when things are going "great" with one project, things are failing miserably with others.

Quitting is for winners. Don't listen to people when they tell you successful people quit. The successful people I know are the best quitters I know. They quit everything that doesn't serve them. They also try everything to see if it works. If it does, they keep going with it, and if it doesn't, they abandon it. Suffering through something because you shouldn't quit is dumb. If something doesn't serve you, quit, and if you are truly meant to do it, you will come back to it later.

Now I would not be so bold as to include myself in this list and give any sort of tips or tricks. I am taking my first baby steps in the storytelling arena, and if anything I should be taking notes.

However I will share the story of how this whole thing came to be.

This magazine was planned for October 1st. This was middle-end of August.

I did a little bit of work on the website in September. I sent a few emails at the beginning of October. And when it came to putting it out, I kept prioritizing other things. I kept allowing myself to be distracted and not getting it done.

Now look at us. 100 pages deep when I was afraid it would be this little thing that people would laugh at. When I planned it out, it was for something in the range of 150 pages. So 2/3 of the way there, and to be quite honest, we're missing a ton of columns. I have put this first issue together in a span of about seven hours. With the emailing and all the other time put in, maybe twelve total hours.

Half a day.

Half a day of actual work to put out something that has been re-imagined and re-worked a dozen times in the last decade. But it had to come out. It had to come out because it allowed me to write more in the Wolfpack universe, it's giving you the reader a few new creators to explore, and it forced me to dust off a lot of knowledge that was in there about layout and the software that I used today.

At the very least, this has forced me to write more, and that's always been part of the reason I'm doing it in the first place.

So follow all of those tips, and learn from my procrastination.

-DZ

EDITORIAL

2020: Banner Year for Comics?

Recently, ComicsBeat (www.comicsbeat.com) published an article pointing out that comics have had a monumental year on Kickstarter. \$22 MILLION DOLLARS has been pledged to various projects, dwarfing the 2019 record of \$16.9M.

Roughly 1,300 projects were funded, and even if you count the enormous take by BOOM! Comics effort alongside Keanu Reeves, that is still over \$20,000,000 for the other 1,299 projects amidst a global pandemic.

The reason I bring this up is to point out that no matter what the goal is, the money is out there. Execution is all that matters. I've spent crazy amounts of money on independent books this year. I would say probably equal to the amount I've spent on stuff from Marvel, DC, and Image—and that's only because I bought four of DC's ABSOLUTE books this year. I've spent money with all three of the comic creators featured in this magazine this year as well as a slew of comics from Black creators, most of which I had never heard of until this year. Like I mentioned earlier in the issue, I met Neil Gibson when he already had 4 VOLUMES of Twisted Dark printed. Your audience is not always going to be with you from day one, but they will find you. If you can get one fan and deliver on your promises—that's a big one when Kickstarting books—the money will come.

Hell, you might even be able to grow up and become a starving artist like the rest of our creators in this issue are or were at one point. Well maybe not Neil. He's got TV deals and such. But he's our aspirational feature. The indie guy who made it big!

The reality is that even when there is incredible economic struggle in the world, entertainment is what people turn to for comfort, for escape, or even for education. If you've been sitting on a project, maybe it's time to do the damn thing.

-DZ

CREATOR INDEX

The whole point here is to get you the reader to interact with, consume, and ideally spend money with the creators I've spotlighted in this magazine. Below you will find a list of everybody's websites and social media tags. Go buy something you bums!

MICHAEL EMERITZ

www.sisyphcancomplex.com

www.spacecatcomics.com

Instagram— michaelemeritz

Facebook— MikeEmeritzArt

Patreon— MikeEmeritz

NEIL GIBSON

www.tpub.co.uk

Instagram— TPubComics

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Twitter— TPubComics

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