

THE INDIE HYPE MAG

CATALYST



**MEET THE MYSTERIOUS
VALKYRIE SINCLAIRE!**

ISSUE 11 - JUL 2023

**HARLEY - FISHMAN
MACK- GRETZKY
MINOR - ŽUJOVIĆ**

**COMICS
PROSE
GALLERY
INTERVIEWS
TIPS**

IT'S TOO HOT OUTSIDE. STAY IN AND READ THIS!

CATALYST

CATALYST MAGAZINE BROUGHT TO YOU BY NEXUS STUDIOS, INC.

Sixteen

full days behind schedule, but I'm still catching the campaigns for our cover story and I consider that a success!

Speaking of campaigns, I've got a new column I'm calling Checking In, where I touch base with previously-featured indie creators.

We've got some great stories and comics for you to read! I'm not including my next chapter since we're over 130 pages here, and to be honest, the chapter's not done. But 130+ pages should keep you entertained.

If you're a creator or want to learn some behind the scenes workings of the indie comics space, I've got an important editorial on page 130.

I'm keeping the intro short so I can get to work on the newsletter and get this scheduled for the morning!

Of course it's last minute, this is a one man show, y'all.

Enjoy!

-Dalibor

COVER ARTIST

Dinky Ramos, Jr.—[DINKYSARTWORKS](#)

(Created for The Ballad of Valkyrie Sinclaire #2 from [Royal Oak Comics](#))

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Note: Amazon links are affiliate links and using them supports this publication.

CAMPAIGNING

For the skimmer types, I wanted to include a quick overview of all the live or upcoming campaigns from our featured creators and other friends.

*From Jamaal Harley **The Ballad of Valkyrie Sinclair** is **LIVE NOW!***



*From Jonathan Hedrick, **Spillblood** is **COMING SOON!***



From Jiba Molei Anderson, *Dark Kingdom* is **COMING SOON!**



From Frank Martin, *The Art of Life* is **LIVE NOW!**



Showing some hometown love, Tango Comics' *The Infinium Book II—The Voyage Home* is **COMING SOON!**



CHECKING IN

Another new column I wanted to add was a check in with previously-featured creators. This will be in addition to the upcoming section on the site which will showcase a list of any active or upcoming campaigns for featured creators.

This issue I'm checking in with Russell Nohelty, featured all the way back in Issue 1! He's just launched a new campaign for Wicked Witch Academy: A magical urban fantasy duology.



Since the last time we spoke, you've finished Ichabod Jones, put out a couple other graphic and prose novels, started an entire Substack community, and even had the Cthulhu series published through Unlikely Heroes! Have you taken a moment to eat? You're an incredibly busy man!

The nice thing about having a big back catalog of books is that it can start working for you a little bit more and you can work a little less. I actually haven't produced any new material in a while. I do write for Substack, but I learned that's just something I will always do, put together non-fiction tips and tricks even when I'm not writing anything else.

For fiction, though, I just started writing my first book in a year. I don't want to jinx it and there is no deadline, but so far it's going well. I've been very blessed to have a prolific career, and so it looks like I've done a lot more recently than I actually have in reality. Still, it's pretty amazing to see what is starting to develop around me. Like I said, I'm very blessed.

What's been the biggest change you've seen in the indie comics space in the past 3 years since we spoke?

The quality of books just keeps getting better. It seems like the proliferation of YA and MG comics in the bookstore market has taken a little excitement away from those types of books on Kickstarter, but I know lots of amazing publishers who are

putting out incredible books, including Unlikely Heroes Studios who publishes several of my books. Additionally, the publishing category has seen a surge of new talent since the Brandon Sanderson Kickstarter and the release of both our Get Your Book Selling on Kickstarter book and Kickstarter Accelerator course. It's really exciting to watch the new talent join the platform with amazing projects.

I see you've got this new duology coming up next. Give us the quick pitch so people will click the link and get notified when it launches!

I put out a trilogy of books called Dragon Strife a couple of years ago starring a virgin sacrifice named Gilda who rises up to change the world. The Wicked Witch Academy duology follows Gilda's daughter as she tries to fulfill her mother's vision by killing the evil dragon Ramidion. It's my first academy series, and if you like how I subvert the chosen one trope, then you'll love this one. You can check it out at <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/russellnohelty/wwa>

Gotta love a good subversion of a classic trope! Make sure you check out Russell's latest campaign, and of course check out his entire back catalog on his personal or Wannabe Press website!

Russell Nohelty



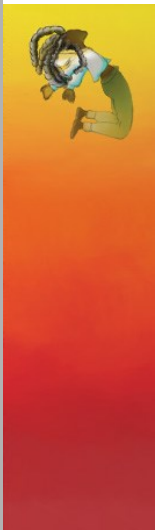


I'll never stop praising Virtuous Con because I met so many awesome people both years now! I bought this young lady's book immediately after she pitched it, so of course I had to bring out the Mack...

JESSICA MACK

Tell me your origin story. What got you into writing?

Ultimately, it was me being jealous of other writers and storytellers. I remember watching Avatar the last Airbender growing up feeling actual envy that the world of Avatar did not belong to me, or wishing that I could have been on the writing team. I decided that I wanted worlds and stories of my own, so I started with fanfiction that emulated stories that I liked until those stories turned into remixed ideas.



What was your first piece that you felt was ready for public consumption, and was it successful?

My first piece ready for public consumption was actually a poetry collection that I submitted to a contest. I guess you could say that poetry is actually my first love and I've filled a whole journal with hand-written poems. The collection was titled "Burning Black Phoenix, I Hope You Rise" and it was detailing how I felt tired from being a resilient black woman, but that ultimately I would continue to be reborn from trials and give love to myself and others. My poetry collection didn't win the contest, but I was still proud of myself for creating it. It was a means of self-exploration and I learned about myself as a writer. I'm also seriously thinking about publishing a poetry project in the future!

Now give us the elevator pitch for Guardians of Masks and Memory. Why should people be reading this?

In a tall lonely tower of an abandoned desert oasis, an amnesiac lost princess named Maleda finds that she has a life and homeland beyond the desert that is threatened by a curse and an unknown murderer, so she works to find a way to break the curse, find the murderer, and discover who she really is. Perfect for fans of Avatar the Last Airbender, Black Panther, and The Gilded Ones!



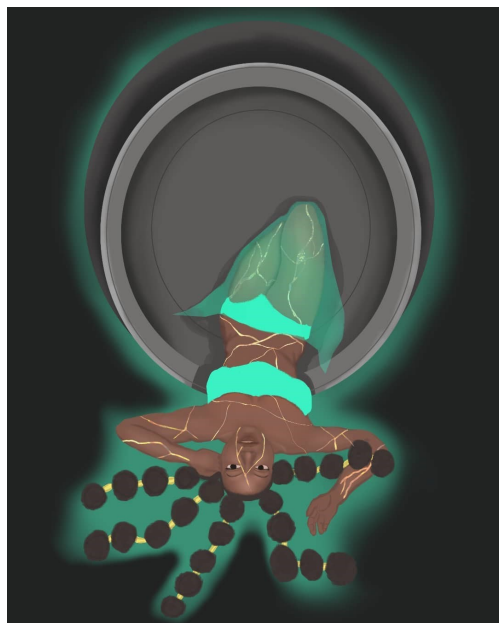


You focus on POC stories, with a specific focus on Afrofuturism. What do you hope to bring to the genre that may be missing?

There are so many possibilities with Afrofuturism and I'm hoping that I can specifically express to black girls that they are the embodiment of infinite possibilities through multiversal concepts. There are definitely examples of multiverses in Afrofuturistic storytelling, but I specifically want to look into the idea of "I think therefore I am" through a black girl that contains infinite possibilities.

Besides writing, what other medium(s) do or have you told stories through?

I've told stories through dance, animation, and art. I have an Afrofuturistic visual art series called "Let Go Girls" where I imagine black girls in colorful abstracted voids similar to tessering like in the movie "A Wrinkle in Time." Through these Let Go Girls, I'm able to visually explore the story of black girls healing in a colorful space where they can pause, explore themselves, and, like tessering, find themselves in a new place once they're ready to leave the colorful void. Most recently, I performed in the 2023 North Charleston Arts Festival in South Carolina where I combined dance with animation. I created a 2D animation that functioned as a background which I projected onto a wall and danced in front of it. I tried a project like this on a smaller scale in college called Microcosm. I've been fascinated with projections in performance for years now with sources like Cirque De Soleil's Toruk - The First Flight and Shen Yun. The animation actually acts as a trailer for my book Guardians of Masks and Memory and I'm performing as the main character Maleda.



What is the best and/or most challenging thing about publishing independently?

The thing about publishing independently is that you're in control, so as a benefit you can do whatever you want! At the same time, you're in control so you're also responsible for everything you want. I was able to have complete creative control with Guardians of Masks and Memory, so I could really get my thoughts across and portray a brand image that I truly wanted. However, I don't have someone to hand tasks off to that are outside of writing the story, such as social media management, updating my website, and scheduling newsletters. With that, it becomes a balancing act of automating tasks and consciously deciding not to take on too much.

See what I mean? The coolest! Now, let's check out the first chapter of Guardians of Masks and Memory! Scroll, already!



JESSICA MACK

GUARDIANS
OF MASKS
MEMORY AND MEMORY

JESSICA MACK

Guardians of Masks and Memory

First published by Ebony Xscape Publishing 2021

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This novel is entirely a work of fiction. The names, characters and incidents portrayed in it are the work of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events or localities is entirely coincidental.

Jessica Mack asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this work.

[PRESENTED WITH PERMISSION FROM AUTHOR]

Chapter 1 - Maleda

Contrary to popular opinion, the princess was in the tower because she wanted to be and contrary to what her family said, she was not a butterfly refusing to fly out of her cocoon, but rather a butterfly that liked her tree. That was what Maleda thought as she noted the castle guard walking on the streets below, seemingly annoyed. She was definitely out of place as the castle's peaks were part of the distant skyline above the city. Which meant that she had to prepare for the Fair, to be around the other royals. Though, Maleda ignored the guard, who had suspiciously familiar brown curls, and kept her in her periphery as she focused on her painting and the ocean in the distance. Maleda had gone to the ocean earlier at the edge of the city, unsure that she would be caught there, but thankfully she was able to stare at the waves and sketch in peace. Sunlight streamed into the large window of her tower as Maleda's paint-stained, brown fingers danced over her choice of brushes laid out on her palette. Her head danced back and forth, jostling the fluffy black twists that ran down her back and the mess of a bun atop her head. She needed more yellow, and she wasn't going to stop working on bringing the world in the canvas to life. It was a window that she merely needed to open, and she would happily do it in her quiet sanctuary, but before Maleda could get three strokes in, there was a rapid knock at her door.

“Princess, it's time to go.”

Maleda tilted her head up and huffed out a curse, but none of that reached her response. “Ok, I’m coming.”

Of course, it wasn’t just one of the random guards. It had to be her. She rose from her stool, brushed her hands over her stained painting clothes, and breezed down the stairs barefoot, savoring her last bits of her own little world. She opened the door to find herself looking into crossed arms and then up into a caramel face with a quirked brow.

“Hi, Mirriam.” Maleda smiled, hoping it reached her eyes, and gestured for her to come into her haven. There were few people that Maleda let into the tower. Into her sacred space. She had no choice with Mirriam as she was her personal guard, but she was at least content that she trusted her. Mirriam’s arms remained crossed as she surveyed the space and turned back to Maleda, brows raised.

“What?” Maleda asked innocently, palms showing.

“Why is that on the day of the Fair that you are here in the University, in your tower dorm and not at the castle getting ready?” Mirriam challenged, amusement in her caramel face.

“Would it help if I said that I didn’t know it was today?” Maleda questioned, messing with one of her twists.

“No,” Mirriam hummed as she sat down at one of the stools in the center of the room nearby another unfinished work, stretched out on a massive canvas, “I’d say that’s precisely the reason you got as far away from the castle as possible. All the rush and crowds of people required for the preparation. I get it.”

She only half got it. Mirriam was spot on with the crowds, but Maleda also wanted to avoid the *parade* of it all and the formal means of how she would receive private and underhanded insults about being the second in line. Second best. The other one. Sneaking out of the castle and avoiding her parents and the requests of her siblings to wade into the city traffic was a blissful and exciting escapade. Maleda didn’t even risk visiting the stables to see her beloved and cheeky owl griffin, Bamidele, even though Maleda wouldn’t get to see her until after the Fair ended. The whole purpose was to avoid alerting castle staff, which would alert Mirriam. This was supposed to be a low-key kind of morning, where she did not have the expectations of a princess. She was just a quiet stranger on the street, absorbing the world around her. When the world became too much, everything too loud

and her heart ratcheted, she would come to the tower, her own world, where she could watch her people below, but not be among them. Mirriam usually seemed to let it slide, but Maleda suspected that she always followed her. Staring Mirriam in the face in the middle of her tower proved her right. She was a hummingbird, an elegant busybody.

“Well, I’ve already packed, and I brought my traveling clothes here, so I’ll just change and we can get going.”

Mirriam reached out an arm to stop her.

“Are you alright?” Concern swam in Mirriam’s light brown eyes.

No.

“Yes, I’m fine. Just give me a moment to change and we can get going.” Mirriam quirked a brow and the ghost of a smile faded from her face. “You really think that you’ve shaken me off the scent with *that* as your answer?”

“I just had a dream last night. It’s nothing.”

“Nothing you say?”

“Yeah, I barely even remember it. I guess it made me wake up uneasy.” Mirriam’s concern lightened but did not completely fade.

“Well, if you’re feeling uneasy, perhaps you should visit an interpreter, a medium.”

Definitely not.

“I don’t think I need to do that.” Maleda waved Mirriam off and went upstairs to her bedroom to change. “It’ll be fine. Like you said, I get nervous, so my mind is probably playing tricks on me in my sleep.”

Mirriam’s mouth opened to argue further, but she was interrupted by a crystalgram call. Maleda thanked the Orisha for the intervention and she dashed up the stairs into her room shutting the door behind her. Maleda stood against the door while the image of the girl turned away in the radiant, yellow coat was at the edge of her mind, but she blinked it away and moved to her clothes that were laid out on the bed.

What's Meleda's beef with Mirriam?

What was in that dream?

Those answers and more in *Guardians of Masks and Memory*!

Buy it on [Kindle](#) or in Paperback on [Amazon](#) or on the [Ebony Xcape store](#)!

While you're there, you can also check out some merch with Jessica's work on it. Stickers, prints, and more!



Guardians of Masks and Memory



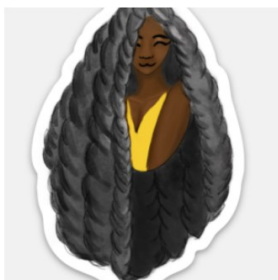
Holo Bubble Braids



Bubbles Sticker



Bantu Knot Heart Part



Maleda Sticker



Let Go Girl Blue Bookmark



In Her Own World 1 Print



In Her Own World 2 Print

GALLERY

I met this rockstar artist through a private facebook group that we're no longer part of, but we've kept in touch. I've bought his comics, some original art, and I've watched a ton of his YouTube content. If you need sentai or kaiju art, this is the number one guy I recommend! Don't let that fool you though, he's versatile as hell, I've shared a Wolfpack commission he's done for me in a past issue. Without further ado, let's check out the artwork of

GAZBOT



->SOCIALS<-

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Twitter—[Gazbot](#)

YouTube—[GazBot](#)

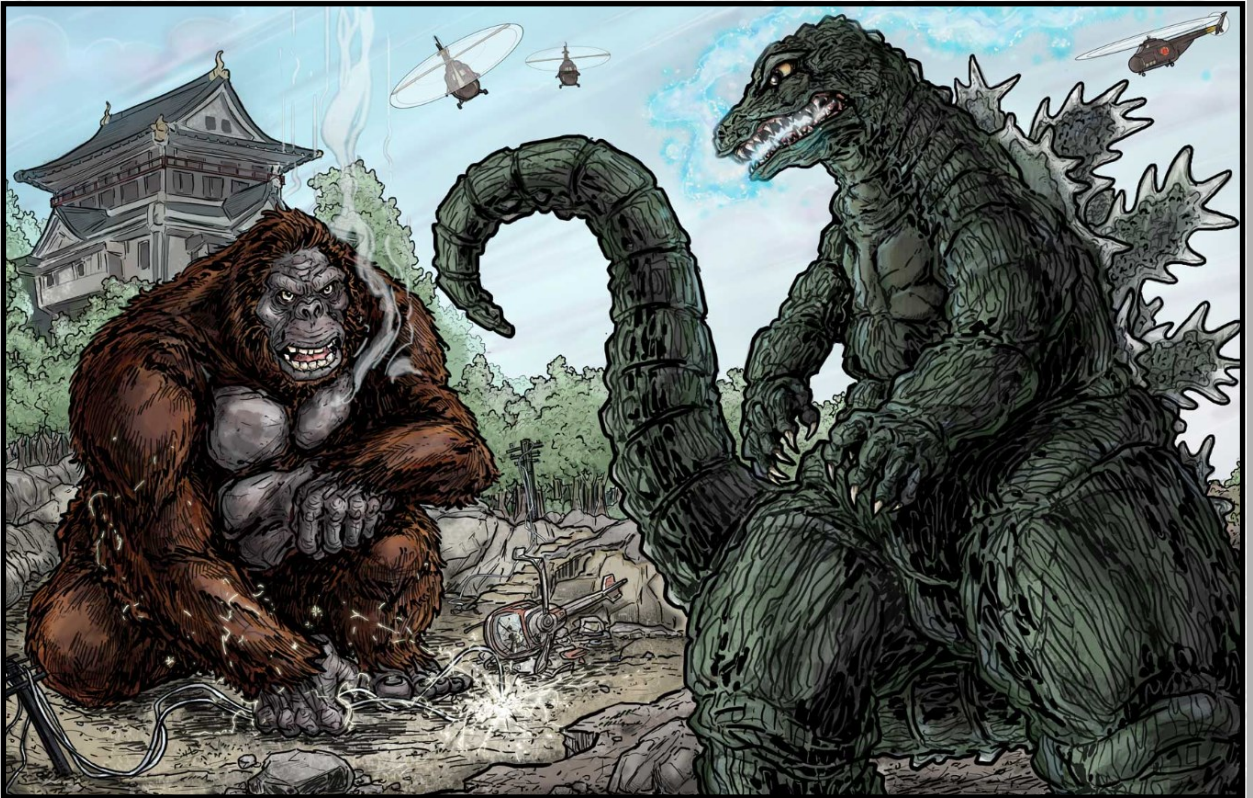
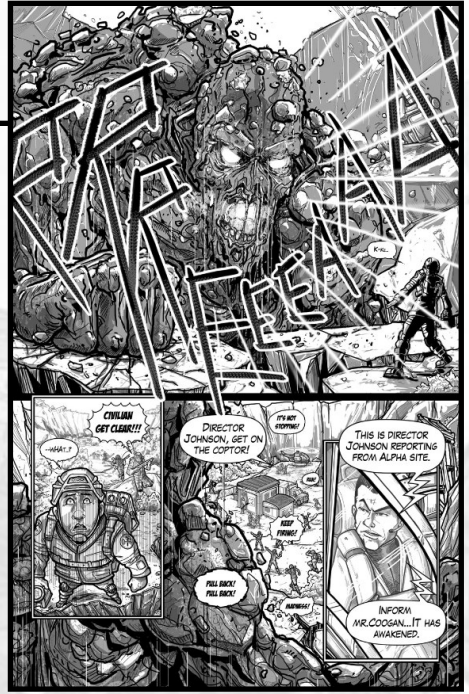
TikTok—[GazbotOfficial](#)

Twitch—[Gazbot](#)

We gotta kick this off with Gaz's Kaiju from his book *The Horror A4!*

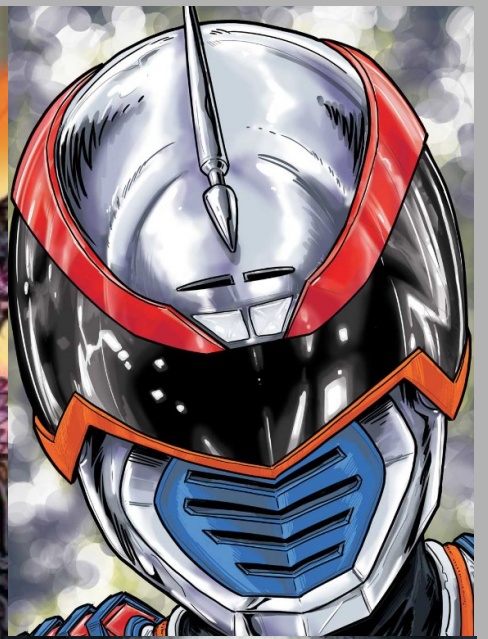
Check out this page from the first issue of *The Horror A4!*

Good as his own monster comic is, it stands to reason he's great with other well-known monsters!



And don't even get me started on his Super Sentai/Power Rangers work! That was the first thing I had commissioned by him!





I don't believe I need to say more. Go check out Gaz's site, his socials, buy his comic digitally on [IndyPlanet](#), and check out his [Etsy shop](#) for physical copies and more!!

JUAN'S ONES

Juan from [Juan Reads Comics](#) will be checking out a new indie #1 every issue and giving us his thoughts!

Sex Life: Zero #1

"The Getaway"

Green Pizza Comics

An anthology mini-series that follows the absurd adventures of a hopeful-romantic as he navigates his 30's. The series will explore heartbreak, growing up, getting old, unrequited love, friendship, family and hope.

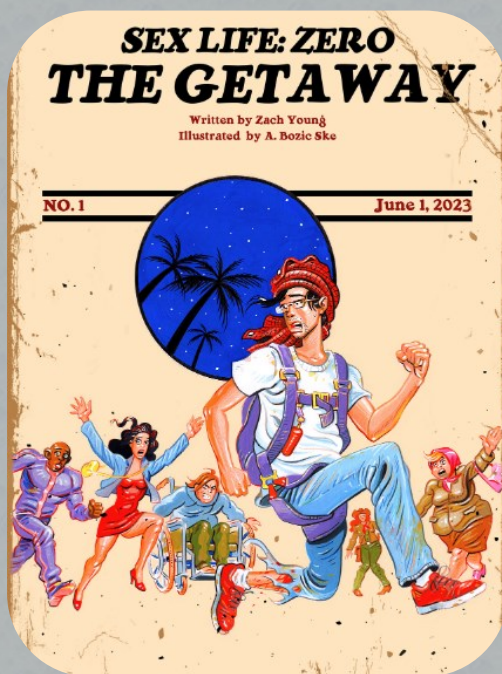
I have to say, that I had a lot of fun reading this comic book. The quirky and out-landish events that happen within this indie comic book is the roots of what it was to make and create a comic book. So, if you enjoy a little bit of nostalgia with some fun characters. I would suggest reading and funding this comic series. The first few issues are free to read on line. However, the last issue will be crowd funded. Get in on great wacky story telling.

But, what do I know? I'm just a guy that loves reading indie comic books.

Review by Juan Cordero

Check out Sex Life: Zero on

[GlobalComix!](#)



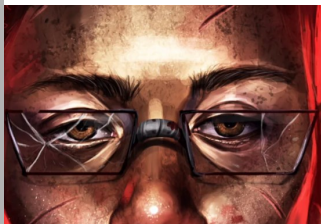


It's serious business out here when you're making great comics. You've without question seen the titles of his books all over social media—that's how I found him, too. I'm glad we have a chance to get to know the creator of our cover character Valkyrie Sinclair,

Jamaal Harley

Tell me your origin story. What got you into writing comics?

Hello Dalibor, thank you so much for the interview! Comic books and cartoons are some of my first and favorite memories. I've been reading comics since I could read and initially wanted to be a comic book artist but music and filmmaking caught my attention in high school so I did that for years while still reading comics and going to see their movie adaptations. Then when the pandemic hit all my excuses of not having the time to create a comic book were gone, so I did it and I'm glad I did.

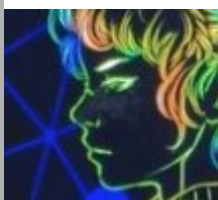


What was your first piece that you felt was ready for public consumption, and was it successful?

WHO'S B.A.D.? was my first attempt at making a comic book and my first Kickstarter, which thankfully was successful.

Give the readers the elevator pitch for The Ballad of Valkyrie Sinclair. Why should people be reading and backing this?

People should read this book if they like sci-fi thrillers with deeply flawed heroes that grow from their failures, and overcome their internal and external struggles to protect others from humans and aliens with nefarious intent, in a cyberpunk post-apocalyptic present.



Is this series intended to be ongoing or will there be a planned ending?

It's an ongoing series with a definite end and plans to branch into spin-offs.

You've got a few series coming out from Royal Oak, crossing across genres like space opera comedy, superhero, and cyberpunk action with The

Ballad. How do you keep it all straight? Do you ever start working on one and get distracted with ideas for another book?

Definitely, the plus of working on multiple books is that if I get tired of or hit a roadblock with one comic I can always switch over to another and get my writing in for the day. The down side is keeping it all together. I have tons of notes, timelines, character bios, story arc charts and recently started hiring editors to helpout.



With multiple series and multiple issues per series, what have you found to be the best and/or most challenging thing about publishing independently, especially at a high volume?

The best thing is meeting, getting to know, and working with a bunch of amazing artists and creators. The most challenging thing is the business side, marketing, and money, which takes away time from writing. Looking forward to the day I can delegate some of that to other people.

So here's what you're gonna do: If you haven't read issue #1, you're gonna scroll down and read it, then go to the [campaign](#) and back #2. If you have read it, then just skip to the second step. I mean ffs, don't you want to know who the hell this guy is? I sure as hell do!



THE BALLAD OF
VALKYRIE
SINCLAIRE



Royal Oak Comics Presents: The Ballad of Valkyrie Sinclair #1

ROYAL OAK



COMICS

Writer/Creator: Jamaal A. Harley

Artist (1-6): Aldo Bautista

Artist (7-11): Cesar Mora

Letterer: Mason Solimine

Logo: Ed Lavallee

In a post-apocalyptic Los Angeles, a government assassin's mission goes haywire after she is drugged with alien blood, which turns human memories as real as they were when they were created. Now Valkyrie Sinclair must complete her mission as she relives her past traumas that are indecipherable from reality.



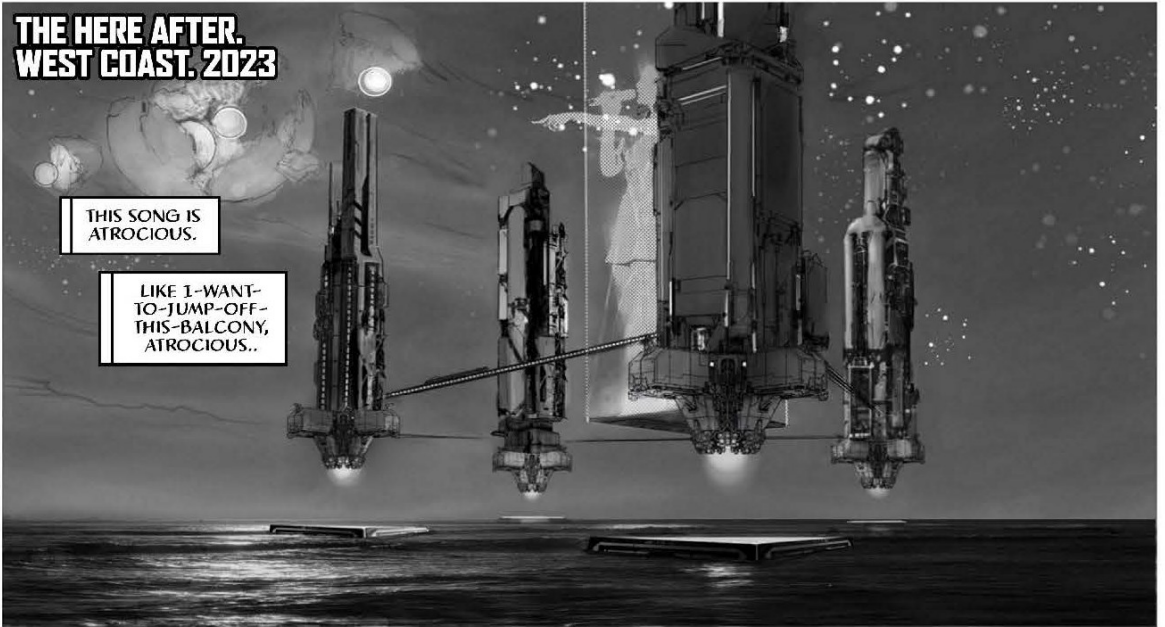
**Dedicated to my Uncle,
Clarence J. Harley**

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**THE HERE AFTER.
WEST COAST. 2023**

THIS SONG IS
ATROCIOUS.

LIKE I-WANT-
TO-JUMP-OFF-
THIS-BALCONY,
ATROCIOUS..



*WHEN YOU KISSING
TIME JUST STOPS, BUT
OUR PULSES KEEP
TIME LIKE GLOCKS.*

THERE'S SO MUCH
TALENT IN THE
BARRELS, AND THIS
SHATTERED MESS
MAKES IT OUT?



OK, I'LL
CONCEDE, THE
VIOLINIST IS
GORGEOUS.



AND THE
DRUMMER IS
BRINGING
IT, BUT...



HATE TO BASH
A FELLOW BORG,
BUT HE CAN PROGRAM
HIS LIMBS TO PLAY
ANYTHING AND
HE CHOOSES THIS?

I GUESS
MONEY CAN
BUY TALENT,
BUT NOT
TASTE.



VALKYRIE!
THERE YOU
ARE!

THIS
SONG!
FANTASTIC!
NO?

HELL
NO.



HEY BOSS!
YEAH, SUPER
CATCHY, BUT THIS
BALCONY VIEW?
WORDS CAN'T
EVEN BEGIN TO
DESCRIBE IT.

HMM, I FEEL
SAME WAY ABOUT
YOUR SMILE AND
SMALL FORTUNE
YOU MAKE ME.

OH
REALLY?

TRUST
ME.

HMM,
TRUSTING YOU
HAS GOTTEN ME ALL
THE WAY UP HERE,
I WONDER WHERE
IT'LL TAKE
ME NEXT?



I CAN
IMAGINE, FEW
PLACES. BUT...I
NEED TO KNOW
SOMETHING.

I'M
AN OPEN
BOOK.



WHERE
WERE YOU
WHEN MOON,
DIE?

HMM.
THOUGHT WE
WERE KEEPING
THIS BUSINESS
AND CASUAL.



THINGS CHANGE. I WANT
YOU AS MY PARTNER.
PROFESSIONALLY AND
PERSONALLY
WILL YOU--

OF COURSE.
YOU DON'T HAVE
TO ASK.

THANK YOU,
BEAUTIFUL, BUT
REACTION TO MOON'S
DEATH TELLS MUCH
ABOUT PERSON.
NO?

THAT SOUNDS
LIKE A TEST.
YOU STILL
DON'T TRUST
ME?



I WANT
TO...KNOW YOU.
ALL OF YOU. AND
YOU ME.

ALRIGHT,
THEN LET'S
DRINK, TO
TRUST.

TO
TRUST.

BIG BEAR, CA. 1993

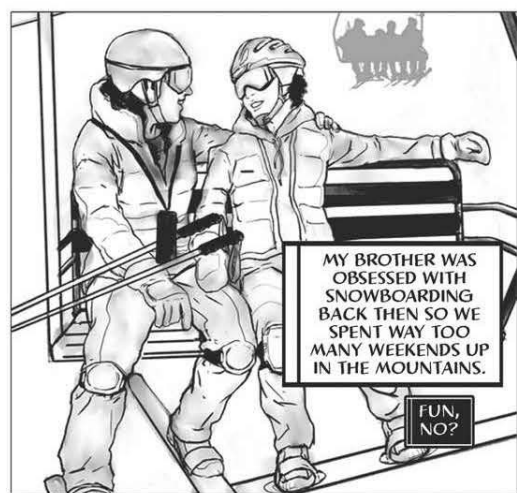


SIGH WHERE TO START? WE WERE DEFINITELY LUCKIER THAN MOST..

WE?

YEAH, MY DAD, OLDER BROTHER... MOM.

I SEE.



MY BROTHER WAS OBSESSED WITH SNOWBOARDING BACK THEN SO WE SPENT WAY TOO MANY WEEKENDS UP IN THE MOUNTAINS.

FUN, NO?



ACTUALLY, YEAH... *SIGH* MY MOM AND BRO DID THEIR THING ON THE SLOPES AND MY DAD AND I HAD A GREAT TIME BY THE FIRE UNTIL...



WE HEARD IT. FELT IT. BUT WE DIDN'T SEE IT. BUT THEY SAW IT.

THE MOON FALL TO LOS ANGELES?

A PIECE OF IT, YEAH.

ARE THEY BLIND? YOUR MOTHER AND BROTHER?

NO, SOMETHING ABOUT THE TIME OF DAY IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE PREVENTED THAT.



NO. YOU SAW IT, VALKYRIE.

THROUGH YOUR BROTHER'S EYES.

I SEE THAT YOU SAW IT.

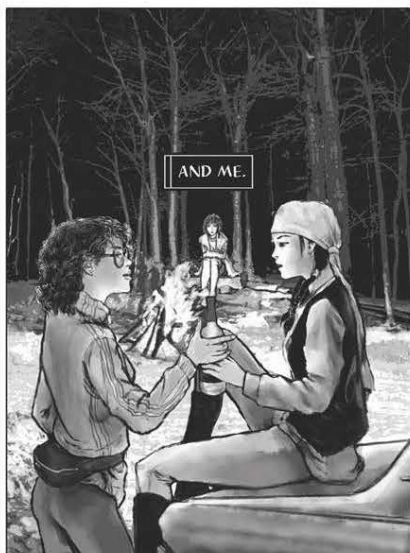
KYRGYZSTAN.

WHAT? WH-WHY ARE YOU IN MY... WAIT! WHERE AM I?...GULSHARA? OH, GOD...YOU DRUGGED ME!

YOU'VE DONE THIS BEFORE, NO?

OF COURSE, I GREW UP IN THE F***ING BARRELS, BUT THAT'S NOT THE POINT!

RELAX. SIT BY FIRE. LIKE YOU, IT STARTED AS GOOD MEMORY. SOVIET UNION COLLAPSE. MANY RUSSIANS RETURN HOME, BUT NOT MY FRIEND, VLADA. SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL GIRL. HER FAMILY HAD MONEY, AND ACCESS TO WESTERN MUSIC... HIP-HOP. SHE LOVED IT.

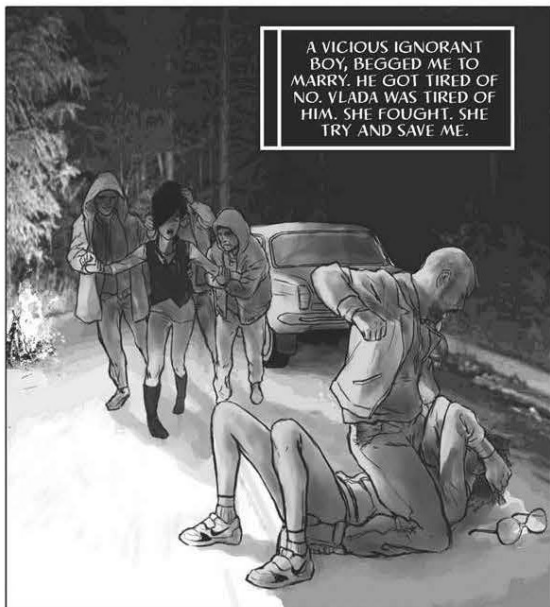


AND ME.



BUT AN OLD TRADITION DESTROYED OUR NEW LOVE. SOVIET COLLAPSE BRING BACK BRIDE KIDNAP IN MY COUNTRY.

OH, GOD.



A VICIOUS IGNORANT BOY, BEGGED ME TO MARRY. HE GOT TIRED OF NO. VLADA WAS TIRED OF HIM. SHE FOUGHT. SHE TRY AND SAVE ME.



I'M SO SORRY GULSHARA, WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?



WHEN MOON DIE, IN MY COUNTRY. ALL WHO SAW? WENT BLIND.



I WAS NOT SO LUCKY. I SEE VLADA. DEAD. ALL NIGHT IN DREAMS.





I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY... I'M--

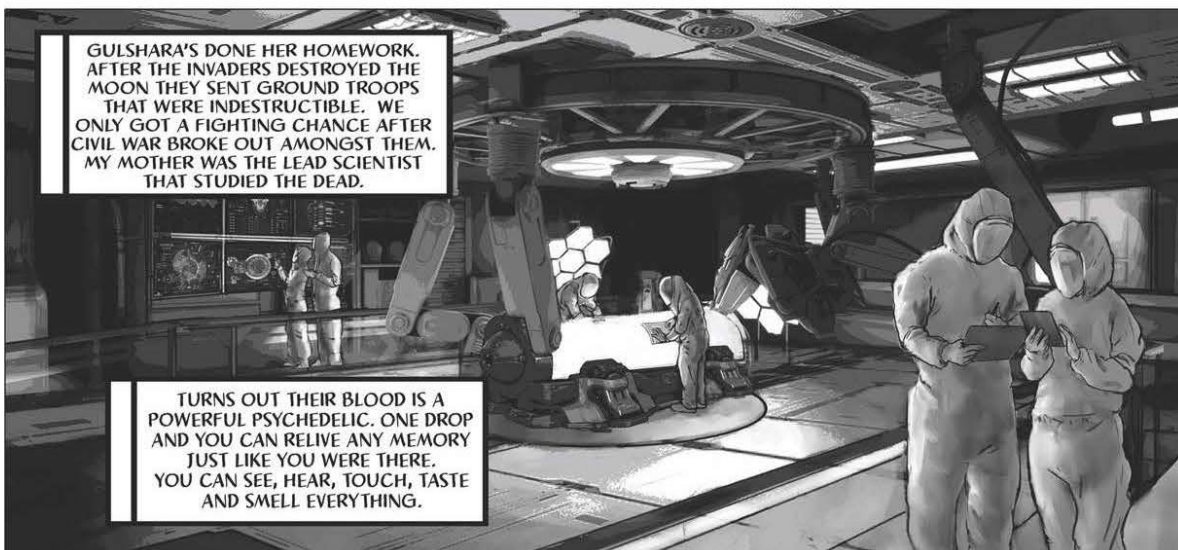


SAY YES.

I WANT TO, BUT I'D PREFER TO BE SOBER. I'VE ONLY DONE NIRVANA ONCE.

APOLOGIES. YOUR MOTHER DISCOVER IT, NO?

HOW'D YOU KNOW ABOUT MY MOTHER?



GULSHARA'S DONE HER HOMEWORK. AFTER THE INVADERS DESTROYED THE MOON THEY SENT GROUND TROOPS THAT WERE INDESTRUCTIBLE. WE ONLY GOT A FIGHTING CHANCE AFTER CIVIL WAR BROKE OUT AMONGST THEM. MY MOTHER WAS THE LEAD SCIENTIST THAT STUDIED THE DEAD.

TURNS OUT THEIR BLOOD IS A POWERFUL PSYCHEDELIC. ONE DROP AND YOU CAN RELIVE ANY MEMORY JUST LIKE YOU WERE THERE. YOU CAN SEE, HEAR, TOUCH, TASTE AND SMELL EVERYTHING.



LIKE YOU. ARE. THERE. MANY WASTE THEIR LIVES IN PAST MEMORIES. AFTER DAD DIED, MOM SPENT THE REST OF HER LIFE WITH HIM. INSIDE HER HEAD.

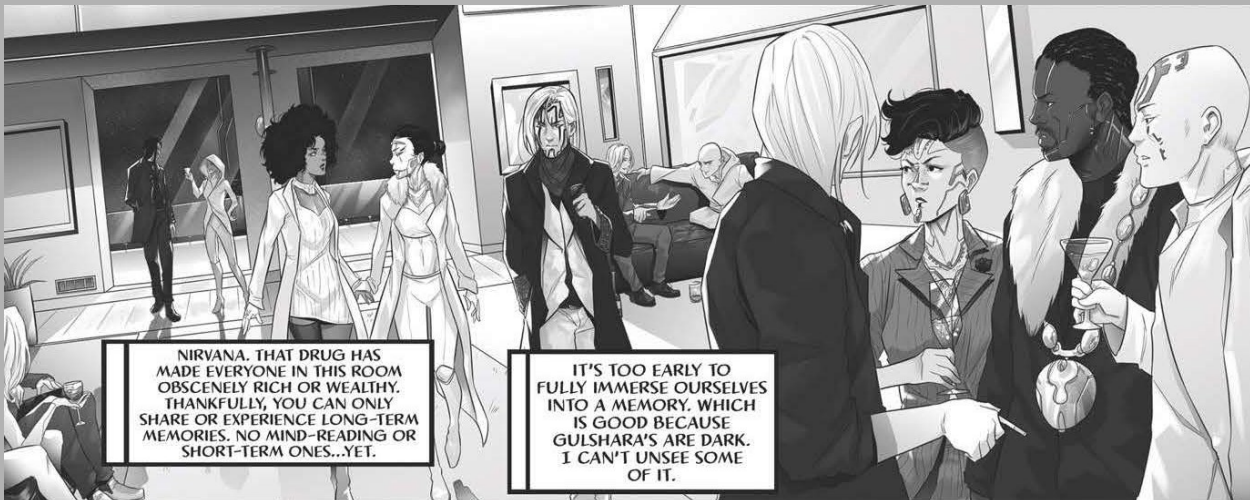


I WORK FOR YOUR FATHER, MAXIMO, MANY YEARS AGO. GOOD BOSS, BUT NO FAN OF HOW HE TREAT YOUR BROTHER.

THIS IS GETTING HEAVY. CAN WE GO SOMEWHERE MORE PRIVATE?



OF COURSE, BEAUTIFUL.



NIRVANA. THAT DRUG HAS MADE EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM OBSCENELY RICH OR WEALTHY. THANKFULLY, YOU CAN ONLY SHARE OR EXPERIENCE LONG-TERM MEMORIES. NO MIND-READING OR SHORT-TERM ONES...YET.

IT'S TOO EARLY TO FULLY IMMERSE OURSELVES INTO A MEMORY. WHICH IS GOOD BECAUSE GULSHARA'S ARE DARK. I CAN'T UNSEE SOME OF IT.



KISSING HER TAKES BOTH OUR MINDS OFF OF IT.



SERIOUSLY, I'M GONNA NEED A THERA--

SVEN!

OH, CRAP! HEH, SORRY BOSS.



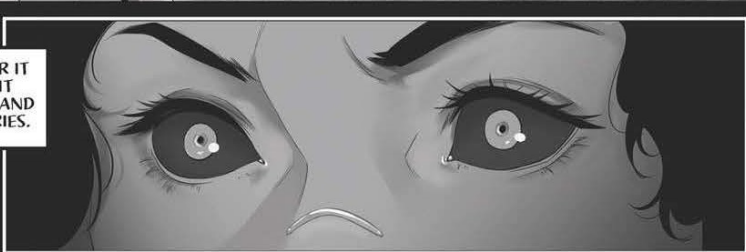
I'M SORRY, I'M SORRY! I'LL CHANGE!

YOU BETTER! NO SON OF MINE IS GONNA--

HERE WE GO. NIRVANA JUNKIES CALL IT THE GATE. BEFORE YOU CAN FULLY IMMERSE INTO MEMORIES OF YOUR CHOOSING, IN THE GATE YOU HAVE ZERO CONTROL.



YOU GO WHEREVER IT TAKES YOU AND IT LOVES TRAUMATIC AND REPPRESSED MEMORIES.





WHOA, BOSS!
CHILL! MY BAD.
IT WON'T HAPPEN
AGAIN!

I
KNOW.



GULSHARA,
YO C'MON, LET'S
TALK ABOUT
THIS.

GET
OUT AND
TAKE WHORE
WITH YOU!

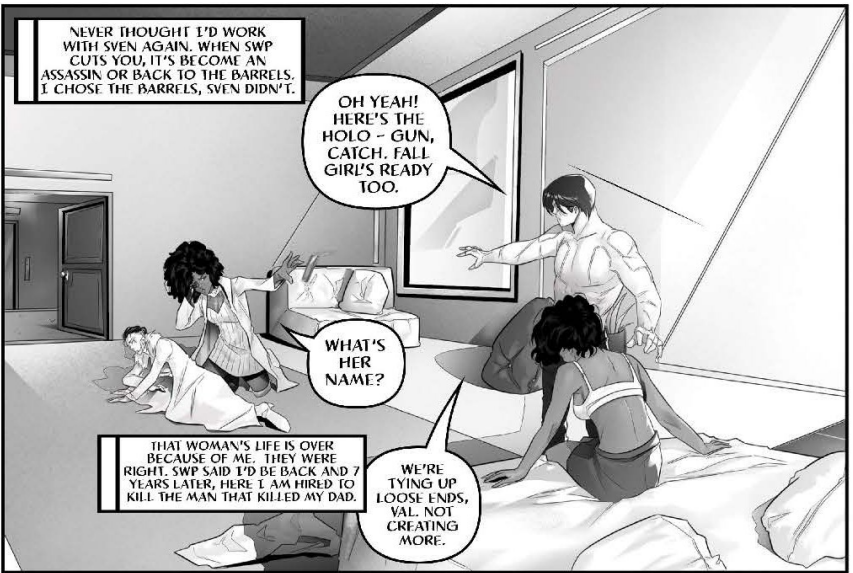
I-I
DON'T FEEL SO
GOOD.

TELL ME ABOUT
IT, SIS, BUT NOW'S
MY CHANCE.



VALKYRIE?
MY LOVE?
WHHHYYYYY...

SVEN,
IS THE
TARGET
PRESENT?



NEVER THOUGHT I'D WORK
WITH SVEN AGAIN. WHEN SWP
CUTS YOU, IT'S BECOME AN
ASSASSIN OR BACK TO THE BARRELS.
I CHOSE THE BARRELS, SVEN DIDN'T.

OH YEAH!
HERE'S THE
HOLO-GUN,
CATCH. FALL
GIRL'S READY
TOO.

WHAT'S
HER
NAME?

THAT WOMAN'S LIFE IS OVER
BECAUSE OF ME. THEY WERE
RIGHT. SWP SAID I'D BE BACK AND 7
YEARS LATER, HERE I AM HIRED TO
KILL THE MAN THAT KILLED MY DAD.

WE'RE
TYING UP
LOOSE ENDS,
VAL. NOT
CREATING
MORE.



NAME?

IT'S EITHER
HER OR
YOU.

NAME.

SIGH:
JESSICA
WILLIAMS.

GULSHARA WILL GO DOWN FOR THE
HIT; JESSICA FOR EVERY CRIME I DID
TO EARN GULSHARA'S TRUST. ONCE
WE'RE DONE, AN SWP SWAT TEAM
WILL STAGE A GUN BATTLE. NO
SURVIVORS.

DOES
JUSTIFYING
THE
ATROCITIES
WE
COMMIT
HELP
YOU
SLEEP
AT
NIGHT?

REMEMBERING
THEIR
NAMES
DOESN'T.
YOU'RE
EARLY,
WHAT
GIVES?



TRUST
ISSUES
OVER
THERE
SPIKED
MY
DRINK
WITH
NIRVANA.

WHAT!?
CAN
YOU
MAKE
THE
SHOT?



I'M GOOD.

RIGHT. CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE THE FIRST ONE TO USE A HOLO-GUN IN THE FIELD. YOU ALWAYS GET THE GOOD TECH FIRST.

NOT FUNNY.

THE HOLO-GUN IS REVERSE ENGINEERED ALIEN TECH. YOU CAN HIDE A MILITARY RIFLE INSIDE A DEVICE THE SIZE OF A PACK OF GUM.



SORRY, WHAT ARE YOU SEEING?

TRAINING... HELL WEEK.



SAN DIEGO? YEAH, OK. WE NEED TO ABORT. NO WAY YOU CAN CALCULATE THE MATERIALIZATION AND DEMATERIALIZATION OF A BULLET RIGHT NOW.

NO. I'VE GOT THIS.



OK, SHE'S SET. ALL WE GOTTA... CRAP, WE GOT A PROBLEM.

WHAT NOW?

GULSHARA'S CYBERNETICS ARE CLEARING OUT THE SEDATIVES. ONLY A LETHAL DOSE WILL KEEP HER FROM WAKING UP.



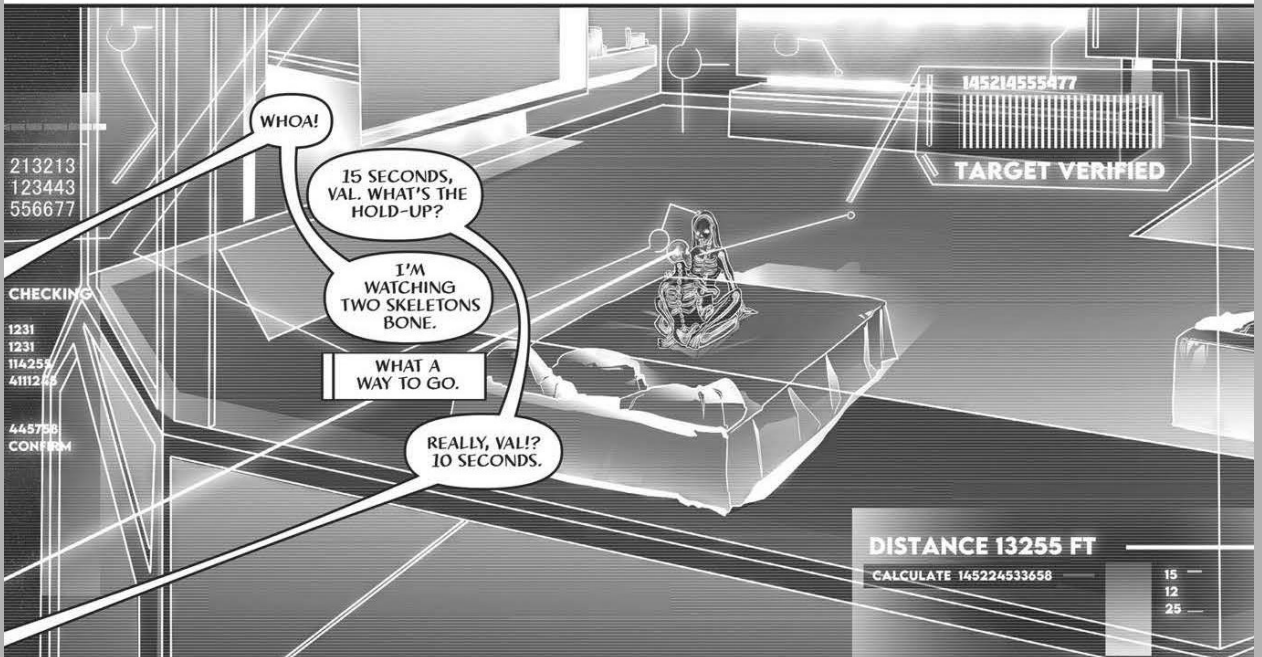
HOLO - VISOR ACTIVATE. FORENSICS WILL KNOW IF THE SHOT WAS FIRED AFTER SHE'S DEAD.

WE CAN SCRUB ANYTHING IN THIS ROOM BUT THAT.

TIMEFRAME?

23 SECONDS.

AND ABOUT 10 MINUTES MAX 'TILL I'M COMATOSE.



213213
123443
556677

CHECKING

1231
1231
114255
4111265

445758
CONFIRM

WHOA!

15 SECONDS, VAL. WHAT'S THE HOLD-UP?

I'M WATCHING TWO SKELETONS BONE.

WHAT A WAY TO GO.

REALLY, VAL!? 10 SECONDS.

145214555477

TARGET VERIFIED

DISTANCE 13255 FT

CALCULATE 145224533658

15
12
25



DEMA AND REMA ON THE BULLET LOCKED.

YOU GOT THIS! 5 SECONDS!!



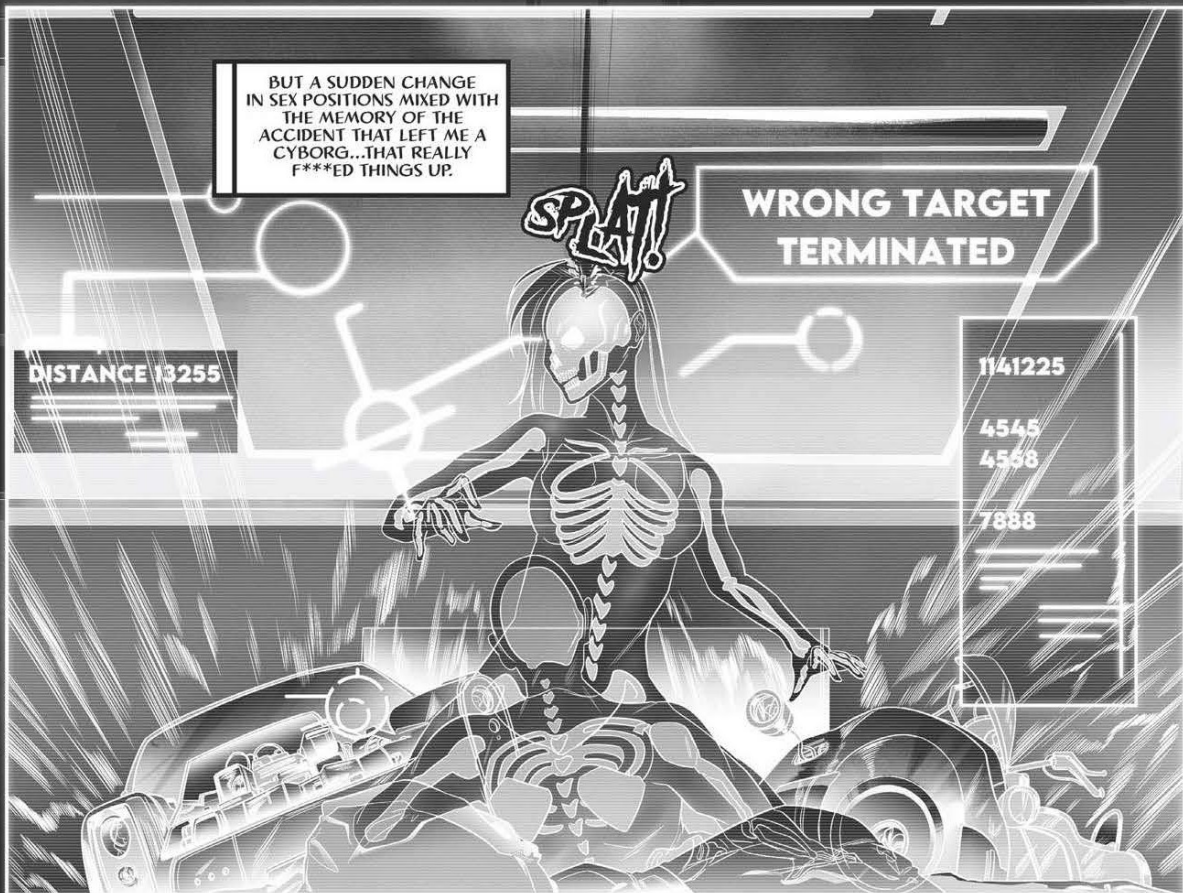
OH, GOD.



NOT THIS.

CLICK!

THE DEMATERIALIZATION AND REMATERIALIZATION OF THE LIVE ROUND THROUGH OUR WINDOW AND THE TARGET'S WINDOW WERE PERFECT.



BUT A SUDDEN CHANGE IN SEX POSITIONS MIXED WITH THE MEMORY OF THE ACCIDENT THAT LEFT ME A CYBORG...THAT REALLY F***ED THINGS UP.

SPAT!

WRONG TARGET TERMINATED

DISTANCE 13255

1141225
4545
4558
7888



TSHUNG!

TSHUNG!

TSHUNG!

VAL!!

WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU DOING?

I MISSED! I MISSED! THE DRUGS KICKED IN. I-I HIT THE WRONG TARGET!



YOU WHAT!? WE NEED TO BAIL! N-

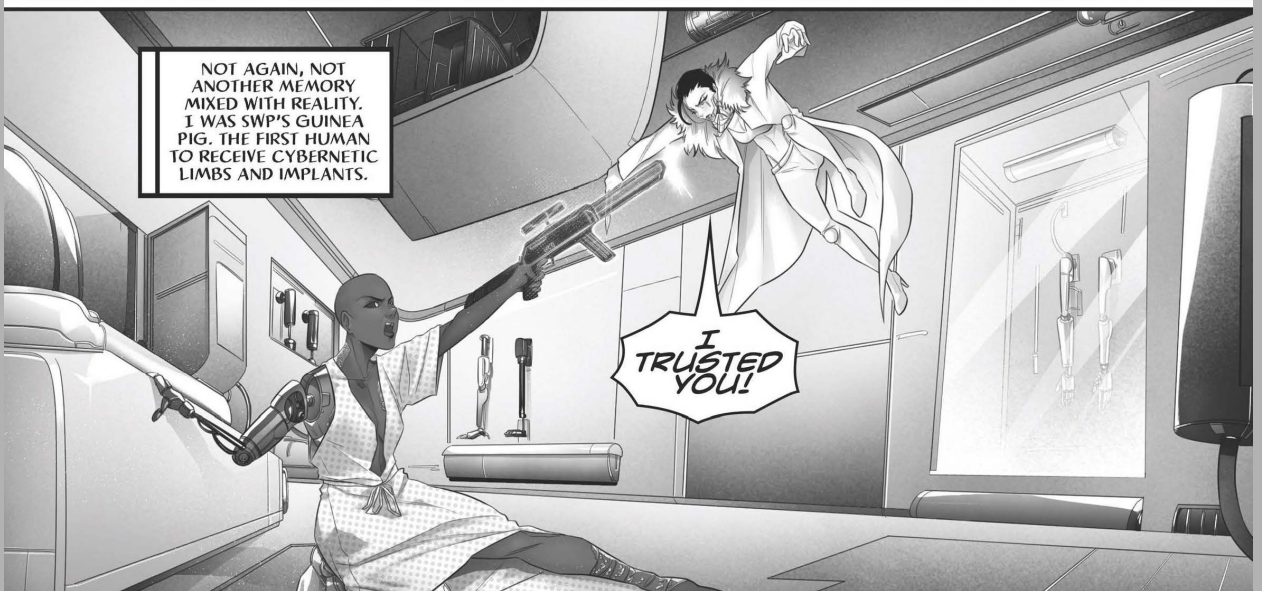


SCHUCK!

oooOow.

SVEN?

HOW COULD YOU, MY LOVE?



NOT AGAIN, NOT ANOTHER MEMORY MIXED WITH REALITY. I WAS SWP'S GUINEA PIG. THE FIRST HUMAN TO RECEIVE CYBERNETIC LIMBS AND IMPLANTS.

I TRUSTED YOU!



I WOULD HAVE GIVEN YOU EVERYTHING!

WHOA, THAT WAS A QUICK ONE! SNAPPED BACK TO REALITY.

UNFORTUNATELY...

EVERYTHING!!!

A HARSH REALITY...



FULL OF CONSEQUENCES.



KRUNCH!

AAAAH!!

NO ONE BETRAYS ME AND LIVES.

GULSHARA HAS SOME OF THE MOST ADVANCED CYBERNETICS ON THE PLANET. HER FOOT HAS CRUSHED MY CYBERNETIC HAND. I CAN'T FEEL IT. I THINK GULSHARA'S FOOT IS THE ONLY THING KEEPING ME UP HERE.

NOT EVEN YOU.

AT THIS HEIGHT, THE WATER BELOW MIGHT AS WELL BE CEMENT. C'MON, THINK!

GOODBYE, MY...



COPY THAT.









I DISAGREE.

ONCE WE YANK THAT MASK OFF YOUR CORPSE, EVERY SINGLE PERSON YOU KNOW IS DEAD.

YOUR MOM, YOUR KIDS!

YOUR FAVORITE BARTENDER! DEAD!

LIGHT HIM UP!

I LET THEM LIVE TO HUNT THEM DOWN INDIVIDUALLY, LATER.



AND TAKE MY TIME.
BECAUSE KILLING
ISN'T A SPORT.



IT'S AN ART AND I'M THE
JACKSON F***ING POLLACK.
THIS NIGHTMARE OF A
WORLD IS MY CANVAS.

THE BLOOD OF THE WICKED IS
MY PAINT, AND THIS CURSED ALIEN
TECH IS MY BRUSH... BUT THAT ***
JUST THREATENED GUSTAVO? HIS
WHITE RUSSIANS ARE THE DIVINE
AMBROSIA OF THE GODS!



SCHUCK!



AAH!!

MUTHA*****!



CAN'T
RISK IT.



HUUGHH!

WOOSH!

ZZSKZZ!

AAAAHHH!!

SNAP!

CRACK!

DON'T KILL ME! I-I'M SORRY MATE, I AIN'T EVEN FROM HERE! I JUST MET THESE BLOKES AN HOUR AGO! SWEAR!

WRONG PLACE, WRONG TIME?

YEAH, YEAH!

LIAR.

YOU'RE VADER MARX. ALL DRUG, ARMS, AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN WHAT'S LEFT OF THE UK GOES THROUGH YOU.

YOU'RE A PRIZE SNAKE-HEAD TO MY COLLECTION.

NO, NO...

112th FLOOR

"NOOOOO!!"

AGENT ACQUIRED, MA'AM. SHE'S ALONE. SHALL WE--

NO, THAT'S CONNERS CALL. TILL THEN WE COVER THIS UP. BRING HER, BURN AND RETRIEVE OUR CYBERNETICS, IMMEDIATELY.

YES, MA'AM.

UH, MA'AM. IT'S ALREADY HIT THE NEWS.

I KNOW.

SHE... WE JUST KILLED THE PRESIDENT?

THE PRESIDENT IS DEAD. HOW SHE DIED IS CLASSIFIED. UNDERSTOOD?

Y-YES, MA'AM.

WHAT? THAT CAN'T BE, RIGHT? MY FIRST TIME ENTERING THE BARRELS MIXED WITH...OH, GOD. I KILLED THE PRESIDENT?

WHAT... WHAT HAVE I DONE?

"WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM."



"YES, AND WORSE. IT ALSO SCANNED VALKYRIE'S CYBERNETICS.

"OUR CYBERNETICS, DOCTOR.

EXACTLY THE PROBLEM. IT SCANNED EVERY SCREW, EVERY WIRE, EVERY MICROCHIP."

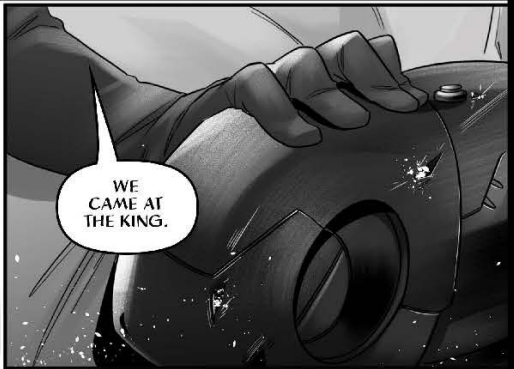
HE CAN TRIANGULATE THE PARTS AND TRACE THEM BACK TO SWP. HE NEVER INTENDED TO KILL VALKYRIE."



STAND DOWN, SEBASTIAN!



CORRECT.



WE CAME AT THE KING.



"AND WE MISSED."

TO BE CONTINUED...

Well you know what they say, you better not miss if you take a shot at the King. So I'm definitely in for issue 2! You too? Well then head on over to the [campaign](#) page and back it now!



Make sure to check out Royal Oak Comics online!

www.RoyalOakComics.com

Facebook—[RoyalOakComics](#)

Instagram—[Royal Oak Comics](#)

TikTok—[Royal Oak Comics](#)

NEW HOTNESS

This is a list of indie books I read since the last issue and have loved.



If you're a fan of Final Fantasy, Dragon Ball Z, Avatar The Last Airbender, or Shonen anime in general, you'll probably like this.

Balbino, a young and powerful hunter working to build his reputation and guild gets in deep fast when the first two members of his guild make him a target of the demonic Oni!

It's a quick read, and the first three issues really flow into one another.

Get your copy on the [Darkmoon Comics website!](#)

What a fucking great read. If you do not have this in your library, just go [get it now on Amazon](#) or on [the website](#).

A bunch of truly great stories spanning all genres. Beautiful art in varying styles complements the stories. Truly, this volume left me out here demanding for more! You can bet I'm keeping a focused eye on [FairSquare Comics](#).

NOIR
IS THE NEW
BLACK
NOIR STORIES FROM BLACK CREATORS

16 STORIES
40 CREATORS

FOREWORD BY
SHAWN MARTINBROUGH



I'm way behind on this book, let me tell you! I'm a big fan of alt history tales that throw in some supernatural or sci-fi spice. Right in the vein of Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Slayer, but more energetic, and a main character who dual-wields katanas! I mean the fact that I've just recently gotten around to reading this is basically a crime.

Go buy it.

[Kindle](#)—[Trade Paperback](#)



This was a surprise, honestly. A bit FRINGE, a bit Rush Hour, this drops you into a rich world of super-powered Chimerans that you're learning along with learning the characters stories and motivations. The background information is provided with well-thought-out in-universe news reports, and newspaper tacked on to the end that gives you a lot of lore without just word-vomiting all over the page. I enjoyed both issues and I'm excited to read issue 3.

Definitely check it out on the Attic Door Media [shop](#).

When's the last time you read a genuine, honest, and entertaining superhero story?

Well if it's been a while, you should read THUNDER.

An earnest hero faces threats that arise from his own actions! Facing off with an armored villain and a master hacker in the first issue, and gaining a new villain, a new sidekick, and a potential ally in the second issue!

It's definitely a fun ride, and I'm in.

Learn more about the series on the [Two Gargoyles Comics](#) site, and then pick the book up at [IndyPlanet](#) or [DriveThruComics](#)!



A brash young man working to rid the world of demons and find his father uses a mystical artifact to channel supernatural powers and rid the world of demons and other supernatural evils.

Solid premise, quick pace, and reads nice and easy. I think there's a secret behind that mask tho. And I saw battle nuns in one of the preview images for later issues! Ffs!

I read the first issue and it definitely piqued my interest. I'm going to keep an eye out for the next campaign so I can snag the Omnibuses, but you can check out the 11 volumes available on [Global-comix](#)!

Years ago I was walking in Artist Alley and a man with a word bubble saying "Let me tell you about my comic" caught my attention. I got the pitch, I found it interesting and I asked the important question—"do you have a trade?" He didn't, and that was our exchange for a few years, until one year he did. I picked up the trade for The Samurnauts and enjoyed it so much that I ended up contacting the group who made it, Unshaven Comics, to feature one or all of them on The Tangents Podcast, for the fledgling "Panels on Pages" segment. It's been years since then, Panels on Pages is its own separate podcast now. Unshaven Comics continues to stand next to the table with that word bubble, and have put out more comics since then. I mentioned them as I was writing some editorial content and reached out to offer a feature in the mag. As luck would have it, just like when I invited them to Panels on Pages back then, I ended up talking to

MARC ALAN FISHMAN



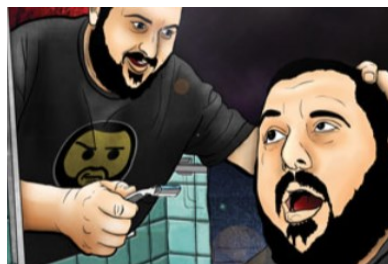
Tell me your origin story. What got you into making comics?



to do a graphic novel. Aren't you and Matt making comics?" And so... I lied. We'd never made a comic prior, but between the three of us, we had the ambition, and were 2 years out of college (Matt with an art degree, me with an art degree with minor in creative writing, and Kyle with an English degree). We were given the chance. We worked our butts off, and in 2008, "The March: Crossing Bridges in America" was released. After that? We wanted to continue creating... just material we were inspired by.

What was your first piece that you felt was ready for public consumption, and was it successful?

As I noted, we were forced out into the public, and "The March" was a small success. For Unshaven Comics though, I would [say] our series after that, "Disposable Razors", while rough around the edges... was very



much us. And it led to us finding "The Samurnauts". So, I'd say we've had more ups than downs.

Now give us the elevator pitch for the two books - *Samurnauts and Blooms: Heist on the Magical Girl's Vault*. Why should people be reading them?



"The Samurnauts" is a team action-adventure about samurai-astronauts — led by an immortal Kung Fu monkey — defending humanity from evil doers of all shapes and sizes throughout time. This includes zombie-cyborg space pirates, transforming demon-dinosaurs from another dimension, evil ancient Aztec succubus luchadores, and a cadre of communist psychic

femme fatales.

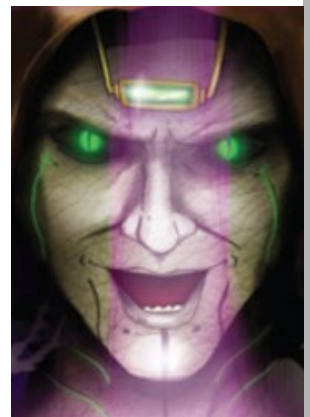
It's a throwback to the things we loved as kids. So anyone into "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles", "Power Rangers" or deep cuts like "Ronin Warriors" or "Exo Squad" will be right at home.

"Blooms: Heist on the Magical Girl Vault" is a caper story — where 4 acquaintances unite to steal the source of power from their city's defenders. The Blooms are magically endowed flower-based crime fighters... who carry a significant tie to our would-be thieves. At it's heart though... it's a love story. Think "Ocean's 11" meets "Sailor Moon".

In both cases? We think people should check them out because they are good stories that appeal to everyone. They are fun, action packed, and I'd like to think... well drawn and written (at least we hope they are!).

Besides your soon-to-be published website redesign, what's up next for the Unshaven crew, when will the Ninjanauts strike?

Oooh, someone's read "The Curse of the Dreadnuts"! 25 points to you. The Samurnauts is continuing this September with the release of "Samurnauts: To the Max!" issue 1. We'll be releasing "The Rage of Reptimian" and "La Noche De Los Luchanauts" soon thereafter. After those stories wrap up (we're working on all 3 at once), then comes the Ninjanauts — and a return to our future team.



Are there other projects waiting in the Unshaven Comics pipeline that people might be interested in?

Absolutely! Kyle is launching "Mark of Cthulhu", a steampunk horror book, working with a good friend of ours (who we'll name drop soon). And beyond books? I'm



You've been at this for a while, what has been the best/most challenging thing about publishing independently?

We were let down by the whole "Diamond Catalog" scam. In short? If you're in indie publisher... unless you have a massive wad of capital (ahem... cash), the game is rigged beyond belief. Simply put: you're not going to get into comic shops without so much skin in the game, there's no way to win. This is why we are cons-only. And while I know folks will say "just go online!"... we are. And if this is the first time you've heard of us? Well, welcome to the world of indie publishing! Money walks, and money talks. We live and die for the cons. It's where we meet awesome people (like you, Dalibor!) and are able to turn our 30 seconds to pitch into a success.



As far as the best part? Seeing the country with my two brothers-from-other-mothers. Making memories, meeting cool people, eating good food... and ultimately being able to have a world to express ourselves. We're just three overgrown kids just closing the deal on those lunchroom conversations. "Hey, you know what would be cool?"

You know what would be cool? Swiping on to read the first issue of *The Samurnauts!* If you're curious about my *Ninjanauts* reference, well then you can pick your copy up on the [Unshaven Comics website!](#)





THE SAMURNAUTS™



THE CURSE OF THE DREADNUTS

FISHMAN

GNEPPER

WRIGHT



THE CURSE OF THE DREADNUTS

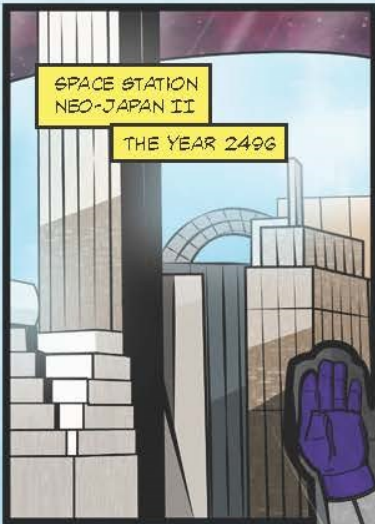
Unshaven Comics, LLC


CHAPTER

1










THE ONLY TEST
WE'RE TAKING IS
HOW QUICKLY WE
END THIS, UGLY!

I TOLD YOU NOT
TO BUM RUSH
HIM, SORA-

HAD HIM...
RIGHT WHERE I
WANTED HIM!



HAR HAR! :zzz: THE CAP'N JUST
WANTED ME TO :zzz: EXAMINE
THIS STATION FOR ANY SIGNS
OF RESISTANCE...

BUT WHY CAN'T I HAVE
A BIT OF FUN :zzz: WHILE
I'M HERE?





LANCER, THIS IS USELESS—HE'S TOO POWERFUL!



SORA... BIND HIM!



I'M ON IT, ARIEL!



GOOD THING THESE HELMETS PREVENT SMELLS FROM GETTING IN...

MEAN GREEN NEEDS A SERIOUS PHASE-SHOWER!



HAR HAR! YOU DON'T LEARN, :zzz: DO YOU!





LANCER, AN ATTACK AT ALTERNATIVE CROSS ANGLES COULD RENDER HIM OFF-BALANCE!









VILE CREATURE...
FACE JUSTICE!

THWAP!

HSSSS! >zzz<
THE MONKEY!

THE BRATS
WEREN'T LYING...
THE SAMURNAUTS
LIVE!

WE DO MORE
THAN LIVE.

HYAH!

KRA-KOW

WE ENDURE.

ACTIVE
TRANSMISSION
BEGAIN.

CAP'N. SCOUT 003
REPORTING. STATION IS
ACTIVE AND DEFENDED--

BY THE SAMURNAUTS!

Salopop!



MASTER, DID YOU... *KILL IT*?

WHAT WAS THAT... *THING*?

ONE CANNOT *KILL* THAT WHICH IS NOT *ALIVE*, LANCER.

TRANSMISSION: *zzz* TERMINATED.

IT WAS *UNNATURAL*.

IT IS AN ENEMY I'D LONG THOUGHT *LOST AND GONE*.



AN ENEMY WHO WE *NEVER* DEFEATED.

AN ENEMY WITHOUT *FEAR*.

AN ENEMY WITH *NO LIMITS* TO THEIR VICIOUS WAYS.



MY STUDENTS... WE *MUST* PREPARE OURSELVES.



I SUSPECT SOON WE WILL FACE OUR *GREATEST* THREAT.



WE WILL FACE **The DREADNUTS!**



"WHEN DID YOU FIRST FACE THEM, MASTER?"

WE'VE BEEN FIGHTING THE ONISAURS FOR ALMOST A YEAR. THE PEOPLE *WILL* TRUST US AGAIN!

SURELY IT MUST BE SAFE TO *RETURN* TO THE VILLAGE, MASTER.

"WITH MY FIRST STUDENTS... LONG AGO."



DO NOT BE SO SURE MY STUDENT. THE PEOPLE TRUST *THE SAMURNAUTS*.

THEY DO NOT YET KNOW WHO IS *BENEATH* YOUR MASKS...

AND THE MONSTERS *TREACHERY* RUNS DEEP.



WHEN WE HAVE ROOTED IT *ALL* OUT, WE WILL REVEAL OURSELVES.

WE *UNDERSTAND*, MASTER.



SOMETIMES I FEEL AS IF FIGHTING THE ONI-SAURUS CLAN IS *ALL* WE DO.



IT MAY TAKE TIME, BROTHER, BUT OUR STRUGGLE *CANNOT* LAST *FOREVER*.



THERE HAS BEEN WORD OF ATTACKS ON THE NEARBY COASTAL VILLAGES.

REPORTS OF DEMONS NOT ONLY ATTACKING... BUT DRAGGING THE VILLAGERS AWAY.



DO YOU THINK RAPTERROR IS ABDUCTING MORE PEOPLE FOR HIS EXPERIMENTS?



IT'S UNCLEAR, MEIFANG.

WHATEVER IT IS, IT *MUST* BE STOPPED. BE PREPARED FOR ANYTHING, MY STUDENTS.



NO...







THIS *DAMAGE*...
IT DOES NOT LOOK
LIKE THE WORK OF
THE ONI-SAURS.

FINALLY, A *NEW*
CHALLENGE!



SAMURNAUTS—
TO ACTION!



SOMETHING DOES
NOT *FEEL* RIGHT.



OF COURSE NOT,
CHEN. THE VILLAGERS
ARE IN *DANGER*.

NO, IT'S NOT THAT.
THERE IS AN *UNNATURAL*
ENERGY HERE.

I CAN'T PLACE
IT EXACTLY.

WHAT IS THIS
UNRULY GREEN MIST?



RRRAAAAAGHH!



CRASH!



GRRR!

IT'S... TOO... STRONG!

GAH!



HUA!

CRASH!

WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT!



THEY ARE STRONG, BUT SEEM UNINTELLIGENT.



WE NEED TO SPLIT UP, AND CORRAL THEM AWAY FROM THE VILLAGERS.



QUIANG AND I WILL HEAD TOWARDS THE CENTER OF TOWN.

MEIFANG AND CHUNG GO TOWARDS THE WEST END.

CHEN, HEAD TOWARDS THE DOCKS!





RAAAHAR-HARI!

AYEEEE!



HUFF!

HNNN!



PLEASE... LEAVE US BE, DEMON! WE ONLY—

GRR!



HSSSS!



KYAAA!

FACE MY STEEL, VILLAIN!



THIS MIST HIDES THEIR NUMBERS!

SURELY THIS ISN'T ANY WORSE THAN THE STANDOFF IN THE MOUNTAINS LAST MONTH?

PERHAPS, PERHAPS NOT.

WAAAHI!

KA-CHING!



DO YOU FEAR THEM?

I FEAR NO ENEMY, WHEN I STAND NEXT TO MY SISTER!



THEN LET US VANQUISH THEM...



PANG!

PANG!

PANG!

HYAH!

PANG!

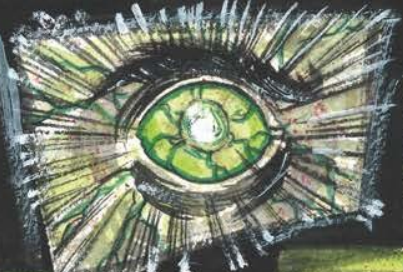
PANG!

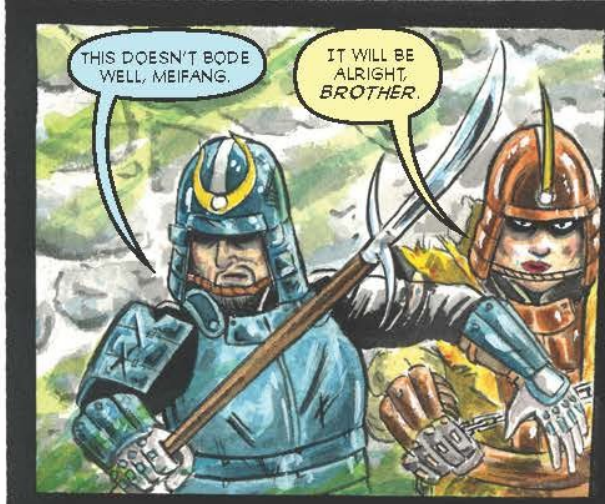
PANG!



REMAND ME TO STAND NEXT TO YOU AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE.

MASTER HAS TAUGHT US WELL, BUT PERHAPS WE BOAST TOO SOON—





THIS DOESN'T BODE WELL, MEIFANG.

IT WILL BE ALRIGHT, BROTHER.



AS MASTER AL HAS TAUGHT US... *FEAR* BREEDS FAILURE.

THEN WE STAND OUR GROUND.

SAMURNAUTS ARE GO!



HAH HA!



TOGETHER WE PREVAIL—

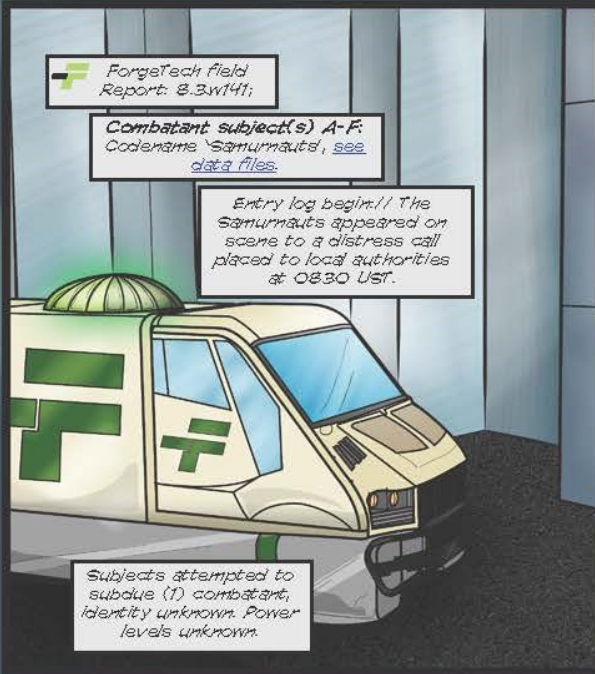
PUSH THEM BACK!



HSS!



SAMURNAUTS... TO THE DOCKS!



Forgetech field Report: B.3.W141;

Combatant subject(s) A-F: Codename 'Samurrauts', see data files.

Entry log begin!! The Samurrauts appeared on scene to a distress call placed to local authorities at 0830 UST.

Subjects attempted to subdue (1) combatant, identity unknown. Power levels unknown.



Subject Albert V entered the encounter at 0852 UST. Combatant subdued.

Coroner's office has been rerouted. Team Sigma on premise for retrieval and analysis.

Whatever this thing was.. it neutralized them with minimal effort. Action Item 001://Retrieve. Revive. Program.

NO, NO, NO, NO, NO!

//End Report.



RAIF?

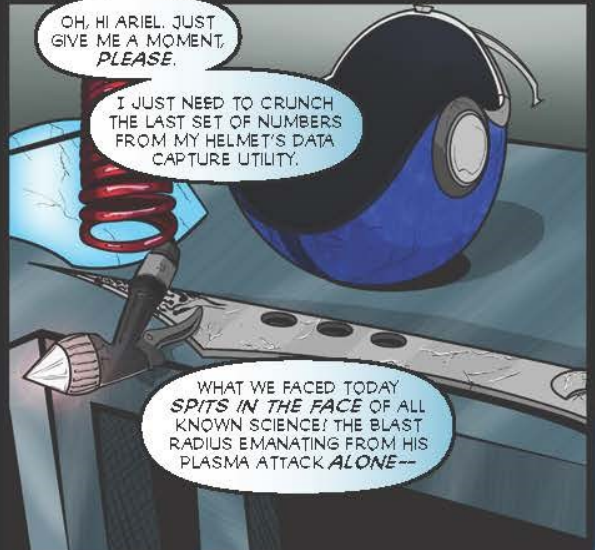
THIS DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE! THE POTENTIAL TO KINETIC ENERGY OUTPUT IS EFFECTIVELY DOUBLE OUR OWN!?



SOUNDS LIKE YOU COULD USE A LITTLE COMPANY...

AND MAYBE A BREAK.

YOU'VE BEEN IN YOUR LAB SINCE WE POWERED DOWN THIS MORNING.



OH, HI ARIEL, JUST GIVE ME A MOMENT, PLEASE.

I JUST NEED TO CRUNCH THE LAST SET OF NUMBERS FROM MY HELMET'S DATA CAPTURE UTILITY.

WHAT WE FACED TODAY SPITS IN THE FACE OF ALL KNOWN SCIENCE! THE BLAST RADIUS EMANATING FROM HIS PLASMA ATTACK ALONE--



RAIF, YOU NEED TO STOP. YOU'RE NOT JUST CRUNCHING NUMBERS...

YOU'RE HIDING.



SIGH! YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT.

I—I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

RAIF, YOU CAN'T—

MASTER AL PLACED ME ON THIS TEAM FOR MY INTELLECT.

DON'T BE SO HARD ON YOURSELF. THAT DREADNUT THREW ALL OF US FOR A LOOP.

IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE, ARIEL AND YOU KNOW THAT. I'VE LOST TOUCH WITH WHY I WAS CHOSEN.

MY EYES ARE OPEN NOW.

SO WHY DO I LEAP HEAD FIRST INTO BATTLE WITHOUT ANY INTELLIGENT PLAN?



THE DREADNUT'S RESIDUAL ENERGY SIGNATURE IS ASTOUNDING...

HOW SO?

IT'S TRACE, BUT MY INITIAL ANALYSIS INDICATES THAT IT SHARES A BASE WAVELENGTH FREQUENCY AKIN TO OUR OWN.



YOU MEAN—

THE DREADNUTS ARE SOMEHOW POWERED, IN PART, WITH THE SAME ENERGY FORCE THE SAMURNAUTS ARE.

Yes sir, I've located the weapons. Primary scans indicate they are still radiating the errant frequency!

...Agreed. I'll bag and tag them immediately.



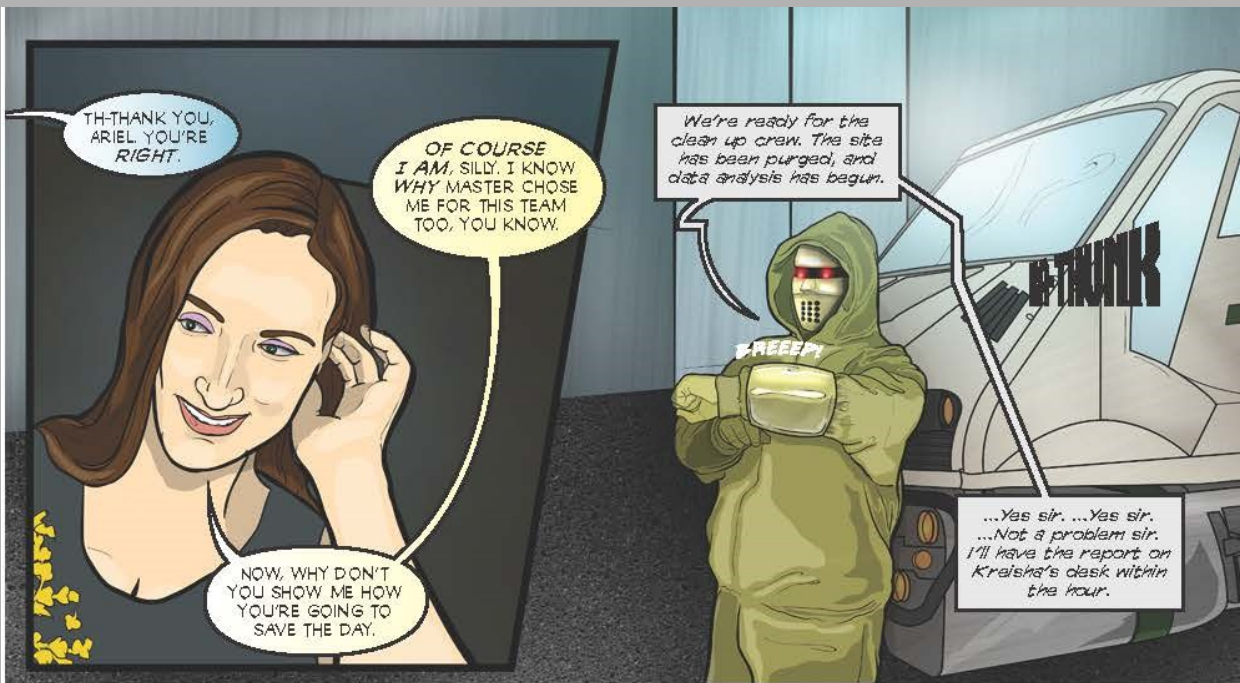
A few days of study in the lab, and the Samurnauts will pose no future threat.



YOU'RE AMAZING RAIF, DO YOU KNOW THAT? DON'T DOUBT YOURSELF... OR YOUR INTELLIGENCE.

DON'T DOUBT YOUR PLACE ON THE TEAM.

YOU BELONG HERE, MORE THAN ANY OF US.



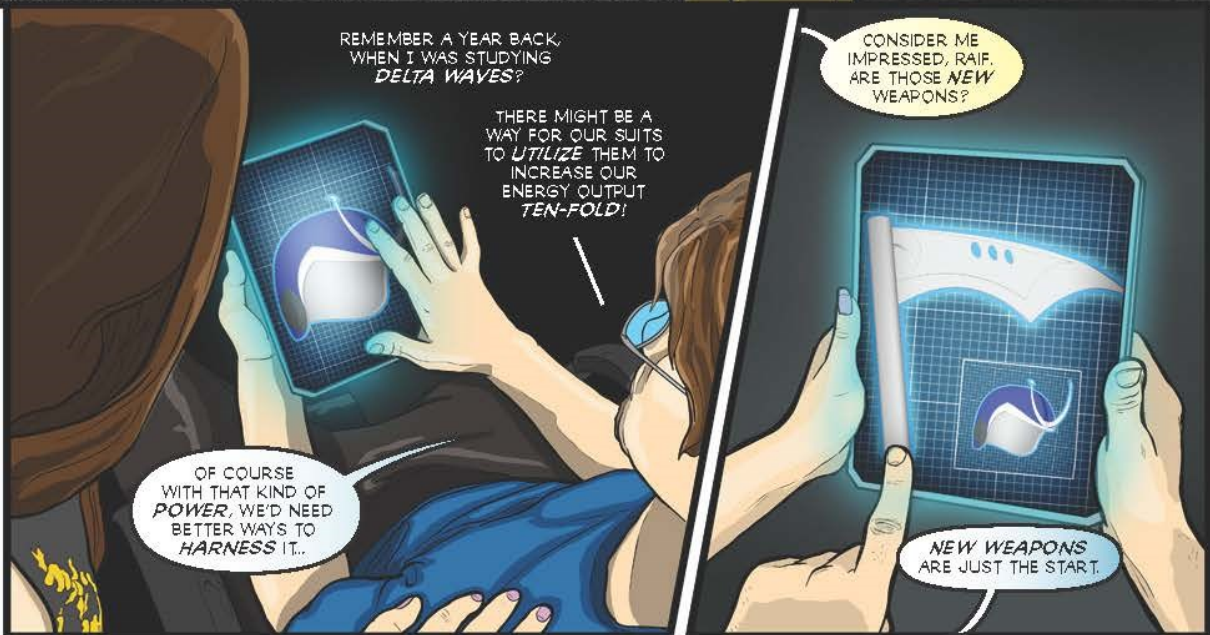
TH-THANK YOU, ARIEL. YOU'RE RIGHT.

OF COURSE I AM, SILLY. I KNOW WHY MASTER CHOSE ME FOR THIS TEAM TOO, YOU KNOW.

We're ready for the clean up crew. The site has been purged, and data analysis has begun.

...Yes sir. ...Yes sir. ...Not a problem sir. I'll have the report on Kreisha's desk within the hour.

NOW, WHY DON'T YOU SHOW ME HOW YOU'RE GOING TO SAVE THE DAY.



REMEMBER A YEAR BACK, WHEN I WAS STUDYING DELTA WAVES?

THERE MIGHT BE A WAY FOR OUR SUITS TO UTILIZE THEM TO INCREASE OUR ENERGY OUTPUT TEN-FOLD!

CONSIDER ME IMPRESSED, RAIF. ARE THOSE NEW WEAPONS?

OF COURSE WITH THAT KIND OF POWER, WE'D NEED BETTER WAYS TO HARNESS IT..

NEW WEAPONS ARE JUST THE START.



HOW ABOUT I SHOW YOU THE REST... OH-OVER LUNCH?

SMARTEST THING YOU'VE SAID YET, MR. ANDERSON.



THANKS FOR MEETING ME ON YOUR LUNCH BREAK, KREISHA.

IT'S NOT A PROBLEM, LANCER... I ACTUALLY WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THIS MORNING'S ATTACK.



YEAH, I KNOW. WHAT AN *INTENSE* BATTLE! WE'VE NEVER FACED SOMETHING SO POWERFUL BEFORE.

I AM! WE'RE GAINING SKILL WITH EACH FIGHT—

YOU ALMOST SOUND EXCITED.

LANCER, I *SAW* THE NEWS ON MY WORK FEED...

I WOULDN'T CALL GETTING SAVED BY MY TEACHER 'GAINING SKILL'—

I'D CALL IT *BEING LUCKY*.



HANDS ABOVE THE BELT, KREISHA! *JEEZ*.

NO, LANCER. I'M GETTING SICK OF THIS. YOUR TEAM IS *RECKLESS*.

OH, AND HOW MANY LIVES HAVE BEEN *SAVED* BY FORGETECH?

MORE THAN YOU'D KNOW.



LANCER, I LOVE YOU, *HONESTLY*, I DO.

BUT YOU CAN'T JUST THROW ON A SUIT, AND CALL YOURSELF A SUPERHERO. YOU *NEED* TRAINING.



YOU'RE OVER THE LINE! WE'RE TRAINED BY THE *SINGLE GREATEST* FIGHTER IN THE UNIVERSE!

TO WHAT END?

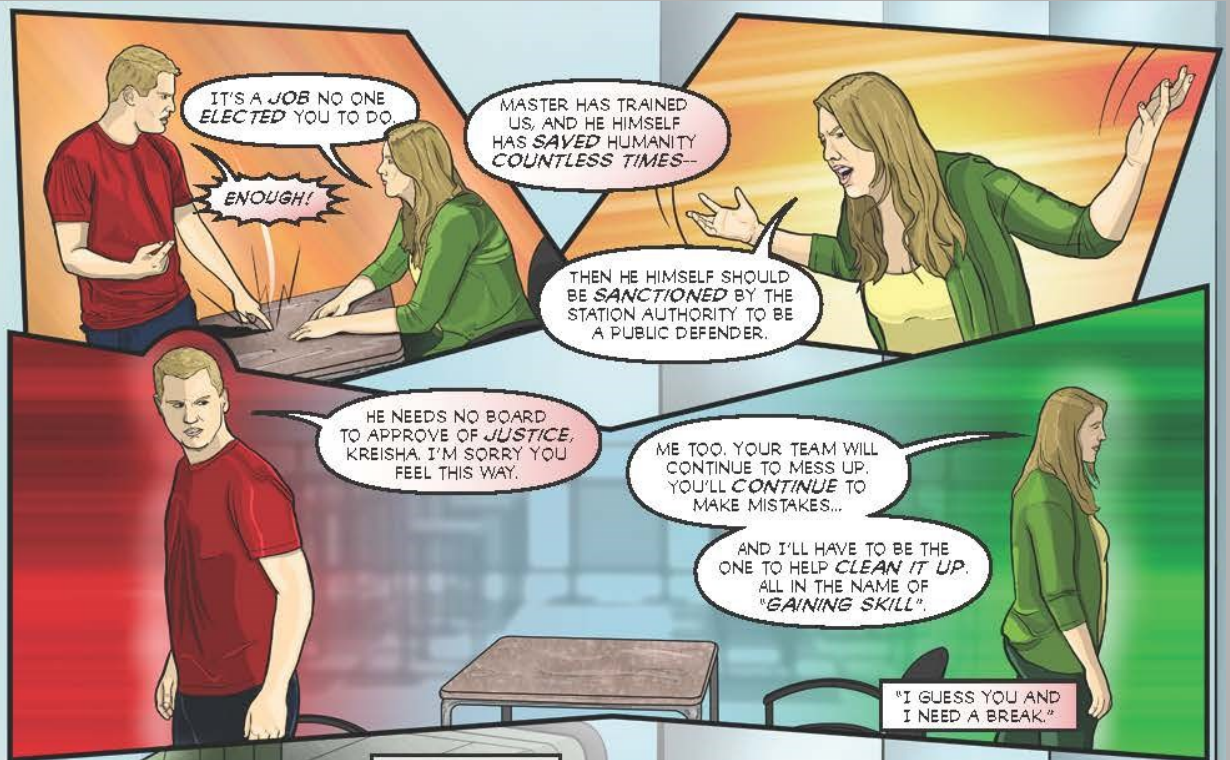
WELL YOU KNOW WHAT *MY JOB* IS?



YOU'RE *STUDENTS*. YOU'RE *GREEN*. I'VE WATCHED HOURS OF FOOTAGE—

IT'S MY JOB!

DEFENDING THIS STATION FROM ATTACK!



IT'S A JOB NO ONE ELECTED YOU TO DO.

ENOUGH!

MASTER HAS TRAINED US, AND HE HIMSELF HAS SAVED HUMANITY COUNTLESS TIMES--

THEN HE HIMSELF SHOULD BE SANCTIONED BY THE STATION AUTHORITY TO BE A PUBLIC DEFENDER.

HE NEEDS NO BOARD TO APPROVE OF JUSTICE, KREISHA. I'M SORRY YOU FEEL THIS WAY.

ME TOO. YOUR TEAM WILL CONTINUE TO MESS UP. YOU'LL CONTINUE TO MAKE MISTAKES...

AND I'LL HAVE TO BE THE ONE TO HELP CLEAN IT UP. ALL IN THE NAME OF "GAINING SKILL".

"I GUESS YOU AND I NEED A BREAK."

Good gravy, this sucker is heavy!

Lift with your knees, Mort.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Another one to the stasis lab, eh?

Yup.

ForgetTech field Report: 8.3.w142;

The body has been recovered. The scene has been scanned, and dumped into the servers. The truck is being loaded at 1056 UST, with plans to return to base immediately.

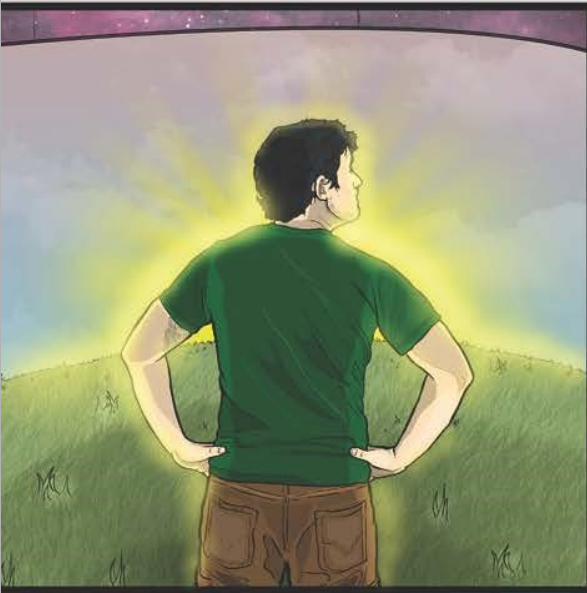
Subject is still emitting radiation and unknown energy signatures. Further analysis is required. The full report will be posted on the shared server. Debriefing at 1130 UST.

ForgetTech field Report: 8.3.w142; FILED AND COMPLETED.



LATER, AT THE ALBERT V DOJO AND PRIVATE ACADEMY...







TODAY WAS A JOKE, MASTER. A SINGLE DREADNUT MOPPED THE PAVEMENT AND HALF THE BUILDINGS IN THE FINANCIAL DISTRICT WITH US.

ALL YOUR TRAINING, ALL THOSE BATTLES AGAINST THE ONISAURS? FOR WHAT? SO ONE ROBO-PIRATE CAN BLOW US BACK TO EARTH PRIME WITH PEG LEG MISSILES?!

SORA, MY STUDENT, YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND! THE DREADNUTS—



SHOULD HAVE JUST DESTROYED US.



MY FATHER WAS RIGHT.

YOU SHOULD NOT BE TRUSTED, MASTER.

BRAHNNMM BUN BUNMM



THREE MORE ENERGY SIGNATURES APPEARED ON XL RADAR, MATCHING THAT OF THE DREADNUT SCOUT—

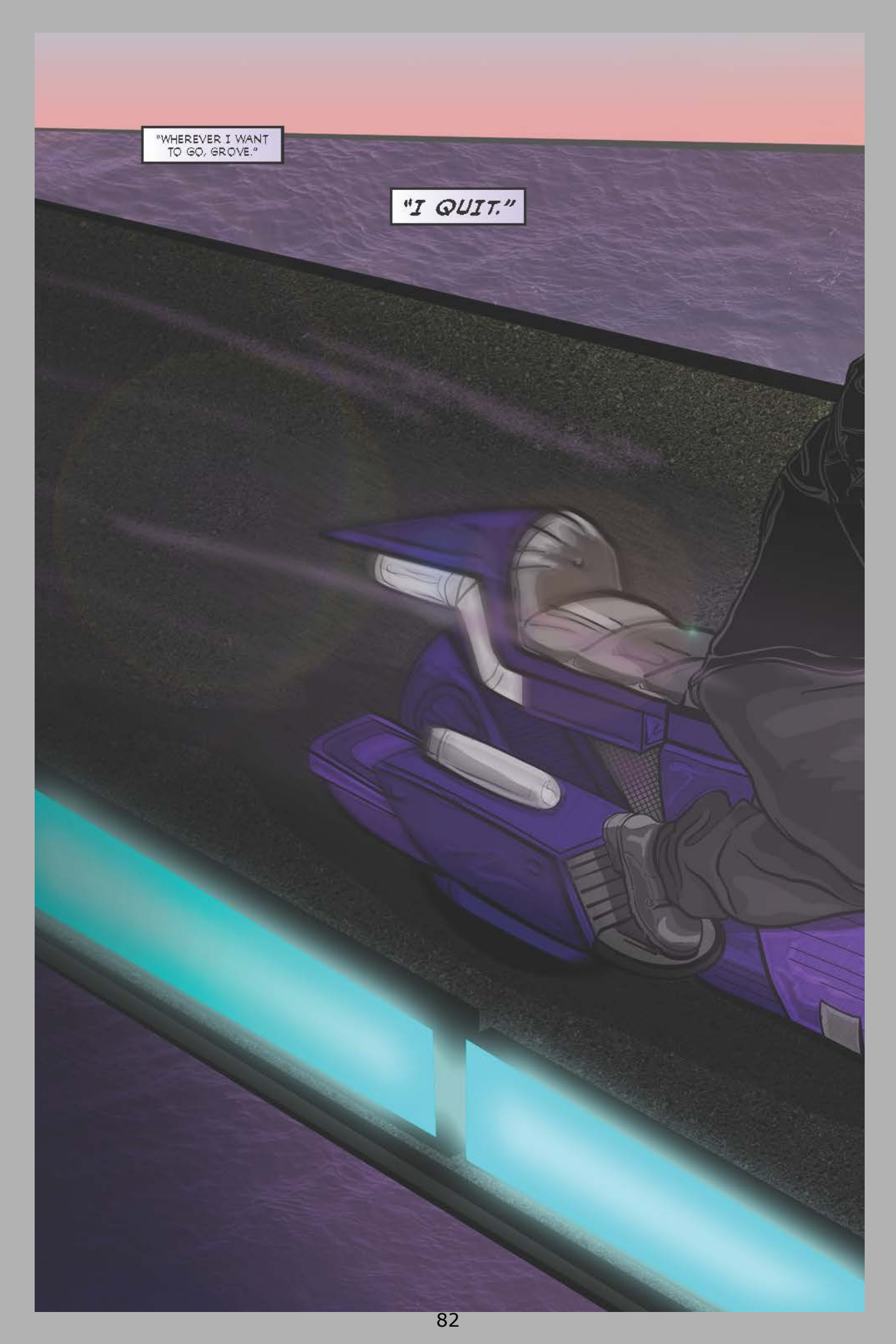
WAIT... WHAT'S GOING ON? MASTER AL?



WAIT, IS SORA TAKING OUT HIS SAMURBIKE? IT'S NOT TESTED!

STOP!

HEY BUDDY... WHERE YOU GOIN'?



"WHEREVER I WANT
TO GO, GROVE."

"I QUIT."



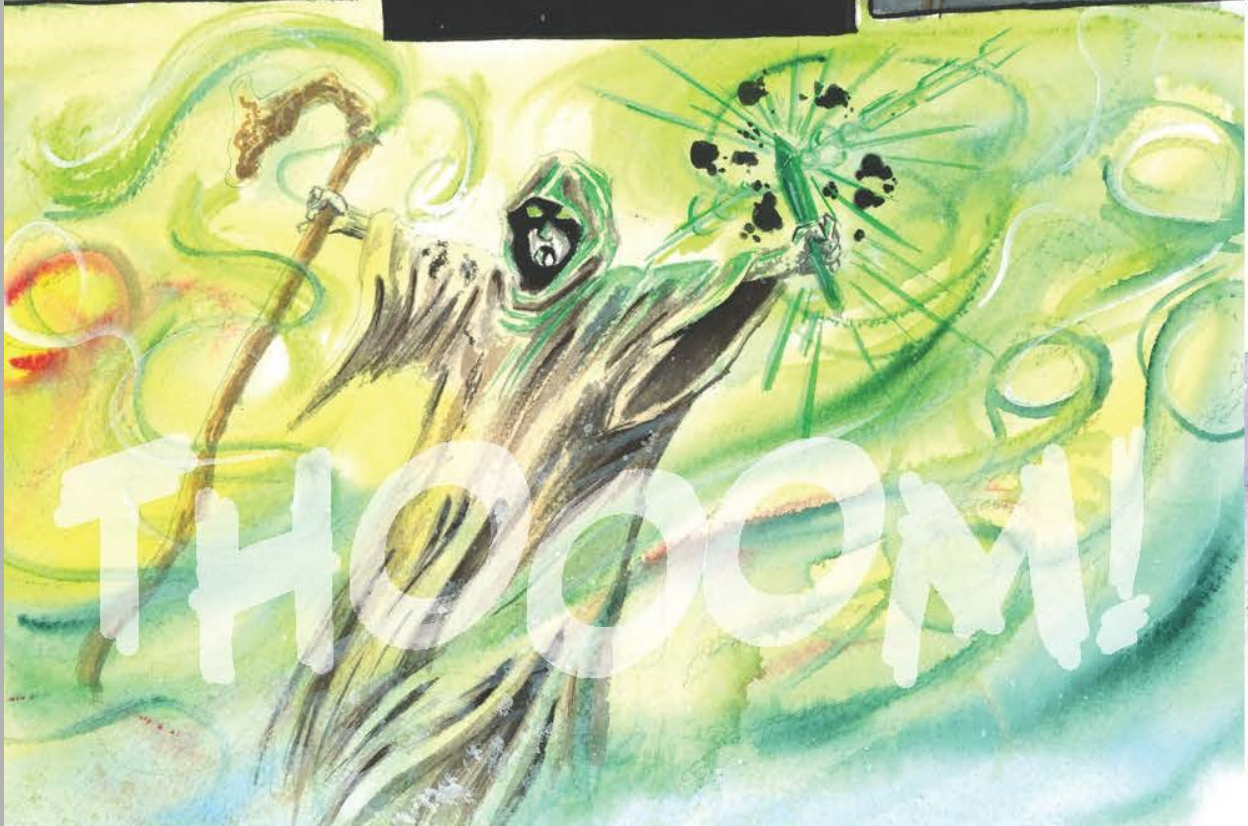
"I SENSE SOMETHING
TERRIBLE IS ABOARD
THIS SHIP—"



THE MIST SEEMS TO BE EMANATING FROM THE DECK OF THIS CURSED SHIP...

IT'S AURA IS SOMETHING I'VE NEVER FELT BEFORE. SOMETHING... VILE!

MASTER WOULD SAY I SHOULD AWAIT THE OTHERS... BUT I CANNOT!





HIDE NO LONGER, CHILD. I'VE FELT YOUR PRESENCE FROM THE MOMENT YOU TOUCHED THIS SHIP.

WHAT'S THAT I DETECT? AN ENERGY I'VE NEVER FELT BEFORE...

IT MUST BE MINE!



I DO NOT KNOW WHAT YOU ARE, CREATURE, BUT YOU WILL NOT HARM ANOTHER VILLAGE!



THE MORTAL SOULS HAVE LITTLE CONSEQUENCE TO ME. I SEARCH FOR MAGICKS FROM BEYOND THE STARS.

I WILL TAKE THEM, AND YOUR POWER FOR MYSELF--

SUBMIT!



I AM MORE THAN A MATCH FOR YOU, WITCH. NOW, RELEASE YOUR CAPTIVES!



YOU MAY BE A MATCH FOR HER LAD...



CLANGG!

BUT SHE'S NOT THE ONE YOU NEED TO BE WORRYN ABOUT! HAR HAR!



AND SO YE KNOW THE
CREW OBEYS ONLY MY
ORDERS...

AND I DON'T TAKE
WELL TO STOWAWAYS
ON MY SHIP



THE MIST IS CLEARING UP—

THE SHIP! CHEN MUST BE ABOARD.

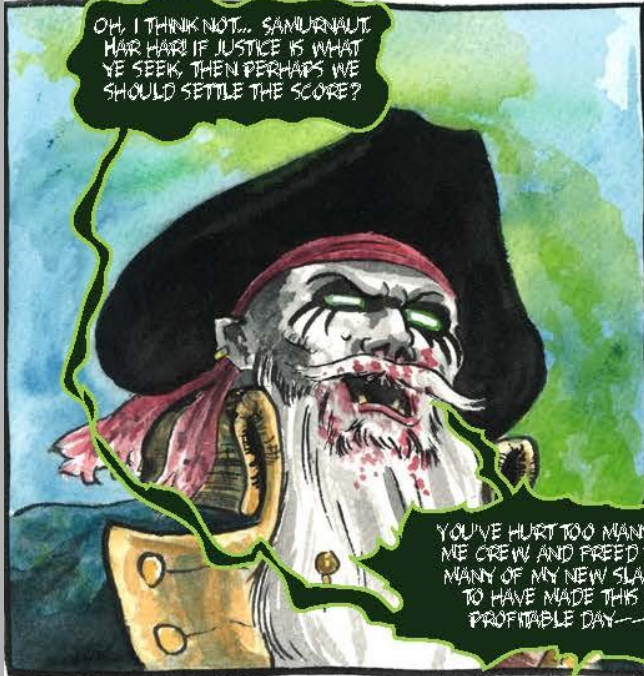
GAEA'S WAVE, GIVE US STRENGTH!



THAT'S FAR ENOUGH. LEAVE MY SHIP AND MY CREW BE. WE'VE TAKEN ALL WE NEED— FOR NOW!



STAND DOWN! THE SAMURNAUTS WILL SEE THAT YOU RECEIVE THE JUSTICE YOU DESERVE.



OH, I THINK NOT... SAMURNAUT. HAR HAR! IF JUSTICE IS WHAT YE SEEK, THEN PERHAPS WE SHOULD SETTLE THE SCORE?

YOU'VE HURT TOO MANY OF ME CREW AND FREED TOO MANY OF MY NEW SLAVES TO HAVE MADE THIS A PROFITABLE DAY—



GLLLK!

SO I THINK I'LL BE ENACTING A WEE BIT O' JUSTICE MYSELF! HAR HAA HAA HAR HARRR!





PUT MY STUDENT DOWN!



AH HAI THE FAMOUS KUNG FU MONKEY. I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED THESE WELPS WERE IN YER CARE!




POK!

HYA!

THWAK!

YAARRGGH!



QUICKLY MY SON... WE MUST FLEE THIS DEMON'S SHIP. YOU SHOULD HAVE NEVER PURSUED IT ALONE!

I KNOW... MASTER.



WELL PLAYED, MONKEY
BUT THE DAY IS NOT LOST
JUST YET--



POWER IS A GIFT AND A
CURSE. OUR LOT IS TO WIELD
IT ETERNALLY HAR HARI!





DON'T WORRY.
I'VE GOT YOU.

SCAFF
SCAFF



ARE YOU
ALRIGHT?

I WILL MANAGE.
MY STUDENTS.
ARE THEY—

THEY ARE ALIVE.
THE BRUNT OF THE
BLAST WAS FOCUSED
ON THE DOCKS.

THE VILLAGE IS
SAFE, THANKS
TO YOU, BUT...

THOSE
MONSTERS
ESCAPED...



FOR NOW,
BUT THIS IS FAR
FROM OVER.



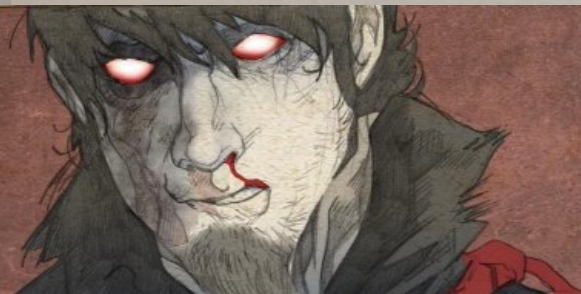


From the set of their first feature appearance, and the first film based on their own comic book *No Rest For The Wicked*, I affectionately call these men *The Minor Boys*. I've been a fan for a long time and I'm incredibly proud to see their work on the big and small screen. I recently had them on [Panels on Pages](#), and figured it was past time to feature them in the magazine. Let's have a chat with

MATTHEW MINOR

During our recent podcast, Kevin mentioned that there were many pages of backgrounds and lore for *No Rest For The Wicked*. Now you're working on a second volume, but when you started were you assuming best case scenario and planned it as an ongoing series, or did you get the *Dead Man's Hand* story down and then work on fleshing out the universe and characters, coming up with more story ideas?

Kevin and I plotted out 5 arcs if I am counting correctly, which should be 20 issues. We fully wrote 16 and recently re-wrote the 2nd and split the antagonists out to make the story more movie sequel friendly.



Besides *No Rest For The Wicked*, what other creative pursuits of yours can my readers check out? In that same vein, will there be other comic projects from *Universe M*?

We have some small run books in our past that are super hard to find...there is one

gentleman from Ohio who seems to have found them all though. He would regularly blow our minds and show up with things even we didn't have.

We have 3 books with Schiffer publishing for an all ages...Peanut & Bosco by Jake and Kevin, Amelia's Story by all of us, and Mega Awesome Notebook by all of us. I owe them one next, I'm working through 2 ideas.

You guys partnered with a publisher pretty early on in the life of the No Rest. What have been the major advantages of having an established architecture around you as you produced comics?

We were actually through 2 full books before we signed I think. For distribution of physical books at the time it was essential. Having a good publisher gets your book made, gets you out in the public eye, and usually keeps you working on projects. A good publisher has everything in place so you can be creative and they can produce/sell.



Now I know this was not as big a function of the indie space at the time, but if you were starting over today, would you go with Kickstarter and self-publish, or would you want to find a publisher?



We have discussed if it makes sense for us right now or not and there are some potential opportunities. Doing this in hybrid is hard. Being good at our day jobs means we can have this night job but getting some help so we can focus on it is definitely on our minds.

Since we talked about franchises, I have to ask - pie in the sky, all of them doing exceptionally well in theaters - how many movies do you want? I guess I'm asking is Reno going to space in Dead Man's Hand 9: Cards on the Table?

Space is on the table for Dead Man's Hand 8: Space Cowboy in the Horsehead Nebula. Seriously, I'd love to tell at least 5-6 movies with what we have plotted so far. It would range you around the US during the old west era and we would have plenty of supernatural lore to integrate into the world. Ideally, this is a television or streaming series so we can really dig into it.



I certainly know I'd love to dig into it! No Rest For The Wicked is one of my favorite indie comics of all time, so seeing it played out as a multi-season series would be amazing!

If you haven't read it before, make sure you scroll on and check out the first issue of No Rest For The Wicked then check out The Source Point Press [store](#) or [Amazon](#) to get your copy!



NO REST For the Wicked



JAKE MINOR

KEVIN MINOR

MATTHEW MINOR

DEAD MAN'S HAND

* PART I *

NO REST For the Wicked

Jake Minor
art

Kevin Minor
writer * colors

Matthew Minor
creator * writer * letters * print/web

www.universe-m.com
www.norestcomic.com
www.sourcepointpress.com



SOURCE POINT PRESS



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BUFFALO GROVE: THE OLD WEST.



**DAMN YOU!
DON'T YOU TURN
YOUR BACK
ON ME!**



**RENO,
YOU SLIPPERY
SOMOFABITCH...**

**...YOU CHEATED
ME OUTTA MUH
MONEY!**



**CARTER,
I TOLD YOU
BEFORE...**



...I'M NO CHEAT.



BLAMM!



BUT I AM A SLIPPERY SON OF A BITCH.

TWO DAYS LATER IN THE SILVER
BOOMTOWN, CROOKED CREEK.



THERE ARE
SOME WHO SAY
THAT AN OPEN
CHAIR IS AN
INVITATION.

YOU MAY CALL ME RENO.

LIKE THE CITY?

SHIT, YOU CAN CALL YOURSELF TIMBUKTU FOR ALL I CARE - YOU GOT MONEY?

WELL RENO, MY NAME IS DALLAS AND THIS IS HERE IS SENOR SAN FRANCISCO.

HEHEHEH.

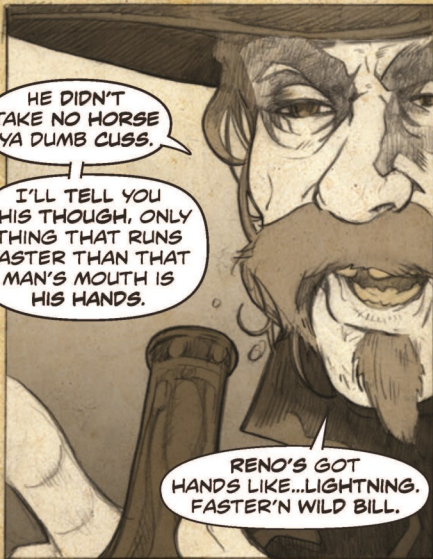


AMUSING.

GENTLEMEN, LET US SEE IF YOUR POKER SKILLS ARE AS SHARP AS YOUR GEOGRAPHY.



SHARP AS YOUR TONGUE, BOY.





WE SHALL SEE SIR.
GOOD LUCK. MAY YOUR
CARDS HOLD FOUR LEAF
CLOVERS INSTEAD OF
CLUBS.

A FEW HOURS LATER...



WELL, SHEEEET.





GENTLEMEN,
CLASS IS
ADJOURNED.



YOU DON'T
SEEM TO GET IT RENO,
I'M CLARENCE BISHOP.
I RUN THINGS 'ROUND
HERE.



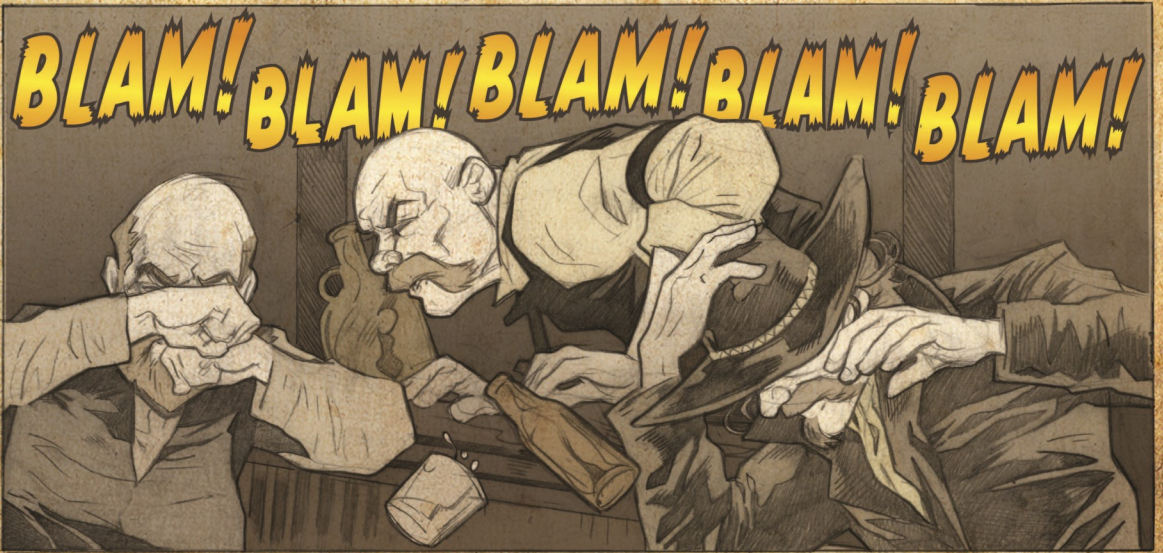
BE A LAMB AND
GET ME A HICKORY
SWITCH DARLIN'.

I NEED
TO DISCIPLINE
THIS CHILD.



YOU'RE A
DEAD MAN!







IT SEEMS WE NO LONGER HAVE ENOUGH PLAYERS FOR A PROPER GAME.

THEREFORE I MUST RETIRE. LADIES, IF YOU'LL JOIN ME? MAKE SURE YOU BRING THAT SWITCH.



AW HELL.

DAMN IT RENO! HE WAS TOWN BOSS.

THAT'S TROUBLE YOU DON'T WANT AND TROUBLE I DON'T NEED!

TOLD YOU. HE'S FAST.

MINUTES LATER...



THIS PLACE IS GOING TO BE CRAWLING WITH COWPOKES LOOKIN' FOR RENO.

SON OF A BITCH.

GET OVER HERE AND GRAB HIS LEG.

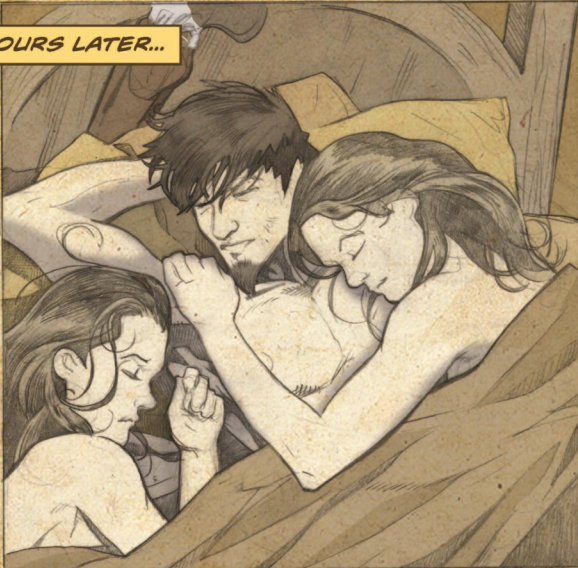


YOU'RE GOD DAMN RIGHT.



WHISKEY. NOW.

HOURS LATER...

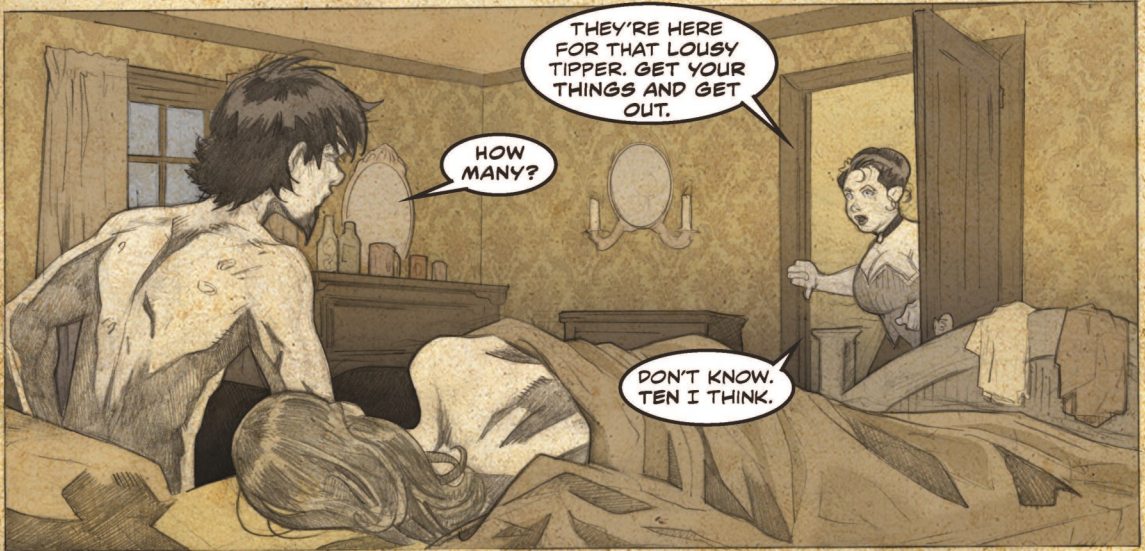


GIRLS! GET UP!
NOW! NOW! NOW!



THEY'RE HERE
FOR THAT LOUSY
TIPPER. GET YOUR
THINGS AND GET
OUT.

HOW
MANY?



DON'T KNOW.
TEN I THINK.



LIKE I SAID, TEN.

DARLIN' I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW I TIPPED YOU A HUNDRED - NOT TEN, BUT NOW I UNDERSTAND THE CONFUSION.







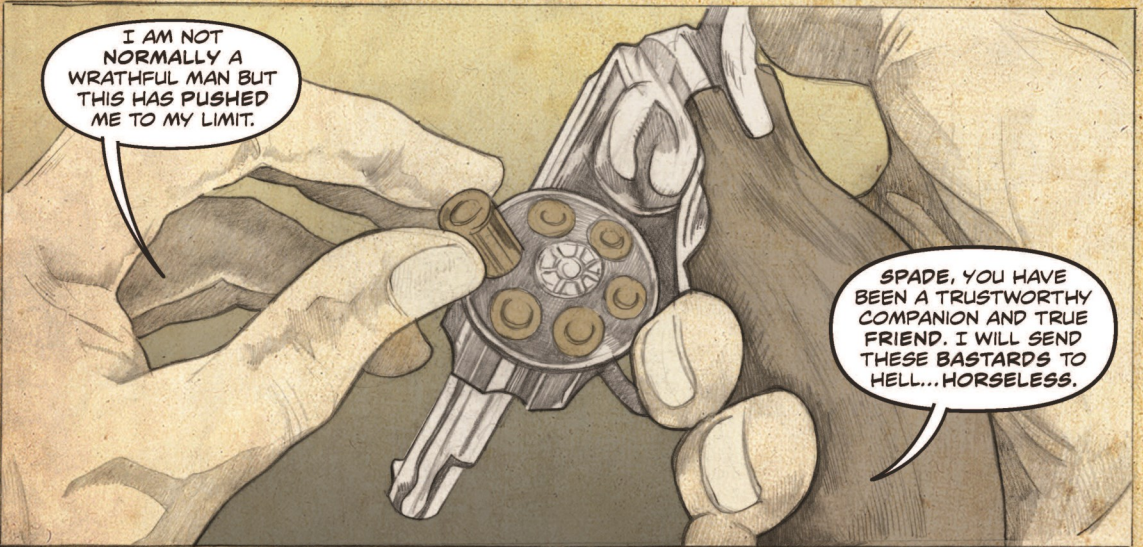




HE AINT GOIN' NOWHERE. COVER THE BACK!

SMITTY N' BERT IS SHOT!

SHOOTIN'S TOO GOOD FER'M!



I AM NOT NORMALLY A WRATHFUL MAN BUT THIS HAS PUSHED ME TO MY LIMIT.

SPADE, YOU HAVE BEEN A TRUSTWORTHY COMPANION AND TRUE FRIEND. I WILL SEND THESE BASTARDS TO HELL... HORSELESS.



IT SEEMS I WILL BE TRAVELING LIGHTER THAN EXPECTED.



DAMN IT RENO, WE'S GIVIN' YOU T'THE COUNT O' TEN TO GIT OUTTA THERE.



TEN.

FA-WOOOOOSH!

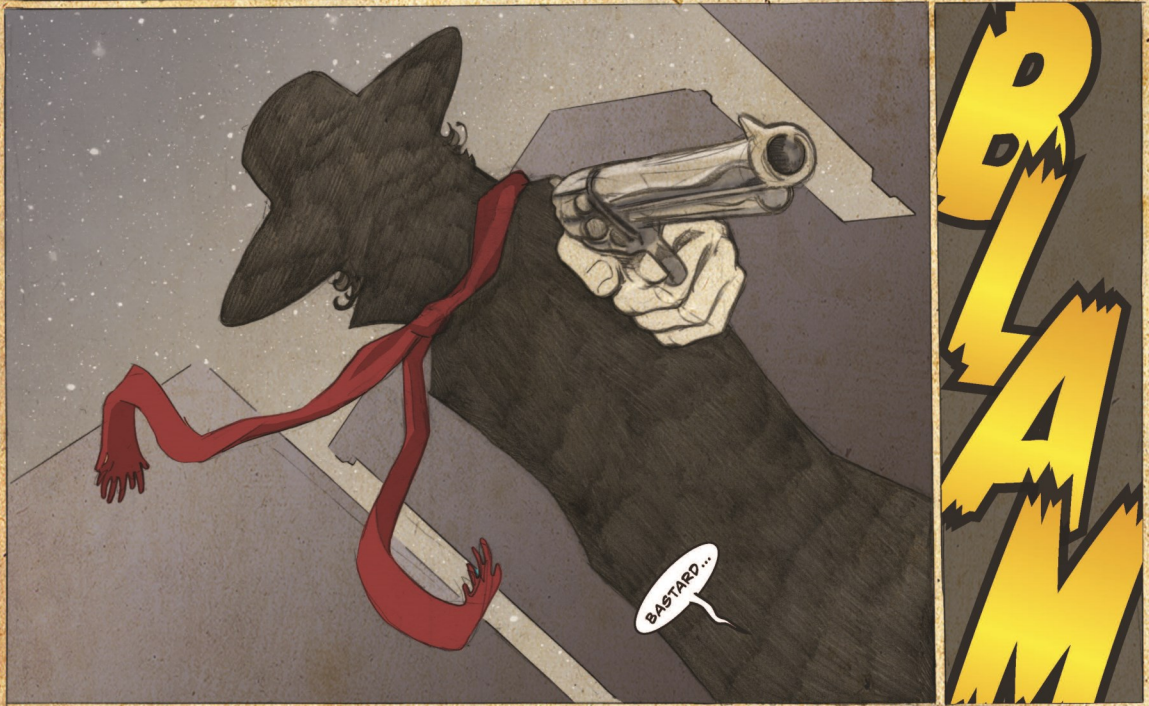
AAAHHH!















A TIMELY WITHDRAWAL SEEMS IN ORDER.

POW!
POW!
BANG!



ZIP
ZIP

KA-PWING
KA-PWING



COME ON DAMMIT!

DON'T LET THAT SUMFABITCH GET AWAY!







TO BE CONTINUED...

*A supernatural tale of the old west by
Jake, Kevin, and Matthew Minor.*



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TIPS 'N' TRICKS

Every issue I ask our featured creators for three tips for aspiring creators, so pay attention, folks!

Jessica Mack kicks us off with some pragmatic tips:



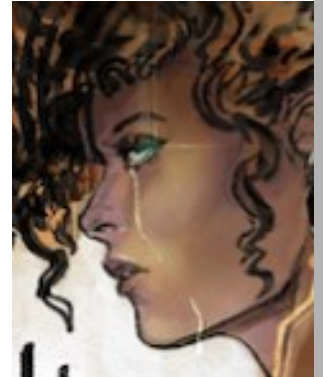
When you find resources that work for you, keep a master list of them for reference. E.g. Canva, Pexels, or even templates you find. This way it will be easier to find tools you need.

Study creatives who interest and inspire you. By studying their work and process, you can decide what parts you'd like to include in your own process.

Keep a notebook/journal nearby so you can immediately jot down your thoughts. I've definitely had good ideas that have flown away because I didn't write them down. Even if you don't immediately use the ideas, you can always go back to old journals to dig for gold and create new work.

Jamaal Harley gives us a mental health view:

- 1) Believe in yourself! What if your favorite artist, musician, author, etc didn't believe in themselves or gave up? Don't deprive your potential die hard fans your art!
- 2) Just do it! Just start, keep going, and one day it will be done. There's no perfect time to start. Work on what you can with what you have.
- 3) Have fun! Create the things you'd like to read, hear or see.



Marc Alan Fishman of Unshaven Comics gives us a good mix of the two:



1. Create. Every. Night. I don't care if all you can do is write one paragraph, or draw one face in one panel. Do it every night without excuse.
2. Accept that the first 100 panels you draw, write, color, ink, edit, and publish will be HOT GARBAGE. They have to be. Repetition is what will breed quality.
3. Stay positive and friendly. No one works with jerks. No one buys from jerks. No one thinks of inviting jerks out to the bar after the con

Matthew S Minor wants you to keep it grounded:

1. Be prepared to accept criticism wherever and however you can get it.

2. Good news or bad, if you can process it and use it, you will get better at doing what you do.

3. Don't be the next Jim Lee or Mike Mignola in style. Be them in attitude and work ethic. Be you in style.



For me, the biggest thing that's been helping me lately is the notion of systems and processes.

When you plan out your work, put it down on paper. Hold yourself accountable to what you write down, and whether you succeed or fail, analyze the results.

What isn't documented can't be improved.

I've been going around with a notebook for months, and it keeps my priorities top-of-mind, and prevents me from forgetting what I'm working on. The digital calendar and notes is nice, but there is a different response in your brain when you write something down. It doesn't have to be a special notebook, it doesn't have to be formatted any type of way—just use it to set you daily, weekly, and monthly goals, and write out a plan of action for each.

Deconstruct your goals to allow yourself a plan to get to them. If you want to draw a page a week, break that down to what you'll need to achieve it—how many hours, are there other things that need to be done to be out of your way to allow you to get that done, etc.

Systems and processes.

EDITORIAL

I have noticed a growing concern about the presence of major Publishers in the crowdfunding space. I wanted to try and approach this from a wider perspective.

To set up some expectations, when speaking of the majors I will be talking about Marvel, DC, Image, Boom Studios - all companies that are already well-represented on comic shelves. This is the mainstream. As much as we may want to say that image is an indie company, it is a major publisher.

These Publishers are massive companies, using crowdfunding platforms to mitigate their upfront risk and cost. They are essentially using Kickstarter to pre-sell these things that are going to get made regardless. Top Cow put out three volumes of the Witchblade collection hardcover to the fans directly through crowdfunding. I would put Top Cow in the list of mainstream Publishers because they've been around for 30 years at this point. However, in recent years they really haven't been producing a lot of books so I can even understand them being a little more hesitant to put in a bunch of money to order a bunch of books to then maybe not sell all of them. So to me, it makes even more sense even for them.

DC products should not be on Kickstarter.

Marvel products should not be on Kickstarter.

Hell, Image and Boom Studios really shouldn't even be on Kickstarter, especially when it comes to these massive franchises like Power Rangers and massive brand names like Keanu Reeves on projects.

They were likely however hoping to leech a bigger audience from people who are already on Kickstarter, and looking at other things. People who may not know about let's say Boom Studios but were on KS backing an indie campaign, and KS recommendation does the rest. The whole approach is just predatory on the indie market.

What I think we as creators need to do is start taking that tactic and utilizing it to the betterment of our campaigns. We need to be watching when a Top Cow or a Marvel or whoever is doing something in the crowdfunding space and then if you're launching or if you have an active campaign guess what you need to be doing you need to be putting in oh you like XYZ thing that Marvel is currently kickstarting well then you'll like my book. This should be added to your campaign text to feed the KS algorithm. If it's not that - like a horror or something that is a flip on a concept, you can basically neg the algorithm.

"{your book} isn't like your usual {major publisher campaign} story..."

In fact, I think creators need to have a reference point to allow people to understand what their book is without having to explain a ton of stuff. I'll use Rae Comics as an example because I know the most about Okemus. For instance if Boom was to start a new campaign for something Power Ranger related and TJ were about to start a campaign for something

Okemos related, he should be adding "if you like Power Rangers you will love Okemus!" to the body text if it's not already there. This way the KS recommendation algorithm will be able to relate those two books, and when someone's on KS to check out PR, he can leech some of that audience.

Really, this should not be exclusive to Kickstarter/crowdfunding spaces, but also for your sales pitch. I know TJ already relates to Power Rangers and Venom and other things when he talks about his books, so let me give you an example outside of comic books. When I saw the author of Iron Widow talking about her book she caught my undivided attention by saying "it's got Dragon Ball Z meets Gundam" right there I know there's superpowers there's fights there's action I'm in I'm in on that level so now she gets to take me the rest of the way and and bring me in with the actual story - which as a side note if you haven't read Iron Widow you absolutely should it's a fantastic book. But the point is that she used something recognizable to bring me in and I'm sure to bring in a bunch of other readers. Danny at IV Wall another great example, he uses Batman as a reference for Aceblade. if you like Batman in vigilante superheroics you will like Ace blade. I think more people need to do that so that as a brand new person being exposed to your property for the first time people can have a quick idea of what it is and can then decide if they want to learn more.

Most importantly, your customers should absolutely be able to learn more about your book! I have interacted with a few different creators recently about their lack of lore on their websites. Everybody should be doing character profiles! Everybody should be doing expanded lore! Anything to bring people into the world. Little story breakdowns, maybe Maps if there's a sprawling world of fictional locations, if there's royalty involved or any sort of family trees, etc. I want to see who the characters are, what this world looks like, how things fit together. I want to put myself in the space of this story so that I understand what's going on and also as a new reader as a new potential fan I want to be able to see where the single issue or single volume that I've picked up is in the world.

I have backed campaigns on the strength of the art alone or the strength of the pitch alone, that got me curious about and I ended up on their website, to just be faced with a storefront. There's not even the simplest thing: a one shot of the character with a bio - nothing. You have the art right? If it's a comic book you have images of these characters, whether it's from your turnarounds that you have for your references or whether it's sketches it doesn't really matter. I mean look at the Marvel handbooks back in the day they had literal stiff static turnarounds this is what this person looks like here is their background here is their power set that's all I need as someone who is looking for more information and lore about the thing that I'm reading or about to read. It doesn't have to be incredibly complicated, it doesn't have to be a two-page dissertation on who the character is and what their true deepest motivations are, obviously leave something for people to discover in the story.

Let me swing it back to the beginning of this - imagine if Marvel were to decide to do a D-Man collected edition on KS. You might think that's RI-

DICULOUS, but I bet you it would fund. And not only fund, it would make bank. Because there is TONS of lore and memes and all sorts of shit on the internet for people to look into the character and get interested. I bet you that D-Man would find his fandom, and that book would be successful.

Support your book with information and content across your website, social media, and all available platforms. You're (probably) not putting out a monthly book. Let people spend that time between releases diving into the universe to keep themselves excited about the story.

That's how you build word-of-mouth, and ultimately how you build a true fan base.

I'll talk more about your true fans next issue.

-Dalibor

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!

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