



FEBRUARY 2023
VOLUME 2 ISSUE NO.2



**I CHEATED THE MOB:
IT DIDN'T WORK OUT**

WELCOME TO THE SHIT SHOW

We've got another fun one, with a story as bleak as the month of February. Let just call it our stab at a parable with the lesson being, "don't gamble with the mafia's money."

We're also pleased to bring back another Artist Spotlight. This time we're featuring the super stylistic and original artwork of [Jeremy Daniels](#), who's new book in the Tidal Waves series, "Dial 'D' for Doppleganger" is available now.

And as [Kevin Killeen of KMOX in St. Louis](#)' Dad once said, "If you can live through February, you'll live another year." And with that, we look forward to March.

Cheers,

Matt and John
February 2023

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THE HOUSE ALWAYS WINS

By P.A. O'Neil



The alarm blared like a foghorn, announcing the first day of Alan Sheffield's new life. His bags were packed. He did that in a drunken stupor the night before. Getting out of bed and onto his feet, he stubbed his toe on the luggage laying in the middle of his bedroom—which was also his living room, and office—it was a studio apartment. The man lived in squalor.

He went to the bathroom to wash the sleep from his eyes. Turned on the switch. No light. He forgot he didn't switch out the lightbulb. Alan took a dump in the dark, flushed, brushed his teeth, and bounced from the one-room flophouse he called home for the past three years; taking the back door so his landlord Harry wouldn't see him. He didn't pay the rent this month, and he wasn't going to.

It wasn't that Alan was broke, he was actually flush with cash. But his life had been in a downward spiral for quite some time. It's hard to pinpoint exactly when his life started on its downward course, but the shit officially hit the fan about two weeks ago.

About two weeks ago:

The Vikings were playing the Packers in a Monday Night game and Alan was feeling good about the Vikings. It was the same gut feeling that never failed him, he always won when he had that gut feeling. Of course, the gut feeling usually had something substantial to back it up. A couple of players point shaving on a basketball team or a ref who was down on his luck and in someone's pocket.

Alan was a good gambler, and an even better cheater, always working the angles to ensure his winnings. But Alan was suffering a losing streak and that losing streak had not subsided. The thing that separates the gamblers with problems from the people who gamble is the fact that the gamblers with problems are on a losing streak. But it's a catch-22, what's he gonna do? Not gamble? Then he can't get his money back! He deals with stocks and investments for a living, that's gambling too! What's he just going to put his money in a savings account like a good boy? This bet on the Vikings would end all that; bring him back in the black. Besides, he felt *really good* about this upset.

Unfortunately, the Vikings weren't on the same page and the upset never happened—Alan Sheffield was in the hole for 30 large with some people you don't want to owe money to. \$30,000 plus the 10% vig, *he couldn't even afford the fucking*

vig!

First, he pawned his computer, which got him a grand. He gave that money to Tony Baletta who only informed him that if he didn't have the entirety of the money the next time the two saw each other, Sheffield would never walk again. But the thousand dollars served its purpose, it gave Alan time.

It didn't matter to Baletta that Alan was one of the many accountants for the mob, that he took dirty money and worked wonders to make it clean and IRS friendly come April 15th. If he just did that; collected his cut and went home, everything would be fine. But it was his gambling problem that got him in with these people in the first place. It's what they do. They see how they can bleed you dry before they offering a helping hand.

The way Alan cooked the books for the mob was this: Money is sold on the street in a cash transaction for something illegal like drugs, gambling debts, sex, etc. Whatever it is, TurboTax doesn't have a section where these transactions would qualify. So the illegal money goes into a business on a bogus transaction. One of the mobs' cash-only pizza parlors sold more pizzas than they had dough, or a mob run strip club or dive bar "sold" ten cases worth of vodka on the books, a laundromat business was humming as if there was a lice infestation in town. Whatever it is you put money from the street into a cash-only or mostly cash business.

This money is not clean, it's grey and stained and needs another run in the washing machine. The next step is putting money from those businesses and investing that into something a little more ambitious, a shopping mall, a shipping company, whatever it is, it's now two steps removed from the street. Each of these businesses is also making money out the back door and those financial gains go back to stage one.

These cleaner proceeds from those businesses in stage two then go into something even more grandiose. They go into major corporations. They buy office buildings throughout Morton City and beyond, one that you may work in. Casinos in Macau, Vegas, and Europe are funded with this money. Startups in Silicon Valley, movies in Los Angeles, golf courses in Florida, and stock companies on Wall Street are funded with this money. And the beautiful thing is, at this point, the money is cleaner than a bottle of Clorox and *it's making more clean money* in return.

Alan had a plan to take a little bit from one of these clean money making schemes, a bogus company that sells pump and dump stocks from other bogus mob fronted shell companies. Just one of such scams he's been a part of through the years.

Alan called his "broker" Chet and told him he wanted to sell the entirety of his bogus stocks from the Brickbriar account he helped the Jimmy Grimaldi crew build up.

"You can't sell those, that'll fuck everything up," advised Chet.

"It's fine I talked to Jimmy about it. I'm making the shares look more attainable, then we put the money back in and drive up demand again." Alan assured Chet. It was all bullshit but it sounded good. By the end of the call, Alan Sheffield was a millionaire.

Alan's first act as a newly minted millionaire was to call his girl Heather to tell her he wasn't going to make it to dinner, then he hung up on her forever.

He knew he could never come back to Morton City ever again, Jimmy "The Grim Reaper" Grimaldi was going to come after him when he found out three things; Alan's name, the fact that Alan skipped out on paying one of Jimmy's soldiers, and that he dumped all of the stock in one of Jimmy's shell companies. Jimmy would lose millions—so, yeah, the Grim Reaper was going to come after Alan when he found that out.

The next stop was at Dick's Auto Body on Chandler Avenue in a dumpy part of town. Dick was dead and his son Arnold was running the place into the ground. The only way the shop was still afloat was through selling parts from stolen cars. He might as well have had "Dick's Son's Chop Shop" on the sign.

Stolen cars went through here on their way to Eastern Europe and Africa by way of the Port of Morton City. Some still sporting "My Daughter is an honor roll student at Houghton Elementary" bumper stickers as they're sold to people in Nigeria.

Alan thought Arnold was slow, he thought this of most people to be honest. It was a serious flaw of Alan's, a superiority complex of sorts. Arnold wasn't just a decent mechanic and bad businessman, he was well versed in knowing who you could fuck with and who you couldn't.

When Dick was still alive and Arnold was a young boy running around the shop, he witnessed

Jimmy Grimaldi put jumper cables to another man's balls to "give him a jump." In Arnold's eyes, Jimmy was not a man to be fucked with.

Alan on the other hand, was a nerd with questionable morals, he wasn't fooling Arnold in the least. Arnold knew the score once Alan danced around his intentions, asking for "A clean car that doesn't stand out."

"Someone's after you huh? I don't want to know. You want a quick getaway or an incognito one?"

"Inconspicuous is what I'm after right now."

Arnold nodded and whispered something in Spanish to one of the mechanics who worked in the shop. The mechanic ran off and came back with a five year old Toyota Corolla. "Not too old, not too new, not too pretty, well you get the idea." They haggled for about 5 minutes but Alan had no leg to stand on and he got bent over for the fucking thing.

After the car purchase, Alan wanted to head over to The Blarney Stone to get the bad taste out of his mouth for getting fucked so hard on that sale. The Blarney was in the Hungry Hill part of town, where the Irish still dominated. He'd be safe, he wouldn't be near the Italians and Jimmy Grimaldi.

He parked across from The Blarney and walked towards the building with the puking leprechaun sign, it was a classy joint, he was sure as shit gonna miss it.

The place was busier than usual. Everyone was watching an Irish Premier League game—Galway United versus Cork City. Alan sat at the bar next to a guy in a green Cork City jersey thinking "I'll do one." Four beers and a couple of shots later, Alan was ready to leave town. Galway was beating up on Cork City pretty bad and it was gonna get rough, you could smell a fight coming.

Pat the bartender was on his side of the bar getting a pint glass for an old guy, "Hey Pat, I'll have the check now." Alan yelled in Patty's direction.

"We've got this one friend." It was Grimaldi. He put his hand on Alan's shoulder. Alan's asshole puckered right up.

He tried to make a run for it, but Tony Baletta grabbed Alan by the ear and smashed his head on the top of the bar. Jimmy followed the blow with a Jameson bottle that knocked Alan out



One of the old timers made a joke about using the Bushmills instead next time; Alan would have liked that one but he was out cold.

A few hours later:

When Alan woke up in the warehouse he had a cinderblock on his lap and could smell the ocean. His road trip ended before it could start.

One bare lightbulb lit the industrial room Alan was sitting in. He could hear seagulls squawking above and around, it reminded him of the movie *The Birds*.

From the corner of the dark room Alan could hear a raspy, "Good morning Cinderella." He looked in the direction of the voice and saw the cherry glow from a cigar next to the smaller glow of a cigarette, slightly higher. It looked like a cross-eyed monster's gaze.

"You mean Sleepin' Beauty." Said the smaller red light.

"I meant what I meant." Said the guy with the cigar, Alan knew both of these voices, they were in Baletta's crew. The one with the cigar was Paulie Whispers, he sounded like a frog with a tracheotomy in church. The other voice was Bobby Harris, tall and thin with a long pointed nose and beady eyes set close together. He looked like a Picasso painting.

Harris called for their boss, Grimaldi who was outside the room on the phone talking to his wife. A fog horn from a tugboat went off in the harbor but otherwise, it was just them and the seagulls. Pitch black, no stars.

"You know who I am right?" Said Grimaldi.

"Yeah." *Obviously.*

"You know what I do to people who steal from me?"

"Yeah." Alan's mouth was papery dry, he could only muster the courage to mutter one-word, mono-syllabic answers. Any more syllables and he'd stutter or worse, offend the already offended Grimaldi.

"Why the fuck would you steal from me? Do you think you're smarter than me?"

"I don't nuh-know. No."

"You don't know if you're smarter than me?"

"No."

"You think you can steal from me and get away with it?"

"No."

"Why the fuck did you steal from me

then?"

"It must be one of them suicide by cop type things." Said Harris from the back.

"Shut the fuck up back there! I'm interrogatin' our accountant."

"Yeah, besides, we're no cops." Said Paulie Whispers.

"Suicide by wise-guys then."

"I-said-shut-the-fuck-up." He turned back to Alan. "If it was a smaller amount, like let's say fifty-thousand dollars, I'd just kill you and take the loss. But according to our friend the stockbroker you stole eight million dollars from me." He paused, took a deep breath like he was trying not to lose it. It didn't work. "EIGHT. MILLION!" He said the word million like a monster truck rally announcer, but less fun.

"I want my eight million dollars plus an additional eight million before the first of November. Or else you're not going to see the second."

• • •

Before Grimaldi dropped Alan off in Webster Square, naked and tied up to a chair in the middle of October, they beat the shit out of him. By the time Alan found some pants he decided there was only one thing he could do, meet up with Pete Garney, the closest thing Alan had to a hoodlum friend, and see if they could come up with any ways to make some cash.

Four days ago:

"I've been wanting an excuse to rob the Julia Elliot Museum of Art for the past two years." Pete was thrilled to the gills that Alan came to him wanting some help getting money quickly.

"Why do you need an excuse for taking millions of dollars worth of art?"

"I guess I'm just a procrastinator. Besides, stealing's the easy part, it's getting rid of the art that's a bitch."

"It can't be that easy to steal a Rembrandt."

After Pete gave Alan the backstory on JE-MOA's security system, he realized just how easy it was to steal a Rembrandt.

Two years ago:

Pete arrived at the address of the party. He was promised there would be plenty of drugs and women, but they must have given him the wrong address, it was a museum.

Undeterred, as he always was at the prospect of sex and LSD, Pete walked up to the

museum where he could hear faint music playing. He walked to the back of the museum and saw a guy smoking a butt next to a propped open door. The man was shirtless, had long strawberry blond hair, and a week-old beard, he looked like a white Jesus.

"Come on in man, to the house of knowledge."

"*Thank you, Jesus.*" Thought Pete as he walked through the door to the security office of a major art museum after hours.

Whoever the hell that guy was he let Pete into the Julia Elliot Museum of Art after hours where he befriended the security guard, Rich, who threw the party. He dropped some acid, starred at a Van Gogh painting for two hours, and had sex with a girl from Morton University next to a John Singer Sargent painting while she wore the tiara of some long dead Swedish monarch.

After that party, Pete would stop by to visit Rich unannounced. Rich told him how to disengage the alarm system so he wouldn't have to get up and do it himself. They would sit around, smoke grass, and have the occasional party.

Pete cased the place for two years, figured out exactly what was worth stealing, and how to do it. He just never knew where to fence the shit. But if they were on this mission from Grimaldi—Alan never told Pete *why* they had to get money for Grimaldi—*he'd* know someone who could sell priceless art on the black market.

Two days ago:

The meeting took place in Pete's apartment which was a mishmash of furniture he got from Goodwill in one unkempt living room. The coffee table had a bong, chips, salsa, and guac—nobody touched the chips.

Frankie and Lefty both came in around the same time. Lefty was a short, wiry guy with a days worth of stubble on his chin. Frankie was a shade under six feet and always had an unlit cigarette around his mouth. He quit four years ago and he credited the unlit cigarette as his trick to quitting cold turkey. Habitually he would take drags from it, the tactile feeling of the cigarette in his hands and on his lips was all he needed to resist the urge.

Next in was Kurt, a no-nonsense professional criminal with hands the size of hubcaps and a permanent scowl. With the Morton City underworld being a fairly tight-knit community, these men all knew and worked with each other. If Kurt

was on a heist, you at least knew you were with some competent people. The same can't be said for the next guy who walked in.

Mikey was a nineteen-year-old kid who Pete supplied with weed and alcohol in return for letting Pete — a 37-year-old man — party with Mikey's college friends at Morton U. He walked in with his nose buried in his iPhone, thumbs moving furiously.

"Who the fuck is this?" Inquired Kurt.

"That's Mikey. He'll be the getaway driver."

"He's driving the car? He looks like he just got his learner's permit."

"Hey man. I'd be nice if I was you," said Mikey. Trying to act tough in a punch the biggest guy in the prison yard on the first day kind of way.

"Listen you fuckin' punk. This *is* me being nice. So shut the fuck up and go back to your Facebooks."

Alan saw that this meeting was getting out of hand. And he only had a few days to earn Grimaldi sixteen million dollars or else he was gonna be worm food. Like a true gambler, he had put all his eggs in this basket and he couldn't afford to have any holes in said basket this early in the game. "Guys. Let's be civil alright? We have a plan that can net us all fifteen million dollars, each." He looked around the room and then spotted Mikey staring up at him open-mouthed. "Except for Mikey, you drive the getaway car, you get a little less."

"What the fuck?"

"You! Shut-the-fuck-up!" Shouted Frankie. Pete turned on the radio, he didn't want anyone listening in on the conversation.

"How do we do it?"

Alan left the floor to Pete, "It'll be a walk in the park. The security guys'll probably be stoned when we show up." He then told them about the lax security at JEMOA, and the time he had sex with a girl in a Swedish Monarch's tiara in front of a priceless painting.

Same day—Across town:

Bill Hanson was an ex-police officer, coaxed into early retirement for use of excessive force. It was on the news, you probably saw it. He was kind of famous in a bad way for a few months. To put it bluntly, if you wanted to see someone go from zero to a hundred pretty quickly, you just had to tell "Wild" Bill Hanson that Black Lives Mattered.

**It was the Bay of Pigs of heists,
a failure of epic proportions**



He walked into the security office, disgusted. One of the men was napping, that was probably the guy whose job he was replacing.

"Are you Rich?"

"I wish. I'm dead broke."

"I mean your name, are you Rich?"

"Yeah, man. It's a joke."

"Chief Masterson wants to see you."

Rich was confused, he never heard his boss called by his title before. Everyone just called him Art. "What does Arthur want to see me for?"

"I believe today is your last day."

"Bummer." Rich left the security office for the last time.

Bill's new partner, Keith, showed Bill his new locker and got him set up with the start paperwork. He took Bill's picture for his ID badge and made the connection. "Say, aren't you the guy who killed that helpless black kid? I thought you were in jail."

"I was exonerated by a jury of my peers."

"Whatever man, here's your badge. It will get you through most doors. Except the basement, that door's broken—so we just leave it open."

Bill looked down at his "badge" it wasn't the same as the brass badge he had with the Morton City Police Department for the last fifteen years.

Three hours ago:

To put it succinctly, it was the Bay of Pigs of heists, a failure of epic proportions. Wild Bill came out of nowhere with guns blazing, hitting Frankie in the gut and putting one in Lefty's pumper. That's when things started to go south.

Pete said it would be a walk in the park, no problems. He had no knowledge that Rich's replacement was a very bored and very pissed off "Wild" Bill Hanson.

Hanson pinned the crew down in the corner with a steady barrage of gunfire. When someone would lift their head over the case to see where the ex-cop crouched, a round would tell them to stay put. Several of those rounds ended up in priceless paintings and one smashed an ornate Chinese vase from the Ming Dynasty. When it came to "protecting the artifacts" Wild Bill would have been better off letting this intrepid band of art thieves go, instead of smashing the collection to shit.

Kurt had seen enough, Frankie was losing a lot of blood and he did not want to go back to prison, especially not because of some security guard. He thought of Ben Stiller in *Night at the Museum*

and got really angry, thinking "Ben fucking Stiller is going to get me arrested. Ben fucking Stiller!"

Enraged he crouched and ran left, drawing fire from—in his mind—"Ben Fucking Stiller," stopped when he got behind the tiara the co-ed was wearing when she fucked Pete two years ago, and popped one in the guard's head with his PK380. Blood splattered on the painting behind him, turning it from a still life to an abstract expressionist piece. He punched the glass case the tiara was in and grabbed it. Not knowing he could have just opened it, security systems at the JEMOA being so lax.

With Wild Bill now very much dead, they took whatever trinkets were laying around, slashed a Rembrandt, Degas, and Van Gogh out of the frames with box cutters, rolled them up, and ran. They came in as five armed robbers and left as three-and-a-half gangsters with one murder under their belts.

Frankie used Pete as his crutch, they looked like two drunks stumbling out of a bar with guns. The getaway car was long gone, Mikey hit the gas as soon as the guns started blasting. That's what you get when your driver's fresh outta high school. They left Lefty at the scene, this wasn't Afghanistan and they weren't Marines.

Kurt ran to the traffic signal just outside the building, the street was desolate at this time of night. The only person there was a pudgy kid in a beat up hatch-back Honda staring at the scene not knowing he was about to be a part of it. Kurt relieved him of his shitty car, he didn't even need to waive the gun, being 6'3" with a linebacker's frame has its advantages in automotive theft.

They all hopped in the beat-up Honda, Pete took the wheel, Kurt rode shotgun, Frankie was tossed in the trunk, and the rest piled in back. Pete tried to take off as fast as possible, but there was a third pedal, which confused him and he stalled.

"Shit... It's a manual."

"You can't drive stick?"

"This is America."

"For fucks sake, move over." Kurt and Pete switched positions and Kurt drove them to a house outside of town he saw on AirBnB.

One hour ago—In the safe house:

"That was that cop that killed that guy!"

"Yeah, his name was Lefty. He killed Lefty."

"No. Before. When he was an actual cop. He killed that black kid. Greg Wallace."

Pete stared at Alan blankly, he didn't stay very up-to-date on current events.

Kurt piped up, "Yeah I remember that. The cop murdered some black kid and they had those protests and all those white kids burned down some black owned business on MacArthur Avenue."

"Yeah, something like that."

They were holed up in a very nice two bedroom craftsman home decorated by a family who did a lot of living, laughing, and loving—according to the decor. The family who was staying at this particular Air BnB as guests were not laughing nor loving the situation they were in. Huddled together, bound by extension cords, they just wanted to live.

Speaking of living, Frankie was bleeding out on the futon in the living room. The sight of him pissed Kurt off to no end. He kept muttering "Ben Stiller" and "Night at the Museum." Pete thought Kurt was requesting a movie to watch instead of the news—which was all about them—but he couldn't figure out the Roku and stopped his search.

"We've got to get him to a hospital."

"We can't get him to a hospital. We're wanted for murder. We killed a cop."

"We killed an ex-cop everyone hates. They might give us the key to the fucking city."

"I don't think that's how it works."

"Go to Grimaldi! Give him the shit to fence and he can hook us up with some black market doctor."

Alan really didn't want to go to Grimaldi yet. He didn't know if the stolen artifacts were worth sixteen million. And he still had another day to hit the lottery or something. But he looked at Frankie and immediately thought of the movie *ET* when the titular character was dying. Frankie kind of looked like that, a ghastly pale, that was both inhuman and upsetting. He knew he had to go see Grimaldi and try to save Frankie.

Right now

It was an odd sensation, staring down the barrel of a gun. Alan took every minute movement as a harbinger of death and when death didn't come he was relieved but only slightly.

"I asked for sixteen million dollars, not fucking finger paintings."

"A Van Gogh, a Degas, and a Rembrandt is not exactly a finger painting."

"I ASKED FOR \$16 MILLION. NOT FUCKIN' FINGER PAINTINGS."

Grimaldi inched the gun closer to Alan's forehead. "I didn't ask you to talk wise."

"I didn't mean to."

"Don't fucking talk."

"I mean, I —"

Alan Sheffield's luck had officially run out. Grimaldi didn't even mean to kill him. Talk about bad luck. It was purely instinctual. Grimaldi didn't like this guy. And he *really* didn't like the heat he attracted to Grimaldi or his crew. So when Alan said "I mean, I," Grimaldi's fingers worked on impulse and shot the man in the forehead. Alan dropped like a felled tree. Grimaldi looked at his gun and thought, "*did I do that?*" It was like the gun did the thinking for him.

He wanted to use this kid to steal more money for him, he was now the proud owner of three priceless works of art and a tiara from Sweden. Not a bad haul.

Alan laid there, legs curled. He kind of looked like a shrimp. Which fit, because he was going to sleep with the shrimp and other creatures of the sea. Paulie Whispers and Bobby Harris wrapped him up in a tarp, threw a cinderblock on his lap, and took Alan out into the harbor in a rowboat.

Attention ladies!

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wants to
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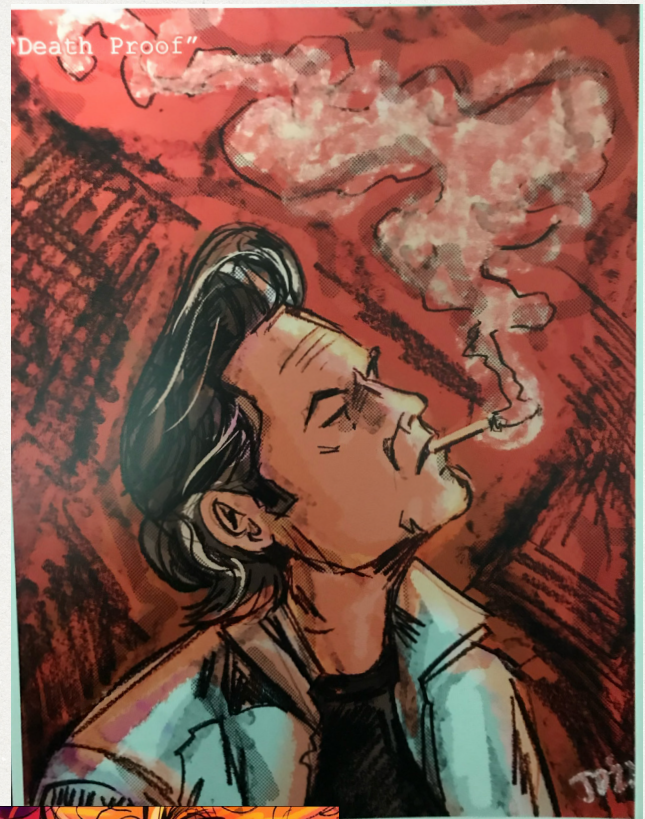
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ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: JEREMY DANIELS



Valentine



Death Proof

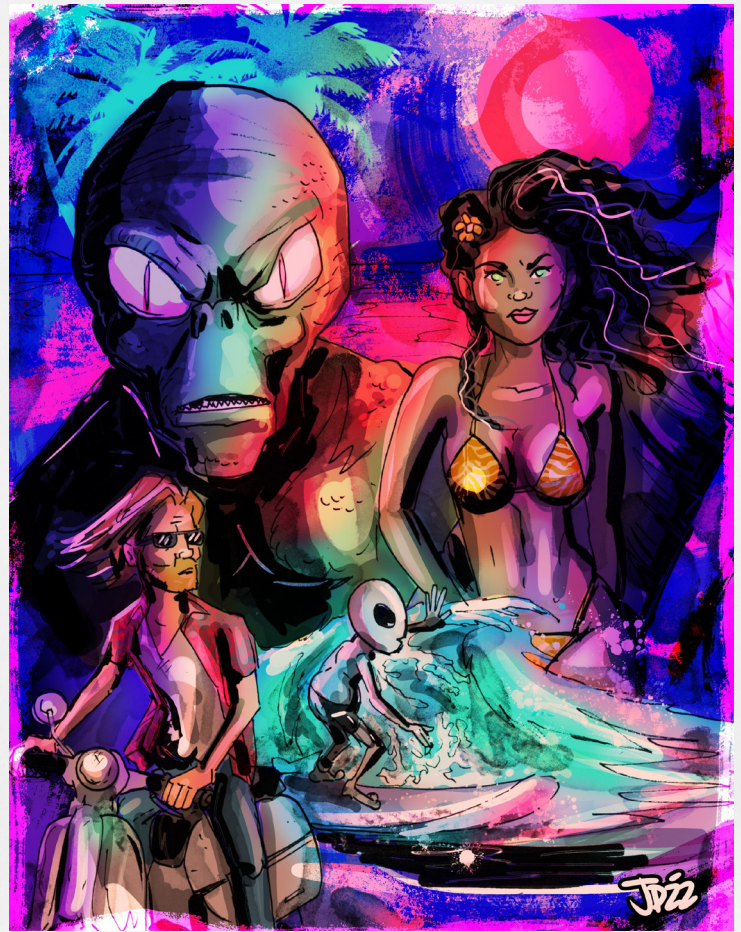
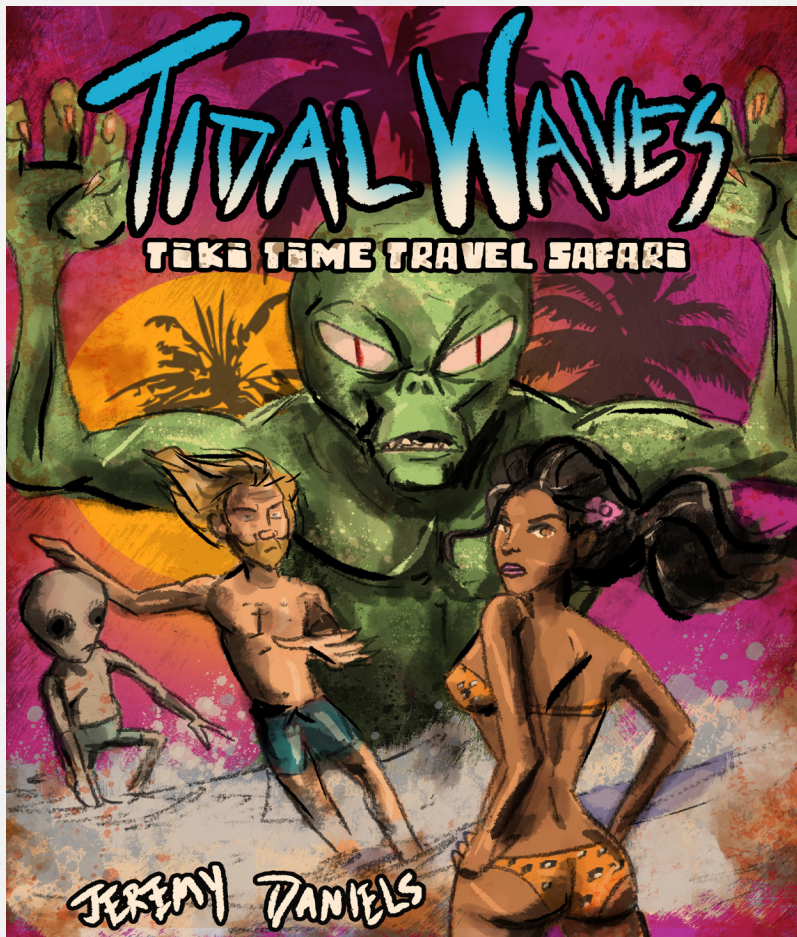


Mixtape

There aren't many artists out there who match our eclectic style. But Jeremy Daniels, a cartoonist out of Michigan, has been pumping out a bunch of art that fit the American Pulp's ethos to a T.

We caught up with Jeremy to discuss his style, influences, and his next book in the *Tidal Waves* series, *Dial 'D' for Doppelganger*. Enjoy.

You can check out more of Jeremy's work on Instagram - [@jeremyddaniels](https://www.instagram.com/jeremyddaniels) and you can purchase his comics and more at, jeremydanielscomics.bigcartel.com



First, I want to talk about the “Tidal Waves” series. Could you give us a quick logline description of the series?

Tidal Waves is a story about Warren, an aging surfer and alien abductee who befriends an alien. As the story unfolds, he learns he is not an extra-terrestrial at all but a time-traveling, evolved human from the very distant future.

And a a logline on the new Tidal Waves book: “Dial ‘D’ for Doppelganger”

Dial ‘D’ for Doppelganger is the third book in the *Tidal Waves* series. It will take Warren and the alien across multiple time-periods, the future and the past as they are pursued by a mysterious and dangerous doppelganger of Warren.

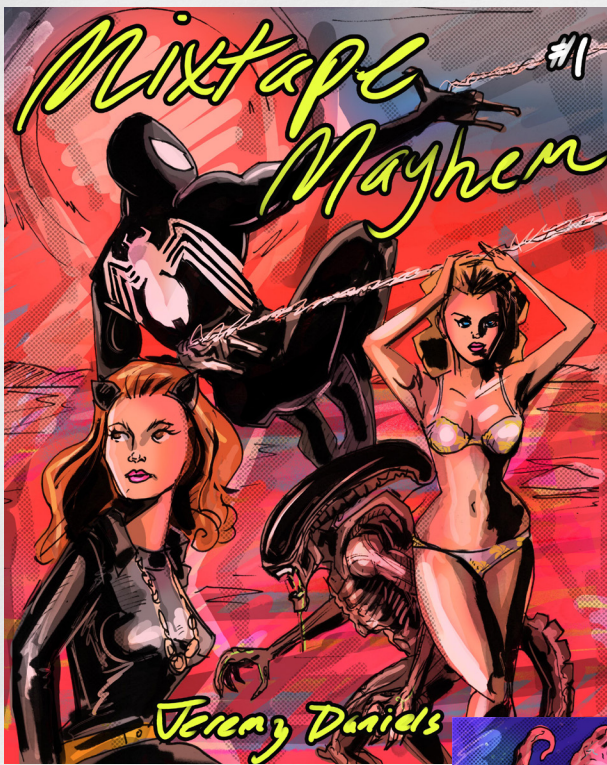
It’s inspired largely by my love of David Lynch films and wanting to infuse the *Tidal Waves* stories with darker visual material and pulling from more of a neo-noir, pulp aesthetic.



Was this story with Warren and Alien always going to be a series or were you just planning on a one-off story with the first book?

I had no intentions of making more stories with these character after the end of the first Tidal Waves. That story is kind of about aging, and taking Warren on this journey, and when it was over I thought that was it. But as time went on, and after completing a few other larger comics projects, I found myself thinking more and more about those characters. The previous book, "Tiki Time Travel Safari," and this newer one are meant to do similar things as far as telling complete, what I feel are satisfying, stories while also taking those characters and bending them as far as I can by putting them into different environments and situations.

A big part of the original Tidal Waves is taking alien abduction lore and flipping it around. This is how I approach genre elements in a lot of my comics, where I take the established idea and try and make it fresh or interesting again. A lot of books 2 and 3 are building on the idea established in book 1, that there are no aliens and there is nowhere else to go after earth. That might be the idea that connects them, but ultimately these are meant to be humorous and deeply human stories that touch on some bigger themes.



TMNT Mixtape

Another project you have is your Mixtape Mayhem art zines. It looks to me like you're doing something similar we do with our creative process, we call it "crop rotation" where we work on something different to give our minds a break on a longer form story or script. Do you find the work you're putting together for Mixtape Mayhem help come up with ideas for Tidal Waves?

Absolutely. Part of what I've been trying to do more and what Mixtape Mayhem represents is trying to be consciously unconscious and just drawing what I feel like and it's kind of about keeping myself engaged and seeing where that goes. Sometimes I like to just draw, and that's what those sketchbooks are. Mixtape Mayhem is really about trying to create an overall aesthetic and vibe. Tidal Waves is a huge part of that but I'm also a fan of pin-up art and I love movies, music and comics. It's really about trying to fold all of that together into something unique and give people a sense of what kind of work I like to do.



Channeling McGinnis



Robert McGinnis

Your art is very distinct. What would you say your art style is? (In one of your videos you said, Vintage/Retro Pop Art)

Yeah, something like that. I primarily think of myself as a cartoonist but I don't have a name for my style. I'm never trying to replicate someone else's style, it's the best compliment when someone tells me that everything I draw looks distinctly mine.

Could you describe your process. Do you start kind of doodling and then if you like it you scan and throw it in Photoshop?

That's pretty much it. I start traditional. I do rough pencil sketches and then lightbox the inks or final pencils and then scan it into Photoshop and go from there. I think of my colored digital work as trying to meld the traditional with the digital. I use a lot of un-conventional inking tools as well. The tools really have a lot to do with the style.

I love seeing your side-by-side reference photos. (And it'd be cool to show some of these in the magazine). Artists like, Frazetta, McGinnis, Joe Jusko, and Vargas. Who else would you say you're influenced by?

I'd point to Bruce Timm and Darwyn Cooke as some of my most obvious influences. I think growing up with Timm's animation specifically cemented some building blocks of what my style would become, but I'm always looking at other stuff. I like to do those art studies, to try and get whatever I can from the greats and incorporate it into my work - but I'm never trying to fully emulate them.



Vargas



Excitable Boy, Warren Zevon



Are there any relatively unknown artists, comics, or writers out there you think our readers should check out?

There are lots of them. There are a lot of indie cartoonists that I've discovered online, primarily from Instagram over the past few years.

Some of my favorite comics I've bought were self-published/crowd-sourced. Jasper Jubenvil's *Dynamite Diva* book and Matt King's *Tales to Enlighten* collection were some of my favorites.

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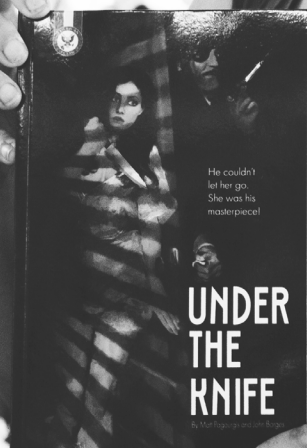


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