

WRITTEN BY

AARON HOWELL

THE FRONT LINES OF GOOD TIMES CH. 3 "ACROPOLIS NOW"

JAKE FAIRLY

HELLO. AND THANK YOU FOR PICKING UP THIS 3RD BOOK IN THE FRONT LINES OF GOOD TIMES COMIC SERIES. SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED SINCE THE LAST BOOK THAT I CAN SCARCELY BELIEVE IT AND TO BE PERFECTLY HONEST, I DON'T KNOW IF I COULD HANDLE SUCH AN INTENSELY EVENTFUL PERIOD OF TIME BETWEEN THIS AND THE NEXT BOOK. THOUGH THE FIRST DRAFT OF THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN NEARLY TWO YEARS AGO, IT HAS SINCE BEEN COLORED AND GIVEN ADDITIONAL DEPTH BY THESE EVENTS WHICH HAVE OCCURRED OVER THE PAST YEAR.

FIRST, MY SON, RANSOM HOWELL TICE WAS BORN ON MARCH 31ST 2019 IN WHAT WAS EASILY THE GREATEST DAY OF MY ENTIRE LIFE. TO EVEN ATTEMPT TO ASSIGN LANGUAGE AND BREVITY TO WHAT I WITNESSED THAT DAY AND HOW IT HAS TRANSFORMED OUR LIVES WOULD NOT DO IT JUSTICE. FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS FORWARD, I WILL SIMPLY SAY THAT IT HAS GIVEN ME A NEW DIMENSION OF LOVE, HONOR AND RESPECT FOR MY WIFE, SARA AND OPENED UP PARTS OF MY HEART I DIDN'T KNOW EXISTED. IF YOU WANT TO HEAR THE WHOLE SAPPY STORY, I RECOMMEND CHECKING OUT EPISODE #051 OF THE MF PODCAST WHERE I GO INTO GREAT DETAIL ABOUT MY SON'S BIRTH.

SECOND, PARKER LEFT THE BAND. PERHAPS ONE DAY WE WILL TELL THE WHOLE STORY, BUT FOR NOW WE'LL JUST SAY THAT IT WAS A BIG, NASTY, DESTRUCTIVE SITUATION. NAMES WERE CALLED (AS WERE LAWYERS), THREATS WERE MADE, SONGS WERE PULLED FROM THE NEW ALBUM AND A NEARLY LIFELONG FRIENDSHIP CAME TO A BITTER END. PARKER PLAYED IN OUR BAND FOR SEVERAL YEARS, BUT WE HAD KNOWN, LOVED AND RESPECTED HIM FOR MANY YEARS PRIOR. I OFFICIATED HIS WEDDING FOR GOD'S SAKE. IT WAS EASILY THE MOST ACRIMONIOUS FALLING OUT I HAVE EVER EXPERIENCED WITH A FRIEND. AS MUCH AS I WOULD LIKE TO THINK THERE IS POTENTIAL FOR RECONCILIATION DOWN THE ROAD, IT DOES NOT SEEM, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT, THAT IT IS IN THE CARDS. TIME HEALS ALL WOUNDS. THEY SAY, BUT WOUNDS THIS DEEP WILL REQUIRE A VERY LONG TIME TO HEAL.

THIRD, AT THE TIME OF THIS WRITING, IT HAS BEEN NEARLY FOUR WEEKS SINCE MY BROTHER, BRIAN STUART HOWELL, SUDDENLY PASSED AWAY. YOU MAY KNOW BRIAN FROM HIS ONE TOUR WITH US FILLING IN ON DRUMS OR DOING MERCH FOR US IN OKLAHOMA CITY OR YOU MIGHT JUST KNOW HIM BECAUSE HE WAS A WONDERFUL HUMAN BEING AND YOU WERE HIS FRIEND. THIS HAS BEEN THE MOST AGONIZING MOMENT IN THE ENTIRETY OF OUR FAMILY HISTORY AND EASILY THE SADDEST TIME OF MY LIFE. EVERY BREAKUP, REJECTION, FAILURE, LOSS AND ADVERSITY IN MY LIFE UP TO THIS POINT PALES IN COMPARISON. IT HAS TAUGHT ME, MORE THAN ANYTHING, THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GRASPING AT ATTACHMENT AND TRUE, PROFOUND GRIEF. BRIAN SHOULD HAVE LIVED TO BE 100 YEARS OLD. HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN "CRAZY UNCLE BRIAN" TO MY SON, HE SHOULD HAVE FOUND LOVE, FATHERED CHILDREN AND SPENT HIS LONG LIFE PLAYING DRUMS AND MAKING PEOPLE LAUGH. HE SHOULD HAVE, BUT HE WILL NEVER HAVE THAT CHANCE. AT THIS MOMENT, I AM SIMULTANEOUSLY THE MOST GRATEFUL AND THE MOST SORROWFUL I HAVE EVER BEEN IN MY LIFE. GRATEFUL FOR THE LOVE IN MY LIFE AND SORROWFUL FOR THE LOVE MY BROTHER WILL NEVER GET TO HAVE IN HIS OWN. I HAVE PLEDGED MYSELF TO HONOR MY BROTHER'S MEMORY BY LIVING MY LIFE AS THOUGH I WERE LIVING FOR TWO. AGAIN, FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS FORWARD, I WON'T GO INTO EXHAUSTIVE DETAIL. IF YOU WANT TO HEAR MORE ABOUT THIS, YOU CAN LISTEN TO EPISODES #068 AND #069 OF THE MF PODCAST. I MANAGE TO TALK ABOUT IT ALL WITHOUT BREAKING DOWN. I CAN'T DRIVE, GO TO WORK OR PLAY MY GUITAR WITHOUT FALLING TO PIECES, BUT SOMETHING ABOUT HAVING A MICROPHONE IN FRONT OF ME PUTS MY MIND IN A COMPOSED STATE. I'VE MANAGED TO PLAY FOUR SHOWS WITH 3 DIFFERENT BANDS SINCE SEEING MY BROTHER WHEELED OFF BY THE CORONER. SOMEHOW, I'VE MANAGED TO KEEP IT TOGETHER AT ALL FOUR. THE LAST WORDS I SAID TO BRIAN, WITH MY FACE BURIED IN HIS CHEST, HOWLING AND SOBBING AS HIS FACE PROTRUDED FROM THE BODY BAG WERE "I'M SO SORRY". AND I AM. I'M SORRY HE DOESN'T GET TO BE AN OLD MAN, I'M SORRY HE COULDN'T HELP OR PROTECT HIM, I'M SORRY HE DIED ALONE WITH NOB

THROUGHOUT ALL OF THIS, I HAVE BEEN SUSTAINED BY THE LOVE AND SUPPORT OF THOSE CLOSEST TO ME: MY WIFE, MY BABY BOY, MY FAMILY, FRIENDS AND OF COURSE, MY BANDMATES. TY, LOGAN AND TONY ARE THE BEST FRIENDS A GUY COULD ASK FOR. THEY, ALONG WITH THEIR WIVES, JESSI, BECKY AND LAURA HAVE BEEN THERE THROUGH IT ALL AND FOR MANY YEARS PRIOR. THEY ARE AS MUCH BROTHERS AS BRIAN WAS, SHORT ONLY OF A SHARED BLOODLINE. MANY CAN ATTEST TO THE UNIQUE.

THIS BOOK GETS VERY PERSONAL. IN FACT, IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT IT BORDERS ON "AIRING DIRTY LAUNDRY". IT COULD PISS SOME PEOPLE OFF OR AT THE VERY LEAST MAKE SOME GRIMACE WITH DISCOMFORT. NO MATTER WHAT I SAY TO EXPLAIN MYSELF IN THIS FORWARD, THERE WILL BE MISUNDERSTANDINGS OF MY INTENTIONS. NEVERTHELESS, I WANT TO COME OUT FROM THE START AND EXPLICITLY STATE THAT THIS BOOK, LIKE ANY WORK OF ART OR SONG, IS AN EXPRESSION OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. THIS PARTICULAR BOOK IS ABOUT MANY THINGS, BUT HAS BECOME PRIMARILY ABOUT LOSS AND REGRET. WHEN I HAD ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IT, PARKER WAS VERY MUCH IN THE BAND AND MY BROTHER WAS VERY MUCH ALIVE. AFTER PARKER LEFT, JAKE FAIRLY AND I HAD TO FIGURE OUT A WAY TO WRITE PARKER OUT OF THE SERIES WITHOUT SUBVERTING THE PLOT WHILE AT THE SAME TIME HONORING PARKER'S MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTION WITHOUT PETTINESS OR PASSIVE AGGRESSION. PARKER'S CHARACTER WAS SET TO PLAY A HUGE PART IN THE OVERALL STORY ARC. WHEN HE DECIDED TO LEAVE THE BAND, IT WAS LIKE CRASHING A BUS INTO THE FRONT OF OUR LITTLE MOM N POP ROCK SHOP. WE HAD TO REASSESS AND RESTRUCTURE. I WANTED TO CONVEY THE LOSS OF OUR FRIENDSHIP IN AN IMPACTFUL WAY WHILE AT THE SAME TIME CREATING NEW MOTIVATION, CRISIS AND CONFLICT FOR THE CHARACTERS IN THE STORY. AFTER BRIAN DIED, IT ONLY GAVE DEEPER CONTOURS TO THAT CRISIS AND CONFLICT. IT IS NOT MY INTENTION TO CAST MALICE ON PARKER. IT IS NOT MY WISH TO BRING HIM SHAME, RIDICULE OR EMBARRASSMENT. THIS YEAR, I GAINED A SON, BECAME A FATHER AND LOST TWO BROTHERS, ONE TO DEATH AND ONE TO ANGER. THIS BOOK IS ABOUT THAT TRANSFORMATIVE PROCESS OF LOSSES AND GAINS. IT IS ABOUT THE TRANSMUTATIVE APOTHEOSIS OF EVERY HERO'S JOURNEY, EVEN IF HE OR SHE IS A VILLAIN IN SOMEONE ELSE'S. IT WOULD BE FAIR TO SAY THAT THESE TWO SEPARATE AND WHOLLY DIFFERENT LOSSES HAVE BECOME CONFLATED IN THIS STORY. IT IS MY HOPE THAT THERE WILL NOT BE A TERRIBLE BLOWBACK FROM THIS, BUT I AM PREPARED TO ACCEPT WHATEVER MIGHT

COME. LET'S ALL JUST KEEP ON REMININDING OURSELVES THAT IT IS ONLY A COMIC BOOK.

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF MY BROTHER, BRIAN STUART HOWELL, TO THE WORKS AND CONTRIBUTION OF PARKER CW MEEHAN AND THE FORMATION OF MY FAMILY MADE POSSIBLE BY THE BIRTH OF MY SON, RANSOM HOWELL TICE.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

AARON HOWELL























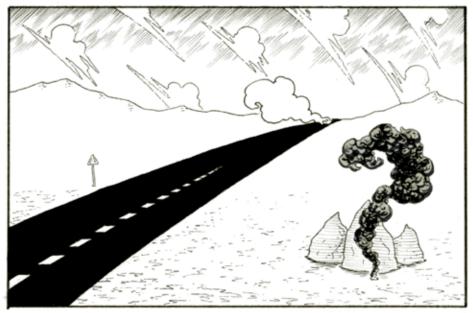














































LOOKS LIKE SHIT! FIX
IT BEFORE YOU GO OUT!

ACTUALLY, I JUST WANTED TO SEE IF YOU WANTED ANY OF THIS STUFF THE REPAIRS ARE GONNA SET US BACK A BIT AND...





I'M GONNA STOP YOU RIGHT THERE. BROTHER I'M NOT LOOKING TO BLY ANYTHING RIGHT NOW. I'VE GOT 5 CARTS OUT THERE RIGHT NOW. WE MANAGE TO BRING IN A GOOD SHARE OF MERCHANDISE THROUGH SCAVENGING, AND I AIM TO KEEP OUR MARGINS FAT. I'LL TELL YOU WHAT THOUGH, YOU COULD ALWAYS COME WORK FOR ME. I'D GIVE YOU YOUR OWN CART, YOUR OWN ROUTE.



MAN, YOU KNOW I'M TRYING TO STAY ON THE ROAD...

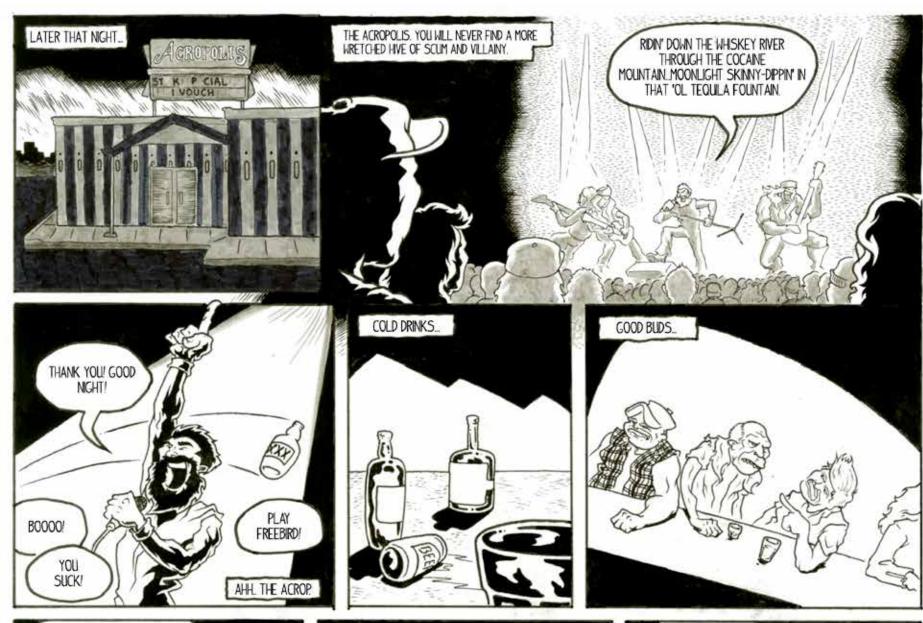
I GET IT, BUDDY. THERE'S MORE IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE, FUCK SCRAPPING, I JUST CAN'T GIVE YOU WHAT YOU WANT, I'M SORRY.

IT'S COOL MAN I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN GET RID OF TONGHT AT THE SLOW



YEAH, MAN! LAST MINUTE THING. PARKER GOT US IN AT THE ACROP. GOOD 'OL ACROP. I'LL SEE YOU THERE, BROTHA!







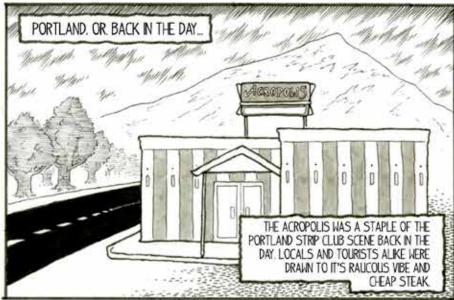






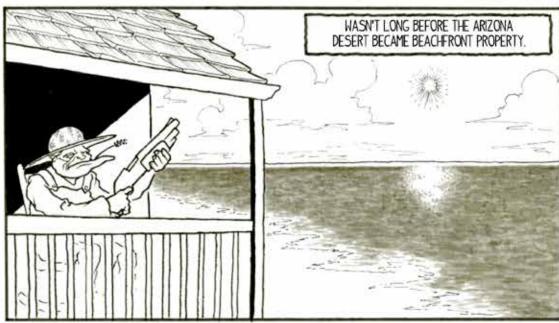


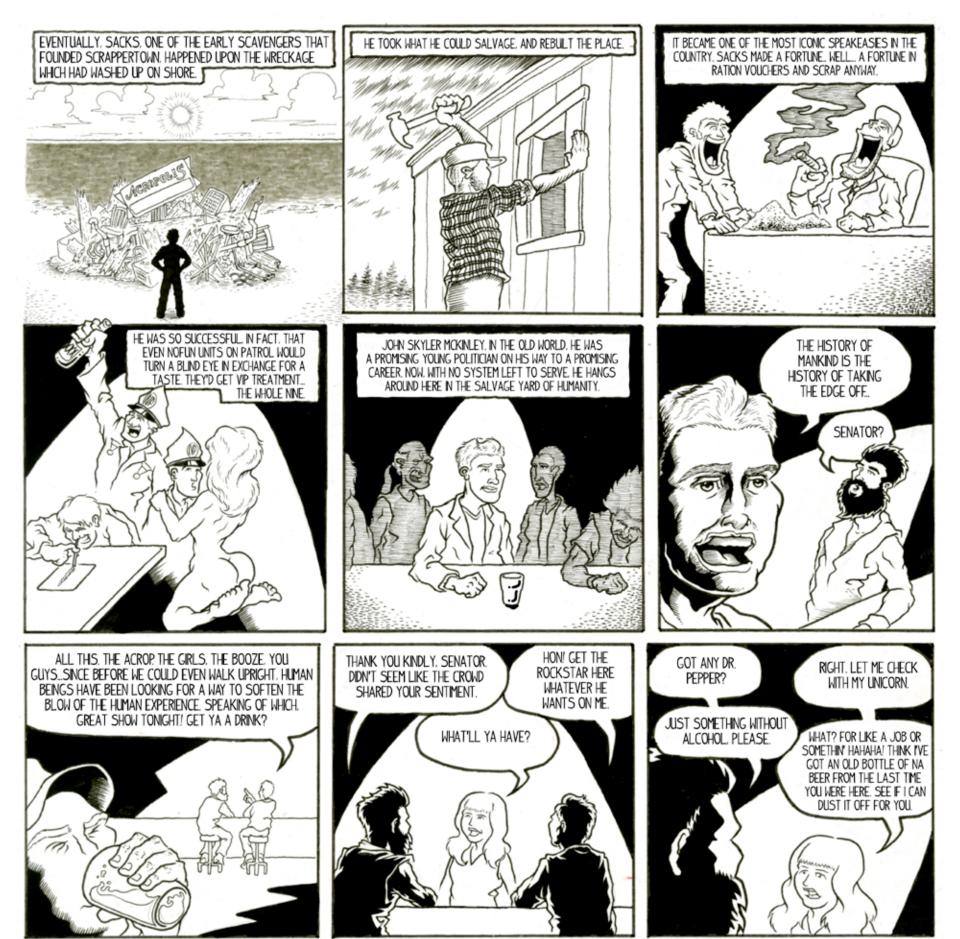


















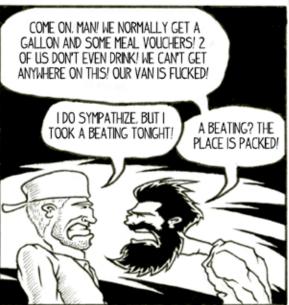














YEAH, MAN. GREAT. THE VAN RUNS ON EXPOSURE AND THE DUDES AND I SUBSIST ON A STRICT DIET OF BULLSHIT EXCUSES. THANKS.







HERE INE GO. ANOTHER BARROOM POLITICAL ANALYST.
LOOK HERE. JUNOR, WE LIVE IN THE OUTLAND, WHAT
THOSE DICKHEADS SAY ON TV DOESN'T AFFECT US
ONE BIT. I'M JUST WAITING FOR THE GAME
TO COME ON.

YOU THINK THEY DON'T CONTROL THE
OUTLAND? PFT_HON...THAT'S SAD, DO
YOU KNOW WHAT A SHEEP YOU SOUND
LIKE? YOU'RE JUST A SLAVE MAN.









THS ISN'T ABOUT WHAT YOU DO OR DON'T DO! YOU TREAT PEOPLE LIKE SHT! YOU TALK DOWN TO THEM! TAKE A LOOK AROUND, PARKER. THE WORLD IS ENDING! WE HAVE NOTHING BUT EACH OTHER AND A HANDFUL OF RELATIONSHIPS BUILT THROUGH YEARS OF HARD WORK! I LOVE YOU LIKE A BROTHER, BUT I WILL NOT TOLERATE THIS SHIT! IF YOU DON'T TURN IT AROUND THERE WILL NOT BE A PLACE FOR YOU IN THIS BAND!











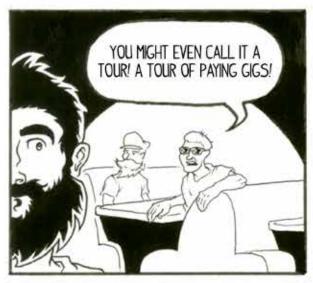
































JAN AND I HAVE DEVELOPED SOMETHING OF A REPUTATION. WE'RE FAMOUS REALLY. CAN'T GO ANYWHERE WITHOUT BEING RECOGNIZED. TROOPS FROM THE CITY DON'T MESS WITH. PARDON ME FOR SAYING...















































































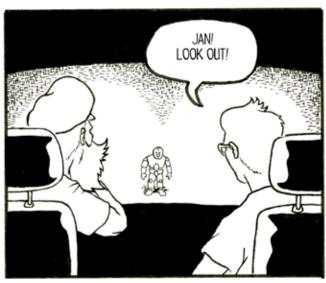


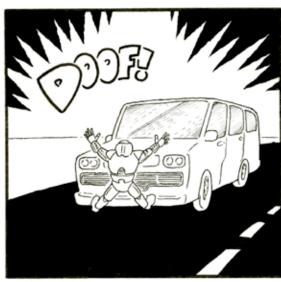


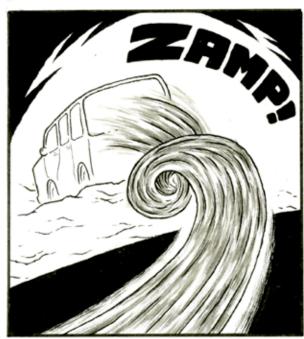






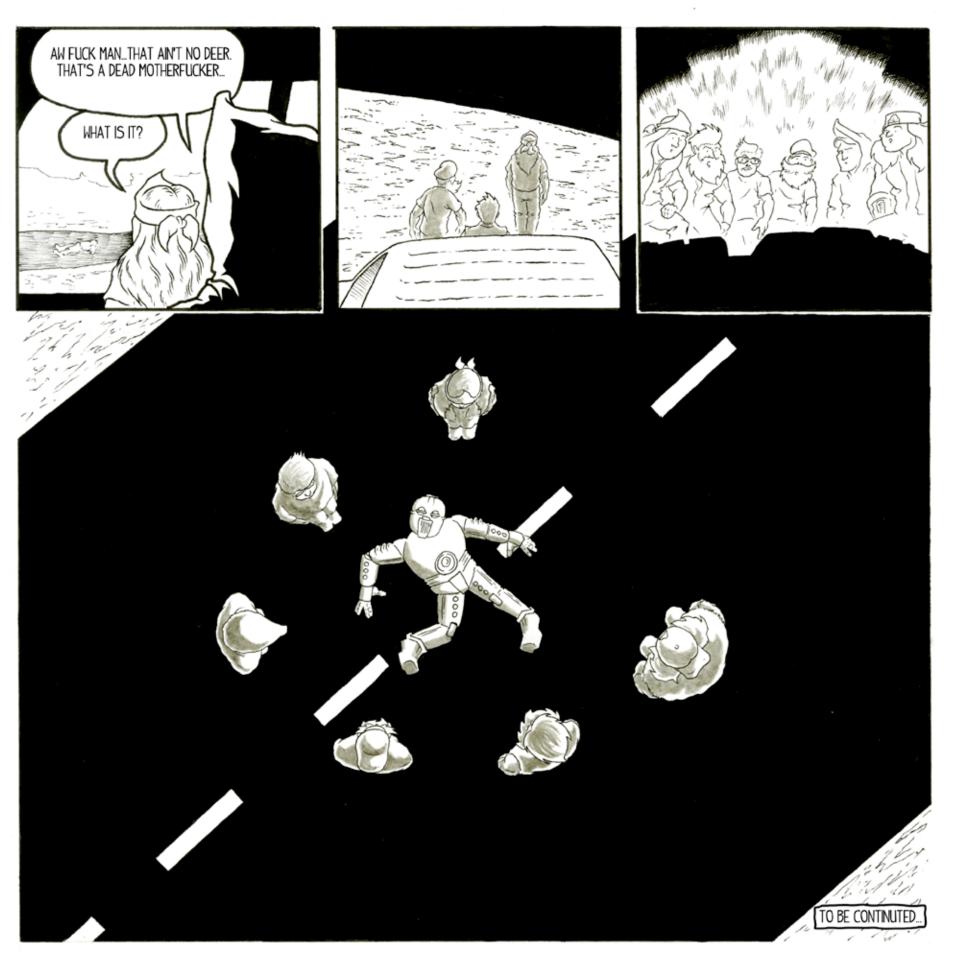


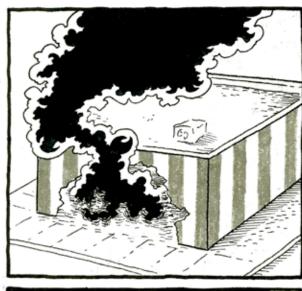




























ILLUSTRATED BY JAKE FAIRLY STORY BY AARON HOWELL

MF RUCKUS IS: TY BLOSSER - DRUMS LOGAN O'CONNOR - BASS TONY LEE - GUITAR AARON HOWELL - VOICE

PRESENTED BY RODEOSTAR RECORDS, HAMBURG, DE

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: ILSE ALCON, NATHAN WADE, MIKE & BOBBIE-SUE HOWELL, MARK & SUE O'CONNOR, EVEL, FONZ, MARSHALL, LIZ AND BINDY O'CONNOR AND RYAN BRANDT

PRODUCERS: ERIN COBLE. SKYLER MCKINLEY. JAN LIPKENS. MISTY & CHAD HUNNICUTT

PATRONS: ERIC ESCUDERO, MICKOL HECK, JULIE K LARY, TREVOR KREMSER, GINA STIEBER, BRYAN DUNCAN, IAN SIDES, ANDY JONES, THADDEUS BENDER, DAVID & MARITZA WILBURN, HEATHER SHIRES, PATRICK CRAVENS, NICOLE DEFRANCISCO, LEIGH NEER, JENIFER HOLLY, JOSHUA HERNANDEZ-IPSEN AND IRMA MORENO, BARBORA KADLECIK, JOSEPH "J PARTYLORD" OLENIK, JOAS WETS, JOHN BYRD, ANDY CENARRUSA, TOREY WEILER, DAMIEN WILBURN, GREGORY S. FULLER, JOHN SKIBICKI, ERIC LIPPS, LISA ANGEL, MAX SHERMAN, RYAN BRANDT, STEVE HOFFBAUER, KELLY CRAVENS, ANTHONY "IKE" IACOVANGELO JR., ALAN SPERRY, BOB AND KITTY ZIELINSKI, GARY HILL, JERRY MATULA, JOHN WORKMAN, JOEY CLONTS, MICHAEL VERNON, TYLER SCHAFER AND TONY LEE (YES. THE TONY LEE.)

GENEROUS DONORS: RYAN WHETSEL, ADRIENNE CHRISTY, MATTHEW PATTERSON, "WAY TOO MUCH FUN" ZACH PARRY, DENNIS MEEHAN, CHUCK MAPLE, MIKE AND MANDY SCHMIDT.

IN MEMORY OF BRIAN HOWELL AND CHAD HUNNICUTT



COMING SOON (APOCALYPSE PERMITTING)

#FLOGTV1