



## IndieCreator: Insights from a Newbie Comic Creator & Other Industry Pros

*This is a series of bi-weekly columns by Bob Heske @ Heske Horror, creator of [The Night Projectionist](#) and [Cold Blooded Chillers](#), featuring interviews and insights from indie comic artists, writers, creators, distributors and visionaries.*

### *10 Questions with Belkis NYC*

Belkis is best known for being the co-host of The Comic Book Novice radio show on the Long Island station, WGBB, and being the cover model for the Novastar Studios 2009 Fantasy Illustration Calendar. After leaving the radio show, she concentrated on producing strategies for online marketing. She is currently the newest writer on ComicNews.info where she writes her monthly column, “Why You Should Never...” It focuses on how to promote comic books by avoiding commonly misunderstood tactics. We recently connected via email to catch up on what she’s doing, what she thinks of indie comics – as well as picking her brain for some marketing tips. Without further ado, here’s Belkis ...



*1. Which did more to kickstart your career – being co-host of [The Comic Book Novice](#) radio show or being the cover model for the [Novastar Studio](#) 2009 Fantasy Illustration Calendar?*

(BELKIS) Both projects were fun and worthwhile. With the calendar, I got to meet a lot of great artists who had a lot of passion. However, the radio show taught me a lot about how individuals from the comic book industry struggle to get noticed by the general public.

*2. Give us the elevator pitch on Belkis NYC: Marketing for the Creative Soul. Why did you create a marketing strategy blog, how’s it been going to date, and what’s in store for the future?*

(BELKIS) When I was doing *The Comic Book Radio Show*, I was introduced to many great writers and illustrators. Some of the work that I saw was incredible and fresh. I honestly believe that if more people knew about them that they would be able to see the benefits of their work. After I left the radio show, I knew there were many unknown talents who needed help with marketing. I believe that all artists are so busy creating their craft that they have no room to concentrate on marketing and promotions. I wanted to educate and point them in the right direction. This is how the blog came to be. I have

received many positive responses and even requests to write something in particular. I am very proud that I am able to do this.

3. *Any plans to turn the blog into a podcast?*

(BELKIS) No plans to turn the blog into a podcast. However, there is a chance to turn it into a book! I am currently working with Tom Filsinger of Filsinger Publishing, publisher of Stan Lee's [Election Daze](#), to make this project into reality. Keeping my fingers crossed.

4. *Give us five quick tips on how an indie comic creator can successfully market and differentiate their work in an oversaturated market.*

(BELKIS)

1. **Be a good friend on social networks.** Remember, it's not always about you. Take a day to read what others are doing. Comment and share information. They need your help like you need theirs.
2. **Always make sure you carry a business card.** You never know who you are going to run into when you least expect it.
3. **Be social in real life.** While working online is great, it is always good to show up to a local event. Meet new people and chat with old friends. Showing your face will leave a good impression to others in the industry.
4. **Make yourself stand out.** Don't be afraid to be different. Being different is always a good thing.
5. **Use e-mailers and newsletters.** Sometimes, I don't check my social networking sites but I always check my email.



Belkis cover art for Novastar Calendar by James Rodriguez

5. *You have a monthly column for ComicNews.info called "[Why You Should Never ...](#)". How's this been going? What has been your favorite column so far?*

(BELKIS) Gary over at ComicNews has been a pleasure to work with. Actually, the entire team is really cool and laid back. I'm really proud to be able to work with such a wonderful group of passionate people. I have to say that Richard Caldwell's The Lottery Party is very amusing. He's not afraid to say how he feels and I like that he doesn't hold anything back.

6. *Can you give us a few "Why You Should Never's" for indie comic creators?*

(BELKIS) You should never ...

1. **...Close a deal without signing anything.** You will get screwed and there will be nothing that you can do about it.
2. **...Join more than 3-4 social networking sites.** You won't be able to manage all them properly.
3. **...Abandon your personal website or portfolio.** ALWAYS update with new material. When I see your last update was two years ago, I will never go back to it again.
4. **... Expect quality work for cheap.** Outstanding work is worth the money.

7. *What are your thoughts on the new paradigm hitting comics and publishing - i.e, the pendulum swing from print to digital print on demand and web comics?*

(BELKIS) I love print comic books. I like holding it in my hand and taking it with me on the train or bus. I'm old fashioned. I think the only way a web comic can be successful is if it is a short comic strip. Graphic novels and series should be left in the hands of a publishing company.

8. *Time to play prognosticator. What 2-3 trends do you see coming in the next 12-18 months? Any strategies to prepare for this change?*

(BELKIS)

- **Webcomics will become mobile.** People with webcomics should start to get familiar with the latest applications.
- **More indie comics will be "on demand" since big companies are moving to film.** Indie writers should take advantage. This is the perfect time to get your concept in the hands of a larger audience.

9. *What are the best websites you recommend for comic creators for a) being informed, b) finding talent, and c) distribution?*

(BELKIS)

- Comicnews.info (being informed)
- Comicspace.com (finding talent)
- IndyPlanetcom (distribution)

10. *Big finish – Some final thoughts on the current state of indie comics in lieu of the tough economy. Is there a light at the end of the tunnel? Finally, market yourself – tell us about your website, your current projects, and/or comic cons or events you will be attending this summer.*

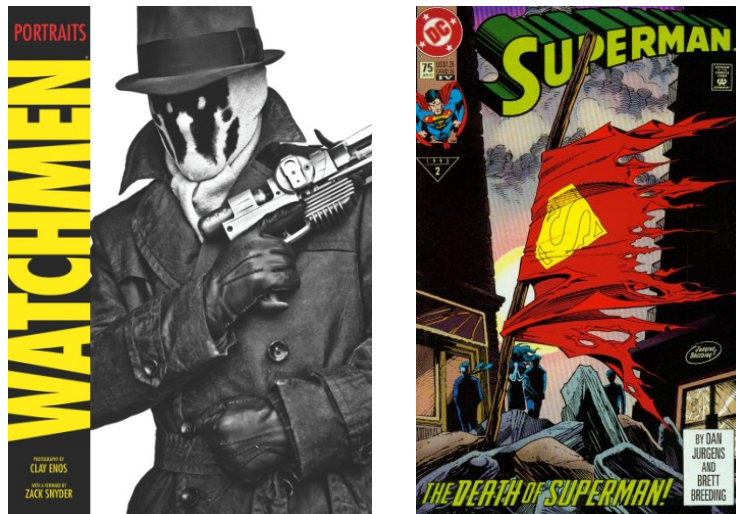
(BELKIS) There is always light at the end of the tunnel. The biggest advice I can give right now during the recession is NEVER DOUBT YOURSELF. Have confidence of what you do and how you do it. This is always work. It's just a matter of you finding it in the right places.

Check out my site at [www.belkisnyc.com](http://www.belkisnyc.com) for marketing tips and information. I also look for emerging talents to interview and pick their brains about their promotional strategies.

**Bonus question:** InvestComics is an investing website. Name 3-4 comics that you consider “priceless” within your comic book collection.

(BELKIS)

- Watchmen, DC Comics
- The Death of Superman, Vo.2 #75, DC Comics



Bob Heske is creator of [The Night Projectionist](#), a vampire horror series by publisher [Studio 407](#) with film rights optioned by [Myriad Pictures](#). Through his Heske Horror shingle, Bob self-published his critically acclaimed horror series [Cold Blooded Chillers](#). Bob's trade paperback [Bone Chiller](#) (a “best of” CBC anthology) recently won a Bronze medal in the horror category at the 2009 Independent Publisher Book Awards. Bob's works are available at Amazon, ComixPress, IndyPlanet, Haven Distribution, HeavyInk, SmallZone and DriveThruComics. You can email him at [info@coldbloodedchillers.com](mailto:info@coldbloodedchillers.com).