



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](#), [Cold Blooded Chillers](#), and [2012: Final Prayer](#), featuring interviews and insights from indie comic artists, writers, creators, distributors and visionaries.

13 Questions with HACK/SLASH Creator Tim Seeley

Back in 2004, Tim Seeley created the stylish and sexy [HACK/SLASH](#) at Devils Due Publishing. Today, he's sitting atop a franchise that has spawned several successful "one shots," an ongoing series, and an upcoming movie (potentially) starring [Megan Fox](#) (*Transformers 1, 2 and 3*). Not to mention, he recently got married. Life is good for this horror comic rock star.

For those of you living under a rock these past 6 years, here's the high concept behind HACK/SLASH:

"What if the Final Girl from one slasher movie went after all the slashers in all the rest?"



What exactly are "Slashers" (or "Revenants"), you ask? As hack-a-slash heroine Cassie tells us in one of the comics:



CASSIE

"A slasher. It's a type of undead, I guess ... sort've like a vampire or zombie. They're so full of anger that they don't wanna die. They hate love, youth, sex ... things they miss from life. All I know for sure is that they are mean and hard to kill."

Good thing she doesn't have to go it alone. Cassie's co-hort is Vlad, a meat-cleaver-wielding disfigured giant who often dons a gas mask and provides the size and muscle to complement Cassie's tough-as-nails persona. Wildly entertaining, their killing episodes also serve to advance the back-story of their avuncular/buddy relationship, in addition to axing supernatural slashers with mucho blood and gore.

As with any great series, a question lingers about Cassie who is a survivor of her own slasher film where the “monster” is none other than her mother, a child-serial-killer Lunch Lady. And, as revealed in another interesting story line with Margaret Crump (AKA Georgia Peaches), we also don’t know if Cassie is straight or lesbian (in fact, neither does she). Man, this Tim Seeley is good!

Enough foreplay. On to the Q&A. But first, a few non-“HACK/SLASH” questions:

1. *What was it like to contribute to The Hero Initiative Ultimate Spider-Man 100 Project and how did you first hear about Marvel wanting you to contribute?*

(H/S) My contribution actually came through Jim McGlauchlin, whom I’ve known for a few years. Jim knows I’m always up for contributing to the Hero Initiative to help out some older creators or those with medical needs. So, I ended up doing the Spider-Man, Hulk and Wolverine books.



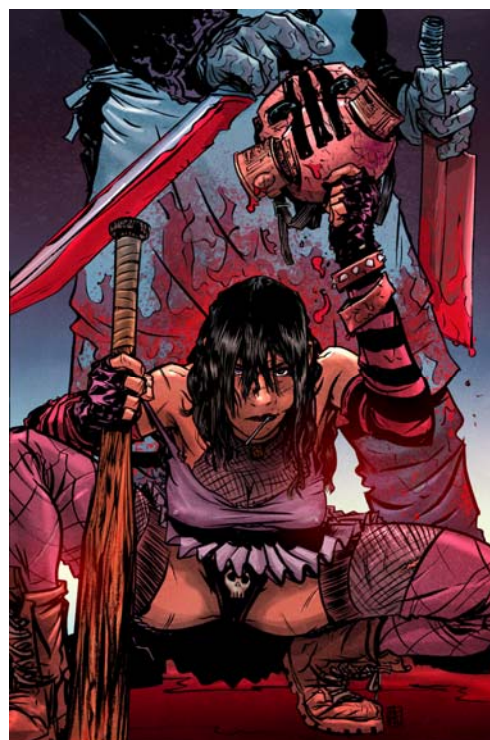
2. *Besides the two Hero Initiative books for Marvel, you have now done an Exiles and a Wolverine story for Marvel. What character in the vast Marvel Universe would you like to tackle – either to write or draw?*

(H/S) I’d love to work on Tigra, or Sleepwalker. I love the sort of horror-esque creepy characters Marvel has, especially the ones that are pretty neglected or misused.

OK, on to the HACK/SLASH franchise:

3. *How did HACK/SLASH come about? Did you know you had a hit on your hands early on? And what were you doing before this magnificent light bulb went off inside your head?*

(H/S) H/S just comes from me really wanting to be able to write a comic, and not JUST draw. I love drawing, but it’s great to have your own story to tell. H/S derives from a realization I had that all horror films kind of take place in the same universe, so the question was: “What kind of person would survive/thrive in that kind of world?” I don’t know that I knew it’d be a hit necessarily (is it a hit?) but I definitely knew it was a story and a set of characters I could invest myself in for a long time.



4. You mentioned in an interview that John Carpenter's *Halloween* was the big movie that made you realize horror films were an art form. What was it about this film that inspired and scared you?

(H/S) HALLOWEEN works so well in that it perfected the slasher film formula, while also being a very sparse, minimal film that creeps viewers out by its mood and story, rather than by throwing a lot of gore and flashiness at you. That film pretty much acts as a text book for the pacing of a horror film.

5. Similar to *Halloween*, your *HACK/SLASH* protagonist is also female who battles a nemesis that seems almost supernatural. And oddly, her monster sidekick wears a mask! Just coincidence or did this have *Halloween*-roots?

(H/S) Oh yeah, definitely. Vlad was actually created as a sort of answer to the question: "What if Jason Voorhees had turned out as a nice guy?" And since Jason derives from Michael, well, you can see the lineage.

6. Much like Jamie Lee Curtis' character had a sadistic "slasher" brother, your heroine Cassie has a mother - "The Lunch Lady" - who was responsible for murdering children at her school. How did you come up with this and will Cassie eventually be overcome by her "Darth Vader" side and become an evil slasher in the end?

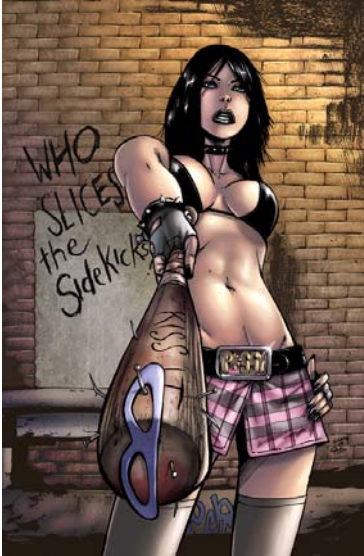
(H/S) That's an underlying question for the series I think. Personally I relate more to characters who try to do good despite the temptation to do bad. Most people do I think. Cassie, to me, is a reflection of a trope from so many slasher films. Often the killer feels they're doing good by punishing "bad" kids, despite the kids in the film just doing what teens do. For Cassie, it's easy for her to see herself in her mom, and the other slashers, since she hates some of these people as much as they do.

7. The comic genre traditionally been misogynist – objectifying women with jaw-dropping shapes and curves; yet you've managed to make Cassie a hottie sans the mega boobs or booty. She's tough, smart and sexy. What has been the reaction from your women readers, if any?

(H/S) Well, I don't know if I'd say the "comic genre." But, certainly, books aimed at boys like the typical superhero book, or horror comics, do have that tendency. I've noticed over the years, that women respond favorably to attractive female characters, as long as they find



them realistic and relatable, and as long as they don't feel like they're being turned into nothing BUT a sex object. Girls seem to like Cass, and a lot of them dress up and send me pics as Cassie. She's cool, she's relatable, she's sexy ... some girls want to be her, or feel they already ARE her. I'm sure there's plenty of women (and men) who wouldn't touch the book because they think it's sexist or trashy. But I'm happy to have the people who "get it" buying my book.



8. *You are an artist, yet you write - but don't draw – HACK/SLASH (with the exception of Entry Wound and a few others). What credentials did you look for in pairing up with pencillers such as Stefano Caselli (Euthanized), Federico Manfredi (Girls Gone Dead), Dave Crosland (Land of Lost Toys) and newly appointed Hack/Slash artist Daniel Leister?*

(H/S) I need artists who can draw more than just action, so that's why I picked ALL of the artists you mentioned. Though a lot of H/S is sex and violence, the most important aspect is the character interaction, and the slice of life stuff. All of my artist selections are people who can draw a monster one minute, and a quiet, touching scene the next.

9. *Aside from Cassie and Vlad, what is your favorite character in the series?*

(H/S) I really love POOCH, the weird alien dog critter, as he provides some humor and a sort of "fish out of water" situation; as well as a desperate need to be loved, which I always find fun to play around with.

10. *Although there seems to be a formula to HACK/SLASH's "kill-a-creature road trip" tales, you manage to keep it fresh with a large stable of Slashers, guest celebrity monsters, and inventive twists. How do you do it ... and do you have an endpoint in mind that you are waiting to unleash?*

(H/S) I do have an end point and a rough idea how I'll get there. Like you said, there is a "formula" at work, and I don't want it to wear out its welcome or for it to get stale. But, it'll be a while before I run out of twists on the formula.



11. *Any plans to incorporate a Sarah Palin "Going Rogue" HACK/SLASH story – Cassie teaming up with a politico hockey mom wielding a shot gun could really wreak havoc. Or would you prefer to have Cassie hack Ms. Palin to pieces?*

(H/S) Personally, I'm not a fan of the former governor or her little "maverick" bullshit. And I'm beyond sick of her "appeal to the lowest common denominator" catch phrases, but I'm trying pretty hard to keep politics out of Hack/Slash, since nothing ruins a completely good escape into fun and fantasy like some depressing, real world politics or politicians. More slashers and blood, less self serving, egotistical, power-hungry-would-be-despots.

12. *Tell us about the upcoming, long-awaited HACK/SLASH movie and your involvement in the film. Is Megan Fox the Cassie you envisioned? If the film is a success (which I'm betting it will be!), do you envision ever writing a prequel slasher featuring the "The Lunch Lady" storyline to show what/how Cassie survived to become the Hack/Slash superhero we love/lust today?*

(H/S) Y'know, at this point, I don't know what Rogue (Pictures) is doing. They have a new writer to do some rewrites, but I don't know what direction he'll go in. The reality is that the movie has very little to do with me at all, aside from the fact that I got paid some money for it.

13. *And now's the time to pimp any other events or books you have locked and loaded. Also, you've seen Jay Katz's "Hack High Five" list of top collectible issues (shown below). Any favorite issues you think Jay overlooked that your readers should pick up and stash away in cellophane?*

(H/S) Hell yeah! Pick up my comic [LOVEBUNNY AND MR.HELL](#) from 2001. It's sort of a pre-Hack/Slash hot girl and monster combo that pokes fun at superhero comics.

InvestComics Jay Katz "HACK/SLASH" High Five Picks:

Here are some great Tim Seeley books to pick up ...

- The very first Hack Slash book from 2004 would be a nice addition to your collection for only \$50, especially considering Megan Fox might play the lead in the movie.
- One of Tim's first works could be found (good luck) in Dead Dogs published - Hellion #1. Get this gem for \$6 if you can find it.
- Ultimate Spider-Man 100 Project and Hulk 100 Project both go to great causes. Help out those creators from yesteryear that need your support for their financial needs. Tim Seeley's page in the Spidey book is a great stand out of Ultimate Venom and Spidey.

- Besides these contributions from Tim, his first official work on a Marvel title goes to the New Exiles team in issue #18.



Don't forget to vote for InvestComics for "Best Comic Book Website" in the 2009 Project Fanboy awards. To cast your vote, [click here](#).

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) won a Bronze medal in the horror category at the 2009 Independent Publisher Book Awards. His "end times" anthology [2012: Final Prayer](#) was released on November 13, 2009. Bob's works are available online at Amazon.com Zaldiva.com, ComixPress, IndyPlanet, HeavyInk, SmallZone, DriveThruComics and YuDu.com (store). You can email Bob at info@coldbloodedchillers.com.