

ONE-HIT WONDER





ONE-HIT WONDER

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This volume contains One-Hit Wonder issues #1-5.

SPECIAL THANKS

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As with all my books, this one's dedicated to my three beautiful children.

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FEATURE PRESENTATION

CREATED AND
WRITTEN BY **FABRICE SAPOLSKY**

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& OSCAR MARTUTATTIS **ART AND
COLORS**
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IVAN FIORELLI **PENCILS & INKS**
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COLORS **LISA JACKSON**
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KATRINA ROETS **PROOFREADING**

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LITTLE GINKGO
TOM LYLE
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SEDAT OEZGEN
LOUIS & LAMIRAND
SEDAT OEZGEN
ISAAC GOODHART
LEO SAPOLSKY



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SHOTS



Everything you heard about creator-owned comics is true. And it's even worse than you imagine. And we – comic book creators – are a bunch of masochists.

In which industry does one inflict upon oneself the following: long hours of development, the search for an artist, then the [desperate] fight to keep that artist from going where the grass is greener, numerous glitches in production, not to mention finding a publisher and getting that publisher to put you on schedule for distribution? Oh, and invest time for marketing and money. Tons of it.

Because you have to pay for everything months before you get a single penny. Publishing comics is like playing poker. You bet. You sometimes win, but most of the time, you lose.

Especially if, like me, you're not a very productive creator. I spoke with people from other creative industries. There are challenges in every medium. But in comics? We have them all... times ten! Oh, I'm not complaining. I did that to myself. I'm fully responsible for everything I wrote and help publish. You don't like it? Be my guest, say it: "It's all your fault". You like it? GOOD! Because I'm not going to stop delivering projects to a comic book store near you.

ONE-HIT WONDER is not my best work to date. It's an exceedingly mediocre one. On top of that, it has been such a journey that I could've burned all of it multiple times or send the files to the Negative Zone. Why did I fight so hard to bring it back? Before you read it, please let me tell you about my therapy story.

THE PROMISE OF A HIT

I got this idea in 2012. I met Ariel Olivetti in 2008 at a festival in Strasbourg (in the East of France). I'd always been a fan of his work, and we immediately got along fine.

Flash forward to January 2012. As I welcomed my buddy Joe Keatinge (writer extraordinaire of Marvel Knights Hulk, Shutter, Ringside and many more) on French soil (he used to visit me every year), I just got this idea: a child-star turned hitman and a series name... ONE-HIT WONDER. At that time, I wanted to develop another project (that I may do down the road) called Gangsta Grill (loosely based on the assassination of Tupac Shakur, with a Dexter feel to it). But Joe insisted that OHW should be my priority.

F.I.R.E.D!

I loved the concept, but I really wanted to do the other book first.

By late June, I was immersed in Gangsta Grill and I wanted a prestigious cover artist.

I sent a message to Ariel, asking him if he'd consider working with a European creator: He was just released from his Marvel exclusive contract and was happy to consider any new project. Perfect timing!

I sent him a dozen concepts of mine and he chose... Gangsta Grill!

A month later, as I took the plane to go to San Diego for the Comic Con, the ONE-HIT WONDER concept kicked back in with a vengeance. There, I came up with a plan for the whole series. Back home, I talked to Ariel, hoping to persuade him to do ONE-HIT WONDER instead of Gangsta Grill. And fortunately for me, he liked it even better:

We even had a French publisher, Indeez Comics who was willing to publish it locally. We started quickly. Issue #1 was ready early 2013 and issue #2 by May of that same year. We were approved by Image Comics before the French album was released, which gave us a lot of confidence that we had something special with this project.

THE BAD AND THE UGLY

But it was too good to be true. Shit hit the fan when Ariel wrote to tell me he had to switch to other projects (like Conan the Barbarian that he beautifully drew from a Fred Van Lente story) and it was clear that he wouldn't be able to be as available as he was before. We tested a few other artists to continue our series and after searching for a few months, we were introduced to Stephen Thompson, thanks to Marvel artist Will Sliney (who got my contact

through a mutual friend, the awesome Andrea Mutti). Stephen impressed us (as did his color artist Lisa Jackson). For issue #3, Ariel had done layouts for the first 13 pages. So I first asked Stephen if he wanted to finish the pages from those layouts. But after giving it a try, he explained to me that he was more comfortable redrawing everything. I trusted his judgement.

Unfortunately, as good as he is, Stephen is a very very slow artist. And while we had enough lead time for issue #3 to ship on time (it was nearly finished when Image released the first one in the US), issue #4 slipped and we were about to face even bigger challenges. Our French publisher also went bankrupt. So, as of today, the series remained unfinished in the country where it was first published. And financially, I was on my own.



It's a shame. But wait. The adventure continued with issue #5. It entered production early summer 2014. The whole team was ready. Ariel couldn't do the cover? No problem! Stéphane Roux stepped in and delivered a very solid one.

Issue #5, the final in the series was to be a super-fun ride anyway, with 29 pages of art for the same price! (out of a 32 pages comic book). I was very confident that we'd finish on a good note and that the delays of the previous issue were just a glitch. Well, it wasn't. Nine pages into the issue, Stephen wrote me an email to say he was leaving the series. That an offer came up from DC Comics and it was "too good to refuse". I tried to talk to him. But his mind was made up. He left, and not only was I once again without an artist but I needed a new artist to pick up in the middle of an issue (something that fans, myself included, hate). Not to mention

the fact that the book would be late - again. It's like I was hit by a bus. I didn't take it well. I started searching again. Asked my friends in the industry if they knew somebody who could step in. I tried a couple of artists and it didn't quite fit. Until I talked to Matteo Scalera at the 2014 Paris Comics Expo show. Matteo and I go way back. In 2010, I hired him to pencil a kid series I was doing for the French market. He's one of the best artists today and his work on Black Science made him a household name.

Matteo sent me an angel: Ivan Fiorelli. Ivan saved the day. He drew and inked 20 pages in five weeks and brilliantly finished the series. ONE-HIT WONDER #5 arrived on the shelves in April 2015.

But the tribulations were far from over. When ONE-HIT WONDER #5 was finally published, retailers had lost interest in the book. Orders were slashed by 45%. It became a financial bloodbath for me.

I hoped the collected edition would help me break even, but this one never came. Image Comics also lost interest in the book. And it never came out.

Heartbroken and tired of all this, I stored ONE-HIT WONDER in my vault. It taught me a lesson: If you want to be serious about creator-owned comics, you have step in the arena and fight. And to me, it meant leaving Paris, where I lived almost all my life, to start a new life in the American arena.

KICKSTARTER PART 1 & 2

Flash Forward to July 2019. At this point, I've lived in the United States for over 4 years. I have attended 60+ conventions and did many store signings. My second creator-owned comic, INTERTWINED, released between 2016 and 2017, has been an outstanding success. First on Kickstarter, then at conventions. The series has also been released by Dynamite Comics on the market.

Once again, I realized that I wasn't delivering enough original content each year and it was time to change that. I founded FairSquare Comics to help kicking my own butt and finally deliver more comics.

But projects take months to be ready for publication. And ONE-HIT WONDER was waiting for a second chance in the vault. Sounded like a perfect candidate for a

new Kickstarter, right? Wrong. Despite my efforts and energy, I failed. The initial goal of \$8000 was never met. And Kickstarter is an all or nothing kind of deal. So I walked out empty handed and exhausted.

But it forced me to re-think everything. Creator-owned comics have changed. And there's so much content available out there that it's very hard for creators to be heard and to sell enough copies to make the whole operation viable. Yet, conventions are still packed. And I'm enjoying great success at many of them. So what went wrong with the ONE-HIT WONDER Kickstarter?

Well, to many readers, this book was just another book. They didn't feel my personality, my passion for comics, my energy defending independent creators. The original campaign was mainly about the product. It was solid, but was missing a soul. Mine.

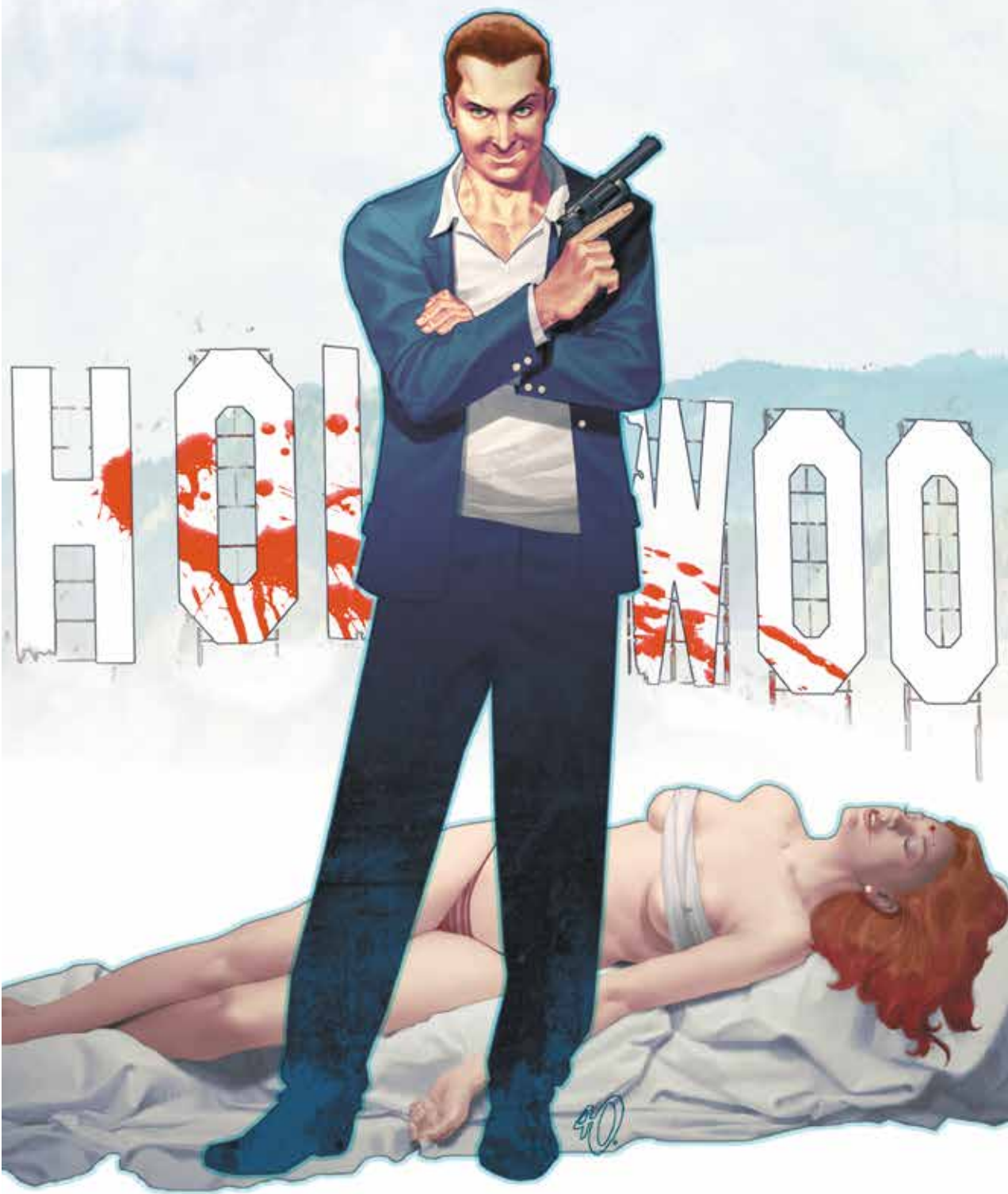
In January 2020, I re-launched the ONE-HIT WONDER Kickstarter campaign and labeled it "Take Two". This time, it was personal. And instead of the traditional 30 days, I opted for a shorter campaign of just 17 days [a deep cut referencing one of Prince's B-Side songs]. The goal was also brought down to \$4000 for a less fancy edition [softcover instead of hardcover]. It was funded in 3 days. It ended at \$6805. I call that a hit.

As I'm writing these lines, ONE-HIT WONDER is finally ready to soar again. What a ride. BIG THANKS to my bro Terrell Woods and superstar producer Ryan Leslie (a TRUE Black Mozart!) who let me play with their characters. Special thanks to Apollonia Kotero who loved the project but finally declined to be in the book because she didn't think the character's designs did her justice (I respect that and believe me, I'll find a way to bring her amazing personality to one of my comics one day).

And, last but not least, the fans, who show up at every show giving nothing but love for my work. This book proves that you should never give up on any project.

This is the beginning, folks. #comicsarelife

@fabricesapolsky
May 2020



1







DO YOU WANT ME TO SHOW YOU?

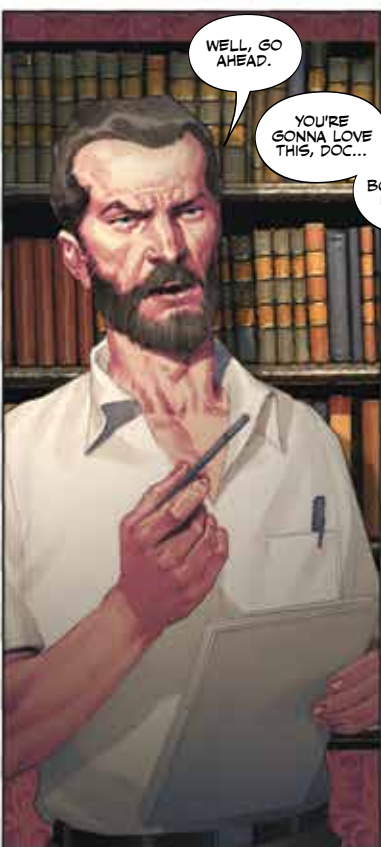
SURE, IF IT HELPS YOU COPE WITH YOUR EMOTIONS.



THERE'S A ROUTINE...

...LIKE SPORT OR A DANCE.

DO YOU LIKE TANGO, DOC?



WELL, GO AHEAD.

YOU'RE GONNA LOVE THIS, DOC...

...DEM BOYS GONNA LOVE THIS TOO!



RICHIE, PLEASE! DROP THAT GUN...

...SOMEONE COULD GET HURT!



THAT'S THE IDEA, DOC...

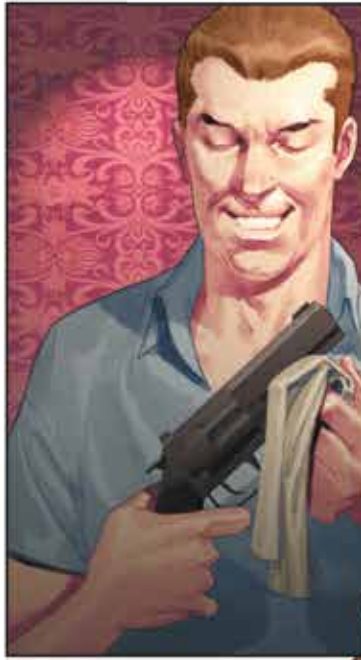
...THAT'S THE IDEA!



BLAM
BLAM

WHAT THE--

IT'S NOT IN
THE SCRIPT,
DAMMIT!



"That was rough. I'll be the first one to admit it."
"Pretty fucked up. But fun."



"Delivery was on point. I liked that the audience didn't see it coming, just like in *The 6th Sense*."

"Could definitely improve the pacing next time..."

"...I think I pulled the trigger too fast."

"I think people like killers who take their time."



"Move over Tarantino! There's a new Snuff Movie King out there."

"Richie Reese's the name."

"One-time commercial child star. Now, the best hitman in Hollywood."

"The one and only..."

ONE-HIT WONDER