

DARBY POP™

PUBLISHING

IDW

ISSUE

1

DEAD SQUAD™



PREVIEW



© 2014

FEDERMAN • SCAIA • MONTENAT

DEAD SQUAD

Three highly-trained Delta Force Operators embark upon a high-stakes mission to obtain a mysterious serum. But when they are betrayed by one of their own, securing the drug immediately becomes a matter of life, death, and their own resurrection.

Created and Written by
**MATTHEW FEDERMAN &
STEPHEN SCAIA**
Colors by
DOUG SIROIS

Layouts by
KIRK VAN WORMER
Letters by
TROY PETERI

Pencils by
MICHAEL MONTENAT
Design by
STEVE BLACKWELL



Regular Cover: **STEVE FIRCHOW**



Subscription Cover:
HOWARD CHAYKIN



Convention Exclusive Cover:
HOWARD CHAYKIN



DARBY POP PUBLISHING

President

JEFF KLINE

Editor In Chief

DAVID WOHL

Managing Editor

RENAE GEERLINGS

VP of Business

Development

MARK WHEELER

Marketing Director

JOSHUA COZINE

Legal Counsel

TOM COLLIER

Comptroller

LOIS M. BOTCHETT

Marketing Associate

KRISTINE CHESTER

LOVE US? HATE US?

Send an email to fanmail@darbypop.com
to let us know what you think!

★ DARBY POP PREVIEW ★

DEAD SQUAD



Darby Pop Managing Editor, Renae Geerlings, sits down with writers Matthew Federman and Stephen Scaia to talk about their exciting new title, DEAD SQUAD, hitting stores in October 2014!

For a lot of people, this Preview will be their first look at DEAD SQUAD. If you could sit potential readers down in a chair and do the speed-dating pitch, what would you make sure they knew about the book before you sent them into the comic store?

MATT: The book came out of the collision of 1) our childlike love of stories about badasses doing badass things and 2) our adult acknowledgement that the taking of life has real consequences, especially on the men and women we send into battle. We wanted to tell a fun, engaging action story where the heroes couldn't just blow everything up to solve their problems, where things were a little more complex. Another way of saying it is that we wanted an action story with a real soul. Also, we like long walks on the beach and a sense of humor (that's for the speed-dating crowd).

STEPHEN: Exactly. *DEAD SQUAD* is the *A-TEAM* with slightly more awareness of consequences and slightly less Mr. T.

Describe Blake, Hooper and Shane in three words each.

MATT: Assuming we can cheat and use hyphenated words... Blake: Leader, single-minded, serious. Hooper: Man-child, loyal, fun. Shane: Rookie, honorable, uncorrupted.

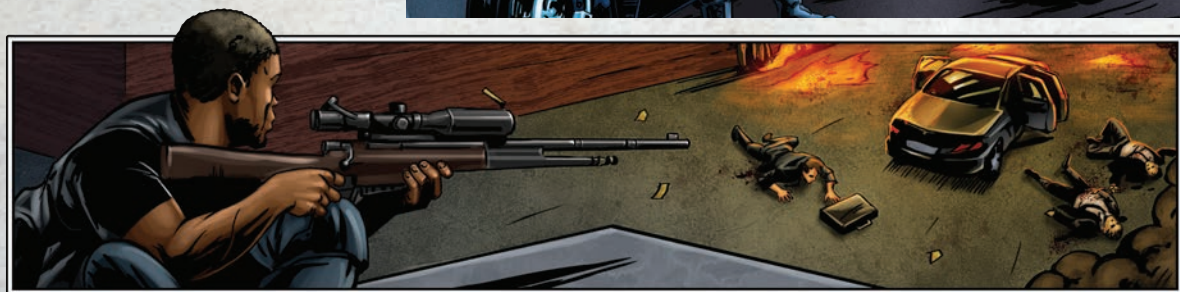
STEPHEN: Also, "Bad Ass Dude" applies to all three.

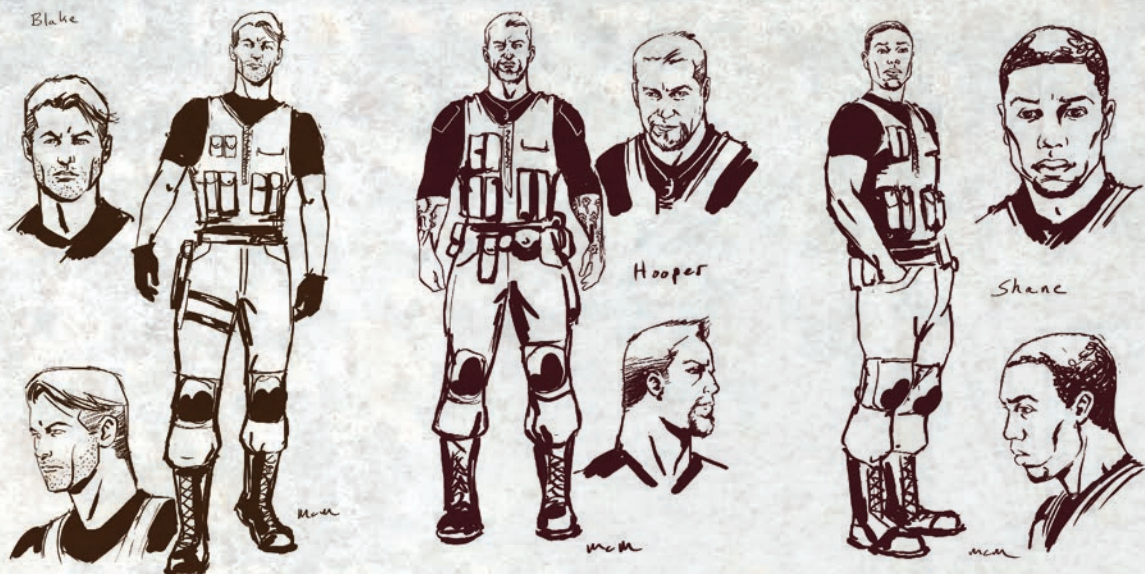
You have a laundry list of television credits including JERICO, HUMAN TARGET and WAREHOUSE 13.

You've also developed some very well-known comics into film scripts. What's it like to be on the other side of it, now, creating comics? How is the process in comparison and have there been any surprises?

MATT: I've worked on one comic before, *JERICO: CIVIL WAR*. That was a lot of fun and really opened my eyes to the difficulties and opportunities of the form. The biggest surprise with this one is how hands-on Darby Pop has let us be beyond the script stage. I mean, they promised that we'd be involved in every step of the process but we work in Hollywood so we're used to being lied to.

STEPHEN: I've always loved comics, they've shaped me creatively from early on—so getting to do one is a huge thrill. I love working in a medium that's so visual, and one where you don't have any production restrictions and your imagination can run wild.





Fans are going to see action, comedy and also some (well-disguised) deep reflection on life and death. Did this story start out that heady? Or did it sort of build? How did you guys cook this up?

STEPHEN: I think it began with an article we'd passed back-and-forth between us about how modern medicine evolves due to advancements made on the battlefield (from anesthetic being used in the Crimean War to modern emergency medicine born out of Vietnam to advanced prosthetics from the current wars in Iraq/Afghanistan). We started to wonder what the next great advancement might be, and found a few articles about nanotechnology and the amazing promise it holds to not only extend life, but to keep someone from dying. From there, we started talking about a team of soldiers who "die" but are brought back. In thinking of what that would be like, to come back after confronting your own mortality, it all started to come together...

MATT: I think by the way our process works, every story has to start out a little complex for us to do it—it's got to appeal to both of us in different but overlapping ways. So lots of times there's just this bucket of ideas, themes, plot moment, etc, and then one day the final ingredient is thrown in and suddenly we're both ready to move forward with it. I don't remember at what moment that happened with this for me but usually I need a theme that unifies everything before I really feel like I "get" something. When we locked in on the idea that three guys who were a team all had a different afterlife experience, and are now pulling in different directions based on what



they think is waiting for them on the "other side," that's the moment when it felt like a story to me.

I know both of you read comics. What two comics do you think influenced/affected you the most? And why?

STEPHEN: Only two?! That's tough. As we were working on *DEAD SQUAD*, I found myself not just reading current stuff, but digging out old favorites like Jeph Loeb's run on *BATMAN/SUPERMAN* for inspiration on developing two great main characters who want the same thing, but are conflicted about how to get it; Busiek's *ASTRO CITY* for the fantastic way he makes small character stories epic while still making you care about everyone; and of course, Bendis (for tone and story) and Ed Brubaker (whose work on *CAP* and *GOTHAM CENTRAL* was so great). One of the more satisfying things about working on *DEAD SQUAD* was having to sit in a pile of comics on the floor, reading for hours at a time because "it's work."



MATT: I was late to comics. Growing up, I read mostly about ancient mythology, and that's great for us because it's another place where there is overlap but we each have something different to bring to it. In terms of comics, I know it's a cliché, but when someone gave me *WATCHMEN*, that really blew me away and changed my perception of what the form could be. I also loved *Y: THE LAST MAN* (we were introduced to it around the time of *JERICO* when we were consuming all the post-apocalyptic stuff we could) for the fusion of premise, character and theme. Vaughn's ability to mix tones and maintain the character's humor and humanity against the circumstances he was faced with was exactly the kind of the thing we try to do and was a great inspiration.

I saw an interview where you commented that you both have older brothers and maybe that's helped you work together for so long and so well. This story has a really strong brotherly relationship between Blake and Hooper; do you see any parallels amongst yourselves? And which one of you is Blake and which one Hooper?

STEPHEN: Honestly, I think there are aspects of each of us in both of them. For me, the part that feels the most like Matt and I is the way Blake and Hooper disagree. They both want the same thing, but are trying to accomplish it differently. Very relatable. Although, for the record, I've never shot Matt in the leg.

MATT: It's funny because our friends are always saying, "Oh, I bet Matt wrote this line and Steve wrote this one," and frequently guess wrong. It's always nice to start out a character as an easy-to-grasp archetype but when you get under their skin, what makes them interesting and human is their contradictions. Which we both have plenty of.

There is not a single, weak female character in this book, even in supporting roles. First of all, THANK YOU. Second, which one of the main three (Nash, Vargas, or Tai) would live the longest on a deserted island. Brains, brawn, or bad?

MATT: The goal is to make every character as interesting as possible, regardless of gender. I think at some point "strong female character" came to mean "ass kicker" when really what makes a character strong is his/her point of view and goals.



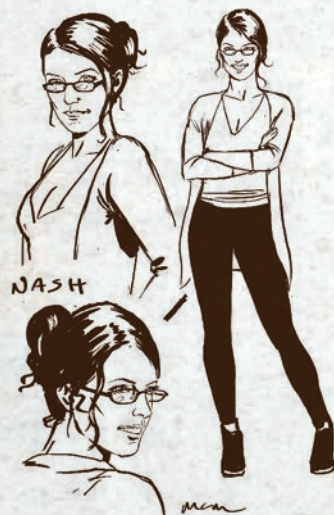
That also makes for better character and scene dynamics, and therefore a more engaging story all around. So no need to thank us, it's our own selfish instinct to make the best story possible.

STEPHEN: I'd like to think that because they're all smart, they'd quickly realize that they'd need to team up to survive, as each of them possesses a unique and useful skill the others don't. That being said, I do think there would need to be a mandatory fight between them—"THEY LIVE"-style—before they came to that realization.

Howard Chaykin did a cover for your first book! Nice! How'd that feel?

STEPHEN: Yeah, that was a very exciting day when Jeff Kline told us about the cover. Of course, who knows what Darby Pop had to promise the man in exchange...

Errr... that information should be declassified around 2020.



Well at any rate, I know I, for one, am REALLY excited for this series and I hope you readers are too!

Check us out when DEAD SQUAD #1 goes rogue in October!! ■