



Shooting War

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The global war on terror is raging out of control. The president is popping Prozac. And the #1 selling videogame in 2011 is the terrorist-simulator *Infidel Massacre: Los Angeles*. On the streets of gentrified Brooklyn, videoblogger Jimmy Burns' latest anti-corporate rant is cut short by a terrorist bombing of a Starbucks...but his live feed isn't. When his dramatic footage is uploaded by Global News ("Your home for 24-hour terror coverage") and rebroadcast across the planet, the obscure blogger is transformed into an overnight media sensation. The next thing he knows he's on a Black Hawk helicopter inbound for Baghdad, working for the same mainstream media monster he once loathed. Burns soon finds that everyone from his ratings-ravenous network overlords to Special Ops troops with messianic complexes to a charismatic band of tech-savvy *jihadists* all want to make him their pawn.

Shooting War Details

Date : Published January 15th 2008 by Grand Central Publishing (first published November 8th 2007)

ISBN : 9780446581202

Author : Anthony Lappe , Dan Goldman

Format : Hardcover 192 pages

Genre : Sequential Art, Graphic Novels, Comics, Fiction, War, Politics

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From Reader Review Shooting War for online ebook

Eric Knudsen says

Indie blogger Jimmy Burns is first on the scene at a bombed out Starbucks and, thanks to the right-wing corporate media, becomes a star. Then he's off to Iraq to discover the truth and regain his soul. Along the way Jimmy has unfulfilling sex with a writer from New York Magazine and pals around with a cartoon Dan Rather. What's not to like?

Jonathan says

One of the more interesting recent trends in comic books has been the increasing politicization of the medium. Shooting War is another example of a comic book with a message: war is bad, and America and the mainstream media are bad too. In the interest of full disclosure the author's politics are not mine, but I do enjoy reading what others who may disagree with my politics think. While readers are going to decide for themselves what they think of Shooting War's politics, the illustrations are quite well done, and the way photo-realism is mixed with drawings is fascinating.

Shooting War fails in two areas. First, it's VERY preachy. This is another trend in recent comic books, from The Walking Dead, to Y, to The Authority, to Wanted. The author isn't content to share his point of view; he has to shove it right down the reader's throat. Personally, it made me choke. I much prefer a more subtle approach, where the author presents a point of view, and then lets the reader make his own mind up. Instead we get a President McCain excoriating the Republican Party. We get it, the author doesn't like Republicans. Does he need to be so overt and blatant? We see American soldiers as villains, needlessly killing innocents, and being callous and cruel. Again, we get it, America is just the worst. The other issue is timeliness. Since the book was drawn, the situation in Iraq has drastically changed. Some dissident literature ages well, and long outlives the war or political issue it was originally created to protest. This isn't the case with Shooting War. Shooting War is an interesting experiment, but the long-winded and preachy dialogue ensures that it won't be remembered as a great read.

Robert B. Miller says

Read by Lacey, Spring 2007:

"This graphic novel is explicit and vulgar in nature and suggested audience should be from 15 years of age and older. This novel is about Jimmy Burns, a reporter who is asked to go and find out things that are going on in Baghdad. Directly from their website comes this plot introduction: "The year is 2011, and Jimmy Burns, a young anti-corporate blogger has just seen his Williamsburg apartment blown to bits by yet another terrorist attack on New York City. He's recorded the gruesome scene on his videoblog camera footage Burns beams live to a freaked-out world and that makes him an overnight media sensation. Exploited by his own network (Global News: Your home for 24-hour terror coverage), enraged by the terrorists, and determined to tell the American people the truth, Burns takes off for Iraq to get the real story of a war that's been raging for more than eight years." I wouldn't suggest this book for students in middle school or early high school, but late high school (11-12th grade) would be ok. I think that it is important to note that if I were to teach, this wouldn't be in my teaching plans whatsoever. As far as a teaching set, probably anything having to do with

current events or history and how it repeats itself. "

Colleen Venable says

Story was super compelling, but the art was muddled and sometimes inconsistent which only really bothered me after I put the book down. Might have been more stars if it wasn't so darn focused on a hipster-y reader. I have to say the cover was super compelling though, even if I assumed the book was about a photographer rather than a video-blogger. The latter choice was much more original, as was this whole story.

Chloe says

I first read this when it was a serialized web comic. The story is a hauntingly realistic portrayal of the mess the US will be in through our continued occupation of foreign land. The graphics are fantastic and the ideas expressed even better. I can't wait for the next edition.

PS- I also like them because they linked back to my blog. Little things like that make me happy as a clam.

PPS- How happy are clams? How would one gauge their happiness? For that matter, how could you tell if they were unhappy?

Jason says

Holy Schnikees!! I haven't read a story this engaging in a while! Lappe presents this graphic novel as a social and political satire, including some pretty hilarious bits that refer to corporate America and George Bush (who I voted for but can be objective about) as well as some very sobering illustrations of what war does to community and to our sense of altruism. Lappe's writing style is quite tongue-in-cheek while also carrying a compelling storyline. I'm curious now to read more of his work!

Intortetor says

un ottimo esempio di come si possa realizzare una graphic novel dai contenuti forti senza mortificare l'attenzione per le immagini (che stranamente ricordano quelle di "dmz", di burchielli e wood, e non è la sola similitudine...). lettura lettura obbligatoria per chi cerca le frange più politiche del fumetto contemporaneo, ma chi cerca un fumetto più "classico" e non è interessato all'argomento potrebbe restare deluso...

Jason Pettus says

(Reprinted from the Chicago Center for Literature and Photography [cclapcenter.com]. I am the original author of this review, as well as the owner of CCLaP; it is not being reprinted here illegally.)

So Chicagoans, did you know that our public library system is starting to make grown-up graphic novels more and more an acquisitional priority, based I guess primarily on customer suggestions? Here's one, for example, that I recently found on the "new" shelf of my own neighborhood library, Anthony Lappe and Dan Goldman's *Shooting War*, a supposed black comedy/political thriller concerning bloggers, political wars held in third-world lands, and the world of instant media fame we now live in, which I picked up because of hearing it favorably mentioned at a number of places I respect. But now that I've read it myself, I have to plainly wonder just what manuscript those other places read; because as much as I hate being mean and obvious here at the blog (and really, I do), I have no other choice seemingly but to say that the writing on display here is just terrible, *it's just f-cking terrible*. It's crude, obvious, juvenile, chock-full of ridiculously simplistic political points, the exact thing you expect when a visually gifted artist decides to do a full-length book but has no decent full-length story to base it on. And that's a real shame, because I'm a huge long-time fan of ACT-I-VATE, the independent online comic-artist collective that Goldman is a founding member of, and wanted very badly to be a champion of this latest full-length project of his; but the fact is that I simply cannot be in this case, that *Shooting War* is one of those projects that makes non-fans laugh at cocktail parties whenever snotty creative-class web-development a--holes try to convince them that they should take graphic novels seriously. Ooh, be wary of this one.

Out of 10: **1.8**

Jessica says

Technically, I shouldn't really put this on my read shelf, since I couldn't finish this graphic novel a few months ago (hence the one star). Art was underwhelming and sometimes just plain weird looking (i.e. proportions could be very wonky). Story was so single minded and overly opinionated that it completely overwhelmed the important issues it was trying to explore. Combine with the totally unlikable, media whore main character, and you've got one disappointing book.

Melanie says

"While making a video for his anticorporate blog, rugged Jimmy Burns serendipitously films a terrorist bombing at a Brooklyn Starbucks. Hired by a sensationalistic cable-news network—"The terrorists don't sleep and neither do we"—he lands in Iraq, where President McCain is continuing the troop surge. Burns unwittingly publicizes a revenge beheading; befriends a sage, flak-jacketed Dan Rather; and dallies with online groupies. Goldman's desert-landscape screen-grabs and kinetic graphics rush to keep pace with Lappé's balls-out script." -- Village Voice

Jeremy Megraw says

In a possible near future, a blogger becomes a celebrity when his live webcam captures a terrorist explosion at a Starbucks in Williamsburg. President McCain's son, a soldier, is captured in Iraq, where a full-fledged civil war spirals out of control. A bombing of a Mexican oil refineries threatens America's dependence on oil. Meanwhile the Great Wall of Texas continues to be built on the border. The blogger, hired by Lockheed Martin's new media company, is pressured to capture more exclusives live from Baghdad. He soon becomes demonized by all sides, but has a knack for being in the right place whenever there is a massacre. Lappe's

satiric graphic novel was published last November, when it looked like McCain had no chance. He also includes in the mix Pres. Raul Castro and a certain war with Iran. Damn.

Keith says

Described by its makers as a work of political satire. Shooting War is a graphic novel form essay on a speculative near future of media monopoly and the ongoing war in Iraq. Blackly humorous and striking in its plausability. The events it portrays lie only a few years in our future... I'm rather morbidly curious to see how true they turn out to be. Sometimes artists can predict the future better than those who get paid to appear on news shows and try that game. The Ex have a lyric on an album that came out in April of 2001 "no chance to wait for things to change/ unless buildings get hit by planes"... creepy a bit?

Marcelo says

I read this book in one night, right after watching V for Vendetta for a 3rd time. Whereas V for Vendetta the movie takes places in a dystopian near future United Kingdom dominated by a fundamentalist Christian militant government, Shooting War is a graphic novel set in the very very near future, almost now, where John McCain is President, the war in Iraq continues and gets worse and worse, and American journalism continues its downward spiral into irrelevance. Beautifully illustrated, frightening in its plausibility, this book is a loud call to my fellow Americans, that the violent world described within is just around the corner if we let it happen. If we don't hold the media accountable for actually investigating rather than reporting government propaganda, if we don't pressure Congress to end the war in Iraq, and if we allow the Republicans to run our discredited foreign policy once again. The American neo-con war drums against Iran are getting louder every day, and soon they'll tell us Iran has WMDs. As George W. likes to say, "Fool me once...."

Michael Wiggins says

I picked this book up cheap at the same time I picked up "War is Boring," another graphic novel that covers journalists in war zones. This, rather than an autobiographical account, is a fiction that takes place in the near future at the time of writing. That happens to be in 2011, which is in our own exciting past.

In this alternate universe, John McCain was elected president, and has fully committed our armed forces to countless hot spots across the globe, most notably in Iraq. That would not seem much worse than the 2011 we had anyway, except for vastly more competent terrorists in this fictionalized world.

There were parts of this book I liked, and much that I did not. The bloodshed was wanton, but I suppose that goes with the story. I thought the sexual encounter and the 'revealing' art to be gratuitous and more intended to lure a few extra readers than add anything to the plot (It also reminded me of the movie, "Thank You for Smoking"). But none of that was what really hurt "Shooting War."

I guess it was the whole premise that a blogger would somehow reset our moral compass by showing how evil and murderous the US military was in Iraq, and by extension, the rest of the world. Jimmy Burns, the blogger/protagonist, is well-placed to do so, whether by some uncanny sixth sense or by being well-

manipulated by others.

It's interesting to read this now, having seen the world we have following McCain's defeat by the junior US Senator from Illinois. It's hard to believe that a President McCain would have made our country so much more cruel and despotic. Tell it to the drones, eh?

J.I. says

Set in an alternate universe (book came out in 2008 and is set in 2009) where McCain is the President of a US under constant terrorist attack and the war in Iraq is both worse and more technologically advanced, *Shooting War* follows an independent blogger turned mainstream journalist. Except he isn't a journalist at all. He researches nothing, is told where to be and simply points his camera at things happening and gets renown somehow.

But the problem with this book isn't the passive protagonist (though it is annoying), it is in the painful caricatures, the long winded speeches and the lazy satire. I was honestly amazed that one of the writers is a journalist, given how painfully unaware this book seemed to be. That this is meant to be a critique of the media shows how deep the problem is--even the critics are uninformed, motivated by painfully partisan beliefs and incapable of understanding subtlety and nuance. Further, the narrative is very herky jerky, moving in time, location and logic in a way that makes little sense, as if entire sections were removed at the last moment and the seams couldn't be stitched in a logical manner.

The art is sometimes strong, often times mediocre and sometimes terrible. The meshing of photos with art are particularly gruesome affairs, with no seeming logic behind when a scene is rendered or reproduced, and the integration of the effects is laughable at best. It makes the book come off as a print equivalent of B-movie special effects.

It's a shame, really. This book has a lot going for it, but it falls in on itself.
