Written by Svetlana Fedotov
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Jacen Burrows has carved his name into the horror world through artwork as deranged as it is brilliant. Still a rising star, he's come a long way in his short career and though his comic styling is as distinctive as Mike Mignola and Ben Templesmith, even these masters don't hold a candle when it comes to the sheer, no-holds barred brutality that sweep the pages of Burrows' work. His eye for detail and large, splash pages of blood and depravity is similar to old school ultraviolent sleaze, where the harder you look, the harder you have to try to pull away.

Not one to shy away from controversy, Burrows has been a trusted partner of the likes of Garth Ennis and Alan Moore, and continues to expand his art from not only include horror, but sci-fi, and fantasy as well. Currently, Jacen Burrows can be spied working on the fan-favorite CROSSED, filling in all the gory details and giving us a birds-eye view of the zombie apocalypse. We were lucky enough to pull him away for a few minutes to pick his brain.

**FANGORIA:** You are known for some amazing horror and supernatural artwork. Was it your intent to do horror comics?

**JACEN BURROWS:** Horror has always been my favorite genre. I used to fill sketchpads with pictures of werewolves and sea creatures, going back to when I was five years old. I think the influence of horror can be seen in all of my projects, whatever genre they may be. I feel incredibly lucky that we have been able to find such an enthusiastic fan base for horror that I get to spend my days drawing monsters. I'm living the dream!

**FANG:** You've already worked with some of the comic industry's biggest names. Are there any authors you're still seeking to collaborate with?

**BURROWS:** I've been very lucky in that regard. It was pretty early in my career when I got to start working with high caliber writers. It has always been important to me to try to give them the best I am capable of at the time. I'm always aware I'm working with writers whose body of work was part of the inspiration that made me a comic artist in the first place, but we all share a passion for telling stories in this medium and I know they enjoy seeing what I come up with. I've done the most work with Garth Ennis and I think I generally understand what he is looking for best. We certainly plan to do more stuff together in the future. There are a lot of great

writers out there these days but lately I've gotten the most enjoyment from the works of Jason Aaron, Joe Hill and Scott Snyder.

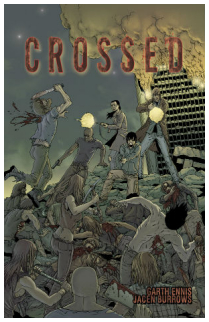
**FANG:** You have a great eye for truly bizarre visions, most notably in your NEONOMICON pages. How strict are your guidelines when bringing pages to life, and how much is yourself and creative freedom?

**BURROWS:** Some writers are more explicit than others, but there is always a little room for creativity. Generally, the imagery for the story pages is pretty well described, but I get a lot of space to run wild with the covers. We do a lot of collector variants and convention covers, so I get to explore some visual ideas that wouldn't normally make a main cover. That's usually where I have the most fun like the "Visions of Hell" covers for CHRONICLES OF WORMWOOD or the classic American works of art turned Crossed for CROSSED: FAMILY VALUES.

**FANG:** Your work is incredibly detailed, especially the big splash pages. Pertaining to the gore, do you ever find yourself holding back?

**BURROWS:** Splash pages are usually the biggest moments in the issue so I try to make sure they are detailed enough to warrant closer inspection. And it is fun for me to come up with ways to fill the space. I've always liked the “Where's Waldo” feel of highly detailed work. For gore, I try to be as realistic as I can. The only way I would pull it back is if I didn't feel it was realistic. But within that realistic damage, I do try to draw every little giblet and bone shard so it has impact. I want the effects of violence to be a damn near tangible thing so readers really feel the writer's intent.

**FANG:** It's well known that you have done art for several video and table-top games, ranging from crime to fantasy. How does that compare to working on comics?




**BURROWS:** The work I did in video games was really more of the advertising art variety than concept art, which I would love to try one day. I really liked the process, getting to see behind the scenes a bit, and the money was great, but job security is pretty much nonexistent in video games. I had some problems with payment working in the RPG market back in the late 1990s, but I always enjoyed getting to draw in the fantasy and sci-fi genres. I did a little work for WHITEWOLF a few years back and enjoyed getting to do something outside of my usual genres again but, ultimately, it is the storytelling of comics that always makes it my first love.

**FANG:** Would you like the chance to draw and write your own comic?

**BURROWS:** I have stories I like to develop in my spare time that might see the light of day one day. I don't see myself as a writer, so I would probably choose to collaborate with someone more talented in that skill set, but I have some great conceptual ideas. For the foreseeable future, though, I have plenty of great stuff on my plate that I could never turn down. It just never hurts to have an idea ready when the time comes and I have some visual ideas that I'm dying to show one day.

**FANG:** What were some of your influences? Is there any music you work to?

**BURROWS:** I like to have music playing when I'm working on layouts and rough sketches. I try to build a playlist of stuff that fits the tone of the book. For NEONOMICON, I used a lot of Post Rock and Dark Ambient. I really like stuff like Lustmord and Inade for that stage. When I'm doing the detailing and finishes, I watch movies, TV shows and listen to a lot of audiobooks. In

comics, my biggest influences have been Katsuhiro Otomo who did AKIRA; Enrico Marini, a European artist known for THE SCORPION, GYPSY; Bernie Wrightson, TimVigil and Frank Quitely. I think you can see elements of all of their styles in my work. Lately, I've been on a big Alex Toth kick and I'm excited to try out some new ideas.

**FANG:** What are you working on now?

**BURROWS:** I just finished a four-part arc for CROSSED BADLANDS, issues 10-13, about a traveling circus and carnival during the initial days of the CROSSED apocalypse. Right now, I am not at liberty to talk about the new project. The company likes to make those announcements, but I can say it is horror again and it is one of the longer stories I've worked on. It has the potential to be the most mind blowing thing I've done yet.

**FANG:** Lets have a fun fact!

**BURROWS:** I bought a really fancy, genuine, Japanese katana this summer and for the life of me I can't come up with any reasonable excuses why other than "Zombie Apocalypse".