

"SO NOW YOU'RE A ZOMBIE" (Book Review)

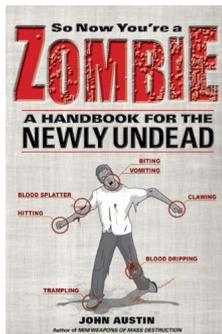
Written by Chris Alexander

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Oh Max Brooks. What hast thou wrought? Back in 2003, Brooks—son of legendary filmmaker/comedian Mel Brooks—released a campy, ersatz instruction manual called **THE ZOMBIE SURVIVAL GUIDE**, a mock instructional on how to evade being eaten by the living dead during a corpse revolt. The book was small, silly and fun and made some waves, putting Max on the map and moving units. Of course, the tome was simply a warm-up for his epic achievement **WORLD WAR Z**, but it was the first one that set the tone for the endless onslaught of quickie ghoulish cash grabbing titles that followed.

As the editor of the world's most widely read horror magazine, I can attest that almost daily zombie books arrive in my mailbox. Most are tired, some are pretty nifty and John Austin's shameless Brooks rip **SO NOW YOU'RE A ZOMBIE** (Chicago Review Press) falls somewhere in between: the concept is pure rehash but the execution has its moments...



SO NOW YOU'RE A ZOMBIE takes the conceit of Brooks' book and reverses it, opting to instead target the demographic that's dead. Split into nine sections including "What the Hell Am I?" which explains the rich history of your zombie (or "Zed" as they're referred to as) predecessors, "Hunting for Brains," "Attacking" and "Human Buffet," the book is nothing but a cover-to-cover goof. As is—and if you can forgive how blatantly it rips off Brooks in tone, text and illustration—there are a few shuddery yuks to be had along the way. In one chapter, the author teaches "us" to cunningly avoid all manner of bullet hits and fire assaults. There's even a throwaway part that explicitly warns dead Santas when sliding their rotting greasy frames down chimneys to check for burning embers. Or the extended bit that details how "Zeds" can infiltrate commercial buildings—including shopping malls—to find, catch and consume their "Breather" prey. Amusing...

So yes, the book is shameless, there's no question of its origins. But if you haven't read the Brooks book, or if you REALLY loved it and have been clamoring for a follow-up, **SO NOW YOU'RE A ZOMBIE** has enough sick shtick to fill the putrescent void...until the next damn

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zombie humor paperback pops onto shelves which is probably, like, right now. And now. And now. And...



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