



Tied-In

The Newsletter of the International Association of Media Tie-in Writers

DeCandido Gets a Chunk of Farscape

by Keith R.A. DeCandido

Back in 2001-2002, while *Farscape* was still on the air, Tor Books (in the U.S.) and Boxtree (in the UK) published three novels based on the show. I wrote one of them, *House of Cards*, and later went on to write three short stories, two for Titan's *Farscape Magazine*, and one for Alderac's role-playing game.

When I found out that BOOM! Studios had picked up the license to do new *Farscape* stories in comic book form, I did what any self-respecting tie-in writer would do: I send an e-mail to the publisher, gave them my resume, and hoped for the best. Mind you, 95% of the time, that doesn't work. But I lucked out and fell into the right 5% for once.

One thing that helped was the involvement of show creator Rockne S. O'Bannon. Back in 2001, the Jim Henson Company hosted a publication party for *House of Cards*, and Rockne was there. The first thing he said

to me was, "You get it!" After that party, Rockne and I stayed in touch. I consulted with him on the plot of a second *Farscape* novel that wound up never happening due to bizarre external

circumstances involving contracts and lawyers and things. Fast forward to 2008, and the response to my cold call to BOOM! is that these comic books will take place after *The Peacekeeper Wars*, and Rockne will plot them. Rockne recommends me as the perfect choice to write scripts based on his plots, so everything works out.

AND HOW DID IT WORK?

Rockne writes a very detailed plot description. Readers will get to see how detailed when BOOM! releases a special



edition comic that reprints his plot for the miniseries. I then write a page-by-page breakdown of the storyline (sometimes adding some details), and then I write the script based on that, consulting with Rockne the whole way on everything.

Usually, I write the 22-page script and send it to Rockne, and then he and I spend a couple of hours on the phone going over it. Mind you, it only takes a couple of hours because Rockne and I are both very silly people who are easily distracted by shiny things, and so we go off on



multiple digressions. That, and we generally discuss things. Rockne doesn't just give orders and I say, "Yes, sir" (though that happens fairly often . . .), but we talk it over. Sometimes he won't like something, and has one suggestion for fixing it, and

then his suggestion prompts me to come up with something even better that we both love. And so on.

It kinda frightens me how much Rockne and I are on the same wavelength—and it should frighten him even more. But it's been as smooth a collaboration as could possibly be, and continues to be more fun than a barrel of Sheyang.

My favorite note from Rockne so far has been: "Love the puke! WHO DOESN'T LOVE PUKE????!!!"

THE PLAN GOES FORWARD

BOOM!'s publishing approach is to do Farscape as a series of four-issue miniseries consisting of standard 22-page monthly comic books available at comic book stores and such. Each mini will later be collected into a single bound volume that will also get bookstore distribution.

The first miniseries—simply called Farscape, with the subtitle “The Beginning of the End of the Beginning,” debuted on Christmas Eve 2008, and the first issue sold out in five days. BOOM! then commissioned a second printing. The miniseries picks right up where The Peacekeeper Wars left off—in fact, page one of the first issue is the “Kunta Kinte” shot of Crichton and Aeryn holding up their newborn to the stars from the end of that



miniseries. We then continue to Hyneria where Rygel finally tries to get his throne back.

In March, the second miniseries will debut, entitled Farscape: Strange Detractors, which will continue the “fifth-season” style stories by me and Rockne. This one will have a new artist: Will Sliney will do SD, following Tommy Patterson on TBotEotB.



Then in April, we go back in time for the third miniseries, D'Argo's Lament. Ka D'Argo was an immensely popular character, but he went and died heroically in PKW, so BOOM! thought it would be good to give the big guy a spotlight comic book, taking place during the series (specifically in the late third season). This one I'm writing on my own, in consultation with Rockne, and features D'Argo and the other Moyan who bought it in PKW, Jool.

And there are no plans to stop there, as Farscape is an ongoing concern for BOOM! I hope to continue to be involved with the line going forward. The folks at BOOM! have been absolute joys to work with, and for reasons passing understanding, they like me, too, so I'd say this has been the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

FUTURE WORK

In addition to tons o' Farscape, I've got a few Trek items coming out in 2009: a short story in Pocket's *Mirror Universe* anthology *Shards and Shadows; A Singular Destiny*, a follow-up novel to David Mack's epic *Destiny* trilogy, showing the larger consequences of what happened in that trilogy on the greater Trek universe; and an issue of IDW's Alien Spotlight comic book focusing on the Klingons. At the end of 2009, I've got two Starcraft

projects hitting: a novel, *Spectres*, the sequel to my 2006 novel *Nova*, from Pocket and the first volume of a manga series from TokyoPop called *Ghost Academy*.

Catalyst Claims John Helfers

Catalyst Game Labs is extremely pleased to announce that John Helfers has agreed to come onboard as the novel line developer. John brings an impressive set of writing and editing skills and history to the table.

IAMTW member John Helfers is an author and editor currently living in Green Bay, Wisconsin. During his fourteen years working for Martin H. Greenberg at Tekno Books, he has edited fifteen short

story anthologies for DAW, as well as numerous other ones and novels for other publishers in all genres. He has also worked with well-known authors and co-editors such as Lawrence Block, Larry Bond, Anne Perry, Jeffery Deaver, Michael Connelly, Walter J. Boyne, Harold W. Coyle, Stephen Coonts, Charlaine Harris, Margaret Weis, Kim Harrison, Mercedes Lackey, and Kevin J. Anderson.

He has also published more than thirty-five short stories in anthologies such as *If I Were An Evil Overlord*, *Time Twisters*, and *Places to Be, People to Kill*. He has written media tie-in fiction for the *Dragonlance*®, *Transformers*®, *BattleTech*™ and *Shadowrun*™ universes, among others. He has written both fiction and nonfiction, including the third novel in the first authorized trilogy



John Helfers working with his editorial assistant.

based on The Twilight Zone™ television series, the YA novel *Tom Clancy's Net Force Explorers: Cloak and Dagger*, and a history of the United States Navy. His most recent published novel is *Room 59: The Finish Line*. Recently he signed a multi-book contract with Worldwide Publishing for their long-running *Deathlands* action series. He also edited the new Shadowrun anthology *Spells & Chrome*, forthcoming from Catalyst Game Labs.

"This obviously has meant a delay for the launch of the novel line," said Randall N. Bills, Managing Line Developer. "However, I'm confident the novel line will be far stronger as it launches this year with John's considerable talents to back it up."

More information on the coming novel line and when those novels will publish will be available in the near future.

One of the highlights of the convention will be the premiere of: "The House Without a Key," a new play based on Earl Derr Biggers' Charlie Chan novel.

LCC will also feature a luau, talks about Hawaiian flora and fauna, pre- and post-convention trips, and fun and informative interactive panels.

For more information about Left Coast Crime, visit: www.leftcoastcrime.org/2009

Official Stargate SG1 and Atlantis Convention

April 2-5, Vancouver, BC, Hilton Metrotown, Burnaby, BC. Attendance will be limited to 525 to guarantee a more intimate setting. Parties, photo-ops, autograph sessions, and more. Guests: Joe Flanigan, Amanda Tapping, Robert Picardo, and others. Attendance fees range from \$199 to \$499. Call CREATION at 818-409-0960 ext. 225 for more information.

WWA Convention

The Western Writers of America Convention is set for June 9-12 at the Sheraton in Midwest City, Oklahoma. Visit the organization's web site for more information. www.westernwriters.org

RWA 29th Annual Conference

Washington, DC's Marriott Wardman Park Hotel will play host to the RWA event July 15-18. More than 100 workshops, panels, and round-tables will be offered, and many publishing professions will be on hand. One-on-one pitch sessions with agents and editors are included. A 500-author charity book signing is also planned. The conference early registration fee is \$425 for members and \$500 for non-RWA members. Registration is open on the RWA Web site. www.rwanational.org www.leftcoastcrime.org/2009

Convention Calendar

Left Coast Crime

Left Coast Crime 2009 will be held on the Big Island of Hawaii from March 7-12. The conference's toastmaster, who is charged with keeping the crowd entertained at the awards ceremony, on the beach, at the bar, and in the elevator, is IAMTW's own Vice President Lee Goldberg.

Norwescon 32

"Things that Time Forgot" will be held April 9-12 at the Doubletree Hotel at Seatac, WA. Guest of honor is tie-in writer R.A. Salvatore. The publisher guest is Wizards of the Coast. Norwescon, PO Box 68547, Seattle, WA 98168-0547, 206-270-7850. www.norwescon.org

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