

10

A Decade of Dominance, Heartbreak and Redemption.

Written by:

Silverback

Foreword by:
Maxina Brown

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Created and written by: SILVERBACK
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Dedicated to:

Dedicated to the wonderful individuals who have graced me with their presence by stopping by my various Con booths to say “hello”, snap a selfie or purchase a title or 2. There would be no “SILVERBACK” without any of you!

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Foreword

What do you say about a person who has encountered many challenges in life, or can you say. I have witnessed the darkest of his days to days of his joy. Silverback is a resilient individual; he has not allowed life to stop him where he stands. He has dug, climbed and stretched his way to success. And by his own rules he is still reaching and pressing to the ultimate goal. That goal is to represent in his life what others told him that he could not accomplish.

He has looked death in the face and has said to it “back up I am not ready there is much for me to do!” I recall the time when I met back up with him, his vision was not doing well. And when I say not doing well, he had become blind to the point when he went shopping he taught himself to count his steps in the store in order to purchase the items he needed. Then he had multiple surgeries to correct the 90 plus year cataracts that caused his blindness. The journey of his healing spoke to his love, commitment and dedication to his craft. After the multiple surgeries and painful procedures, he was able to see again but it came with its own struggles and disappointments.

The disappointment was that he thought that as soon as all the surgeries and procedures were done that his sight would have repaired all the damage that had happened to his eyes. Little did he know that all of this would be a process and not instant. He became very happy when he went to the doctor the first time to remove the initial patch that covered the eye. He turned to me and said “Oh wow, you are beautiful!” It took me back for a second. I said what are you talking about, then it hit me that he could see me. And I was so overjoyed for him. Then he turned to look out the window

shouting out the colors of flowers that he before wasn't able to see. But now he saw all the colors. We were excited....

He was so ready and anxious to resume his long awaited writing and drawing that had been awaiting his return. He went to one of his favorite art supply companies and hit them for everything that he would need to get started again. Although his eyes were fixed he didn't realize the amount of pain and healing that his eyes were going to go through. He has to endure drops that have to be placed in his eyes two to three times a day. Which was painful, because the eyes were oh so sensitive still. At this time he was invited to participate in an exhibit and return to The Sunrise Comic Con (which he was so eagerly willing to accept. He was one of the founding participants from when it was first created. With accepting the invitation he would need to create several exhibit pieces that would be seen in the show room.

Seeing that he recently had surgery on his eyes , he gladly took on the challenge. And began creating eight new pieces to add for the exhibit. There were days that he would create the pieces and then there were days where he could physically not get out of bed. Some days his sight would become blurry and so painful. Then there were days that I would look at him and I knew instantly that he could not see his hand in front of his face. I would tell him honey if this is becoming too much just back out. But, if anyone knows him they know that he is not a quitter. And so for months he would stop and go as his body and eyes would allow him. At this same time he was dealing with stage-5 kidney failure. All I could do was pray for him as he refused to quit. There are so many things that I could say about this man named "SILVERBACK".

What I will say about him is that he is a mold that I would want to copy for myself. His drive and desire to be the best that he can be for his family, fans and himself is simply resounding. And to know him and share a part of his life is an honor. He has encouraged so many including myself that no

matter what you given in life that if you just keep pressing
you will reach your goal

So, I say to you Mr. G my dear “Silver” congratulations on
celebrating your 10-year anniversary of being an author and
artist and to many more years!! CONGRATULATIONS!!!

Preface

Ennio Morricone's Ecstasy of Gold plays through the soundbar and subwoofer as I reflect on what a long, strange glorious trip it's been. Through all the peaks and valleys, twists, turns, highs and lows I traveled them all even experiencing a few potholes along the way. But I have finally arrived at my destination, the glorious City of 10. That's right ladies and gentlemen. I've done it for 10 years, a decade, 3,650 days of triumph, dominance, design, disappointment and redemption. When I look back at it all...I wouldn't change a thing

Chapter I

AN UNEXPECTED INTRODUCTION TO THIS LIFE I LOVE

I'm not going to bore you with the typical insipid and platitudinous beginnings of the memoir genre when I discuss my turbulent childhood. If you want to read about that pick up "SILVERBACK": My Life and Journey or "TATTOOED APE" From Point A to B. For today we are going to start right from where this amazing journey truly began. A little man with a big legacy behind him stopped to take some time to speak with me. I met Allen Bellman at PPF (Past Present Future Comics) Allen worked for Timely Comics and for those of you who have resided under a rock Timely Comics eventually became the global juggernaut that we now know today as Marvel Comics. In a brief 15- minute interaction Allen sent me on a path that I sure as hell didn't foresee myself traveling. "You need to be at Supercon!" he exclaimed. It was as simple as that 1...2...3...but there was one slight problem: I HAS NO IDEA WHAT A SUPERCON WAS! Or even where to find it so when in doubt go to Google!

Query: What is Supercon?

Answer: Florida Supercon is an annual comic book convention held in the Miami and Fort Lauderdale metro areas of Florida. The event usually takes place in early July.

Ok so with that bit of information in hand I made plans to go to Supercon. Not knowing what to expect I began getting my portfolio in order. If this professional saw something in me I owed it to myself to take a proverbial leap of faith. But before Supercon Allen had one more courtesy to extend to me. The store I had met him at was having an event where artists were showing their artwork and he had arranged for yours truly to be one of those esteemed artists. I was shocked, humbled and more importantly grateful. I drew more in that short period of time than any other time in my life. If this was going to be my first public and professional event I was going to with both guns blazing!

The day of the PPF event I was a bundle of nervous energy with a shit load of questions:

1. What if they ask me how much for one of my pieces?
2. How much do I charge?
3. What if they don't like my artwork?
4. What if they really like it? (Did I bring enough with me?)
5. Bro, are you sure you belong?

I was in some pretty big company: Marvel's Allen Bellman of Captain America fame. (Oh, did I forget to mention that part?) Also, in attendance was DC Comics and Inkspot Award recipient Jose Delbo. Delbo worked on The Spectre, Wonder Woman, The Superman Family, The Batman Family and Superman/Batman World's Finest. The event even had a Hollywood component to it with The Walking Dead's "Big Tiny" Theodus Crane. There was no turning back for me. I was already set up and it wouldn't behoove me to turn tail and run, not when I've done so much to prepare myself for this day. I can't say that it was everything I thought it would be because I really didn't know what to expect but what I can say is that this event had both its highs and lows. There were some people who just loved my work and that was the boost of confidence that truth be told I really needed. Then I encountered "HIM!"

After meeting Jose Delbo and getting a hand drawn sketch of Batman I met an individual who came to my table and just absolutely shredded my work saying that it was crap, crap and bigger CRAP! I felt like Peter Parker standing before J. Jonah Jameson in the offices of The Dairy Bugle. I WAS CRUSHED! DEVASTATED BEYOND WORDS! In the blink of an eye he took a lifetime of dreams, and aspirations and gathered them all up into a crumpled-up bundle of trash poured lighter fluid on it and set the whole thing ablaze. He wasn't remotely subtle; he criticized every and I mean EVERY piece in my portfolio. He would've criticized the plastic sleeves that the pieces were in if he had the chance. He was heartless, brutal, absolutely sanguineous in his approach.

I was ready to pack up my things and silently slink out the back door, then I realized that there was no back door. So, I had 2 choices before me:

1. Gather my th8ngs and walk past everyone on my way to the front door.

OR

2. Stand my ground, be proud of my work and not allow him to run me off.

You got 1 guess to what I decided to do. Well clearly you already know what I chose because if I had chosen anything other than option number 2 you would not be here reading this book right now and I will not be celebrating 10 years. So needless to say, I stayed and it's a good thing I stayed, for experiencing that asshole prepared me for the one crucial lesson that would serve me well the rest of my career "*not everybody is going to like your work!*" That little lesson is something that I not only apply to everything I do now but I try to instill that into the core consciousness of every young creator that approaches my booth whether they're a writer or artist. So here goes my public service announcement for today.

The opinions expressed in this public service announcement do not reflect those of the literary community as a whole. But solely the thoughts of the artist "SILVERBACK" and his Unholy Literary Trinity

Not everybody is going to like your work! If you were to draw or write for the masses to please everybody you will drive yourself FUCKING CRAZY! Create what you love and love what you create. If you put your whole heart into your work it will show and will attract those likeminded individuals and from there your true fanbase is cultivated. And now back to our regularly scheduled show.

So, where were we?

I stayed for the whole event. I sold a few pieces that were in my portfolio, Even got a few new commission opportunities. But the one thing I didn't see coming was that I met an individual who was another show promoter of a much smaller convention who gave me an opportunity to fine tune my craft before stepping foot into Supercon. He complimented my work and even purchased a few pieces. He extended the opportunity I accepted and we shook on it. Before you knew it, I was on my way to Ultra-Con.

Hey, do you know the problem with handshakes?
They're exactly 5.9 inches away from a knife between the shoulder blades!

Chapter II

ULTRA-CON

Ultra-Con was a small regional show that started in a hotel reception hall. Now I'm not disparaging Ultra-Con by any means, I'm just stating the size and scope for informational purposes as the book goes on. Like I was saying Ultra-Con was a fairly small show but to me it might of well have been San Diego Comic Con or New York Comic Con, it was that special to me. I had never experienced anything like it from the cosplayers of all shapes and sizes displaying their unmatched creativity and talent to the celebrity guests to comic book royalty Ultra-Con was the ultimate highpoint for my career. There is a saying that goes: "Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you'll have to eat them, you can swallow it well."

- That is exactly what happened when guess who walked into the convention? You got the prick that I met a few weeks previously at Present Future who shredded my work. Yeah J. Jonah's twin yeah that dick! Now here's the rub he came up to my table ranting, raving and glowing over my artwork the very same artwork that he ridiculed earlier.

"Oh my God this is amazing! You are super talented this is like top tier art!" he said. All I could do was laugh, He didn't even realize that the very same pieces that he was going goo-goo over were the exact same ones that he just obliterated with his critique. Hell, if you think my work is that good you should by some and that was exactly he did (\$350.00 worth.) After this weekend, I was confident enough to take on the massive juggernaut that was Florida Supercon.