



IMITASYON

THE GRAPHIC NOVELLA

PETER PAUL PAYACK

MIKE PAYACK

EUGENE DAMIAN



The graphic novel inspired by the "Official Selection" in the 2010 San Diego Black Film Festival and the 2009 Roxbury Film Festival



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PETER PAUL PAYACK
illustrator/writer

MIKE PAYACK
writer

EUGENE DAMIAN
writer

IMITASYON: THE GRAPHIC NOVELLA

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and Eugene Damian and the film, *Imitasyon*, directed by
Eugene Damian and produced by Mike Payack and
Eugene Damian for Dreamtrack Productions © 2008

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Illustrations based on the likenesses of:

Yves Lamitie as Jeanson Pierre

Kyla Cardoso-Lamitie as Kyla Pierre

Natasha Barnwell as Ms. Sally Aru

Nate Hyde as Jack

Jared Lindsay as Isiah

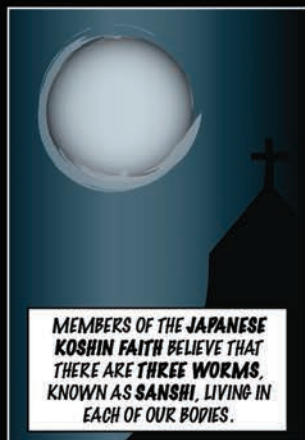
Jahmaya Adamson as Sasha

This graphic novel is dedicated to my parents,
Peter Payack and Monica Hynes-Payack,
and to those who lost their lives or loved ones
in the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

IMITASYON *IMITATION*



PREMYE PATI
PART ONE



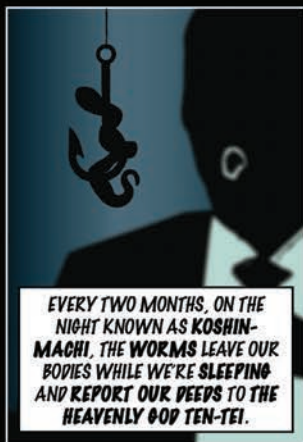
MEMBERS OF THE JAPANESE KOSHIN FAITH BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE THREE WORMS, KNOWN AS SANSHI, LIVING IN EACH OF OUR BODIES.



THESE WORMS KEEP TRACK OF OUR GOOD AND BAD DEEDS...



... ESPECIALLY THE BAD ONES.



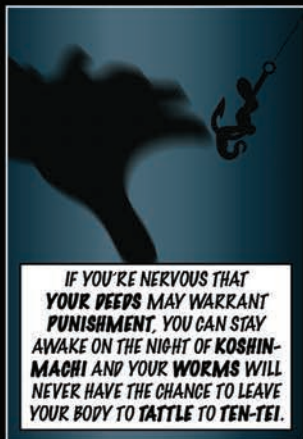
EVERY TWO MONTHS, ON THE NIGHT KNOWN AS KOSHIN-MACHI, THE WORMS LEAVE OUR BODIES WHILE WE'RE SLEEPING AND REPORT OUR DEEDS TO THE HEAVENLY GOD TEN-TEI.



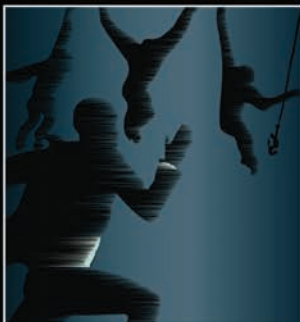
IF TEN-TEI FEELS OUR DEEDS ARE BAD ENOUGH, HE CAN PUNISH US IN ANY WAY HE SEES FIT: ILLNESS. DEATH.



BUT THERE'S ALWAYS A LOOPHOLE, RIGHT?



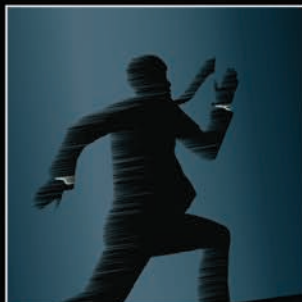
IF YOU'RE NERVOUS THAT YOUR DEEDS MAY WARRANT PUNISHMENT, YOU CAN STAY AWAKE ON THE NIGHT OF KOSHIN-MACHI AND YOUR WORMS WILL NEVER HAVE THE CHANCE TO LEAVE YOUR BODY TO TATTLE TO TEN-TEI.



JAPANESE TRADITION TELLS OF THREE WISE MONKEYS: KIKAZARU, MIZARU AND IWAZARU.



OUTSIDE OF JAPAN, THEY'RE BETTER KNOWN AS HEAR NO EVIL, SEE NO EVIL AND SPEAK NO EVIL.



WITHIN THE KOSHIN FAITH, THESE MONKEYS ARE BELIEVED TO KEEP THE WORMS AND TEN-TEI FROM HEARING, SEEING AND SPEAKING OF OUR BAD DEEDS.



I'M A CHRISTIAN, SO I DON'T HAVE WORMS. BUT BACK IN HAITI WE HAD A SAYING OF OUR OWN:

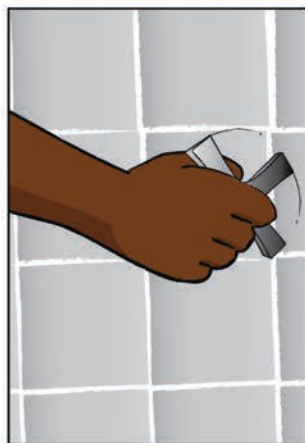
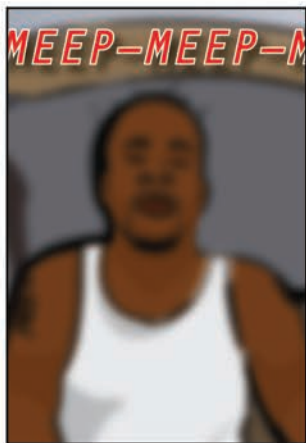


"TIMOUN GEN ZORÈY LA AK LANG LONG."

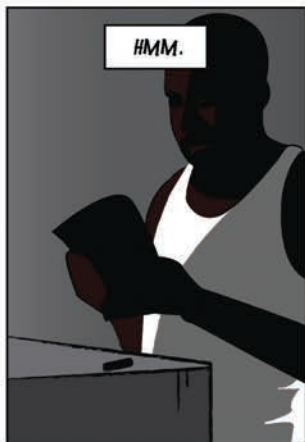
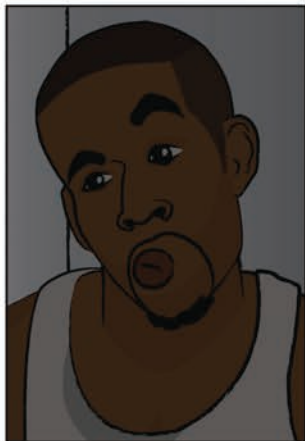


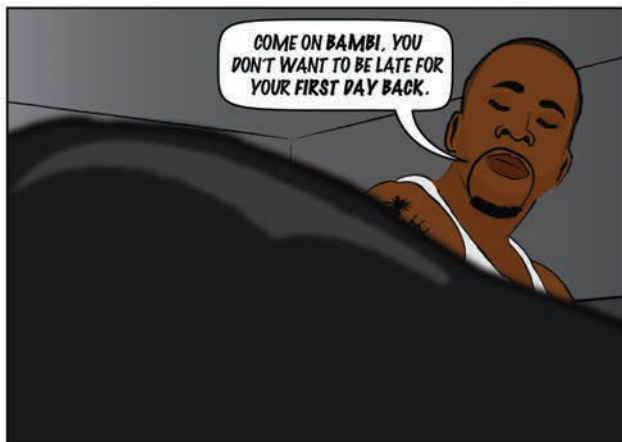
"CHILDREN HAVE WIFE EARS AND LONG TONGUES."













MY JOB IS TO MAKE YOU GO TO SCHOOL.

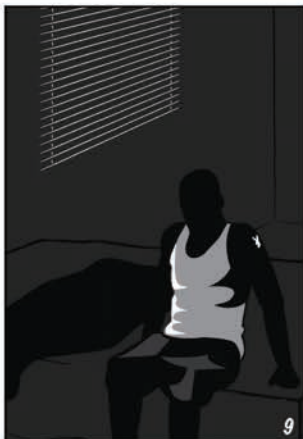


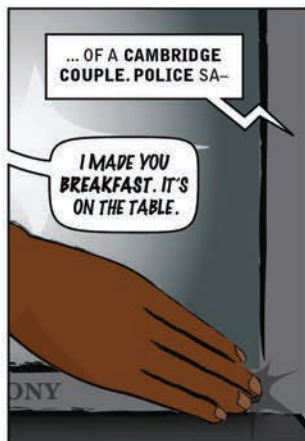
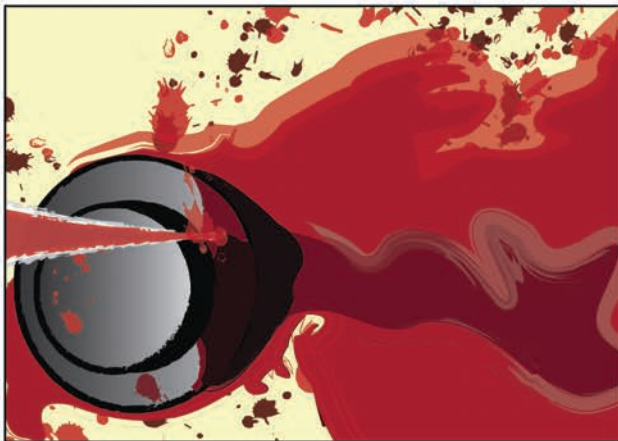


THEN HE ASKED YOUR DADDY WHO HE WANTED THE GODFATHER TO BE AND DADDY SAID ME. PASTOR SEKRÉ MADE ME PROMISE THAT IF ANYTHING BAD EVER HAPPENED TO MOMMY AND DADDY, I WOULD TAKE CARE OF YOU...

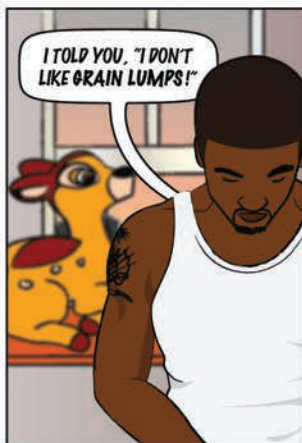


... AND THAT I HAD TO FEED YOU, BUY YOU CLOTHES, MAKE YOU GO TO SCHOOL AND PROTECT YOU IN EVERY WAY.

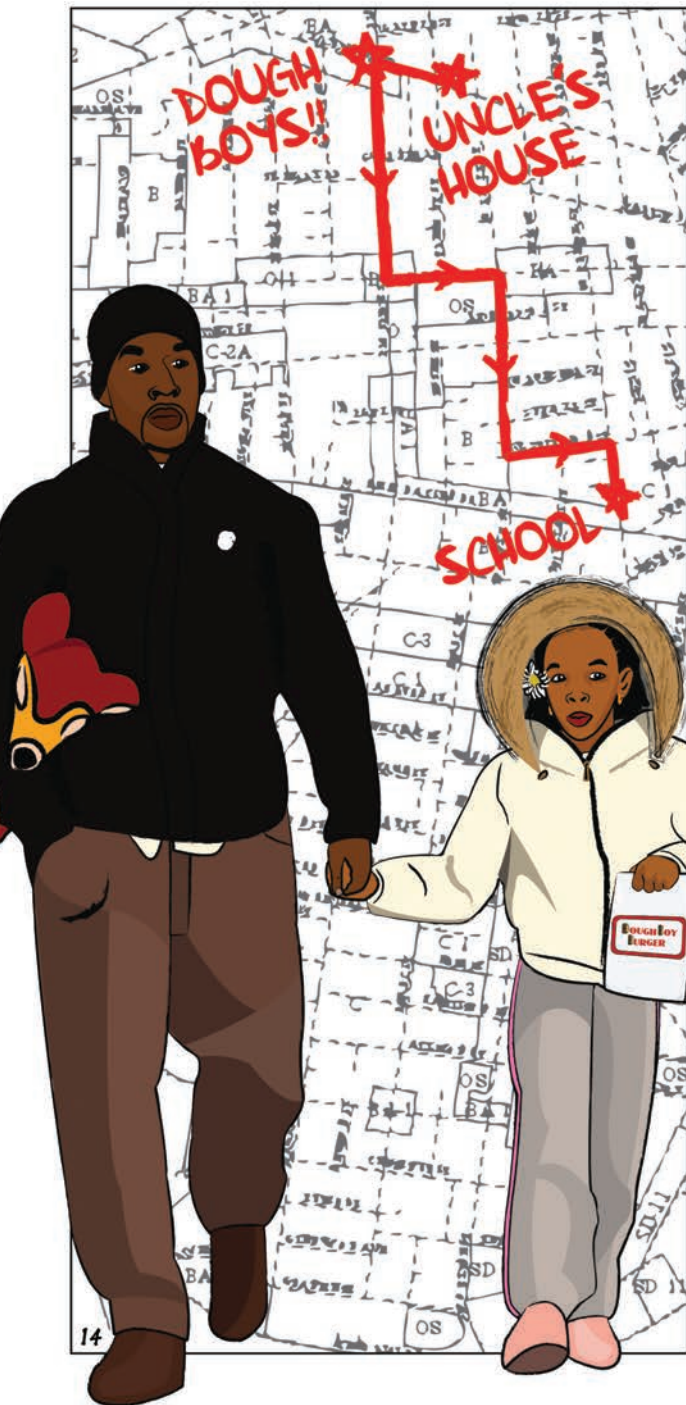












YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR PROBLEM IS, BAMBI? YOUR MOTHER BABIED YOU AND YOUR FATHER MOTHERED YOU.





VERY GOOD! TODAY WE ARE GOING TO READ A BOOK ABOUT A LITTLE BOY WHO WAS RAISED BY ANIMALS. DOESN'T THAT SOUND LIKE FUN?



WHY DON'T YOU GUYS READ TO YOURSELVES FOR A COUPLE OF MINUTES WHILE I SAY "HELLO" TO KYLA AND HER UNCLE.

AND JACK, WHY DON'T YOU GET A TISSUE FOR YOUR NOSE?



HI, I'M SALLY ARU. YOU MUST BE MR. PIERRE?

YES.

IT'S NICE TO FINALLY PUT A FACE TO THE NAME.

WAIT - SALLY ARU? OH, YOU MUST BE CLAUDY ARU'S DAUGHTER - HE OWNS THE BAKERY ON RINDØVE AVE...



YES... HE DOES.



"... I LOVE HIS CUPCAKES. HE HAS THE BEST FROSTING!"



YEAH, THEY ARE GREAT. HI KYLA! WE'RE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU BACK WITH US!

OH YEAH! YEAH, KYLA'S GLAD TO BE BACK. I DON'T KNOW WHY SHE'S BEING SO SHY THOUGH.



BAMBI?

IT'S OKAY TO BE A LITTLE SHY. KYLA, DO YOU WANT TO PLAY HOUSE IN THE CORNER?



JACK IS BUILDING A BLOCK TOWER. WANT TO HELP HIM?



OH, I KNOW! WHAT ABOUT PAINTING? AH, I THOUGHT SO!





AFTER I DID THE LAUNDRY YESTERDAY, I HAD TO LOOK AROUND THE HOUSE FOR TEN MINUTES BEFORE I FINALLY FOUND KYLA UNDER THE KITCHEN SINK, "HIDING FROM THE BAD MAN."

SOUNDS ROUGH.

NOT AS ROUGH AS TRYING TO EXPLAIN THAT HER PARENTS AREN'T COMING BACK.



WELL, KYLA WAS ACTUALLY ASSIGNED A GRIEF COUNSELOR THAT CAN HELP YOU WITH THINGS LIKE THAT.



GRIEF COUNSELOR?

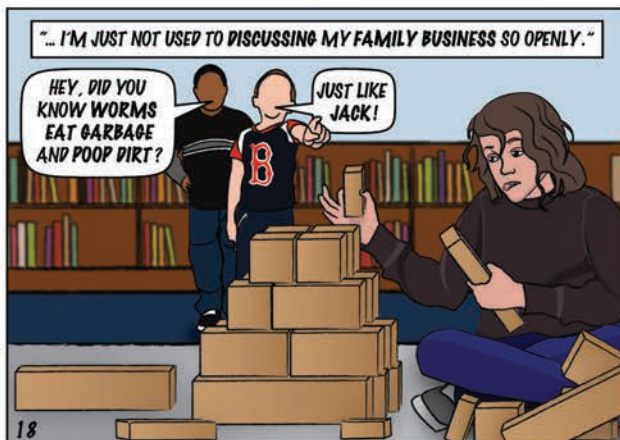
DON'T WORRY, HE HAS A GREAT REPUTATION.



IT'S NOT THAT. IT'S JUST I'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT THIS NONSTOP, YOU KNOW, AND-

I'M SORRY. IT MUST BE DIFFICULT. BUT, THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT HE CAN HELP YOU WITH.

YEAH I KNOW...



"... I'M JUST NOT USED TO DISCUSSING MY FAMILY BUSINESS SO OPENLY."

HEY, DID YOU KNOW WORMS EAT GARBAGE AND POOP DIRT?

JUST LIKE JACK!



WELL, HE ALREADY HAS ALL OF KYLA'S INFORMATION SO HE'S PRETTY MUCH UP TO SPEED...



... IT SHOULDN'T TAKE TOO MUCH TIME, BUT HE IS EXPECTING YOUR CALL.

HIYA!



DON'T SWEAT IT SALLY. THAT'S JUST THE WAY IT GOES. I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO HAVE THE AFTERNOON TO MYSELF...



... BUT THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU JUST CAN'T RUN AWAY FROM. NOT LIKE THESE KIDS.

WHOOPSIE - DAISY!

I'M TELLING!



MS. ARU! ERIC KNOCKED MY TOWER DOWN!

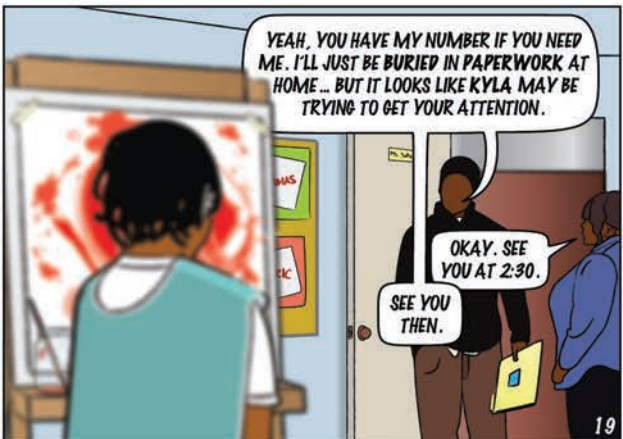
WE'LL TELL ERIC THAT'S NOT THE WAY WE TREAT OUR FRIENDS AT SCHOOL.



TATTLETALE, HUH?

THEY'RE KIDS; THEY ARE ALL TATTLETALES.

WELL, I GUESS I'LL SEE YOU AT 2:30?



YEAH, YOU HAVE MY NUMBER IF YOU NEED ME. I'LL JUST BE BURIED IN PAPERWORK AT HOME ... BUT IT LOOKS LIKE KYLA MAY BE TRYING TO GET YOUR ATTENTION.

OKAY. SEE YOU AT 2:30.

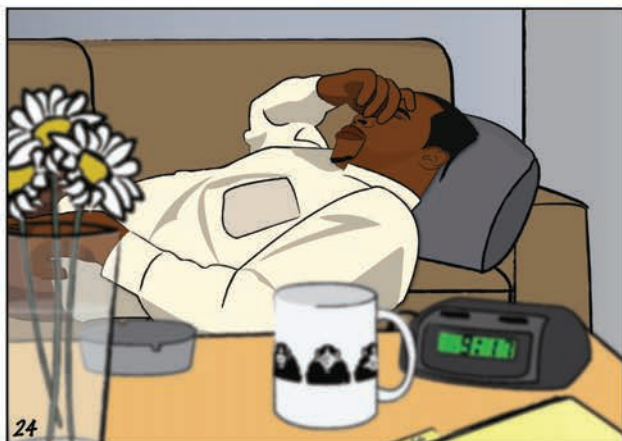
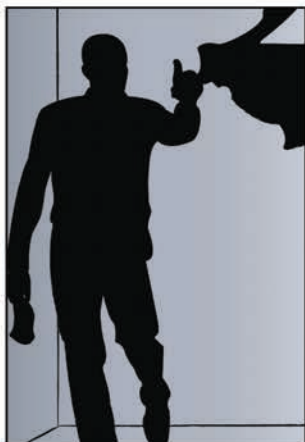
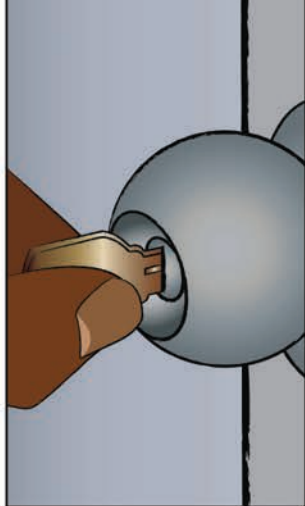
SEE YOU THEN.

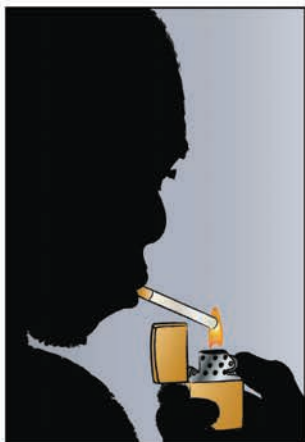






DEZYÈM PATI
PART TWO







SO I KNOW IT'S SOON AND YOU'VE PROBABLY HAD TO DO A LOT OF TALKING ALREADY, BUT THERE ARE A FEW THINGS I NEED TO KNOW BEFORE I CAN START WORKING WITH KYLA. DO YOU HAVE A MINUTE?







LOCAL BREWER BOSTON BINGES ON D

FILM >> Interview with local film

VOLUME 259
NUMBER 264

\$1.00

The Boston

SATURDAY, SEPT

In the news

Presidential race focusing on Iraq War, the economy and healthcare reform. Presidential candidates Obama and McCain continue to take shots at one another. **A2.**

Gath'ring words, expansive, terse, to tell a Cambridge tale in verse.

Cambridge Poet Populist Peter Payack, in an attempt to bring the community together using art, has been searching far and wide for Cambridge couplets. **B1.**

Lights, Camera, Action! The Roxbury Film Festival is back this weekend with films celebrating people of color. Get your complete guide to the festival. **B1.**

Cambridge rap duo, N.B.S., signed to major record label. Natural Born Spitters was signed to a deal worth \$1 million

Double Murder

Long-time Cambridge couple slain in front of child, police

By Andrew Costello
POST STAFF

CAMBRIDGE — It was not long after midnight Saturday morning when police discovered the brutal living room scene on Inman Street in Cambridge. Cambridge Police are now investigating what they have ruled to be a double homicide.

Gunshots rang out in the Mid-Cambridge neighborhood around 11:55 last night.

“There were a bunch of loud popping sounds, but it wasn’t until I heard a woman’s screams that I called the police,” Inman Street resident Pauline McCarthy said.

The lifeless bodies of Noel and Bertrand Pierre were found in the living room of their long-time home. Police say the cause of death for both victims was multiple gunshot wounds to the head

and chest.

“I don’t get it, this is such a tragedy. And for it to happen to them, two very well-respected people around here,” resident Tim Tingle said.

Upon arrival at the Cambridge Police station, officers also discovered the six-year-old couple hiding under her bed. The girl was unharmed, but the boy was taken to Cambridge City Hospital for medical evaluation and has been taken home by his grandmother at this time.

“I just feel so terrible for the family. She’s a very nice girl and is always very helpful in the neighborhood,” McCarthy said.

Police reported that t

IES ON RISE ASAGAFFEL BREW

m-maker, Eugene Damian

Sports

Sox still chasing division title with 3-2 win over Rays

WINDY WEEKEND

Fall will officially arrive this weekend and the Bay State will witness its power.

Expect extreme winds in the Greater Boston Area with gusts of 20-25 mph and lots of grounded leaves both Saturday and Sunday.

ton Post

EMBER 20, 2008

er Rocks Community

ple
ce say

safe neighborhood.
[...] they were such
d here," Broadway

bridge home, police
old daughter of the
parents' bed. Police
but very distressed
minor was taken to
for a psychological
into custody by her

the daughter. She is a
very visible in the
mid.
they did receive a



Photo courtesy of Jeanson Pierre

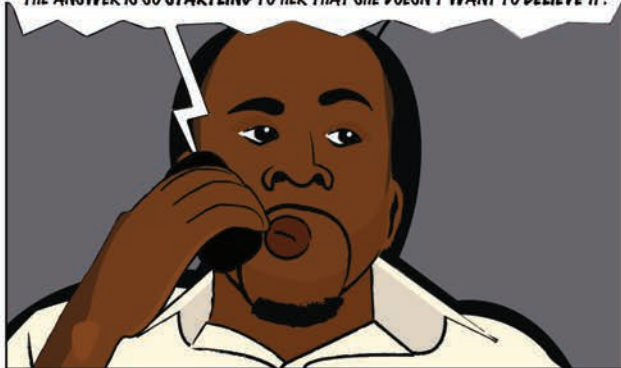
Noel and Bertrand Pierre were murdered in their Cambridge home late Friday night.

911-distress call from the Inman Street residence, but that the signal cut out before they could retrieve any information.

At this time, police are looking for the public to come forward with any possible suspects or leads in the investigation.



WELL IT'S NORMAL FOR A CHILD TO REPEAT QUESTIONS OVER AND OVER. IT'S PROBABLY NOT THAT KYLA DOESN'T UNDERSTAND YOUR ANSWER, BUT THAT THE ANSWER IS SO STARTLING TO HER THAT SHE DOESN'T WANT TO BELIEVE IT.



"I TOLD HER THAT HER PARENTS ARE ANGELS LIVING WITH GOD NOW, YOU KNOW, WITH HALOS AND WINGS. BUT SHE STILL WANTS TO KNOW WHEN THEY'RE COMING HOME."



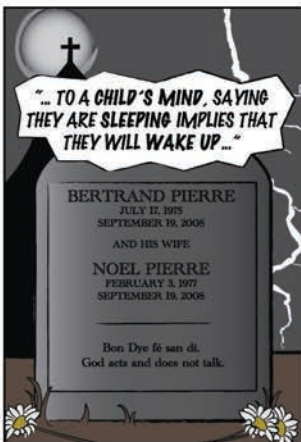
OKAY. WHEN YOU'RE ANSWERING HER QUESTIONS, USE CONCRETE TERMS AND AVOID EUPHEMISMS - THEY'RE CONFUSING TO CHILDREN...



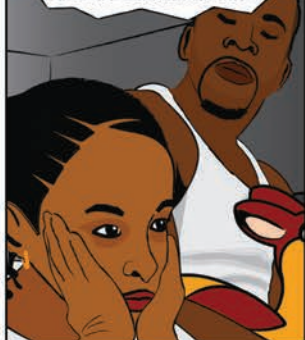
"... TELL HER 'MOMMY AND DADDY'S BODIES ARE BROKEN, THEY WON'T BE COMING BACK.' INSTEAD OF, 'MOMMY AND DADDY ARE SLEEPING, THEY ARE WITH GOD NOW...'"



"... TO A CHILD'S MIND, SAYING THEY ARE SLEEPING IMPLIES THAT THEY WILL WAKE UP..."



"... THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO BE HONEST WITH HER. KIDS CAN TELL IF YOU'RE HIDING ANYTHING OR TRYING TO LEAVE SOMETHING OUT..."

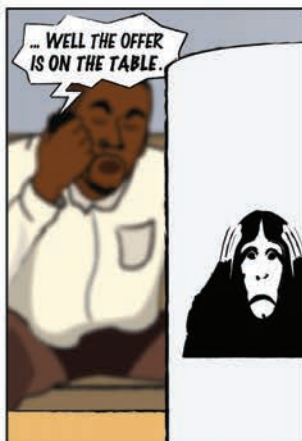
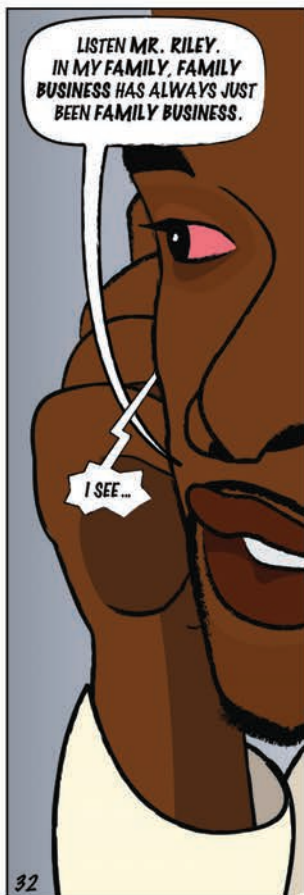


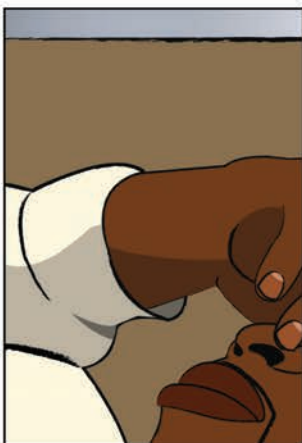
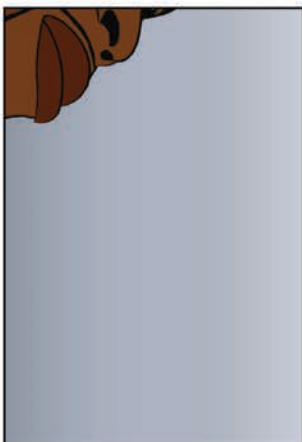
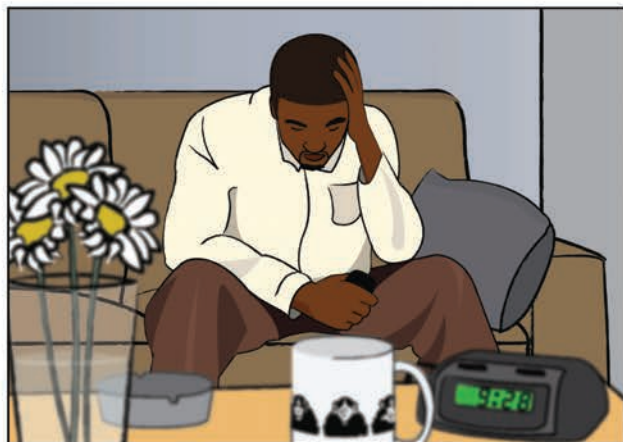
"... I KNOW IT'S EASY TO ONLY THINK ABOUT KYLA AT A TIME LIKE THIS, BUT DON'T FORGET TO GIVE YOURSELF TIME TO MOURN AND GRIEVE. TALKING TO SOMEONE MIGHT HELP. AND IF YOU WANT, I'D BE HAPPY TO MAKE A RECOMMENDATION."

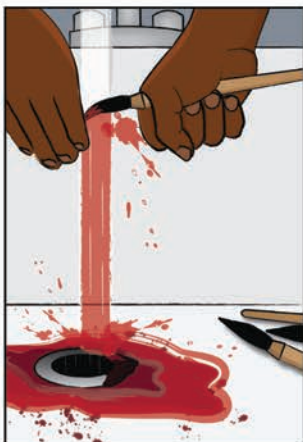
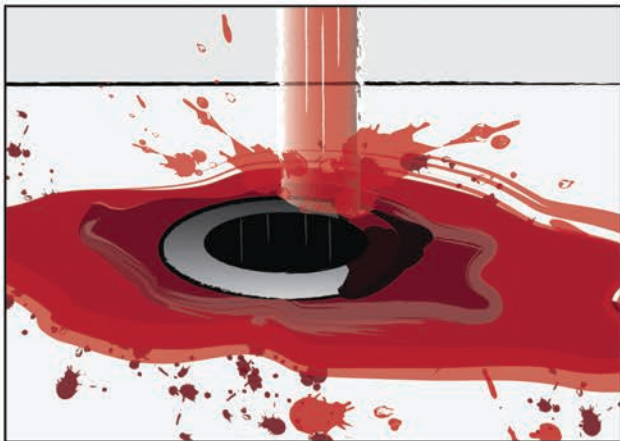


NO OFFENSE, BUT I THINK I'VE TALKED ENOUGH.



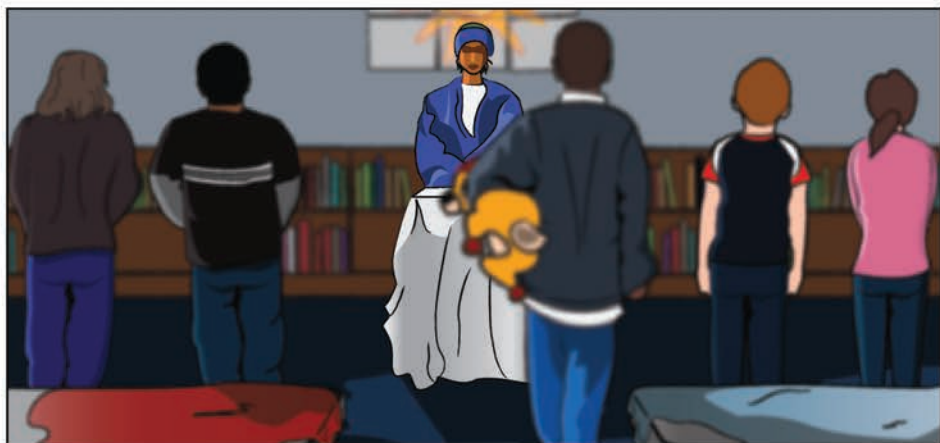


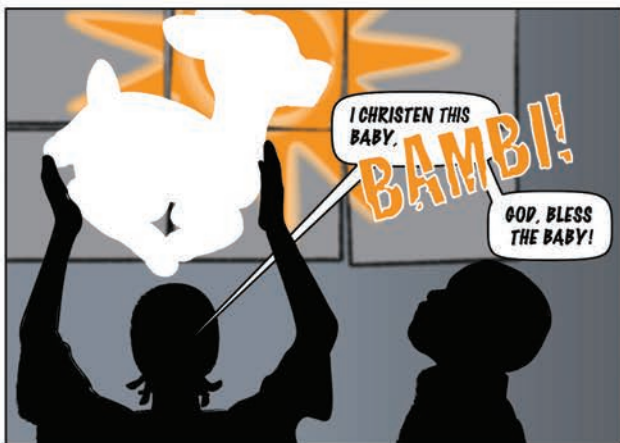




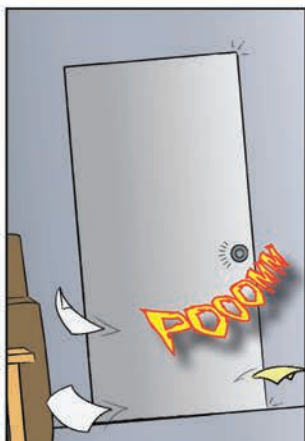
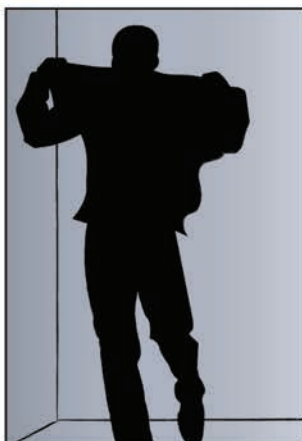
NAP TIME IS OVER IN 5 MINUTES. YOU CAN WAKE UP YOUR CLASSMATES SOON.

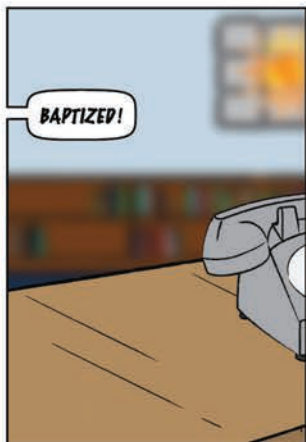










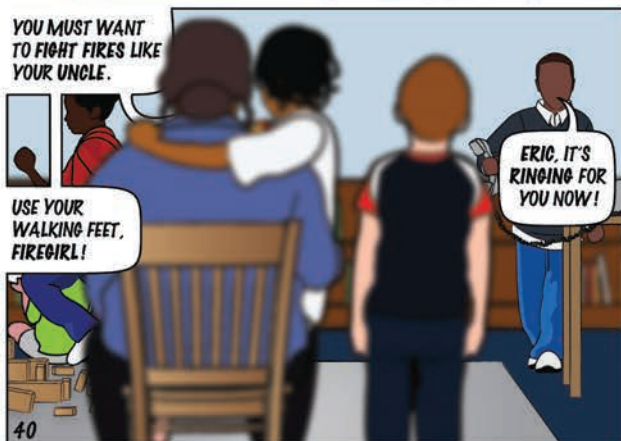




HELLO? OH REALLY? I'D HOLD OFF FOR NOW, BUT IF IT GOES UP TWO POINTS, SELL, SELL, SELL!

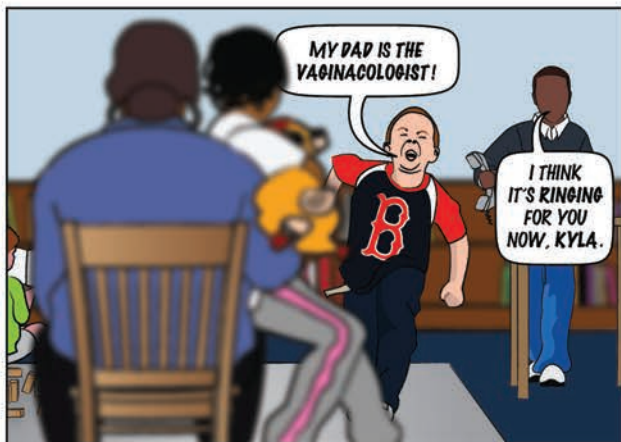


THERE ARE TWO PEOPLE STUCK ON THE THIRD FLOOR! WE HAVE TO GO IN!

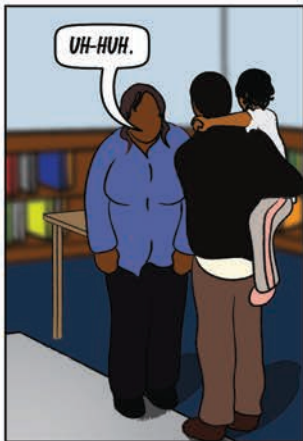
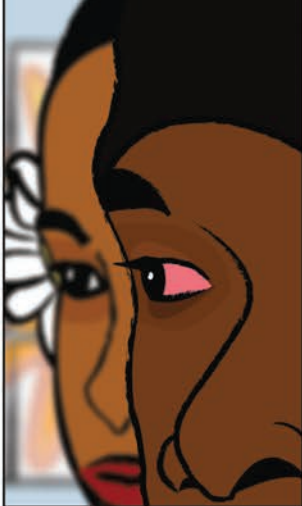


YES, I SEE. IS THERE ANY DISCOLORATION OR ABNORMAL DISCHARGE?











TWAZYÈM PATI
PART THREE

Kyla's Journal

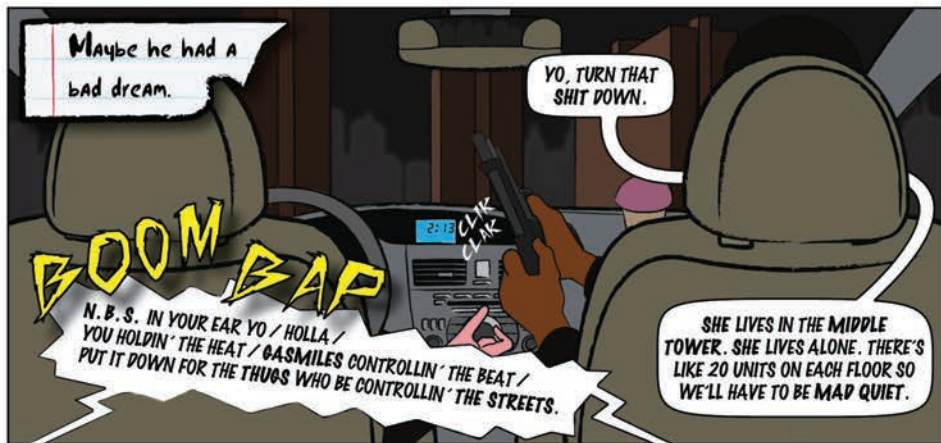
September 30, 2009

Composition Book

Name: Kyla Pierre's Journal

School: King Open School





Maybe he had a bad dream.

YO, TURN THAT SHIT DOWN.

BOOM BAP

N. B. S. IN YOUR EAR YO / HOLLA / YOU HOLDIN' THE HEAT / GASMILES CONTROLLIN' THE BEAT / PUT IT DOWN FOR THE THUGS WHO BE CONTROLLIN' THE STREETS.

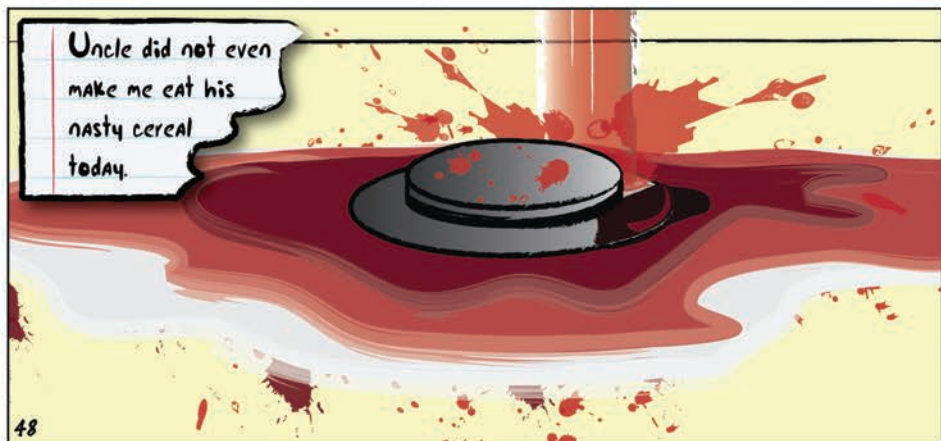
SHE LIVES IN THE MIDDLE TOWER. SHE LIVES ALONE. THERE'S LIKE 20 UNITS ON EACH FLOOR SO WE'LL HAVE TO BE MAD QUIET.



Ms. Aru is home sick today. Principal Gentile is here instead. Maybe Eric's dad will make her better.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT IF SHE'S NOT HERE IN FIVE MINUTES, I'M LEAVING.

I SWEAR SALLY IS NEVER THIS LATE. WE CAN'T GET A HOLD OF HER, SO I'M ASKING YOU ALL TO PLEASE REMAIN HERE UNTIL OUR SUBSTITUTE ARRIVES.



Uncle did not even make me eat his nasty cereal today.



Uncle's bed again that
an cannot find me there. I did not see
Neither did Uncle. Maybe he had
d dreamt. Aru is home sick today
ncipal Dotti. I will come instead. Maybe
ic's dad will make her. Uncle did not
en make me eat his nasty cereal today. He
t me have leftovers from dinner instead!
Maybe flowers will make Ms. A better.
will bring one to school tomorrow. I will
bring her a daisy this time. I could tell she did
and Isiah want to go play house now. Jack
Jack will be Bambi's Mommy and Daddy. Isiah
can be Bambi's angry Uncle.

ARE YOU
READY, KYLA?

WE'RE
WAITING
FOR YOU!

OKAY,
I'M COMING
NOW!



 Kyla

JAPANESE
LOVE THAT
WORMS,
MACHI, LIVING IN
BODIES.

THESE WORMS KEEP TRACK OF
OUR GOOD AND BAD DEEDS...

... ESPECIALLY THE BAD ONES

**FINI
THE END**

EVERY TWO
NIGHT KN
MACHI, TH
BODIES V
AND RE
HE



A JOURNEY THROUGH MEDIA

BY MIKE PAYACK

I have a friend who once lived above a bar that wouldn't have looked out of place in Gotham City. From time to time she'd make small talk with people having a smoke outside the bar, who would often be blocking the path to her front door. One time while she was unlocking the door, a woman cranking a butt said to her, "It must

get pretty loud up there with all the music."

"Oh yeah," replied my friend. "Not only the music ... I hear everything: Pool balls, people talking ..."

"I wouldn't repeat that," said the woman with the cigarette.

"Repeat what?"

"That you can hear people talking. Certain people wouldn't like that you hear certain conversations." She took a drag from her cigarette. "Don't let people know you hear things," she reiterated.

My friend nodded. It was soon after that conversation that she began looking for a new apartment.

There are certain places where you might expect to "hear things." I never thought preschool would be one of those places. I was wrong. I heard many things, admittedly none of them criminal, but embarrassing things, personal things, revealing things.

One preschool conversation I overheard as a teacher went something like this:

Girl: "Let's have a party. I'll bring the cake."



Original "Imitasyon" movie poster. Poster design by Peter Paul Payack. Photograph by Shara Drew.

A JOURNEY THROUGH MEDIA



Yves Lamitie (far left) and Eugene Damian (far right) on "Imitasyon" film set in Cambridge, MA. Photograph by Mike Payack.

Boy #1: "I'll bring the chips."

Boy #2: "Who's bringing the beer?"

Girl: "If you drink beer you can sleep on the couch 'cause it makes your farts stink."

Boys: "Ewwwwwwwwwwww!"

Nothing criminal about breaking wind, but I'm sure the girl's father wouldn't appreciate his daughter sharing with her classmates and teachers that his wife makes him sleep on the couch anytime he has a couple beers. This unwitting violation of trust really struck me. A family's most private moments transformed into a stage production with free matinee performances every weekday in their child's classroom. Sure, many of these

performances were embarrassing, but I began to wonder, what would the most extreme case look like? What intimate family secret could a child reveal that would most impact the lives of their family members and those around them? It is from this idea that my short story "Tattletale" was born.

In 2006, I was coaching wrestling at my alma mater, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, with my friend and documentary filmmaker Eugene Damian. Gene mentioned he was looking to move into narrative filmmaking and was looking for a project with which to do this. I gave him a copy of "Tattletale," he liked it and we decided to begin work on a screen version immediately. We would adapt the story into a screenplay together, Gene would direct and we would co-produce the film. (Gene makes an appearance toward the end of the graphic novella as a very directorial Principal Genfile.)

Before even starting the script, we cast



The "Imitasyon" World Premiere lights up Coolidge Corner Theatre's Marquee in Brookline, MA. Photograph by Laura Casey.

IMITASYON: THE GRAPHIC NOVELLA



Eugene Damian (from left to right), Kyla Cardoso-Lamitie, Mike Payack and Yves Lamitie at the World Premiere of "Imitasyon." Photograph by Monica Hynes-Payack.

our good friend and fellow wrestling coach, Yves Lamitie, to play our lead character and his real-life niece, Kyla Lamitie-Cardoso, to play his on-screen niece. Casting Yves before writing the script allowed us to write his character around his personality and skill-set. We wrote his character's lines in his manner of speech and worked his idiosyncratic facial expressions into the script. We also had many conversations with him about growing up in a Haitian-American household and different aspects of his upbringing that we could work into the film.

In our research, we came across the Haitian proverb, "Children have wide ears and long tongues," which completely embodies the theme of the movie. If a kid hears it – and they will – they *will* repeat it. We eventually changed the name of the film to

"Imitasyon" – the Haitian Creole word for "imitation" – to pay respect to what we saw as the driving force behind this story.

Eight months and many drafts later, we had a shooting script. Armed with borrowed equipment and various filming permits, we hit the streets of Cambridge (and classrooms of Newton) to make our movie.

Yves was just about ready to walk off the set on the first day of shooting after we strapped him to a treadmill that was in turn strapped to a dolly, which was running along a dolly track. The dolly was being pushed by two dolly grips in front of a moving Jeep Grand Cherokee driving in reverse, carrying the camera man, director, first assistant director, lighting equipment and a fog machine in the open rear hatch. And because running on a moving treadmill in front of a moving Jeep isn't a challenge enough, we decided to shoot this scene on a rainy night. Thanks for bearing with us, Yves. (In this same scenario, Yves, at one point, accidentally kicked our second assistant director, Neal, who was doubling as a dolly grip, in the face. This happened on the fifteenth take; Yves thought we had nailed the shot in the first few takes. Looking back, I'm not so sure the kick was an accident.)

On set for the classroom scene, we had second thoughts about having the seven-year-old actor playing the doctor's son read the line about STD symptoms, let alone declaring himself "The Vaginacologist." We ended up modifying the line at the last minute to something far more innocent, but

A JOURNEY THROUGH MEDIA

far less funny. Every time I watch that scene of the movie I regret changing that line. Seeing the scene depicted (in print) now as it was originally written is very satisfying.

We filmed the movie in four days spread over some five months. After a few months of post-production, we premiered the movie at the Coolidge Corner Theatre in Brookline, MA on September 20th, 2008. It has since become an "Official Selection" at the 2009 Roxbury Film Festival and the 2010 San Diego Black Film Festival.

I was thrilled when my brother and graphic artist Peter Paul Payack showed interest in adapting the film and screenplay into a graphic novel. I had already had the pleasure of accompanying my original idea on its journey from short story to screenplay to film and now would have the privilege of seeing it transform into sequential art, all the while collaborating with brilliant artists, family, and friends. (Peter and I also



Eugene Damian and Mike Payack taking questions at the 2009 Roxbury Film Festival. Photograph by Peter Paul Payack.



Mike Payack during an interview at the 2010 San Diego Black Film Festival. Photograph by Monica Hynes-Payack.

now had the privilege of reading as many graphic novels as we could get our hands on and writing it off as "research.")

Aside from working with Peter on an additional opening narration and final scene, we were also able to include several scenes from the original screenplay that didn't make it into the film due to time and budgetary constraints. I'm happy to say that this means that what you hold in your hands now is the most comprehensive version of the story to date, the final stop in the journey, if you will.

"TATTLETALE"

BY MIKE PAYACK

Although we are unable to exhibit the film itself within these pages (Can you hear me, Steve Jobs?), in the spirit of following this story on its journey through various forms of media, we now present an early version of the short story, "Tattletale." As Gene once said as we were working on the screenplay, "This is going to be one of those 'the book is a lot different from the movie' movies." And so it is with the short story and the graphic novel. We hope you enjoy finding some of the similarities and differences.

We all have times in our lives when we have to do things that we never pictured ourselves having to do. For me, this was one of those times.

It was the first time I was dropping off my niece at her preschool since I had inherited her from my brother and his wife. I never imagined myself raising a kid, but it was the right thing to do. We always had a rule: Always take care of family, no matter what.

"Hi, Mr. Polaski. I'm Ms. Sally," said her teacher, trying to form a smile. "Susie, hang your jacket up in your cubby and then you can pick anywhere you want to play," she said, squatting down to my sweet little niece's level.

Susie began toward her cubby, pausing for a moment to glance back at me with my brother's eyes. She was the spitting image of her father, really – so much so that it pained me to look at her. I nodded in approval and she continued on her way.

The room was wallpapered with construction paper collages and

finger-painted self-portraits. A group of boys were building block towers on a big rug in the far corner of the room and a few other kids were sitting at a table playing a matching game.

Ms. Sally straightened up and said timidly, "I'm very sorry about what happened to your brother and sister-in-law. We were all so shocked." She hesitated, looking down at the ground. "How's Susie doing?"

"She's ok," I answered slowly, "but only because I haven't told her everything yet. All I've said is that they had to go away and she'd be staying with me for a while. I'm not really sure how to go about telling her. I never thought I'd have to explain death to a four-year-old. I'm still trying to get used to this whole parenting thing."

"We have someone in the school department who can help with that," Ms. Sally said. "I'll get you her number before you leave. I have a pen here somewhere." She fumbled through her pockets, only to come up with a broken red crayon. "Well," she said

"TATTLETALE"

and cleared her throat. "I'll also have a brochure for you that will tell you a little bit about our classroom."

Ms. Sally turned her attention to a child who needed help putting on a smock, getting ready to paint with watercolors at a table covered with old newspapers functioning as a makeshift tablecloth. I morbidly wondered whether the article recounting the gruesome details of my brother's murder was among the used car ads and box scores being splattered with paint by the children too young to know of, or have any use for, such things.

Susie ran from her cubby to the dress-up corner. "Use your walking feet, Susie," Ms. Sally reminded. Susie took some bright-colored plastic dinnerware from the toy sink and began setting the table. A girl with glasses and curly blonde hair was standing next to her pretending to have a conversation on a toy phone made of yellow plastic. "I'd hold off for now, but if it goes up two more points, sell, sell, sell," she said.

"Elizabeth's mother is a stock broker," Ms. Sally said, smiling.

Elizabeth passed the phone to a red-headed boy standing next to her. "...And we'll need a few more cases of whiskey," he said.

"Erik's parents own a bar," Ms. Sally explained.

"Let me see," said a shorter, dark-haired boy, reaching toward Erik. "Are there any other symptoms?" he said, speaking into the wrong end of

the phone. "Burning? Any abnormal discharge?"

I looked over at Ms. Sally, who had her eyebrows raised and was biting her lower lip. "Let me guess," I said. "Mom or dad's a doctor?"

She nodded, cheeks slightly reddened. "A gynecologist, actually."

"Here, Susie, he wants to talk to you," the boy said, handing the phone to my niece.

Susie took the phone and put it to her ear. "I know they were family," she said into the plastic receiver, "but he broke our number one rule: Always take care of family. Once they agreed to testify against me they weren't family anymore, just two more witnesses." She lowered her voice. "And you know the thing about witnesses: they can't testify if they're dead."

Ms. Sally turned to me. "And what is it that you do for a living, Mr. Polaski?"

The next day, I was one of several parents who waited with the children while the principal scrambled to find a last minute substitute. Apparently, Ms. Sally had fallen ill and couldn't make it to school. Yes, it was strange that she hadn't called, everyone acknowledged, because Ms. Sally was the very picture of punctuality and responsibility, but everyone was sure that there was a good explanation.

As for my niece, we came up with a new rule: No more playing with the toy phone.

CREATING THE GRAPHIC NOVEL BY PETER PAUL PAYACK

It was 2008. "Tattletale" had already been transformed into a 45-page screenplay and subsequently a film. It was toward the end of the year when I decided Mike's story was not yet done transforming. I asked him if he'd be cool with me adapting "Imitasyon" into a graphic novel. He loved the idea, and we immediately began brainstorming.

I was entering my final semester at Stonehill College, where I focused my studies on graphic design and journalism. The graphic novel seemed to be a perfect project for the directed study in graphic design I had requested for the spring semester. I wrote a proposal for the director of the graphic design department and he was more than excited about my idea.

I was very intrigued by "Tattletale" and then by "Imitasyon." After seeing Mike's story transform once already, I knew we could adapt it into a great graphic novel. I was aware that Mike and Gene were not able to produce certain aspects of the story in their film due to filming schedules and budget limitations, but I was full of ideas that I believed would enhance the story. I knew that I would have nearly no creative limitations when designing my graphic novel with the Adobe computer software I would be using.



Peter Paul Payack with an early draft of *Imitasyon: The Graphic Novella* at The Design Annual 2009 at Stonehill College's Cushing-Martin Gallery. Photograph by Peter Payack.

I was also fascinated by the current Hollywood trend of adapting well-known graphic novels into feature length films. *Watchmen*, *V For Vendetta*, *Sin City*, *300* and *Surrogates* are just a few examples of graphic novels that have been adapted into films in the recent past. My project was an attempt to do just the reverse of this growing trend, by adapting a film into sequential art.

When *Imitasyon: The Graphic Novella* was still just an idea trapped in a nerve impulse firing through neurons in my brain, I was coming up with ways to

CREATING THE GRAPHIC NOVEL

make this graphic novel unique from others. In most cases, computer software is used in the creation of comics and graphic novels today, usually in its final stages (coloring, layout, publication design, etc.), but a majority of the work is still done using traditional art tools (pens, pencils, erasers, rulers, etc.). In this case, I decided that our entire graphic novel would be generated using computer software. I also decided I would use various blurring techniques using the Adobe software to put specific areas of certain panels in or out of focus to give the graphic novel a cinematic feel.

The project completely engrossed my attention, even while in college. In one class, I would brainstorm the first page-spread. By the end of the second class, page one and two would be storyboarded. Dinner, meeting, then it was time to get on the computer to work on some illustrations. There were long hours in the design studio, late nights staring into the computer screen and even sleepless nights when I would get out of bed to sneak in an hour or two of work. Drinking a couple beers while knocking off a couple illustrations on my MacBook became a normal pre-game routine for weekend nights (don't judge me). Those countless hours of work were the foundation of this awesome story told through pictures (257 pictures to be precise).

I predicted it would take me just about the entire semester to complete the project, but it grew into something far more expansive. *Imitasyon: The Graphic Novella* became something that absorbed almost all of my free



Peter Paul Payack and Yves Lamitie coaching the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School Wrestling team. Photograph by Peter Payack.

time in that final semester at Stonehill. Then it became something that absorbed almost all of my free time during the summer after I graduated. Then it became my full-time job. *Imitasyon: The Graphic Novella* ultimately took me over an entire year to complete. I actually only finished eight pages of the graphic novel during that spring semester.

The semester, however, was not a disappointment to me or to the director of the graphic design department. He loved the work I completed and encouraged me to finish the graphic novel after graduation. My project became more than a directed study that semester, it became an avenue in which I wanted to steer my graphic design interest. Maybe it will become a career.

Thank you for reading *Imitasyon: The Graphic Novella*. I hope you enjoyed reading it as much as Mike, Gene and I enjoyed creating it.

THE ARTIST'S PROCESS: CREATING A PAGE

BY PETER PAUL PAYACK

Mike and I agree. It sucks when you finish reading an awesome graphic novel and find nothing but an About the Author section in the publication's final pages. During our "research," we've come across tons of great Afterwords, for lack of a better term, and decided we'd never put out a graphic novel without a somewhat extensive Afterword, including a section that describes the artist's process. This is that.

I didn't start from scratch. Mike and Gene provided me with a 30-minute film and a 45-page screenplay from which to build. Believe me, I took advantage of it.

That's not to say that every frame of the film was illustrated or that every word spoken on screen was lettered into speech bubbles, but I did attempt to maintain the film's integrity. I accomplished this by using the same main characters and settings from the film and by duplicating many camera angles and vantage points from the film. I also tried to visually give the graphic novel a cinematic feel by adjusting the focus in certain panels (as if operating a camera). Some details from the film, however, were altered for the sake of the modified storyline. Ms. Sally Aru, for instance, was named Ms. Sally Richardson in the film (we chose "Ms. Aru" to mimic the name, "Mizaru," one of the three wise

monkeys mentioned in the additional opening narration of the graphic novel).

This project was the first time I had attempted a comic or graphic novel of this magnitude, so developing my artistic process was definitely a learning experience for me. As the project grew, my creative process evolved.

Ultimately, this is the process I used to create each page:

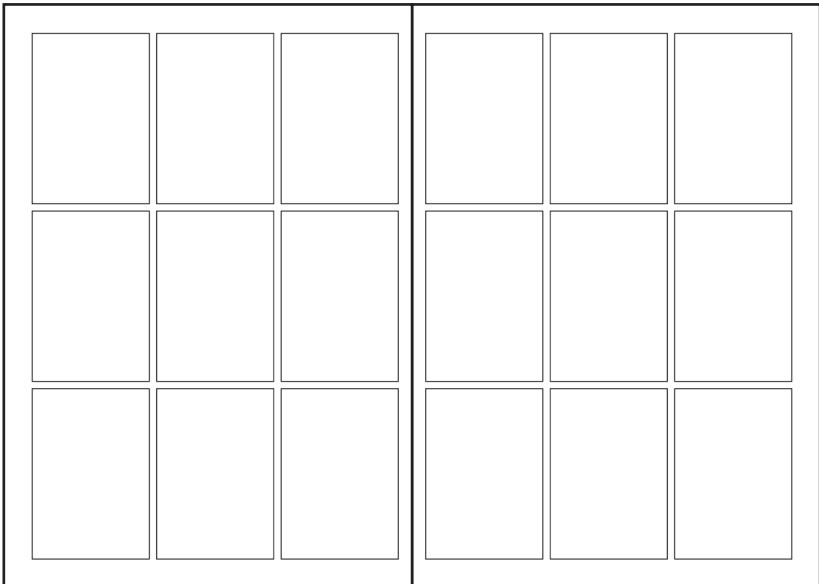
THE ARTIST'S PROCESS: CREATING A PAGE

DEVELOP A GRID

Since it was my first time making a graphic novel, I wanted to establish some guidelines, limitations and rules for myself (some of which I would later break). Using Adobe InDesign CS3, (a page-layout computer program) I first developed a standard grid of panels for the page layout. I went with a 3x3 grid of vertical rectangles for this project (I was on a *Watchmen** kick at the time). I knew this grid would give me a consistent "canvas" to work on,

but also give me the freedom to merge and manipulate the panels to create panels of many sizes and shapes. Later, I even decided to cut these panels in half on page 40.

I decided to use this 3x3 grid, generated using Adobe InDesign CS3, as a standard for the graphic novel.



**Watchmen* is a 12-issue comic book series created by writer Alan Moore, artist Dave Gibbons, and colorist John Higgins. The series was published by DC Comics during 1986 and 1987. The series has since been reprinted into a collected graphic novel and adapted into a Hollywood film directed by Zack Snyder.

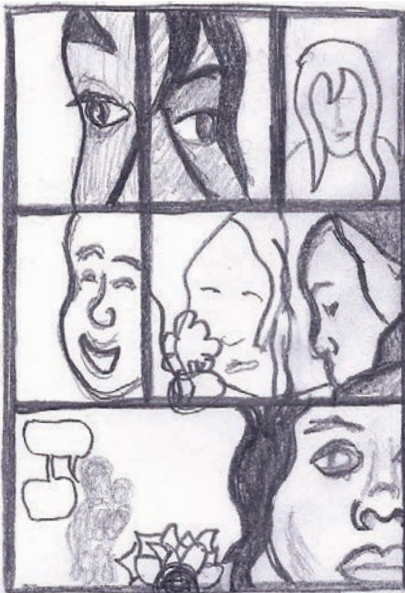
STORYBOARD

I decided it was best for me to storyboard the graphic novel scene-by-scene, rather than all at once (meaning storyboard a scene, then illustrate it, then storyboard the next scene, then illustrate it, etc.). With the film and screenplay as reference materials, I used a regular pencil and paper to brainstorm, take notes and draw sketches. After choosing what to and what not to include from the film and screenplay, I adapted the dialogue and began to sketch out possible panels and layouts for each page (keeping in mind the path that the reader's eyes will follow as they read the page). While storyboarding

a scene, I would decide how many pages the scene would be and how many panels there would be on each page. I usually toyed with a couple possible layouts before finding something that I liked.



Thumbnail sketch of the third panel on page 47 (top). Storyboard of page 11.

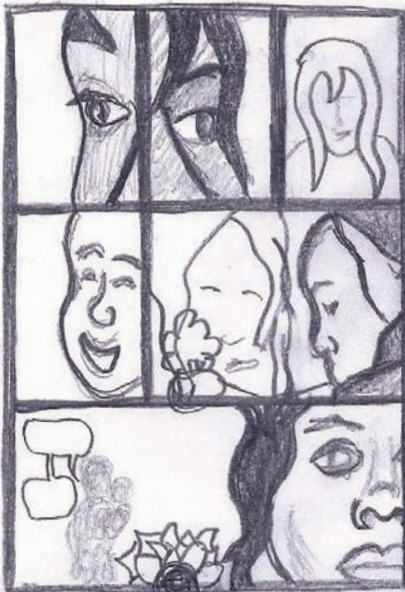


Storyboard (left) of page 43. As you can see, I decided to swap the first and second panels to show Ms. Aru and Jeanson looking toward one another. I also decided to pull back and reveal more of the classroom environment in the third panel.

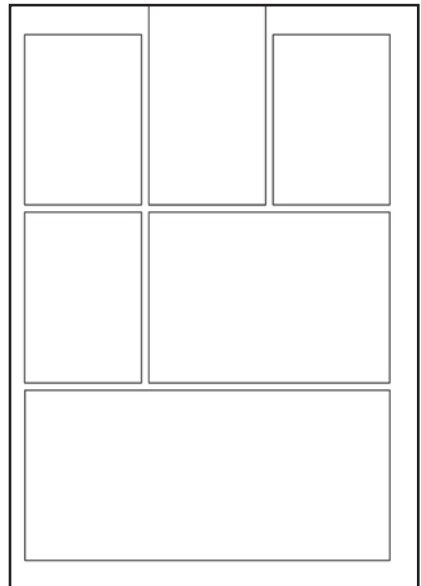
OUTLINE PAGE GRID

Once a storyboard was complete, I created an Adobe InDesign CS3 document for those particular storyboarded pages. Using the Rectangle Tool with the Fill set to None and the Stroke set to Black, I replicated the panels that were decided on in the storyboard and placed them in their position on the page. At this point, the panels were just blank outlines with no illustrations.

Storyboard of page 43.



Grid outline for page 43
generated in Adobe InDesign CS3.



IMITASYON: THE GRAPHIC NOVELLA

COLLECT REFERENCE MATERIAL

Once a storyboard and its page outline were fleshed out, I collected the reference material that I would use for each illustration on that page. I used many forms of reference material, including screenshots from the film, film set photographs, stock photos from the Internet and reference photographs I took myself. To get screenshots from the film (using an Apple computer), I opened the MPEG version of the film in QuickTime Player, paused the film at the frame I wanted, then performed a Screen

Capture by pressing Command-Shift-4 and using the crosshair cursor that pops up to select the area of the screen desired. This selection is then converted to a PNG file and saved on the desktop. Once I acquired my reference material, I saved it all in one organized folder.



Screenshot (above) from "Imitasyon" used as a reference in the first panel on page 38.

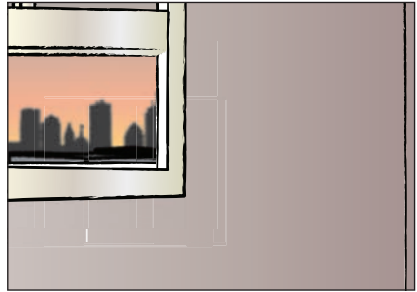


Photograph of myself (top) used as a reference in the third panel on page 37. Screenshot from "Imitasyon" used as a reference in the first panel on page 5.



ILLUSTRATE PANELS

I began each panel by creating a new Adobe Illustrator CS3 document (a vector graphics editing program) at the size of the desired panel. Before I began illustrating any images, I would import the reference material for that specific panel by selecting File>>Place, then locating the desired file. I used an Apple Mighty Mouse, a Wacom PTK-440 Drawing Tablet and the program's various tools to create many illustrations on multiple layers. When organized correctly, these layers form one illustrated panel. Even though each panel appears to be one illustration, some of the Adobe Illustrator CS3 documents contain over 50 layers of illustrations! The top-most layer is usually where the speech bubbles and lettering appear (in the example's case, there are no speech bubbles).



The wall and window illustrations are generated on the first layer of the Adobe Illustrator CS3 document.



The illustration of Kyla is generated on the second layer.



Screenshot from "Imitasyon" used as a reference in the first panel on page 11.



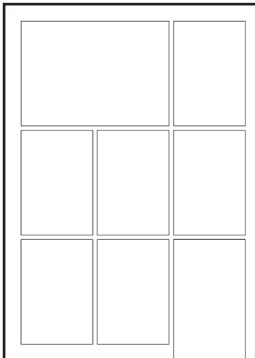
The illustration is completed by adding the kitchen table, Bambi stuffed animal and cereal bowl on the third and final layer.

PLACE PANELS IN GRID

With the grid outline (designed earlier using Adobe InDesign CS3) open, I imported each panel, one at a time, by selecting the correct panel outline with the Selection Tool, selecting File>>Place and locating the desired Adobe Illustrator CS3 document.

Page 38 with panels in place, but without its finishing touches.

Grid outline for page 38 generated in Adobe InDesign CS3.

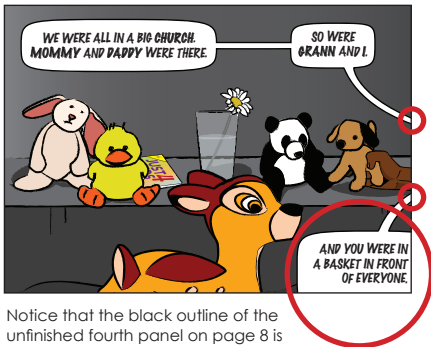


ADD FINISHING TOUCHES

The finishing touches include the page number in the bottom corner of the page, adding any images that are designed to leave their panel and clearing the panel outline where speech bubbles enter or leave. To add the page number to the Adobe InDesign CS3 document, I simply used the Type Tool to type the number, then used the Selection Tool to move the number into the corner of the page. When part of the illustration leaves or crosses over the outline of the panel, it is called "breaking the fourth wall." To add an image created in Adobe Illustrator CS3 to break the fourth wall in an Adobe InDesign CS3 document, I copied the image from Adobe Illustrator CS3 by selecting the image with the Selection Tool, then selecting Edit>>Copy. Then, back in the Adobe InDesign CS3 document, I pasted the

image by selecting Edit>>Paste, then used the Selection Tool to move it into its correct position on the page. When a speech bubble enters or leaves a panel, I used a simple technique to cover the black outline of the panel in that specific area. To effectively erase the panel outline in a specific area, I selected the Pen Tool, with the Fill set to Paper and the Stroke set to None, and simply illustrated a shape to cover the panel outline. With this white shape covering it, the panel outline appears to break and contour the shape of the speech bubble.

With the addition of three white shapes, the black outline is covered where speech bubbles enter and leave the panel. The outline now appears to break and contour the shape of the speech bubbles. This panel is now complete.



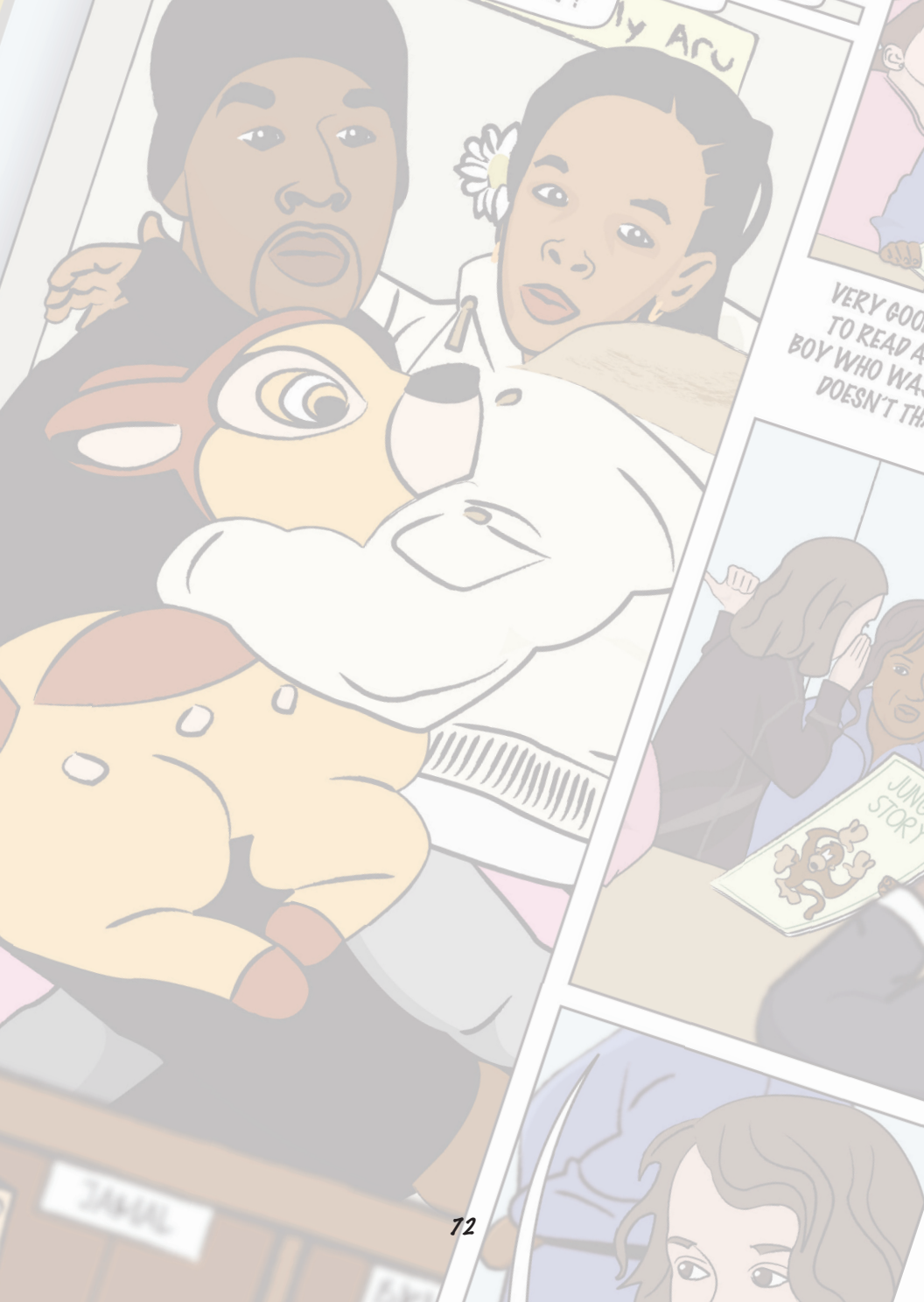
Notice that the black outline of the unfinished fourth panel on page 8 is completely present. The red circles show the areas of the outline where speech bubbles enter and leave the panel.



IMITASYON: THE GRAPHIC NOVELLA



With the addition of the page number, two peices of paper flying out of the fifth panel and the word "POOOOM" added to the eighth panel, page 38 is now complete.



VERY GOOD
TO READ A
BOY WHO WA
DONES'T TH



SPECIAL THANKS

To my family for all of your love and support throughout the years ...

To Peter Payack and Monica Hynes-Payack for always loving me and for always being proud of me. I thank you so much for always supporting the decisions I've made in life and for always believing in me ...

To Mike Payack for always setting the right example for me to follow, for always supporting my ideas and for always contributing your creativity. You are the best brother I could imagine. I look forward to our future collaborations ...

To Florence "Mom Mom" Payack for all the love, for all the strength, for always inspiring me and for always being a fan of my work ...

To Brianna Marie Touzjian for all the love we have and for the experiences we've shared. I thank you so much for your support and for your love ...

To my friends from Cambridge, MA, Stonehill College and Florence, Italy for all of the good times we've shared and for those we have not yet had ...

To the cast and crew of "Imitasyon," especially Eugene Damian, Yves Lamitie and Kyla Cardoso-Lamitie, for

all the hard work and for giving me the inspiration to create something big ...

To Gary Stanton and Andrew Costello for being such great professors and mentors during my time at Stonehill College and for our continued relationships ...

To Wambui Githiora-Updike for believing I would do great things since high school and for maintaining our relationship ...

To Jesse Young for building my confidence and introducing me to digital art ...

To Cambridge's second Poet Populist Jean Dany Joachim for providing me with the Haitian Creole translations that made this graphic novel possible ...

To Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (Cambridge, MA), Stonehill College (North Easton, MA) and Scuola Lorenzo de' Medici (Florence, Italy) for helping me expand my mind and for helping me mature as an artist and as a person...

THANK YOU !!!

Peter Paul Payack





BOW YOUR HEADS.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR AND WRITERS

The Payack Brothers and Damian are all natives of Cambridge, MA and graduates of Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. They wrestled together for their high school team and continue to coach the team today.



PETER PAUL PAYACK

is a graphic artist and cartoonist. Payack received a BA in Visual and Performing Arts with a concentration in Graphic Design and a minor in Journalism from Stonehill College in 2009. Payack spent four months in 2008 living and studying art and culture in Florence, Italy and currently lives in Cambridge. You can visit peterpaulpayack.com to view more of Payack's work.



MIKE PAYACK

is a teacher, writer and painter. Payack received a BA in Psychology from Boston College in 2004 and currently lives in Cambridge with his wife, Laura. You can visit cog-art.com to view more of Payack's work.



EUGENE DAMIAN

is an artist and works in documentary and feature film production. Damian received a BA in Art from Northeastern University in 2006. "Imitasyon" is his first independent film offering as a college graduate. Damian currently lives in Somerville, MA.

BOOM BAP

N.B.S. IN YOUR EAR YO / HOLLA /
YOU HOLDIN' THE HEAT / GASMILES CONTROLLIN' THE BEAT /
PUT IT DOWN FOR THE THUGS WHO BE CONTROLLIN' THE STREETS.

YO. TURN THAT SHIT DOWN.

2:13
CLIK CLAK

SHE LIVE
TOWER. SHE L
LIKE 20 UNITS
WE'LL HAVE TO

Arv is home sick today.
Principal Gentile is here
Maybe Eric's
make her better.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT
BUT IF SHE'S NOT HERE IN
MINUTES, I'M LEAVING

I SWEAR SALLY IS NEVER THIS LATE.
WE CAN'T GET A HOLD OF HER, SO I'M
ASKING YOU ALL TO PLEASE REMAIN
HERE UNTIL OUR SUBSTITUTE ARRIVES.





***"THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU
JUST CAN'T RUN AWAY FROM.
NOT LIKE THESE KIDS."***

"The bad man" can't harm Kyla when she sleeps under her uncle's bed. Her uncle spends his nights on the couch, running from the all-seeing, metaphysical worms of an esoteric Japanese faith in a recurring nightmare.

In the early aftermath of the death of the young girl's parents, Kyla and her uncle are adapting to life with one another. They are getting by the best they can, each dealing with the tragedy in their own way, but something is amiss.

When Kyla begins to mimic her belated parents, what will these imitations reveal about the past and future of her family?

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