

# TABLOID Purposes II

An Anthology Of Short Stories  
Edited and Selected by Nickolaus A. Pacione

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# TABLOID PURPOSES II

EDITED AND SELECTED BY NICKOLAUS A. PACIONE

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# The Revolution Continues

I grew up outside of the city of Chicago in one of the suburbs of Glendale Heights, and sometimes on the news stand I would see a tabloid newspaper. When I was younger I never thought about doing an anthology which has a similar style cover, but when it came together it was originally going to be called *The Ethereal Gazette*. That was the working title for Tabloid Purposes, but when I wrote Lake Fossil and included it in that anthology the title changed to what it is.

I was raised on a healthy dose of Science Fiction novels such as *The Martian Chronicles* by Ray Bradbury and *The Smoke Ring* by Larry Niven, then horror written by the masters, Stephen King and H.P. Lovecraft. When I first planned to do an anthology in 1997, I was just going to use horror fiction. That project was shelved, and here I was at the time about twenty not having the tools to put out a good magazine. Then enters Brigit Knox years later in 2004, running three of my stories and giving me full reign of the House of Pain as the co-editor. She didn't know what to do at the time, and being she was M.I.A. from the site. She suggested about me doing something keeping The House of Pain tradition alive. So the next thing I knew, I was going to bring back the anthology idea. Her running *Gruesome Cargo*, was the start of my being a published author on a few other levels.

This was about the time when Terry Vinson sent me an electronic mail about *Reality Check: An Anthology Of Horror*, at the time before it was an anthology it was a contest. I wrote two stories for the contest, one was originally accepted but because of some monkey going around sabotaging the slot I wrote a different story. The news of the story being accepted came on my 28<sup>th</sup> birthday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2004.

I got to be featured with some talented authors such as Joni Latham, Terry Lloyd Vinson, William I. Lengeman III, and Nicholas Mounts, who eventually jumped on board to become part of my *Tabloid Purposes One* line up, a tip of the hat goes out to them. Such authors who appeared and kicked some ass on this one are Macey Wuesthoff, her friend Mike Ault, Casey Gordon, Gary Morton, Nicholas S. Stember, Sherry L. Gibson, and S.G. Cardin to name a few of them. So with that I give a raise of a beer to them for being part of the project.

William J. Wright brought it all together with his introduction and ***In The Event Of An Actual Emergency***. A few of the authors from the first came back ready and willing to kick some more ass out of the naysayers. Then a few of my anthology mates from ***New Writers Of The Purple Page*** were willing to jump in the fire this time around. Then to finish it off Kimberly Steele did the cover, this time around she's an author and back as one of the cover designers. I wanted to give first pickings to the anthology to the authors who get ignored the most, those being either self-published or web-published. I will still have authors representing that medium on this project, and this time around I got authors who are also published in the traditional magazine and mass market anthology medium as well.

The magazine that was the real model for ***Tabloid Purposes*** was one titled Plots. A reader of mine in 2000 sent me a copy of two issues of this magazine, and in that when I was reading over some of the old stories in this one I was thinking that was going to be the model for the first and now the second. Then the model for the second are a few magazines and TV Shows such as ***The Outer Limits***, ***The Twilight Zone***, and ***Beyond Belief: Fact or Fiction***. I knew my roots in the horror genre to deliver enough scares long after the reader read the story. Being disgusted with the way one magazine was publishing horror, the fiction they've published isn't remotely scary and this being the competition of ***The House of Pain***. Brigit and I both can say this about them, nothing but mall goths looking for a place they can belong. Brigit and I knew exactly what we wanted with horror fiction, her with ***The House of Pain***, as with me and my own website, ***Writings From The Grave***. I brought something to the table which eventually landed me a slot on The Tajmahal Review anthologies.

Then when it came time to do this anthology, there will be its controversies. Much as Reality Check had. I did Tabloid Purposes I to buy Thomas some time to get his done. So when it was finally released both anthologies got some mixed reactions. Some like it and some hate it. One asshole out there said the editor should never work in the industry again for running my story ***Bite of the Spider***, but I will say the opposite. The industry needs a Thomas Long, Jr. Thomas is a real genius for coming up with an anthology playing on the whole Reality TV craze, so with the story in here titled, ***Halloween On Camera***, I am giving Thomas a nod. Then with other stories in this project the authors touched into some

controversial subject matter. This even more so than the first, then with the first there were a few out there offering pirated copies of it before it was released. This time around, I did the best I can to keep the line up a secret until the day it is released.

The moment the book was released, the hazing online started of all the authors involved with it. The hate mail, the death threats, and the comments about the ruination of their careers for being on my anthologies. I wonder if H.P. Lovecraft or August Derleth got this much shit during their times. Then again being a horror writer it is an occupational hazard. As Macey Wuethoff said in an interview, be prepared for the crazy people because they will show up. This is the case with me because I've seen them all over the eight years I've been online. For as many anti-fans coming out of the woodwork, I am getting a lot of new readers as well because of my website appearances.

Though keeping in the tradition of the writers such as Ray Bradbury and Richard Matheson, there is going to be some flack as well for it. Especially from the authors who embraced the whole new erotic horror movement. I am not trying to alienate an entire genre of horror, just that I know what I wanted with the horror genre all along. My vision of horror is clear, and it shows within this anthology. The hammer strikes and the ground begins to rumble; Horror, Science Fiction, Crime Noire, and Pulp Adventure find their home in this anthology.

In the spirit of both the Tabloids and the Pulp era, the readers were captured by the imagination of both type of writers have to offer. When these genres are combined they create something that is a lot of fun to read, even when I was editing this project I was having a lot of fun. Posted most of the stories in the anthology the order I got them, rejected a few stories along the way because they weren't long enough then one after the anthology was filled. There is no question about my passion for this genre, and what I wanted with it was something completely old school.

Every tooth, claw, tentacle, and fang imaginable as well as denomination within the traditional horror, Pulp Adventure and Science Fiction genres showing the good, bad, and the ugly out of the good, the bad and the f'ugly. The stories involved are a lot heavier, faster and harder hitting, not to mention bolder. Some of these authors came in with some brass balls. They knew exactly who they were writing these for so they wanted to bring their most brash

forward. Some of the monsters in this anthology are both real and imagined, there will be no dark fantasy here. Even the Sciecn Fiction stories in this one are going to scare. What speculative fiction in the 1990's and the 00 decade have in common with its forefathers?

Hard question to answer because many genres cross into another genre so the lines are now blurred. But what I wanted to do with this was an anthology that was published in 1991 did, scare the crap out of whoever read it. But with this anthology, I wanted to show the ties to the writers of *The Outer Limits* and *The Twilight Zone*. I had *The Outer Limits* in mind when I wrote *Lake Fossil*, and later with *Lake Fossil II*. Then watching a lot of shows on Discovery Channel about ghosts and other things like that, as well as side show oddities. The things one would often find on shows *Beyond Bizarre* and *Ripley's Believe It.....Or Not*, would always come to mind. I am talking both versions here, I still remember the one they first put out when I was six. This project is a Generation X ran project, but there are authors on here who were published before my time.

Someone told me at the age of twenty-three I was going to be published by age 28, and they were dead on. They also told me that my longest story was yet to come and at the age of twenty-eight that story was *Halloween on Camera*, it clocks in longer than H.P. Lovecraft's *Call of Cthuthu*. Now here I am, about to turn twenty-nine. Looking at two anthologies I am editing, never thought I would actually do two at once here. Though with the diversity in the horror genre, there is always the adversity. Few posting on message boards saying, "Run away, run as far as away as you can because Nickolaus Pacione is doing another anthology."

Though coming into this anthology, I came in with a rich history as the writers came to the table. Horror and Self-Publishing have a long history, Dickens was self-published. Then the genre are cruel to visionaries when it comes to how horror is, for example writing Gothic Horror without the overt sexuality. In the information age, new horrors appear in form of identity theft, cyber stalkers, e-piracy, and cyber bullies. New times include newer horrors, and they act similar to how the paparazzi are to celebrities. I never let these stalkers run my life in person, in fact I managed to go on normally without them bothering me but deep down - it does. And that goes back to the times when I was in school, all the people harassing me because I was in the special

education system at a public high school. Small in stature didn't help either.

Then this was a subject covered in a story written by Washington Irving almost two centuries ago titled "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." School teacher getting harassed by one of the locals, then he encounters the headless horseman. We all got our headless horseman to confront in our times, and that was what our bullies are like. What one sees with the tabloids and paparazzi have to be something they don't want to face, common thread with horror fiction as well. What is often read on message boards, seen in doctored pictures are often a bastardization of the truth. Sometimes authors get bullied out of contributing stories to anthologies, this was the prime example with the first and second **Tabloid Purposes**. Seeing this, how many were gunning for me because my refusal to play by the rules.

As Shirley Jackson said in one of her stories, "Play the game, you get treated the same." This is often the case here, and getting pulled from message boards then censored. Assholes doctoring the cover art of my short story collection to make it look like toilet paper, in other words acting like middle school children. Celebrating books about over sensitive vampires just made me want to write a harder and heavier style of horror. Some are just intimidated by sheer brains, the concept of writing a story truly thought-provoking scares them. Combine that with brawn, there nothing that will be stopping it almost like the thinking sharks in **Deep Blue Sea**.

Combine that with our long winters here in Illinois and the rest of the Midwest, the question will be addressed. What makes someone from the Midwest so damned dark? That question will be answered in due time with this anthology from Science Fiction to Southern Gothic Horror, all the way to a brutal Midwestern style. There is a new type of gothic fiction going out there, and this is a heavier end of it. A lot more underground, this underground is born out of the Midwest ranging from Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Kansas, Iowa, Minnesota, and Ohio.

Last time around there were just three authors from the Midwest. This time there are six. There were a few authors from Canada last time, this time there is just one. Even horror from across the pond, The Land Down Under, and New England are represented in this one. The Aussie front of horror and Science Fiction was very much the way it was in the United States during the

1940's. Canada being similar to the early 1920's in some parts.

Then a few from Texas are back with this one, the attitude there is Don't Mess With Texas. The imaginations down there are about as huge as the state itself. Like **Reality Check** and the first **Tabloid Purposes**, it had authors from Texas. This one is definitely bigger and bolder. Combine this with a small town attitude, the imagination captured in this brings about the saying, "everyone knows everybody, the town has ears and eyes." Though with this one, I wanted make sure there's something for almost everyone. I knew what I wanted with this and went for it. Being disabled, I know the horror thing well enough. Abled or Disabled, horror speaks universally.

Science Fiction taps into what can happen or will happen, example. The Internet, in the 1950's, 1960's, 1970's or 1980's it would be the subject of Science Fiction novelists. Then censorship as what Bradbury did when he touched a nerve when he wrote his apocalyptic novel, **Fahrenheit 451**. This is exactly what is happening in the genres these days especially when it comes to authors who go the route of Print on Demand. Thought Nazis going around saying one author sucks because they decide to publish their work themselves. Though much of the Science Fiction these days is more Space Opera styled, nothing against that but I wanted something more closer to home and set within the lifetime of the author. Hence what one sees with influences of Isaac Asimov, H.G. Wells, and Ray Bradbury. A fine mix of this and steam punk styled Science Fiction. I wish I can do the high tech stuff, but I will leave that to the ones who are able to do it.

Then with what H.P. Lovecraft did in the horror genre by being the first author to bring the genre into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. H.G. Wells did that with his Science Fiction as well writing from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup>. Here we are in the twenty-first century, horror and Science Fiction spanning off to different sub genres within its own genre. Just that what one sees with speculative fiction there are just different disciplines in doing it, and it is like pieces on a chess board. Every author is a pawn on that board. The publishing ends are the kings, self publishing on one end then traditional publishing on the other. Each pawn moves forward to capture the other man's king. Example the Knight and Death playing a game of Chess.....the movie - **The Seventh Seal**.

I've seen the trends come and go, and being a straight man doing anthologies who has the conservative values; there is always a

war waiting to be started. By who it doesn't matter, it is the same bullshit but a different face and name. No matter how different one thinks, there is always someone who will give dirty looks then create message boards often being used as a public urinal on their names. The rigid conservatism is going to piss someone off along the way - in some ways conservatism can scare people more than what the liberal end can throw at them. It is always the question of the horror genre of what is the new norm, or the new taboo. Some lines cannot even be defined.

"Why are you doing another anthology if your first one didn't really sell that well?" Would be one question I get, but to answer that question I find doing anthologies a lot of fun. If I don't make sales of short stories, I find another way of getting them out there. Even if someone like a Dave Lloyd will make sure my name is never read or stories are never published, there's always an option to get it out there. Self-publishing for me was always an option because I like to write stories with a lot of obscurity to them.

Self-publication for some writers is a **"fuck you"** to the rest of what is going on in the industry. This was the attitude going into this thing, more to spite the naysayers. The things I've say of some writers is definitely the thing of internet legend, then getting these authors one thing is promised here. Be prepared for a ride within the realms of the horrific, imaginative, and the controversially thought provoking. So when reading these stories, there will be at least one story that will touch a nerve with someone. In that spirit, I close with the words William J. Wright said in the introduction of the first *Tabloid Purposes* - you were warned.

NICKOLAUS A. PACIONE  
Editor, **TABLOID PURPOSES II**



