*Continuing our conversation with the creators of Image Comics' Vietnam-era zombie story '68, begun here .*

**FANGORIA:** The story begins with Yam, a foreign-looking solider, writing to his parents about his war stories. The other soldiers tease and ostracize him because he looks slightly like their enemy. How did you know this character was perfect as the central protagonist? Was it difficult to present a character without veering toward the stereotypical?

**MARK KIDWELL:** To properly portray the attitudes, prejudices and reality of the Vietnam War period, you have to get down in the muck of racial tension, prejudices and societal division that permeated people's thinking at the time. We have to use a lot of words describing America's enemies in that conflict that we, as different-thinking people today don't share. This was something we knew we had to do to hit on all cylinders and portray the world of '68 accurately, but we all sort of cringed at some of it. My idea with creating Yam was to give birth to the perfect foil for all of that, and show the readers the effect that words like, "Gook" and "Zipperhead" would have on someone by aiming it directly at "one of ours." It's all too easy to accept the fact that the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong were enemies that used vicious, barbaric tactics in the field and were often deserving of the enmity and derision leveled on them. But when you turn that blistering hatred on someone within your own ranks or among the poor multitudes of those you're there to protect, based simply on the color of his skin or the structure of his face, it takes on a whole darker aspect. Words can wound just like bullets, but sometimes the victim of all those attacks gets stronger through the adversity. And that's how heroes are born.

**NAT JONES:** It wasn't difficult at all. Mark really establishes individuality when he creates his characters, which makes it easy for me and Jay Fotos to stay away from stereotypes.

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