

## “WALKING DEAD” and Talking Comics

Written by Jorge Solis

Tuesday, 11 October 2011 07:10

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The second season of AMC's THE WALKING DEAD premieres this Sunday, October 16 at 9 p.m., continuing the televised saga based on Robert Kirkman's celebrated Image Comics series. For Kirkman, who's involved directly with the show as an executive producer, it's just one of a number of projects he's got his severed fingers in, encompassing a number of media, both within and outside the WALKING DEAD universe. The writer/creator spoke to Fango about what to expect from the upcoming round of episodes, plus new comics titles WITCH DOCTOR and THE INFINITE for his Skybound imprint and more.

**FANGORIA:** So many rumors have building up towards the second season of THE WALKING DEAD—from casting to writing staff gossip, and surrounding Glen Mazzara replacing Frank Darabont as showrunner. How will season two will be different from, or better than, season one?



**ROBERT KIRKMAN:** Just on the surface, the main difference between season one and season two, season one was always six episodes, season two is going to be thirteen. We're going to be able to tell bigger stories and get into the characters a lot more, explore the world that much more. It's really going to be just a bigger, better season of THE WALKING DEAD. One of the things I'm really excited about is this change of scenery that we're doing in this season. The first season was largely this metropolitan, Atlanta setting where they're going through desolated streets and exploring the city. For the second season, we're definitely going to be moving out of Atlanta right from the get-go, and moving more into the rural areas of Georgia, where it's going to be out in the woods, in open fields, and it's going to be creepier and darker; there's danger around in every corner. I'm just really excited about that shift in the series, and that's what I think is going to make season two that much cooler. There's just all kinds of twists and turns and cool stuff in store for season two. I just can't wait for people to actually watch it. We've been working on it for so long. Now that we're so close to it coming out, that's really my main concern; I can't wait to hear what people think of it.

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**FANG:** The WALKING DEAD comic-book series will reach its 90th issue this month, and it’s heading close to its landmark 100th edition. Tell us about the significance of these issues to you.

**KIRKMAN:** It’s something I actually sort of lose track of. When I hit the 90th issue, well...90! Nine decades worth of issues! That’s a large multiple of ten! As we move to our 100th issue, it’s a really cool thing! I think of all the other comics in the past that I’ve enjoyed, that have gotten to their 100th issue. It’s going to be a cool celebration. I’m really excited about reaching that landmark. It becomes an institution in comics when you get to that point, so I’m really excited about that. But also, I think the coolest thing about reaching WALKING DEAD issue 100 for me, I feel like I’m just getting started. I feel like I’m very much at the beginning of the story. I’ve got a lot of cool stuff planned. We’ll be hitting issue 200 before long, and issue 300 after that. I just don’t see any sign of me getting sick of the story or not enjoying it as much I am now. If anything, I’m enjoying working on the book now more than ever. So I’m just going to keep going, put that notch on my belt, and then move on.

**FANG:** You also wrote the new novel THE WALKING DEAD: RISE OF THE GOVERNOR with Jay Bonansinga. Why now?

**KIRKMAN:** The Governor is a very important character in the comic book stories. We never really knew anything about his back-story. We never really knew where he came from, who he was, and what happened to him that made him to twist and turn into this horrific monster that we know in the comic book series. I don’t like doing back-story and flashbacks, things like that even in the comic book series, because I’m much more about moving forward, and seeing where the comic book characters go next and what they do; that kind of stuff. It never really came up in the comic book series. When the opportunity came up to do a series of novels, my first idea was, “Oh! I can finally tell the back-story of The Governor!” That’s really the story of it all that really made it happen.

Working with Jay Bonansinga was an absolute, totally awesome experience. I’ve written prose before. I did a short story in the LIVING DEAD 2 anthology, which everyone should run out and buy a copy of, because it’s totally awesome! The thought of actually tackling a novel was something I liked to do one day, but with working on the television show, the comic, and everything else that I’ve got going on, I knew that there was no way I would actually sit down and do a novel. I’m pretty much a novice at prose writing. I didn’t really trust myself to be able to do it and do it well. Like working with Frank Darabont and now Glenn Mazzara on the TV show, people who actually know what they’re doing when it comes to TV, I figured it would be best to partner with somebody who knows what they’re doing in novels, and that guy is Jay

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Bonansinga. And I'm currently happy to say that the novel turned out great and I'm really proud of it.

**FANGORIA:** How did Skybound come about, and how did you become involved in the project?

**KIRKMAN:** Skybound is an imprint of Image Comics. I'm a partner at Image Comics, so I can kinda do whatever I want, which is totally awesome! One of the things I really want to do, have my own corner at Image Comics where I can tap my influence over different people's books, marketing of those books, helping new creators get a leg up and get their work out there and seen by the masses. You know, a bunch of different things. It's an outlet for my ideas and just have a cool little comic company that does all kinds of cool stuff.

**FANG:** What was it about WITCH DOCTOR and THE INFINITE that interested you for Skybound?

**KIRKMAN:** WITCH DOCTOR in particular is just a really cool book I didn't think was getting a lot of notice as it should be. I took it under my wing and tried to show people the book and the great creators who are working on it. Author Brandon Seifert and artist Lukas Ketner are pretty awesome guys! I just wanted to make sure the book got the notice it deserved. I think Skybound is a good place for it and a good fit for the book. It's doing really well there and I'm really happy for those guys.

And then with THE INFINITE, that's really just my desire to work with Rob Liefeld. You know Rob's been an influence on my career. I've been a big fan of his for years and years. When the opportunity came up, where he actually had time to do a book with me, I kinda jumped at the chance. We sat down and thought, what is the ultimate Rob Liefeld comic? What is something his fans, who I feel I can relate to, can really enjoy? What would be a cool comic book to be coming out today? I thought doing an awesome future storyline would be pretty great. So that's where we went with it.

**FANG:** Having seen THE WALKING DEAD adapted for TV, do you now look at projects and think about adaptability toward the television or movie screen?

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**KIRKMAN:** No, I really try not to do that, just because you kind of get into a trap of thinking, "is this a good movie or a good TV show," as opposed to, is "this a good comic book?" That would be a crappy thing to do. I just really set out to do the best comic books that I possibly can and work with the coolest concepts. If those are able to be translated into a movie or television show, then great! I'm certainly not opposed to that. I definitely would love for every comic book I've ever done to be turned into a movie or TV Show, that would be pretty awesome. At the end of the day, my first love is comics and that's what I focus on. It's really just a matter of making cool comics. If the other stuff happens, it's a bonus. I'm never really thinking about that in the early stages of putting a book together.