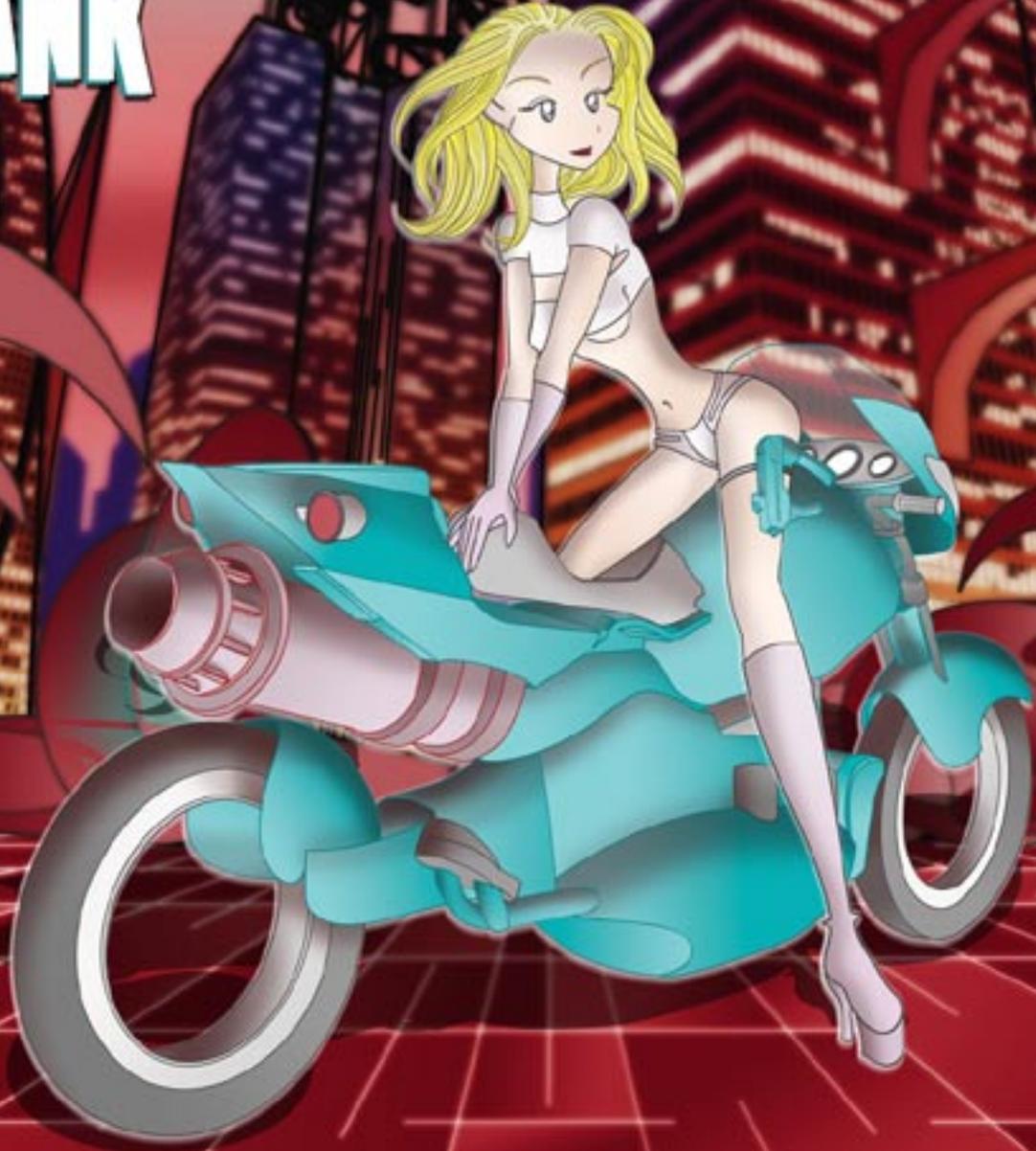


# THE DRINK TANK



Brian Spindel 2014  
Rapunzel

***That is a Frank and Brianna Wu cover! I haven't had enough stuff from them lately, partly because they've moved to Boston, so that'll eat up a lot of time. They said I'd love it. They know me too well. It's a cover that's freaking Sweet!***

***This issue is dedicated to the memories of Merce Cunningham (who I first saw on Sesame Street) and sculptor Bernard Rosenthal. The early is the greatest, most recognisable dancer/choreographer of the last century and the latter is one of the greatest sculptors in a century where sculptors have been pushed down on the totem pole.***



Funny People  
by Chris Garcia

Judd Apatow got me. He fucking got me. I can not believe how hard he hooked me and the incredible yank I took out of the water just amazes me. If you have not seen it, and it's very possible you haven't seen it, Funny People is quite possibly the most painfully effective films I've ever seen. Why was it so effective? Because all my fears and insecurities were presented in a way that just flat out had me in tears.

I'm not kidding. I freakin' cried while I was watching it on the computer. It ripped me apart.

First off, let me set the scene- I grew up loving comedy. I devoted hours and nights watching Comedy Tonight, Stand-Up on Showtime, Carson, Letterman, Showtime specials, HBO specials on VHS, listening to Bill Cosby, Lenny Bruce, Weird Al and George Carlin on record. I loved to laugh, and I loved to tell jokes. I learned that I could make people love, sometimes with me and more often at me. I tried stand-up; I wasn't very good. I tried comedic acting; I was OK. I tried comedic writing; I've never got the feel for it. I can make people laugh, sometimes loud and sometimes I can keep people rolling. Sometimes. I'm not a comedian, I never could be, but those who that I've spent time laughing with, they're great at it and they've had varying levels of success. Friends have gone on to TV shows, a few touring stand-ups, a couple of friends who are working movie actors. It's always a good thing, but like Morrissey said 'We hate it when our friends become successful.'

You see, I have living room charisma. I

do well at parties. I can get a rise out of a bunch of folks on couches. That's the closest you can get to be being not funny while still being kinda funny. My friends, they vary. Some are arena funny, other are bar and nightclub funny. Some people are the kind of funny that I call Distant funny. They're like John Singer-Sargeant paintings, so they work when you're not up-close. Living room charisma is the best kind of charisma for The Nice Guy.

I'm blessed to be a Nice Guy. I may not always be the nicest guy in the world, but I'm not the kind of guy who goes out of his way to extra kind, not the kind who sets out to make much for myself, not the kind who goes after what he wants like a pitbull. I'm just a guy who likes to be with people, not make waves, always try to do the right thing and keep the mood light. Those are the people I love the most, and I always try to be a part of that and I think I manage it most of the time.

That leads right into Funny People. It's got a very interesting story, one that you can boil down to this- What if you went through a life-changing situation and you didn't really manage to change? It's an interesting concept. Adam Sandler plays George, a Comedy superstar who went from doing great stand-up to becoming a star of awful films and then he plateaus and after being told he's probably dying, he goes back for stand-up, but has lost his light. Seth Rogen plays Ira, a young comic who lives with two more successful comics: one of whom is the star of Yo, Teach! a sitcom that's among the worst things on TV. He's not overly charismatic, but he's got some great material and a certain charm. He stumbles across George and he hires him to

be his assistant and write him jokes, but really, George wants a friend and doesn't know how to actually form a friendship.

That's where things started to get touching to me.

You see, George isn't human. He's that part of every person that can't deal with what they've been lucky enough to acquire. Whether it's money, status, possessions, muscles, it doesn't matter: they're a drug that leaves you hollow in the after. He can't enjoy his own life. That's a painful situation. It hurts to think that you could never find happiness in all the fruits of your labor. It almost makes one yearn for the austere lifestyle of a character in a Danish film.

Ira isn't the kind of guy who could go out and make it happen. He's a guy who might find some success in the world on his own, but he'll never break. He just flat-out doesn't have the talent, and what's worse, he's a friend. He is a nice guy. He's not perfect, but he knows that he can't be a dick. That's what the entire path of Ira is. When he breaks from being the nice guy, you stop rooting for him, but you don't have anyone else to grab onto, every character in the movie is

flawed beyond belief, so you come back to him, you take him in and try to go with his thinking. It almost hurts how much you want him to be the good guy, but he's not. He's awkward in many situations. He tastes what can be his if he breaks, and he never achieves it himself, and it's obvious that he never will.

That's what got me.

I saw a ton of myself in Ira. I've wanted to be somebody, a significant figure of one sort or another, and maybe I've managed some of that in some areas, but I've never been The Guy You Want to Know. Instead, I'm The Guy You Know. I'm the buddy. I'm the one you think you've known all along. There are people who you want to know. They may not be famous, but they're the ones you come across and are drawn to. One is someone you'll enjoy being around. The other is the one you'll go across the country just to see. I hang around with some of those folks. I doubt I'll ever be one of those folks. .

And of course, there's the girl.

In this case, the one that George loves is the perfect woman. She's amazing, but she also feels like she's been left behind. George cheated on her years before, and then she left. Her

current husband (who you can hate because he roots for the St. Kilda Saints in the AFL) cheats on her, but she has two young girls and she can't go. It's a hard role. Ira thinks that George is being reckless at trying to get her back. He's right.

Ira has a girl too. She's Daisy. She's awkward,

she adorable, she's funny and she's smart. She totally reminded me of The Lovely and Talented Linda. Only the set-up to our relationship was not nearly as awkward as their story. Not nearly.

Here's the thing, and maybe it's just that I'm at that point in my life where I have to understand that I've pretty much set the table, poured the wine and about to sit down to what I'm going to be doing with the rest of my life. I'm actually exactly 1/2 of the way between George and Ira. I want to be George, because I can do it right, I can take the success and not let it change me, but I know I'm Ira. I'll always be Ira. Ira is great when you're young; Ira is harder to deal with being when you've seen so many others go on to become Georges.

Georges who have managed to stay cool and can deal with the success. That's the worst part.

So yeah, I spent half the movie in tears and not for anything that really existed in the film but for the things that I brought to it. I wish I could have been a comedian, but alas, I'll find something. I always do.

As far as the film itself: see it. It's funny, sometimes riotously so. It's raw, and the tone careers through moods both light and dark. It's not for everyone, but it's entertaining and powerful at times. It's really long, about 2 hours fifteen minutes, but it doesn't feel like it. Apatow understands that you can move through feelings, comedies don't have to be constantly funny. Mostly, Judd understands that you can find something in every character that you connect with, and if you're at the right point, you'll be moved hard.



# The Countdown

*Tara Wayne*

Why is it, that no matter how much time you have to prepare, when the clock begins to count down you inevitably find yourself rushed to finish last minute stuff?

In this case – the Worldcon.

I've known I had to be at the Worldcon this August for about a year. I've kept an eye on the calendar, and did what was needed, as it was needed. Yet I feel in a constant state of near-panic that everything will be done on time.

Since the official Artist Guest at Anticipation withdrew some months ago, I've been more or less the "unofficial" Artist guest as well as the official Fan guest. Ralph Bakshi was a producer of animated films in any case, and had never been expected to provide the con with original art.

In both my official and unofficial capacities, I've been kept busy. I've provided illos for the progress reports, a large portfolio for one, and a cover for the last. I've also had to create a short biography, and a much longer one for the souvenir book. In addition to the bio for the souvenir book, I was asked for a written story or essay. All of this is more or less what you could expect.

But I've also designed the membership badge, another badge for special events, sent some minor art for the Hugo party, done the cover for the program guide, and

a colour T-Shirt. I have to buckle down, still, and produce a short speech in case I win a Hugo myself. (The old one won't do. It's too grouchy.)

I gave two long interviews. One led to doing a cover for the publication that contained it.

On top of all that, at the con I'm expected to be involved in both the opening and closing ceremonies. I was asked to present the Hugo for Best Fanzine to whoever wins, and will have to be at the Pre-Hugo warm-up and reception. I'm also invited to the party afterward. I will be talking about my passion for collecting Roman coins, giving a talk on using mime in learning to draw, giving a "virtual" tour of my apartment in a full-size photographic recreation, sitting on several other panels, and will be roasted on Sunday. I think there are 15 separate items in my timetable, not counting VIP parties I should make an effort to attend.

As if that wasn't enough, Marc Schirmeister is arriving in Toronto *the day before* I leave for Anticipation. We'll be traveling the last leg to Montreal together, along with my "minder" Alan. In the remaining days I have to figure out who's looking after my cat, frame some items for the art show, write that damned (probably unneeded) Hugo speech, and fill out

a million post-it's for the "virtual" recreation of my apartment. I hope I haven't forgotten anything.

Oh, and did I mention that I have to figure out how to pay my internet server without a credit card, meet the rent and avoid eviction, deal with bankruptcy proceedings I've been trying to avoid for most of a year, and that I have an appointment with an ophthalmologist after the con? I also have to earn a living month by month, taking on whatever commissions I can.

Some people thrive on this sort of make-busy. I hate it. No, not the art I've done for the con. That's wonderful – I love opportunities to do first rate work for a sizable audience like the worldcon. But the stuff in the last bit -- dealing with the "real" world. That's all *shit*. It almost seems designed to keep me miserable, insecure, and distracted from any sort of creative effort.

If there was a God, I'd say he was a jealous one indeed – because he continually throws all sorts of "important" real-world headaches at me. They seem to serve no better purpose than to reserve creativity to Himself. In bleak moments I think He created us just to labour without meaning. Original sin is no excuse for it.

But I don't believe in God, so I suppose I have to blame it on thermodynamics, Capitalism, or some other impersonal force of nature.

In the meantime, I'd better get back to work. Times flies.

**Le 67e**  
**Congrès mondial de science-fiction**  
**6 - 10 août 2009**



**The 67th**  
**World Science Fiction Convention**  
**6 - 10 August 2009**

**Anticipation**

## **PUBIC EDUCATION AND MORE DELIGHTFUL TYPOS** by Frank Wu

Way back in “Drink Tank” issue 56, I wrote about an expensive typo. Congress had once intended to declare: “All foreign fruit-plants are free from duty.” Instead, a clerk entered: “All foreign fruit, plants are free from duty.” The loss of duties on fruit cost U.S. taxpayers a cool \$2 million before it was fixed.

I wrote that back in 2005, and now I present, for the gentle reader, more wonderful typos, arranged from least to most costly.

### **1. PUBIC CONTRACTING PURPOSES**

The text of Proposal 06-02 on Ottawa County’s 2006 election ballot read:

“A proposal to amend the State Constitution to ban affirmative action programs that give preferential treatment to groups or individuals based on their race, gender, color, ethnicity or national origin for pubic employment, education or contracting purposes.”

Pubic employment? Maybe they meant “public,” or maybe Ottawa is no longer helping minority hookers and lap-dancers.

Ottawa was compelled to reprint the ballots.

COST FOR ONE “L”: \$40,000.

NOTE: The “pubic” for “public” mistake is fairly common. Dennis Jacobs,

Second Circuit Judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals once wrote: “Plaintiff-appellant John L. Karedes was manager of a pubic golf course.” Apparently a good place for nude-ins.

### **2. THE MILLION-DOLLAR COMMA**

Rogers Communications (Canada’s largest cable TV provider) thought they had a 5-year contract with Bell Aliant. Rogers had contracted to pay Aliant for the rights to string their cables along Aliant’s telephone poles (at \$9.60 a pole).

The problem is that the contract read:

“This agreement shall be effective from the date it is made and shall continue in force for a period of five (5) years from the date it is made, and thereafter for successive five (5) year terms, unless and until terminated by one year prior notice in writing by either party.”

That second comma, Aliant argued, meant that – with one year’s notice – the contract could be cancelled at any time, not just after 5 years. A Canadian telecomm regulator agreed with Aliant, which raised its rates to \$28.05 a pole.

COST OF ONE COMMA:  
\$2.13 MILLION CAD

### **3. BUSINESS CLASS FOR NEXT TO NUTHIN’**

For a few hours on April 5, 2006, you could buy a business class plane ticket on Alitalia from Toronto to Lanarca, Cyprus, for \$39.00 instead of \$3900. Word spread on the internet, resulting in a stampede of buyers before Alitalia was able to correct the error. An estimated 500 to 2000 folks flew for cheap.

COST OF ONE PERIOD: \$1,930,500 - 7,722,000 CAD (EST.)

### **4. ONE DIGIT IN A 732-PAGE**



The ATARI 825 Printer connects easily  
ATARI 850™ Interface Module, which

## **CONTRACT**

The upscale Rushmore condo in New York recently opened – 41 stories of glass and glitz overlooking the Hudson River. Now, with falling housing prices, buyers want to rescind their contracts – without losing their 15% deposit. Or they want to cancel their contracts and buy back in because the condos are cheaper now.

They found help in a typo. The contract allowed buyers to rescind if the first closing didn't happen before Sept. 1, 2008 – when the developer had meant “Sept. 1, 2009”. The first closing was in February 2009.

The mistake happened because the contract had been written by high-priced lawyers long before, and construction delays pushed back the building's opening. And no one fixed the date.

TOTAL COST FOR ONE DIGIT: \$TENS

OF MILLIONS

## **5. WINNING AND LOSING IN THE STOCK MARKET**

In September 2006, a trader at Mizuho Securities intended to sell 1 share at 610,000 yen (about \$6403

US). Instead, he sold (you guessed it) 610,000 shares at 1 yen. Oops.  
COST OF FAT FINGERS: \$340 MILLION.

