

DRIVE-IN **HORRORSHOW** PRESENTS

My

TEACHER

HAS
a



GUN

GREG ANSIN & MICHAEL NEEL

DRIVE-IN HORRORSHOW
PRESENTS:

My Teacher has a Gun



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First edition.

MY TEACHER HAS A GUN



"Kids will be kids."

Ronald Phillips—"Señor Phillips" to his students and, as far as they were concerned, just an average Spanish teacher whose life began with the morning bell and ended with the final one—sat at his desk in an empty classroom at Robert J. Diamond Middle School, his phone to his ear, in front of a laminated poster of flags from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, and seventeen other Spanish-speaking countries. He was a month shy of his forty-eighth birthday, and had been able to maintain a fit physique while most people his age had grown soft around the belly: his tweed sport coat, white button-down shirt, and khakis flattered him.

He took off his thick, square-rimmed glasses, squinted, and ran his hand through his short, grey hair, growing frustrated as he listened to the voice on the other end of the phone. He could hear the kids outside his door, milling in the hallway: conversations about movies, dating, video games, music, and other normal aspects of middle school life

melding into low background noise. School would start soon, and he hadn't even written his lessons on the white-board.

"What?" Mr. Phillips exclaimed into the phone. "You didn't get the transfer?"

"No, sir," a pleasant young woman said. "First State Bank did not receive your payment. Your two-week grace period is up."

"But I'm on direct pay, each month on the fifteenth, like clockwork. Can you check my account? There should be a record."

"Sir, I don't have access to that information. We just provide mortgages. You need to talk to your personal bank for that."

Mr. Phillips forced a sigh. He put his glasses back on and looked at the clock, where the hours were spelled in Spanish: Uno, Dos, Tres, and so on. *Son las ocho menos cinco*, he thought. *Only five minutes until first period*. "Okay," he said.

"There is also a late fee, totaling one-hundred-and-seven dollars—"

"What?"

"—which is due by the end of the day, or we will have to charge you another late penalty."

"Are you kidding me?"

"Due to the urgent nature of your past due amount, we will only accept wire transfer."

"How the hell am I supposed to do that? I'm stuck in school until two thirty-five. Can't you cut me some slack?"

"I'm sorry sir, I don't make the rules. And I can't override our software, so if we don't receive it by closing today you will automatically get charged."

Mr. Phillips drummed his fingers on his desk. "This is *supposed* to happen automatically. It's been this way for five years."

"I understand sir, but if you have an issue you should take

it up with your bank.” She paused, waiting for Mr. Phillips to respond. When he didn’t, she said, in a pleasant, rehearsed tone, “Is there anything else I can do for you today?”

Mr. Phillips seethed through gritted teeth. “No.”

“Well thank you, and you have a nice day.”

Mr. Phillips resisted the urge to slam his phone on to his desk. He stood up, closed his eyes, and breathed deeply.

He opened his eyes and glanced at the clock—only one minute until the bell. “Shit!” He grabbed a whiteboard marker and began to furiously write the lesson plan for first period. As he stretched, standing on his tip-toes to reach the top of the white-board, his tweed sport coat rose up, revealing a Glock in a shoulder holster.

The eleven-fifty bell rang, and hungry eighth graders swarmed the cafeteria. Within seconds, the hot lunch line was out the door, and children scrambled to find the best circular, plastic seats at the long, faux-wood tables; no one wanted to sit on the cracked ones.

Mrs. Janson, the cafe monitor, stood at the far end of the room, keeping watch. She wore brown pants, a white blouse, and a holster with a 9mm handgun on her waist.

A group of girls—Alba Gomez, Taylor Hutchins, and Haven Thomas—walked by, chattering. Haven, the most outgoing of the three, waved to Mrs. Janson, and said, “Hi, Mrs. J! What’s on the menu?”

“It’s pizza day, my favorite,” Mrs. Janson replied.

“Yes!”

Alba made a gagging sound, and Taylor chuckled. “Come on,” Taylor said to her, “it’s better than chicken nuggets. I can’t believe you eat that stuff.”

“Chicken nuggets are yummy,” Alba replied.

"Nasty," Haven said. "I only eat free-range ones that my mom gets at Whole Foods."

The girls' chittering faded into the din. Mrs. Janson smiled as she watched them go. *Good kids*, she thought.

In the back of the room, four best friends, all thirteen—Noah Goldman, Isaiah Glover, Bobby Roland, and Joey Lee—sat together, joking around. Isaiah and Bobby had empty lunch trays in front of them; Noah, whose recyclable cloth lunch bag was likewise empty, wiped milk from his half-grown peach-fuzz mustache. Joey, who was a foot taller than his friends and outweighed each by at least thirty pounds, had polished off a tuna fish sandwich and two milks, and still had two more sandwiches and four milks left to go.

"Dude, slow down," Noah said. "You're going to make yourself sick."

"How do you eat so much?" Bobby asked.

Through a mouthful of food, Joey replied, "I don't know. I'm just hungry all the time."

Isaiah said, mocking his tone of voice, "I don't know. You're going to be fat one day."

"Like your mom," Bobby said.

"Like yours," Joey replied. "I'm takin' your mom to the Spring Fling dance this weekend. Gonna sneak off into the locker room and give her the old Joey special. If you know what I mean."

"What's that? Holding hands?"

The other boys laughed. Joey pushed them playfully, then giggled.

Isaiah subtly pointed to Alba Gomez, who was sitting a few tables over. "I'm going to ask Alba to the dance. Gonna get a new fade to seal the deal."

Noah said, "Alba's cute, but Taylor's super hot." He paused, then asked with hesitation, "You guys think she'll dance with me?"

"You gonna shave that cheesy stache?" Joey asked.

Noah showed off his peach fuzz with pride. "You wish you had this stache, big boy."

They boys laughed. Noah asked Bobby, "What about you?"

"I wish," Bobby replied. "My dad's got some big army thing in D.C. We all have to go."

"I'm sure that will be cool, though," Joey said, trying to cheer him up.

Bobby looked at the girls sitting a few tables away, and sighed. "I'd rather be sucking face with Haven."

"That'll never happen," Noah said. "But Joey's mom is free."

They burst into laughter.

Mr. Phillips hurried into the teacher's lounge, which was beginning to fill up with teachers. He was running late: his seventh-grade class had been unusually off-topic today, and, try as he might, he couldn't get them out promptly. As the lunch bell rang, they were just packing up their books and dawdling, and by the time Mr. Phillips got out the door he had already lost two of his precious twenty-three minutes for microwaving his lunch, eating it, and taking a bathroom break before his eighth grade class arrived.

As he was walking towards the microwave, Mrs. Beth Dudley looked up from her Tupperware container of reheated eggplant parm, noodles, and broccoli. She was twenty-seven, and it was her first year out of grad school.

Mr. Phillips tried not to make eye contact, but she spied him before he could hurry past her and busy himself with the microwave. *At least there isn't a line—the first thing to go right today.*

"Hello, Ron," she said. It made his spine shiver; he hated that nickname, and it was even worse coming from her cheery demeanor. But he kept his cool.

"It's *Ronald*, Beth," he replied. "I'm fine, thanks." He took his Tupperware out of his lunch bag. It was leftovers, again: rubbery boiled chicken, bland mashed potatoes, and mushy carrots. He loved his wife, Ellen, but her cooking left a lot to be desired.

"How did you do with the new study hall assignments? Mine is much better. Right after lunch, I can get a jump on grading."

Mr. Phillips, opening the microwave, stopped. "What?"

"In the email this morning. How did you do?"

My email. The new study hall sign up. Shit. After that crap with the bank, I forgot all about it. When was the last time he'd forgotten to check his email in the morning? He couldn't remember. "Um, I'm not sure."

"Here, you can check it," Beth said. She took out her phone: the case was printed with an overly-cute selfie of her kissing her blond, blue-eyed, model-quality boyfriend on a yacht, in front of a glorious orange sunset. They looked like an ad for a Sandals resort. She opened her email and handed the phone to him. "Hope it's good news!"

"Hope so," he answered, trying to sound calm. He scanned the list, then his face flushed. "Son of a bitch," he muttered, under his breath.

"What's that?"

"Nothing," he forced himself to say. He handed Beth her phone, grabbed his lunch, and left the teacher's lounge as quickly as he could without breaking into a run.

Janet Knight, a young principal at thirty-five, sat at her desk;

Mr. Phillips sat on the other side. Janet gave him a sympathetic look, and said, "I'm sorry, Ronald. There's nothing I can do. It's the new policy, a direct order from Superintendent Strickland. You have to wait till next quarter."

"Come on, can't you please change it? You know I like to leave early on Friday. I've been doing it that way for eleven years."

"I am sorry you didn't get on it when the email was sent."

"Why can't you assign it to Beth Dudley, or Marsha Thomas? It's their first year, they'll never know. Say it was an error."

"Ronald! That isn't fair to them."

"Fair, shmair. I've been here almost twenty years. I've earned the right."

"Now, Ronald, we all appreciate the years you have put in — the kids love you. But, you know I can't do that. Even if I wanted to, it's out of my hands. The superintendent would have my job."

Mr. Phillips squeezed on his lunch bag, hiding it below the desk so she couldn't see it. Principal Knight looked at him; he realized that he hadn't said anything for a few seconds. "Okay," he said, finally.

"I'm sorry, Ronald. Please don't hesitate to call on me any time. My door is always open."

Mr. Phillips forced a smile. "Thank you." As he stood up to leave, he noticed the clock over the door. *Fuck!* Only ten minutes until the next period.

Mr. Phillips sat at his desk, hurriedly eating his un-microwaved lunch, which was even worse when eaten quickly. He glanced at the clock: *cinco minutos hasta el próximo período.*

As he was shoveling a forkful of bland potatoes into his

mouth, his phone rang. A photo appeared: he and Ellen, standing on the beach in Costa Rica during February break. He smiled for the first time all day.

He answered the call, put it on speaker, and said, "Hi, honey! Great to hear from you. Sorry to eat on the phon..."

"I was in a car accident," Ellen interrupted.

Mr. Phillips almost choked on the potatoes. "What? Are you hurt?"

"No, I'm fine. But the front end is is totaled."

"That's okay. As long as you're all right. What happened?"

"I was merging on to Route Two at the light at Oak, and the guy in front of me stopped short and I..."

"You were on Route Two?"

Silence answered him.

"I thought I told you to take the back roads," he said. "Route Two is a deathtrap."

"I know, honey. I was going to, but I was running late, and Mr. Kurtzman said that if I was late one more time he was going to count it as a sick day, and—" She began to sob.

Thoughts swirled though Mr. Phillips's head, each one faster than the one before: *Ellen sobbing, all alone, I can't do anything from this damn school; how much does it cost to fix a front end, thousands?; our insurance premium will go up, even if it's his fault, damn insurance; Ellen could lose her job, why didn't she tell me she was nervous about it, is she hiding something?* He squeezed his desk, pushing those thoughts deep down. He composed himself. "Hey, honey. It's okay." *No, it's not, but—*

"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I just—"

He glanced at his clock. *Quedan dos minutos. Fuck! Not enough time to pee. Guess I'll have to hold it until study hall.*

"I have a class to teach. We'll talk more when I get home tonight."

"I love you."

"I love you, too."

She hung up. He looked at his cold, half-eaten lunch, and threw it in the trash. He leapt up from his chair, erased his previous lesson on the white board, and began to hurriedly write the one for his next class. *I've told her a thousand times not to go Route Two. She never pays attention at that light. I bet she was on her phone, that's what she wasn't telling me. And I know our insurance isn't going to cover that.*

In the cafeteria, it was the paper football championship game—for today's lunch period, anyway. Bobby vs Isaiah, the last two standing. Bobby perfectly slid the football to the edge of Isaiah's side of the table, scoring; Joey and Noah clapped.

"Lucky," Isaiah said.

"Just let me kick the extra point, so I can finish kicking your ass," Bobby replied. Isaiah put his fingers up, forming a goal post.

Bobby stood the paper football on a corner. "The ball is set. The kicker is ready. Here comes the kick, and—" he flicked the paper football; it flew through the goal post and whizzed over Isaiah's head, missing it by less than an inch. Bobby threw his hands up. "It's good! It's good!"

"You dick," Isaiah said. "You did that on purpose."

"The winner, and still champion! His undefeated season continues."

"Just get the damn football."

Bobby laughed and went to get the paper football. "All right, loser. You want to take me on again? Maybe this time—"

The bell rang. Mrs. Janson said, in a booming voice that cut through the loud, boisterous cafeteria, "Clean it up, kids! Make sure to put your recyclables in the blue bin."

"I guess you'll have to wait until next time, loser," Bobby

said with a wink.

Isaiah gave him a dirty look, then smiled.

The boys walked into the hallway of the language wing, which was full of chatty students rushing about: going to lockers, getting books, and gossiping.

"I got French with Mrs. Colette," Noah said. "What about you guys?"

"Spanish," Bobby answered.

"With Mr. Psycho Phillips," Joey said.

"Since they gave him a gun, he's gotten even more psycho," Isaiah said.

"Thinks he's king of the range."

"Well, enjoy. At least you won't be put to sleep. Mrs. Colette makes French about as exciting as my sister's ballet recitals."

The other boys laughed.

"See you boneheads in gym," Noah said; the boys fist-bumped each other and parted ways.

Mr. Phillips finished writing his lesson on the white board, turned around to face the class, and took a deep, calming breath. *Just in the nick of time.*

Seventh graders filled the room. This class had an unusually large number of rich kids: expensive gold Bat Mitzvah necklaces, authentic Golden State Warriors jerseys, and top-of-the-line iPhone Xs were standard. *Bunch of spoiled brats.* Sometimes they were angels. Sometimes they were devils.

Please let them be angels today.

Bobby, Joey, and Isaiah took their seats at the back of the

class; the bell rang seconds later.

"Hola clase," Mr. Phillips said. "Hoy es martes. Espero que tu almuerzo haya sido delicioso." He wrote on the white board: Verb conjugation—El tiempo pasado (past tense). "Hoy aprenderemos sobre el tiempo pasado—"

A fart interrupted him, from somewhere in the back of the room. The class giggled; the sound made his blood pressure spike.

The stench was overwhelming: rotten eggs and spoiled sour cream. He looked at Joey, who wore a sly, cocky grin. *Look at his oversized clothes, neck rolls, sweaty chest. He's pouring out of that shirt. What is he, thirty pounds overweight? Forty? He's going to have a heart attack before he's twenty, just like his old man. Family money. His dad was such a jerk when we were kids—*

"I know that was you, Joey," Bobby whispered.

"Yeah, I can tell from the smell," Isaiah added quietly.

We can ALL tell.

He pulled himself together, forcefully keeping his rage in check.

Don't let them be devils. Get them back on track.

Mr. Phillips squeezed the white board marker. "Bobby? Isaiah? ¿Tienes algo que decir?"

"No, sir, we just—" Isaiah said.

"En español por favor."

"No señor."

Mr. Phillips loosened his grip on the marker. He put on a calm face, trying to present an even keel.

There we go.

"Bueno. Continuemos." He turned back to the white board. "En el tiempo pasado, el verbo 'ser' se convierte en—"

Joey farted again: wet and juicy. The class burst out in laughter.

Mr. Phillips's body locked up.

Rude.

The smell hung in the air. *How many TIMES have I asked the school to fix the damn vents? This room has NO ventilation. But even that would not stop that stench. What is wrong with that boy's bowels?*

He stopped his thoughts. *Calm down.*

He was sweating; he could feel his shirt sticking to his armpits. Slowly, he turned around. "Joseph, that is disgusting."

"En español, Señor Phillips," Joey replied. The class erupted into laughter.

Mr. Phillips's heart raced and his face turned bright red.

That little shit.

Mr. Phillips wiped sweat from his forehead.

Stay calm.

He spoke, in as even a tone as he could, "Bien entonces. Clase, tendremos una prueba sorpresa." He glared at Joey, Isaiah, and Bobby, his eyes narrowing into a chilled stare. "For those of you who might not understand: pop quiz."

The class groaned as Mr. Phillips walked to his desk and opened a drawer.

Bobby whispered to Joey and Isaiah, "How did they give him a gun?"

"I thought they had to do a background check," Isaiah whispered back.

"Why don't you just shoot us, instead, " Joey said under his breath.

Mr. Phillips slammed his hand on his desk with a *BANG!* The class jumped in their seats, as though a gun had fired.

"That's ENOUGH!"

Silence consumed the classroom. Mr. Phillips was aware of every tick of his clock, the echoes of a few kids in the hallway. Out of his line of sight, someone rustled their paper; he almost jumped out of his skin.

Assholes. Little pricks.

Sweat poured into his eyes. "I don't think you understand," Mr. Phillips said. "I'm just not getting through to you."

His fingers trembled; his other hand fidgeted with his pants pocket.

Joey's feet began to tap. Isaiah and Bobby sat like statues.

Is this a joke? thought Mr. Phillips. *Is this a joke to you?*

Mr. Phillips gripped the side of his desk; his knuckles turned white. He felt his pulse through his fingertips, ticking like a bomb's clock. *You think you know about life? You think you know about stress? You ever had to worry about how you're gonna pay your bills? Or figuring out who's going pay for your car after your wife smashes it up? Or put your kid through college?* His pulse raced.

No, all YOU have to worry about is whether you'll get an Xbox or PlayStation. Whether you get the new iPhone or Samsung.

He looked with disgust at Joey's retro Air Jordan sneakers. *Those shoes cost more than my last mortgage payment.*

Joey dropped his eyes to the floor.

Well, I didn't grow up with a silver spoon in my mouth. I deal with shit every day that would make your PAMPERED ASS so scared, you'd be crying for your DAMN MOMMA—

Joey raised his hand.

If that kid says one more smartass remark, I'm going to lose it.

Mr. Phillips used all of his self-control to keep his voice steady, and said, "Joey?"

"Señor Phillips lo, lo—" He took a breath. "Lo sien, siento. Lo siento."

Mr. Phillips stared at him, in shock.

"I'm sorry, Señor Phillips."

"I..." Words escaped Mr. Phillips. "Apology accepted." *He said it in Spanish. He really did.*

A wave of relief washed over Mr. Phillips.

He opened his sport coat, revealing the Glock in his

shoulder holster. "This is a not a joke."

Mr. Phillips wiped sweat from his eyes with his sport coat sleeve.

"What if a classmate had one? Or someone else?"

The kids were silent.

Mr. Phillips reached inside his sport coat jacket. When he removed his hand, he was holding his Glock.

The students' eyes locked onto the barrel of the weapon.

Mr. Phillips aimed the gun at the floor. His finger lay on the gun's slide, above the trigger; the plastic was warm from his body heat.

"You all know why I have this. It's not a game."

He took a deep breath.

"And I take it very seriously. I'm certified and trained, every year. God forbid that I *ever* have to use it."

He looked each student in the eye, and said, "I would *NEVER* use this on any of you. I would never even point it at you. Okay?"

"Si, Señor Phillips."

He looked hard at Joey, Bobby, and Isaiah. They looked back at him, not as smartass kids, or class clowns, but with real understanding.

How's that for a wake-up call.

The stress of the day flowed from his body, the way it always did when he whipped his students into line.

He exhaled.

Finally got through to those little shits. About time someone did.

"Very good, class. Now that we're settled, let's get to that prueba sorpresa."

Mr. Phillips brought the Glock back towards his shoulder holster.

The button on his tweed sport coat's sleeve caught on his coat's lapel. He pulled at it to get it loose.

Come on, bastard.

Mr. Phillips had chosen the Glock because it was used by police officers across the country. The Glock had an internal safety, which would prevent accidental discharge if the weapon was dropped or mishandled.

Cops liked it because it was made to be drawn and fired as quickly as possible, which, in their line of work, was the difference between life and death. As a result, it did not have a normal safety on the handle.

Mr. Phillips pushed his coat sleeve forward.

Mr. Phillips' sport coat button caught on the trigger, pulling it back. The bang that followed filled the room.

Mr. Phillips's eyes bulged; he flew backwards.

The children screamed.

He collapsed onto the floor. He grabbed his chest, but couldn't stop the blood flowing from the gaping hole to the left of his sternum.

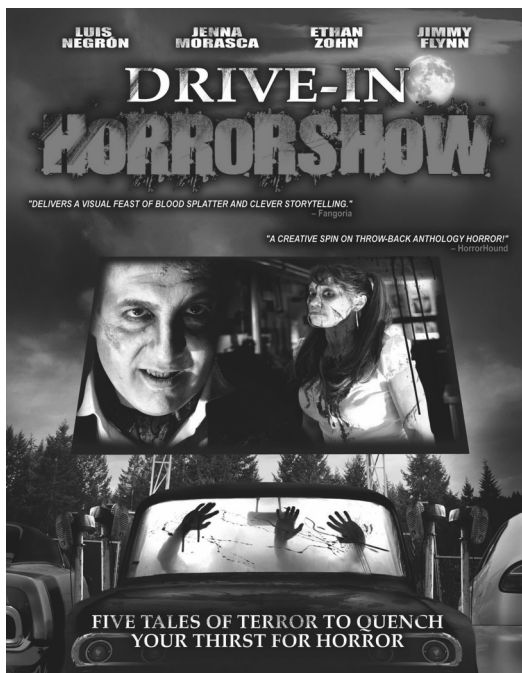
Students poured out of the room; some crying, some screaming, some in pure shock. They ran into the hallway towards the exit, past the sounds of classroom doors locking and the muffled sounds from the teachers inside, trying to calmly instruct the students to get away from the door, seek shelter, and be quiet.

Paul McKoston, the school resource officer who was in only his second year on duty at Robert J. Diamond Middle School, arrived to Mr. Phillips's classroom in time to witness the blood flowing from Mr. Phillips's mouth slow to a trickle. The whirlwind of anger in Mr. Phillips's head slowed down, all the stresses of the day growing fainter and weaker. He thought of the kids he had belittled. He thought of Joey, Bobby, and Isaiah. *They're not so bad. Just idiot kids.* He thought of his wife, Ellen, standing on the side of the road waiting for help. *I'm sorry for being mad at you.*

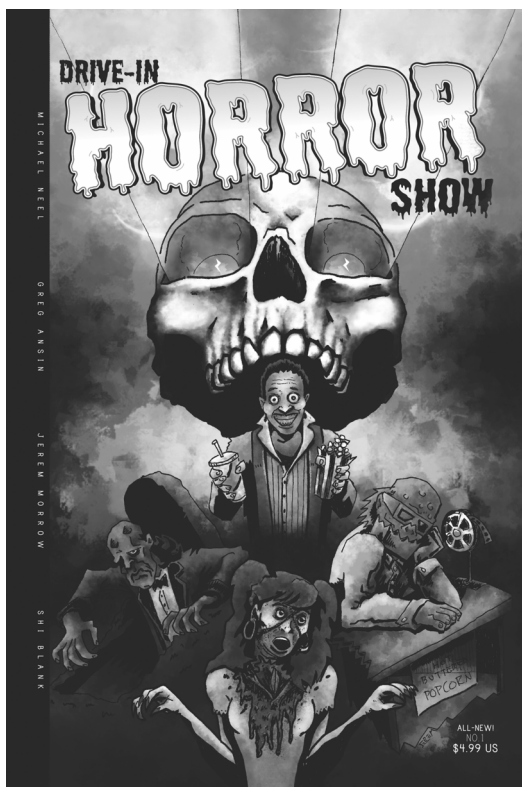
His eyes glazed over, he breathed his final breath; and then, silence.

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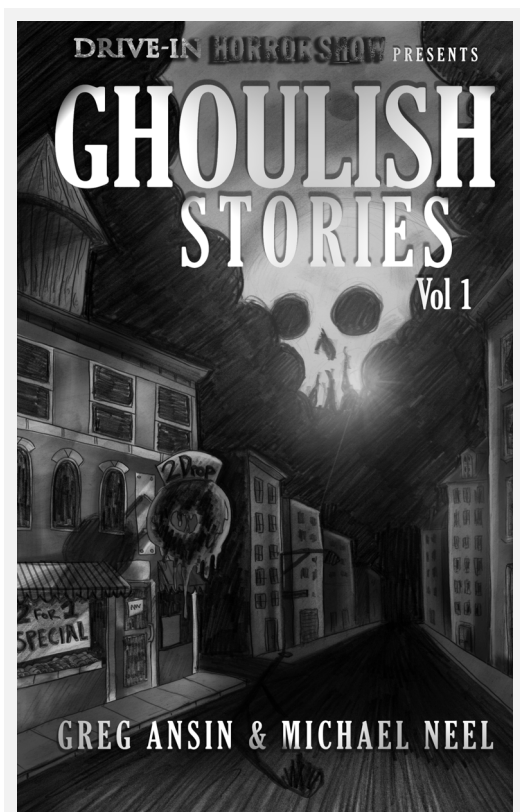


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About the Authors

GREG ANSIN and MICHAEL NEEL are the creators of *Drive-In Horrorshow*. They are always willing to scare any lost souls that need a good fright.



Greg Ansin



Michael Neel

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