

FAQ

**Where do you get your ideas?**

Writing comics is one of the best jobs in the world. My goal is to take the things that I encounter each day, and look at them in such a way that they make people happy. It’s wonderful. It keeps the bad days away, because in any situation, there’s a way to find the funny part of it, and distill it down to where the reader can see the humor as well.

People think that it must be hard to keep thinking of ideas, but I find that the longer I create, the more ideas there are to have. I compare it to working out. The more you do it, the stronger the muscle gets.

Over time, I’ve had different ways of coming up with ideas. These days I like to either start with a sketch, or a scenario. Something that makes me chuckle. Then I try and figure out what the characters would do in that scene. I try to think like a kid. I try to be a bit absurd or over the top.

There are a few people who I try hard to make laugh and it’s very satisfying when I succeed, so, I think of the things that would make them howl, and I try to write that.

**How did you get started with comics?**

When I was eleven years old, my dad had to work in Oklahoma for six weeks, and he decided to take us all for a road trip. We had a little two door car and my sister and I were jammed in the back for several days and we were allowed to bring whatever we could fit into a backpack. I brought a pad of paper, some colored pencils and an assortment of comic books. If I remember right, there was a Garfield, a Bloom County and a Peanuts in there. The first day I read comics. The second day I started to draw my own. By the time we got to Oklahoma, I was off to the races. I spent the summer reading library books about drawing comics and filled sketch pad after sketch pad with my own. When I got back to school in the fall, they gave me my own page in the school paper, and I used it to hone my skills and to adjust what I was doing based on whether it made the kids in my class laugh, or not.

**What are your favorite comics?**

I don’t read the funnies as much anymore because I don’t want to have other people’s ideas floating around in my head when I’m writing. But, I love all kinds of comics.

As far as funny/newspaper comics, I think everyone loves Peanuts and Calvin and Hobbes. Those were my favorites growing up and it was a major boost when I got to talk with Charles Schulz about cartooning when I was 16. He had amazing advice for me that shapes the way I work to this day.

I recently have been enjoying graphic novels and I really like the work of Pénélope Bagieu (*Exquisite Corpse),* Jeff Smith (Bone), and Marjane Satrapi (Persepolis)

**How long does a cartoon take?**

Assuming the idea part of my brain cooperates, it takes me about two hours to complete a black and white cartoon, and about 6-8 hours to complete a color cartoon.

**What pens/ink/paper/etc… do you use?**

For my line art, I use a Pen and Ink Sketch Iridium point fountain pen with Sailor Kiwagura Nano-Carbon black ink. For more solid areas, I use a Windsor-Newton Sable brush or a PITT pen.

The comics are drawn on 400 level Vellum finish Bristol Board.

**Are Casey and Kyle based on your kids?**

Comic characters stay the same and kids grow up. Plus, I have five kids now, not just two. The characters of Casey and Kyle were inspired by my kids at the time I was creating the strip. But as time goes on, the kids and the characters have shaped their own identities. And I’ve added new characters, many of which are parts of my own imagination. So, the cartoon is inspired by my kids, but I wouldn’t say it’s based on my kids. My actual kids are much more responsible than you’d think, if you compared them to the comics. Comics are more fun, and much more exaggerated than real life. But, when done right, you can relate to real life from them.