

Practitioner's Statement

Comic Book

Thomas Casey

The Chicago Wire is a twelve page black and white comic book produced by Graphite Smudge Productions that follows two 1930s-era gangsters as they go about their mobster activities in downtown Chicago.

The company required the comic book to be at least **10 pages in length**. This requirement was exceeded with a length of **12 pages** due to the expansion of the comic's opening pages. While the comic turned out longer than expected, this added a greater layer of depth and allowed for a more refined plot line. As the brief requested, the comic sports a **classic black and white style** that uses a number of illustrative techniques to give the artwork a diverse and eye-catching appearance. The style of artwork is mostly **cartoony** with **elements of realism** as the brief required. The plot outline that was given in the brief was fairly vague which allowed for a fair amount of creative freedom when it came to developing the story. While the general plot is somewhat far-fetched in comparison to events that would have played out in a similar Chicago of the 1930s-40s this adds to the realistic yet cartoony nature that the comic art exhibits.

The process that was required for each of the 12 pages began with idea generation followed by designing major and minor characters, art styles, plot lines and media experiments. Once these requirements were met each page required a basic thumbnail sketch followed by a full size hand drawn concept and finally a computer-generated concept. Character dialogue was filled in tentatively during the hand drawn concepts and was reviewed and revised after computer generated concepts were finished.

My final design was heavily influenced in its style primarily by Steve Purcell's *Sam and Max* series of comics. This series uses a similar drawing style, utilizing only black and white. I drew inspiration from the diversity seen within this artist's panels that expanded on the basic idea of images and text confined to boxes on a page. The textural shading techniques that I made use of in my work was inspired by Art Spiegelman's extensive use of textures in his *Maus* comics. Some of the positive / negative space shading within my illustrations is also akin to Frank Millers, especially within his comic *Sin City*.

The finished design is visually appealing, extensively refined and built up. The artwork makes great use of the black and white art style and uses varying shading techniques to complement itself further. For the most part the plot and the panels used to convey it are flowing and fit well together, minus a few somewhat complicated pages. Overall, the design is well thought out and because of this is a visually appealing and entertaining piece of work.