

# Entertainment

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## Kansas City writer, artist publish digital comic book for cell phones

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The Kansas City Star

The first comic book series created exclusively for North American cell phone customers is the work of Kansas City writer Sean Demory and Lee's Summit artist Steven Sanders.

*Thunder Road*, described by Demory as a "post-apocalyptic dieselpunk action adventure" story, is being released today by Uclick's GoComics, a digital subsidiary of Andrews McMeel Universal in Kansas City. The cell phone comic's debut coincides with this week's Comic-Con International in San Diego.

Demory, 34, is a poet and playwright and a communications specialist for the city of Kansas City. *Thunder Road* is his first comic book.

Sanders, 33, is a freelance artist who reformats existing comics material to cell phone screens for GoComics. His previous comic book work includes Image Comics' *Five Fists of Science* with Kansas City writer Matt Fraction.



The writer of *Thunder Road* describes it as "Dr. Strangelove" meets "The Road Warrior."



## **How did you two come up with the first original cell phone comic book in North America?**

**Steven:** Sean was just throwing out ideas. He had the concept for *Thunder Road*, and I thought that it would be a good match for the cell phone. And I asked him if he would be interested in making a pitch to GoComics.

**Sean:** I saw it as a challenge. A lot of it is just simply dealing with a style of writing that has to focus on that individual (cell phone) panel.

### **If there's only one panel shown at a time, is it still a "comic book"?**

**Steven:** I guess it depends on what your definition of a comic book is. I mean, you don't get the same sort of leading-of-the-eye from panel to panel that you do in a traditional comic book format. But in terms of it being a story told largely through pictures, then I think it is a comic book.

**Sean:** It's a more dynamic medium in some ways. Cell phones have different tools. We have big, sweeping battle scenes, and I can tell Steven, "Pan right."

**Steven:** For each panel, you do have the option of scrolling up and down or side to side by using either the right or left arrow buttons on the cell phone player.

**Sean:** And this story works well with that.

### **What is the story?**

**Sean:** I read somewhere that Douglas MacArthur had been courted to run for president. And he said, "The first thing I would do is drop the bomb on a major city in the Soviet Union just to show them we mean business."

### **MacArthur said that?**

**Sean:** No, he didn't. It's absolutely false. But it's great for a story. Basically what we're looking at is an alternate 2007 after 50-some years of atomic war between the Soviet Union and the United States — including World War IV, which started in Wichita. The middle of the country is not a pleasant place.

It's "Dr. Strangelove" meets "The Road Warrior." We have everything from corporate-sponsored road gangs to a Soviet military column that's waiting for the "go" sign, effectively, from apocalyptic evangelicals who call themselves the Meek.

### **And their goal?**

**Sean:** That the Meek shall inherit the earth.

### **Nice. Are most comic book creators meek or assertive about cell phone and other digital comics?**

**Steven:** I haven't seen very many people go into the potential future of digital comics with any great amount of enthusiasm. I know that (comics visionary) Scott McCloud has. A lot of people just kind of want to fix the current (print comic book) industry, to find some way to just get more readers to go along with the current system.

### **Are they blind?**

**Steven:** Fools! They will see!

### **Seriously, what's your digital comics dream?**

**Steven:** If you were able to essentially have a service like iTunes or Rhapsody for comics. You could rent the comics or buy and own the comics in a digital format, and then you could transfer them over to your e-paper comic book reader.

**Sean:** It will happen on some level. The market will fill that need. But I think and I hope that you will still be able to pick up a paper comic book. I very much would like to do a paper comic book. But I already have new ideas for this.

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### **New comics alert**

#### **Some of the latest issues due out today in comic shops:**

•*Hellboy: Darkness Falls*

•*All-Star Batman and Robin* (written by Frank Miller, who wrote *Sin City* and *300*)

•*Incredible Hulk* (the Green Goliath wages war on Iron Man, Mr. Fantastic and Dr. Strange)

**A free trial of *Thunder Road* is available to Verizon and Sprint mobile phone customers. For details, go to [gocomics.com](http://gocomics.com)**