

## JAMES LUCAS JONES EDITOR

James Lucas Jones is the Publisher of Oni-Lion Forge Publishing Group and the former Editor in Chief of Oni Press. When he is not working on comics, he's likely building with LEGO, watching basketball, obsessing over music/sneakers/media, or fretting over impending ecological collapse. He lives in Portland, Oregon, with his partner, their 13-year-old, and their two doofus dogs.



Art by John Allison

**hoopla  
digital:**

**Since its initial release over 17 years ago, *Scott Pilgrim* has gone on to become a Hollywood movie, a video game, and a staple in pop culture. Did you ever expect the series to have this kind of impact?**

**James Lucas  
Jones:**

At the very beginning? No way! As an indie publisher with just three full-time employees when the book launched, we were just hoping it would find an audience and Bryan would get to tell the full story he wanted to tell. Around the time of the release of the third volume, we could really feel the tidal wave coming. Things were starting to break in a big way.

**hd: What do you think it is about this series that makes it resonate so well with people?**

**JLJ:** I think the amount of growing up most folks still have to do after they've hit "adulthood" is something almost everyone can relate to. The way that metaphor plays out in *Scott Pilgrim* is still pretty rare to find even all these years later. The synthesis of influences and life experiences is uniquely Bryan.

**hd: At the time of its release, this series was unlike anything ever seen in comics. What was the pitch from Bryan Lee O'Malley that convinced you this could be a hit series? What grabbed you?**

**JLJ:** I had been a fan of Bryan's work for years already when we published *Precious Little Life*. We were wrapping up his graphic novel *Lost at Sea* and I knew we wanted to be part of whatever Bryan wanted to do next. I don't think any of us expected him to pitch something as big as *Pilgrim*, but once we saw what he was doing, we were in for the long haul.



**hd:** What was the editing like for *Scott Pilgrim* compared to other comics? Were there any particular challenges or notable steps in the process?

**JLJ:** As a comic book and graphic novel editor, every creative team or cartoonist you work with is different and produces different challenges. One of the things about *Pilgrim* that really stands out is the speed at which Bryan produced the series. To write, draw, tone, and letter over 1,200 pages over a little over six years is a herculean feat and one I'm proud to have been at Bryan's side for.

**hd:** Talk about the decision to set the story in Toronto. How do you think it impacts the overall story?

**JLJ:** Toronto is essentially a supporting character in the series. The personality of the city and the specificity of the landmarks and locations Bryan uses in the series grounds it in a way that I don't think would be possible if he set it anywhere else.

**hd:** We visit two libraries in the story. Do libraries in general hold any significance to you or Bryan?

**JLJ:** I think we both share a lot of love for libraries and the folks who work in them and Toronto's reference library is such an amazing location. Going back to Bryan's specificity in terms of locations, it's just a joy to be in the reference library and look around at where such an epic encounter from the books takes place.

**hd:** From *Zelda* nods to the X-Men patch on Scott's coat, there are dozens of Easter Eggs and pop culture references scattered throughout Volume 1 of this story. Are there any that fans tend to overlook or don't catch?

**JLJ:** Oh, I'm sure there are. I know there are some real superfans out there but I'd be surprised if anyone other than Bryan knew all of the individual callouts in the series.

**hd:** Some of the references in *Scott Pilgrim* are incredibly specific—a recipe for vegan pot pie, tablature for guitar chords. Were these things that Bryan specialized in?

**JLJ:** Bryan is an accomplished musician and a veteran of restaurant kitchens and these perspectives are scattered through the book along with other references born of Bryan's personal experience.

**hd:** How have comics changed from when you were a teenager? What do you hope to see in the coming years?

**JLJ:** The North American comic book scene is almost unrecognizable from my teen years in the '90s. There is certainly more varied material than ever before in my lifetime. There is more diversity present in the folks creating that material. It's just amazing to see and I only see the readership of comics and graphic novels continuing to expand. It's a joy to be a part of.

**hd:** For fans of the *Scott Pilgrim* series, are there any other graphic novels that readers should check out?

**JLJ:** *Snotgirl*, Bryan's collaboration with cartoonist Leslie Hung, is a blast. From the Oni Press catalog, I'd recommend Corey Lewis's *Peng! Action Sports Adventures* and *Sharknife* books, as well as *Wet Moon* from Sophie Campbell. Both Sophie and Corey tackle similar themes of new adulthood but in dramatically different ways than what Bryan does in *Pilgrim*. *The Black Mage* by Daniel Barnes and D.J. Kirkland is another book that injects a lot of pop metaphor into some sneakily weighty subject matter. I can't wait to see what that pair does next.

