



The Nightly News

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As an act of violence spirals out of control to encompass the entirety of the news media, a cult has emerged from the errors and retractions that have ruined careers, marriages and even lives. Under direction from his cult master, The Hand leads an army of followers committed to revolution, willing to die for their cause.

Collecting: *The Nightly News* 1-6

The Nightly News Details

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From Reader Review The Nightly News for online ebook

Sam Quixote says

A sniper begins shooting journalists and anyone connected to the media, journalists, cameramen, sound guys, all in the name of an obscure cult leader called The Voice. John is recruited to join this mysterious and deadly organisation after a news story destroyed his life where he meets similar people who've had a rough deal from the news companies, wrongful accusations, etc. They begin the fight back against the information monopoly the media corporations hold and the way these corporations abuse this power to mould our reality.

I've enjoyed Jonathan Hickman's work a lot - his FF series with Marvel, his books with Image - they're great, so it made sense to me to pick up his critically acclaimed debut comic book which writers like Andy Diggie and Brian Michael Bendis positively gush about in the blurb and Brad Meltzer even says "This is what the future looks like". Well, if this is the future of comics then I can only imagine that in the future we've all become significantly stupider.

You know how some kids go to college for their first term and return completely changed, believing that having heard a lecturer talk of big ideas and treat them like adults for the first time, they now know everything? This is the impression Hickman gives in this book. Reading "The Nightly News" is like reading someone who has just read Noam Chomsky for the first time and is clumsily fashioning a story around his barely-digested teachings.

Here's Hickman's take on news reporting: journalists and everyone in the media are evil. So evil they deserve to be shot in the head with a high-powered sniper rifle. And to make sure the reader is on the side of the lunatic with the gun, he makes every single journalist evil too. He makes them say things like "I tell people who to pick as the next president, what stocks to buy, what to think about foreign affairs. The Japanese have a saying 'The press leads the public'. They're goddamn right." So they're all amoral and deluded with god-complexes: they deserve to get shot right? Especially when they're in collusion with the politicians who are even more evil and scary.

Like cartoon Bond villains the politicians make toasts such as "To the violence that makes peace possible. To the true power that makes market economies stable" and say even nuttier things like "We destroy people without fear of retribution or litigation. It's what we do." And when the evil media types and the even more evil politicians get together Hickman has them literally quoting Goebbels and Hitler along with exposition like "our revenues are tied to our dominance on the front line of ideas". Yeah that's convincing dialogue, Jonathan, they would really be saying that to one another.

But we're clear so far, class? Media and political types are just bad. They deserve all the bullets and bombs the cultists throw at them. Because the cultists know what's really going on, they're the smart ones. They're so smart they say things like "We call them programming facilities. You call them public schools. 99 of 100 students are automata. They are careful to follow prescribed paths and customs, not by accident but by the result of ample education." Riiight. We're all "automata". Thanks guys, for lifting the veil of deceit and showing me the truth - now I see the world for what it really is.

Hickman sprinkles info dumps in each chapter showing charts, figures, and stats in the midst of the story with a snarky and smug disclaimer along the lines of "To find out more about poverty/hunger/rape/genocide read below, however if all you're concerned about is entertainment, skip this and continue reading the next page." He also includes smarmy comments throughout like an un-asked-for commentary along the lines of "here's why I made this artistic choice because you wouldn't be able to handle anything more challenging". It's so unbelievably patronising.

On the one hand you have more-evil-than-Darth-Vader politicians and rich media types vying for some kind of Orwellian future and on the other you have brain-dead anarchists represented here as heroes looking to create a utopia through nihilism. And then between the two you have an author sneering at the reader with an array of facts lecturing you that you're a bad person because you bought this comic book for entertainment and that unless you're fighting the system and the corporations, you're an "automata". I don't know which I disliked more, the authorial voice, the characters in the book, or the story - I just know I hated them all.

I get that 6 giant corporations owning all of the media outlets in the west is a bad thing, but Hickman's solution in the book is "shoot them all". For a book posing (and boy is it posing) as intellectual and knowing, that's a pretty trite answer. Why put so much effort into making yourself look educated and smart when your only conclusion is chaos - surely it undermines the entire point of the book? If you want to address serious problems and talk down to people who ignore them, you can't then turn around and claim the solution is out and out violence, some brainless bang bang boom. It betrays the central premise that this is an adult book with adult issues if you supply childish answers. How about saying something intelligent and/or original? Hickman subtitles this book "A lie told in 6 parts" to cover himself from critiques about his actual political stance and the fiction he's writing. He can make a political statement and then back away from it claiming "hey, it's fiction, it's all a lie!" - in other words he can have his cake and eat it. It's a cowardly approach.

And a hypocritical approach too. Hey Jonathan, if corporations are so bad, why do you work for one? Marvel is owned by Disney who are owned by Buena Vista, one of the Evil 6 you singled out. Writing "The Nightly News" and then going to Marvel to write "Fantastic Four" is like if Tyler Durden made his "you are not a beautiful or unique snowflake" speech and then put on a suit and went to work for Goldman Sachs.

But political posturing aside, how's the story? Well, tedious to be honest. The - and I say this very loosely - "heroes" of the book kill journalists and media types and then the book ends. They're not "characters" as Hickman doesn't really give them character, they're just ciphers at best. There are other plot-holes in the book which I won't go into but are glaringly obvious if you choose to read this.

There are a couple of good points. I liked Hickman's art. I didn't even know he was an artist but he draws pretty well and sets out the pages like graphic design rather than comics layouts and it's quite effective. At times I felt the pages were a bit overstuffed with boxes of information but I suppose that's Hickman educating a robotic schlub like me to think than just read a comic for entertainment. Thank you sir, may I have another?

Overall, this book is astonishingly crap. Bad story and even worse characters aside, being condescended to on every page became very tiresome very quickly and I struggled to make it through the end. This is political thought as written by an immature, thoughtless half-wit who is parroting back ideas bigger than he conceive in a convoluted and messy way. Hickman's response to 21st century media saturation is to throw his toys out of the pram while mumbling banalities about how everyone's an idiot. I cannot believe writers I respect are in cahoots on this book, that a good writer like Hickman wrote this and that Bendis and Diggle praised it. "The Nightly News" is one of the dumbest debuts I've ever read and the kind of book a 15 year old would think is cool and righteous because they're 15 years old. Jonathan Hickman, if this is you trying to prove your intellectual veracity, shut the hell up and get back to writing about the Thing and Spiderman, ok? You're embarrassing yourself, mate.

Jordan says

I've heard nothing but gushing praise for Hickman, so I'm going to jump on the bandwagon by checking out all his early stuff 5 minutes before he starts his gig at Marvel.

This book looks amazing. Stylistically, it's like nothing I've seen before. Every page is a feast for the eyes. The story is also just the sort of thing I like, blending *Fight Club*-subtle political discourse with a wicked sense of humor and wish-fulfillment violence against "the man."

The trouble is, it left me feeling pretty empty. The characters don't have much depth and are often difficult to tell apart. The intricate design work, while fascinating to look at, doesn't always make for the clearest reading. There isn't enough of a plot to hang the message on, and what there is doesn't reach any satisfactory conclusions. Maybe if I was still more of an Angry Young Man I could overlook the storytelling flaws in favor of the fight-the-power sentiment. But telling me that a handful of giant corporations own the media is only a first step. You then have to do something interesting with that information beyond just putting bullets into members of said media.

The potential here is obvious, and I look forward to seeing more from Hickman. This one, while entertaining, just didn't hit all the necessary notes with me.

Jan Philipzig says

Noam Chomsky Meets the Punisher

How do you turn the brilliant but rather prosaic writings of Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman into a comic book? Jonathan Hickman came up with this idea: you just copy some of their sentences, then add a few statistics from a recent article on globalization. Oh, and then you throw in lots of self-righteous violence, of course, so that comic-book readers can relate to the whole thing. "Noam Chomsky Meets the Punisher," basically. Sounds like an ill-advised approach? Well, that's because it is.

In their book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Chomsky and Herman argue that the mass media impose propaganda designed to manipulate the general population into accepting economic, social and political policies that are actually not in their best interest, but only in the interest of small political and economic elites. This ideological manipulation is argued to be the result of the mass media's very structure, most significantly of the concentration of media ownership, and of the media's reliance on advertising and governmental news sources.

The Nightly News provides a very rough and sketchy introduction to the theories developed by Chomsky and Herman, quoting a sentence here and referencing an argument there. The spotlight is on the fact that our access to critical information on the topic of globalization is very limited, as the mass media we have come to rely on for information have every reason to keep us in the dark on the subject. After all, why would global media conglomerates and the advertisers they rely on have an interest in us becoming aware of the harmful implications of processes that have been immensely profitable for them?

So far so good. Unfortunately, the story Hickman has constructed around those scattered globalization facts is not only awful from a storytelling perspective (cardboard characters, etc.), but falls prey to the very ideological mass media tendencies it purports to criticize. The anti-globalization activists that the story presents us with are not reasonable human beings fed up with multi-national corporations having unregulated political power, but psychotic cult members duped into rebellion by a recorded voice, ruthless and arrogant mass murderers ("We ain't the good guys... we're killing without conscience, bad men with big ideas.") who look down on non-violent protesters (as they, it is claimed, "offer nothing of consequence") and have given up all "hope for a better world," recommending that you simply "abandon it." Apparently, they are in it just for the killings.

In short, the book's demonization of political activism is even more absurd than the one usually provided by the mass media, and the false claim that peaceful activists are fighting for a lost cause simply repeats one of the most commonly trumpeted myths designed to discourage us from exercising our democratic rights. Under its pseudo-intellectual surface, *The Nightly News* thus adds up to little more than *Fox News* in disguise. While the book pretends to provide the kind of globalization critique that is usually repressed in our corporate-controlled media environment, it is at its core every bit as close-minded, neoconservative, and manipulative as your typical mass-cultural commodity.

Until a more insightful and sincere comic book comes along (by Joe Sacco, maybe?), I recommend you explore some of the many excellent conventional books or documentary films on the crucially important topics of globalization and mass-media propaganda. The writings of Noam Chomsky, clearly a (not even half-digested) key influence on *The Nightly News*, would be a great place to start.

Gayle Francis Moffet says

I picked this at random for a re-read after not having read it since--I think--the first time I read it when it came out. I had forgotten most of the plot.

It's the story of a group of people who have been recruited into "The Cult of the Voice" because they have been wronged (or feel they have been wronged) by how they've been portrayed in media stories about themselves. Their goal is to murder journalists because the news can't be trusted.

I'm not sure if this re-read was perfectly timed or perhaps the worst decision I made this week. I do know this: It doesn't feel like cynical trash. It feels, instead, like Hickman saw a rush of journalists (back in the 2005-2007 era) get busted for fabricating stories and flat-out lying, saw the early days of Alex Jones (one of the leads is named Alexander Jones, and I don't believe it was accidental), and put together a story that wove out an interesting narrative that happened to include conspiracy theories and cult-like devotion to the message of someone who is clearly not to be trusted.

In the year of our screaming 2018, it doesn't hit close to home. It camps on our front lawns. I'm certain Hickman never expected his book to be so fucking accurate, and I'm not sure I'll be picking it up again any time soon. But it's a crafted piece of work, both in script and in the art. And I'm glad it's here, even if it's not what I needed right now.

Josh Epstein says

It's a rare occasion when I worry that a comic book purchase will land me on a Homeland Security watch list. After reading the first chapter of the elegant hardback that I picked up at Westfield Comics, I was concerned.

The Nightly News was creator Jonathan Hickman's debut work. In it, he attempts to channel the popular rage that films such as *Network* and *OutFoxed* attempted to bring to the forefront. The pages are packed with "info-graphics" which (despite many disclaimers stating that the account is fictional) put forth a great deal of real information as it relates to the structure of corporate media in the United States and the world at-large.

This is a book that was several years ahead of its time. When the first of six issues came out in 2008, we had yet to witness the effects that the Arab Spring, Occupy, and Anonymous movements would have on the

popular discourse. The only people screaming about globalization and the concentration of wealth into the hands of an ever-smaller circle of people were anarchists, ultra-liberals, and the basement-dwelling conspiracy theorists.

The book is a scathing indictment of the "systems of control" that have been created over many decades. Media, education, pharmaceuticals—nothing is out of bounds as Hickman verbally assaults the establishment.

Four years after its release, many of the topics that are addressed with violence in the book are core issues for the rising wave of populism that started with Egypt last spring and continued on through the Winter. Hickman's mysterious driving force, "The Voice," would be perhaps proud to see the new generation of activists who are not content to merely wave sins, but actively work to tear down the corporations, politicians, and purveyors of control whose works define the world in which we live.

If The Nightly News were to come out today, it would be hailed by the Occupy movement and decried by Fox News as a blatant call for violent uprising. In truth, it is a tremendous story whose broad, sweeping narrative reminds us that the struggle for freedom is ongoing and, as Thomas Jefferson famously said, that "the tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants." I'm sure The Voice would agree.

Khalid Albaih says

This is a most read for any one interested in media. "The media is like a big keyboard the government plays"

Nick Kives says

This is a real interesting book but I think it was cause I was reading it the same time I was reading Fahrenheit 451.

Nightly News is mimicking movies like Network. They news and all the organizations that own all the news are trying to control us, and to make everyone thing a certain way, much like the government in Fahrenheit.

The story involves a group called The Hand that is starting to attack the news media through brutal attacks and bombings throughout New York City. The problem is that it really doesn't feel like it follows through. Who is the leader of this group? And are their methods really going to have a real effect? Most of these seem to be a let down in the end. The style of the book is what drives this though, and the mix of story with actual statistics about news organizations and what they do.

J.G. Keely says

Cute book. While Hickman never actually throws away his credibility with the word 'sheeple', there is that vibe there. The plot smacks of the convenience that marks conspiracy theory, which is either a reflection Hickman's personal philosophy, a boon to streamline his writing, or both. One always has to fall on one or the other side of the Great Conspiracy, as there seems to be a lot of evidence both ways, but for the cynical, never enough to convince.

Hickman himself admits that the idealism of the conspiracist is no more pure or useful than that of those he opposes. There is some balance in his presentation--a degree of subtlety and satire--but I don't think it quite overcomes the straw men and picked arguments in the book.

But then, he's trying to provoke a reaction, which takes a delicate hand when dealing with dull and frightened people, which is how he paints his readership. Perhaps, hedging his bets, he wrote the story for that sort of person; hey, why write an instructional book aimed towards people who should be intelligent enough to have figured things out already?

I prefer writing as if to a peer, but it can be terribly tempting to imagine the world to be full of ignorant people with no self-will, and raging against it for the damage it does to you.

Hickman litters his book with charts, quotes, and invectives which can be quite amusing. I particularly liked the characters confusing quotes between Chomsky and Goering (particularly apt because of the fascist way Chomsky tries to control his field and silence detractors).

The shout-out to Tufte was also appreciated, but not unexpected, given the design-focus of the creator. I should, for a moment, mention the art, which is conceptual and explorative. Hickman doesn't mind flaunting his design background, and it really helps to give the book an original tone, even if it sometimes looks like a T-Shirt from Express.

But the simplified color scheme, intense inking, and stylization means that very specific and consistent character design is necessary to maintain the flow of the story, which Hickman doesn't always achieve. But overall the design aesthetic is a nice change from your run-of-the-mill book, especially seeing as a lot of those have same-face problems, too.

Nietzsche scholar Rick Roderick expresses that it is the nature of society to wear people down, to make them similar, and to replace their singular, free-thinking parts with socialized, communal ones. As a metaphor, identity is a sort of 'last bastion', under constant siege from without, and hence, any depression, frustration, or desperation you feel is not the symptom of maladjustment, but the perfectly natural reaction to being trapped under external pressure.

But, personifying this social/individual conflict edges too close to pathetic fallacy: more pain and injustice is caused by ignorant, thoughtless actions than by malicious ones. Certainly, there is a consistent form that this conflict takes, which some authors represent in personal terms, but usually, this allegorical representation is about as apt as suggesting that bears meet secretly in order to plan better ways to use their claws and teeth on hapless salmon.

Certainly there is a destructive imbalance at play, and it is soul-wearing to labor beneath it, but it is disingenuous to represent this power-play as ultimately purposeful and unnatural. It makes for an exciting story, gets the revolutionary blood pumping, making you feel alive, and revealing, for a moment, all the bare scaffolding of our unequal society, but it's an oversimplification.

Like Fight Club, it's meant to wake you from your daze, your useless, work-a-day life, and make you feel righteous, for a moment. Beyond that fleeting fist pump, the method is rarely effective. I always prefer works that treat the reader more respectfully: presenting multifaceted, subtle arguments, allowing the reader to come to their own informed conclusions.

There is some subversion in TNN, but it is difficult for me to see what line Hickman intends to draw between cynicism and idealism. The character of the author is always acknowledged, and despite some deliberate self-deprecation, Hickman portrays himself as informed, sure, and freed from social control by his knowledge and will. Combined with the portrayal of the reader as weak and ignorant, Hickman comes off as

somewhat egotistical and deluded, as conspiracists tend to be: no one would be out to get you if you weren't worth getting.

The book wasn't one-sided, and it did reverse its themes a few times, but it's rather linear, and if you think you've guessed the Big Twist, you have. His attacks on the media evoke other comic greats, particularly the talking heads from Miller's 'The Dark Knight' and the struggle between information and power from Ellis' 'Transmetropolitan'.

He has other similarities to Miller, as well: with his thick ink and violent storyline of a small armed man acting against a large power structure, it is evocative of Sin City. However, TNN doesn't have the heavy satire of Dark Knight, nor is its exploration of journalism and the power of ideas as vivid as the gonzo sci fi adventures of Spider Jerusalem. Hickman's story is going for a much more realistic approach, yet he seems to have traded a sci fi fantasy for an ideological fantasy.

Hickman states several times that the book is meant to be a fun, simple revenge story, though condescendingly prefaces these admissions with the implication that the reader would be incapable of seeing anything deeper, anyways. Perhaps he's trying to be funny, or perhaps it's merely an extension of the little trust he puts in the reader, or maybe, he's simply hedging his bets: putting his philosophy of the world out there, and then indicating that no one will 'get it', since, if changing people were as easy as entertaining them with personified inequality, the world would have long ago grown better on the backs of willful, informed, revolutionaries.

But then that's never how it plays out. Every power structure comes to resemble the ones before it, independent of who put it there or why. I could have done with some more cynicism about both 'revolution' and 'enlightenment', but then, Hickman needed there to be a firm ideological structure for his revenge-bent protagonist to follow.

Unfortunately, the straw men he's fighting him make his journey feel rather weak, and perhaps that should clue us in. If Hickman isn't capable of presenting the enemies of revolution as sympathetic human beings, then he probably isn't capable of comprehending why such structures develop, despite all the illumination he places before us in pretty charts.

In the end, the bad men in his allegories are more villains than characters, sociopathic and acting not out of their own ideals or confusion, but from ennui and a need for chaos. He suggests that his protagonists' methods aren't that different, but since their enemies are not true foils, it becomes clear where Hickman's sympathies lie, and that those sympathies are coloring his conclusions.

I enjoyed this book, but I would have liked it more if it respected the reader and painted the situation in realistically complex ways, showing the difficulty of trying to comprehend the Big Picture. But maybe that's a problem Hickman, himself has, which would have come off better if he presented this flaw as something to struggle with instead of something to idealize.

My Suggested Reading In Comics

James DeSantis says

I think my favorite part of this whole book is Hickman's final words. It made the most sense of it all haha.

So what's this about? Well a bunch of news or media people are getting shot in the head. Like Bam, boom,

head gone or big motherfucking hole in the head. Why? Because a group of people are being controlled by "The Voice" and told to do these awful things. With a abstract look of it all, not common comic paneling, and a ton of philosophy questions, the comic begins a dark spiral trip down a dark way.

Good: Really enjoyed a lot of the dialog. The back and forth made me think, made me question things, made me scared of my own thoughts sometimes even. The twist and turns kept me intrigued and really loved the ending. I also thought the structure was well done and told a complete, one shot story.

Bad: The art isn't my favorite. Can't really tell who is who. Everything is blotchy and dark. The structure is hard to follow at first and takes awhile to get used to. The questions are tough and maybe a bit too wordy for some.

Overall this was pretty interesting comic. I don't know if I'd suggest it to a new comic reader but once you read a few, this is something to check out since it's SO different. I'd go with a 3.5 out of 5.

Mark says

"Following the orders from the VOICE, they marched through one of the largest polling companies in New York killing 3 of every 5 employees."

I heard the author's original pitch for this was *Network* meets *Reservoir Dogs*. Yep. The mingling of news brokers and power brokers molding public consensus meets a rising cult dedicated to killing those journalists. Running through it all is a cynicism that says both the news and the cult are fundamentally about brainwashing.

The style is highly distinctive, taking more from monochromatic info-graphics than from primary colored comics. After the first dozen pages I had to restart, because it took me that long to get a good feel for how the pages/story were presented. Refreshingly the story is finished within this single graphic novel.

Jesse A says

It's hard to say how I even felt about the story bc the lay-out was so awkward. Not top line Hickman.

Jeff Raymond says

I've enjoyed nearly everything Jonathan Hickman has done, and *The Nightly News* has been sitting on my bookshelf for some time now, waiting to finally be read.

The book is described in one blurb as a cross between *Fight Club* and *Network*, and it's absolutely correct in that assessment. It follows a cultlike group that's effectively killing off news reporters for being bad at their jobs. It's very ultraviolent and extreme, and as a choice, it's not really a bad one. The story is interesting and really keeps things moving.

The key of Hickman's early work, however, is the style. It's always pretty jolting, with a lot of abstract stuff combined with quite modern looking text boxes and speech bubbles. The style, in this case, both works in ways to advance the story well while also acting as a sort of barrier to get things moving forward. It was a bit of a struggle in this one that didn't exist for me in other things he did, like *Pax Romana*.

Still, worth reading. It's unlike much of anything else I've read in a comic up to this point.

47Time says

This comic is certainly different from the mainstream. The page layout hits you first as unique and original. You get the main story together with statistical facts, quotes from a character called the Voice, even facts about physics where they are relevant. Unfortunately, the setup makes it a slow read.

The setting is the modern day when a secretive order is carrying out terrorist acts to punish the corporate media and disable their propaganda. Their order has a cult-like hierarchy with the Voice as the leader. None of the members may see or directly speak with the Voice. The Hand is ordered by the Voice to carry out terrorist acts and he then assigns tasks to regular members. They are the Cult of the Voice, a group of individuals whose lives were destroyed by the media and they now want revenge.

The views in this comic might be a bit hard to swallow for some. They are extreme to say the least - the media, the government and the school system are constantly blamed for the corruption of society. Still, it can be argued that, even if the media doesn't do in real life what the author describes, it does have the means to do so. It is this story their corruption is a premise.

John Guyton ended up on the streets after a racism scandal. Alexander Jones wants to show him the truth about how his case was manipulated by the press. As the new Hand, John starts a war against the corrupt press, shooting to death several journalists and cameramen using a sniper rifle.

(view spoiler)

Caitlin says

The Nightly News is the story of a group that becomes labeled as the Cult of the Voice and their attempts to bring justice to corrupt journalists by any means necessary. While the author makes it very clear that he's not advocating violence, this cult of anti-news activists use a system of identifying corrupt or lazy reporters that have ruined the lives of others by pursuing story rather than fact and kill them on live television. The Nightly News is essentially a treatise against the twenty four hour news cycle and the lack of objectivity and fact in news today. It makes the argument that the news is created to indoctrinate the public rather than to inform them and that it is engineered that way by a complicated, corrupt web of politicians, businessmen and

journalists. The cult aims to create a world free of that pervasive influence and they kill many of those that they see as contributing to this culture of indoctrination. The story is supported by a unique art style and infographics that may or may not be factual but that add to the story being told. The web woven throughout The Nightly News is complicated and occasionally hard to follow but it's certainly not short on hairpin curves.

To say I'm not a Jonathan Hickman fan is a fairly significant understatement. I have yet to really like one of his stories but I flat out HATED Pax Romana. The Nightly News is a step above Pax Romana in several ways but the best I can say about it is that it's not quite as terrible. Just like with Pax Romana, the story is essentially a tiresome treatise on a subject that appears to be near and dear to Hickman's heart. It's like if you mashed Noam Chomsky with the lunatic on the street corner and then gave him a gun. Stories often have a point that they want you to walk away with when you're finally finished reading but I truly hate when the story gets lost in that point. For a large part of The Nightly News, I felt like I was reading some manifesto posted on some obscure blog. At no point did I care about a single one of the characters because I was never given a reason to do so. They weren't fully fledged people, they're just talking points for Hickman. It also falls prey to what appears to be Hickman's fatal flaw: an addiction to babbling on and using an art form meant for SHOWING to TELL you everything. There were understandable and relatable points in the story and lessons in which I somewhat agreed with Hickman, only to have him take it to some conspiracy nut wet dream's extreme and lose my attention completely. It's not quite on the same level of Pax Romana, but I feel no smarter or emotionally changed from reading this. Mostly, I was just bored.

A large part of the reason that it IS actually better than Pax Romana however is the art. While Pax Romana's panels were so heavily dominated by text that I could barely tell that there was art in there at all, The Nightly News does very interesting things with the art work. Gone are the traditional panels. It has the same strangely pretty art style as I've come to expect from Hickman but he uses shadow and color to have violence without it being gory. It's still somewhat shocking but more stark and therefore more interesting for it. There is still a lot of text but instead of hiding the art, it accentuates it. For a story with this much text and extraneous infographics, it's actually easy and compelling artistically to follow the progression from page to page.

Given my deep hatred of his previous work, I had pretty low expectations of The Nightly News. Perhaps that colored my opinion but frankly I'm still not convinced that Hickman knows that graphic novels are supposed to tell stories along with the moral. If you're fascinated by conspiracies and the idea that the news is really just propaganda, The Nightly News may be just the book for you. To be fair, the art makes it worth flipping through even if you're as bored by conspiracies as I am.

Olivia says

My experience with this book is really unique. To summarize: I offered to co-teach a graphic novel in a composition english class next semester as a trial run for me to co-teach a whole graphic novel based English course next year. This is the book the instructor picked for us to teach next semester.

With most comics I can usually tell if it's something I'd want to read in the amount of time it takes to flip through it and read the plot synopsis. If it wasn't for my unique circumstances, I would have never read this. I like the idea of questioning media and all but the art is so graphic design inspired that it makes my brain want to run away. I found the story confusing. Most of the time I can't tell what character is who and what order I'm supposed to read the dialogue.

All that being said, forcing myself to read it has created a lot of interesting talking points in a class based on

the comic medium and the idea of the book. The instructor's thinking that after the election (they decided on this text before 11/8, btw) that there would still be a lot to talk about when dealing with the media. As much as I disliked it, I think the fact that it looks so influenced by graphic design and is about how media is manipulative is great. I'll probably be reading this several more times due to necessity.
