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GUEST OF HONOR:
**AARON
DEMBSKI-BOWDEN**

This year's Black Library Guest of Honor at AdeptiCon 2010 will be none other than Aaron Dembski-Bowden, author of *Cadian Blood* and *Soul Hunter*. We recently got a chance to converse with Aaron and pump him for a bit of info about what's coming down the pipe from Black Library.

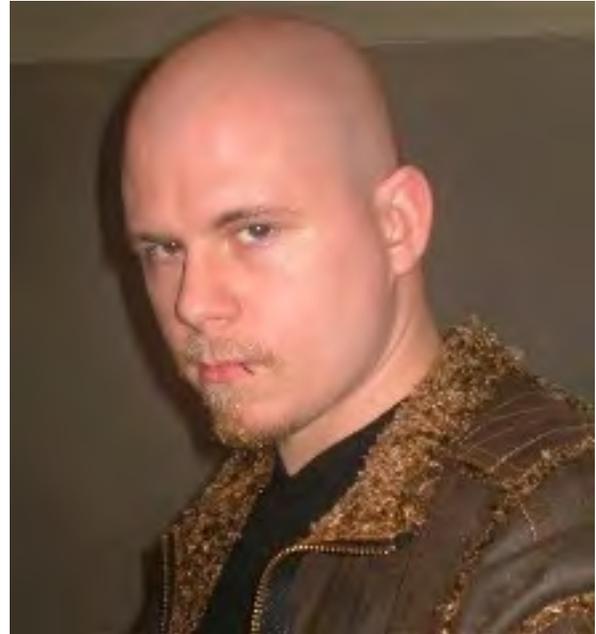
Question The First: Your Black Library Press Packet mentioned something about a copy of Space Crusade? Tell us a bit about your background, both as a writer and as a (war)gaming hobbyist.

I have a press packet? They give the new guy a press packet?? What was it - a few lines scrawled on a Post-It note? Madness.

Okay, background. Let's do this. I've done a little work in video games, which wasn't all that much fun, but the money was sick. I've done a bunch of RPG stuff, which was a little more fun, but the money sucked. I've been full-time writing since I was about 24, and starting that so young has been tough going from time to time, but I've managed it without needing to rob a bank yet.

But essentially, after a writing degree at university, I was only qualified to do one thing, and that was to sit in an office and call people about their internet service. Since I was way too lazy to do that, I decided to start on the writing career early and not wait until I was 40 like all those other guys in sci-fi magazines, with their impressively huge beards.

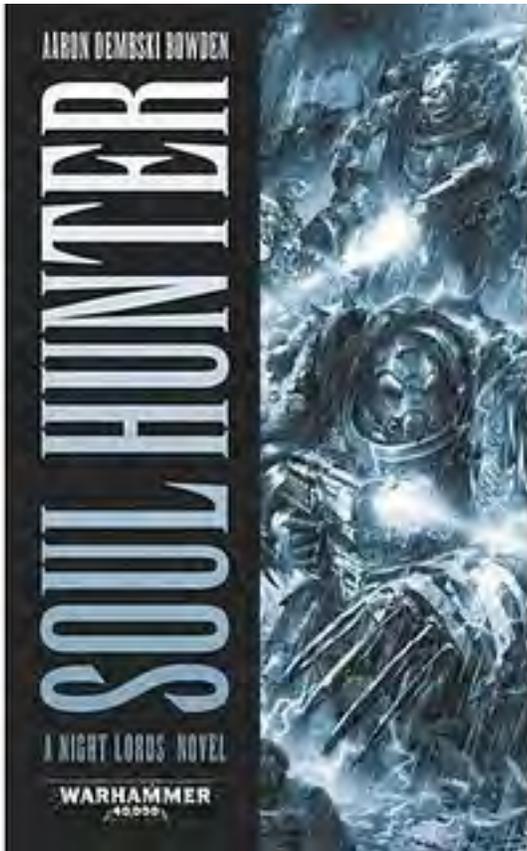
But none of that is important. You mentioned *Space Crusade*, and that's what matters. I got that game when I was, like... 9 or 10. It was a gateway drug, and I was absolutely hooked after that. I picked up *White Dwarf*, but understood basically none of it. That didn't even matter, I still loved it. I had



HeroQuest, too. That wasn't as much fun, but the rules were simpler so it was easier to talk my family into playing it with me. I think where the hobby is concerned, the *Warhammer* 40,000 universe kicks so much ass, that once you start to learn about it, it does a killer job of eclipsing a lot of other settings.

Over the years I've tried and failed to raise plenty of armies. There was the pre-Tomb King/Vampire Counts undead who reached a mighty 30 painted points. There was 4,000 points of unpainted high elves that regularly destroyed my friend's Empire army in the summer of '98. My Space Wolves reached an incredible 4 painted Blood Claws, which actually represents the largest painted army ever fielded by a Dembski-Bowden general. Currently, there's a Black Templar army on the rise, with a bunch of bitz on order from various places. They're black, see. That way, I reckon I can paint them before the end of the millennium.

My fiancée Katie is practising painting, too. I think she wants either a loyalist Chapter or some Adeptus Sororitas. There's a half-painted Blood Angel dreadnought



downstairs, as well as some test Ultramarines and Doom Eagles. She's been busy. When you live with someone who's into the hobby as well, it makes it easier to get in the mood to paint again.

Question The Second: You've got two novels published by Black Library, with a third on the way. What can you tell us about the third novel?

That's called Helsreach, and may have something to do with why I want a Black Templars army, lately. It's centered around a single garrison of Templars essentially exiled from the main battles raging across Armageddon, and assigned to defend Hive Helsreach - an industrial hellhole on the shores of the Tempest Ocean.

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They have a horde of Steel Legion Guard with them, and the ragged elements of the Titan Legion Invigilata. But that's it. And they have to hold this place, street by street, while it gets attacked by one of the largest ork armies in the entire campaign. It culminates in the Battle for the Temple of the Emperor Ascendant, where Reclusiarch Grimaldus of the Black Templars was the only recorded survivor.

Question The Third: A voice on the wind mentioned something about "Horus Heresy." Anything you can tell us about that?

I'm probably not supposed to, but whatever. I got tagged to be on the Horus Heresy team after my second novel was handed in. The editors loved my Night Lords novel Soul Hunter, and that snagged me a place in the HH meetings.

My first Heresy novel is called The First Heretic, and focuses on the Word Bearers as they begin their fall to Chaos. I'm halfway through it now, and working on an outline for my next HH book, which will be about... something secret.

Question The Fourth: So tell us a bit about your writing process...how do you come up with the stories you tell?

You'll go to the special hell for asking this question.

Thank you.

At weird hours every day, usually when everyone else is asleep. I'm trying to work on that, though. I need to pretend to be a normal person. I think the best way to have ideas is to read a lot, and read outside the genre. The mind's a muscle, it needs to be exercised. If



you keep only doing the stuff you're comfortable with, I reckon stagnation sets in.

Question The Fifth: What writers do you consider your greatest influences?

I'm honestly not sure who's influenced me, but I can say who I like a lot. My favourite authors are Robin Hobb, Dan Abnett, Edgar Allen Poe, Neil Gaiman, David Gemmell and (recently) I'm getting into Conrad Williams, a crazy amount. (He's a British horror/urban fantasy author. Check him out, he's rad. He writes the way Gaiman would if he'd come back from the dead and seen some hideous things.)

Robin Hobb does these patient, measured, beautiful character pieces. Dan is... Dan. Everyone knows what he does, and why it rocks. He turns a phrase with the very



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best of them. I just read part of Prospero Burns, his Space Wolf HH novel out next year, and some of the phrases he uses are just awesomely resonant. Some characters will talk a lot, but a Dan Abnett character has a "tireless tongue". It's all in the details.

Question The Sixth: Complete the following sentence: When I was a kid, I wanted to grow up to be...

...someone who hangs out with Optimus Prime.

Question The Seventh: What Movie/TV Show/Book are you most looking forward to in the next year (besides your own)?

This year, um... A couple. Nemesis, by James Swallow - the Horus Heresy novel about assassins going after Horus himself. I heard the storyline for that bad boy at the last HH meeting, and it's punishingly awesome. Robin Hobb has a new one out this summer, too. You won't see me all day once that gets here. I'll be sealed off in my room for 10 hours, reading non-stop. I don't really watch much TV, but I get a lot of DVDs, and I still haven't bought season 2 of *Flight of the Conchords*, so... I suck. But hell, who isn't looking forward to Iron Man 2? I'm not usually a fan of superhero flicks, but the first one was killer.

Aaron Dembski-Bowden will be in attendance at AdeptiCon 2010. He'll be signing autographs at the Black Library booth all weekend. Don't miss out on your chance to meet and talk with Aaron!

Register online today at:
<http://www.adepticon.org/cart>

AdeptiCon - For Gamers, By Gamers