Writer, victim of brutal mugging, turns crime into novel

BY DAVID BETANCOURT THE WASHINGTON POST

Paul Dini has turned a tragic night of fear into an instantly classic graphic novel.

In "Dark Night," available in print and digitally from Vertigo Comics, Dini, a writer who contributed to the "Batman: The Animated Series" and "Tiny Toons" cartoons in the 1990s, retells the tale of the night his career and life almost came to a halt after he was brutally beaten during a robbery.

graphic novel, which has a visual assist from artist Eduardo Risso,

ing of Dini's face after the robbery and leads into the floating in and out of dreams that come after.

Readers go on a journey through Dini's life and mind. A childhood love of cartoons and comic-book characters. A father convinced cartoons wouldn't lead anywhere in life when it came to future employment. Beautiful Hollywood women who have an eye on his studio connections instead of having any interest in him. The one thing that remained strong when the rest of Dini was broken was his imagination.

The night of the robbery,

the world, working on a top cartoon in Hollywood while wining and dining with a beautiful actress. But it turns out she's interested in getting her portfolio to Steven Spielberg, whom she assumes Dini has connections to because of his work on "Tiny Toons." Dini quickly realizes a woman he thought was his girlfriend is just using him and that he's more alone in life than he realizes. So when his "girlfriend" offers him a ride home, he declines. He walks off into the shadows and

into a dark life-changing moment. Frustrated and not pay-

starts with the reconstruct- Dini is seemingly on top of ing attention to his surroundings, Dini is approached by two men and mugged. One man grabs him by the arms while the other punches him so hard that his glasses shatter. His wallet is taken, along with whatever ounce of pride remained after the failed date.

Vertigo Comics, a maturecontent imprint of DC Comics, is the best place to tell this story. This book is in no way for kids, but DC Comics' PG-13-esque heroes and villains do show up. It explains how Dini uses the characters he wrote for in his cartoon work as a way of healing from the physical and mental pain.

may never return to a life of writing vigilante adventures of a dark hero who always saves the day, especially when no rescuers leaped out of the shadows the night he fell victim to an attack. Dini had lost faith in heroes. But he sometimes finds himself fantasizing about what Batman would have done if he

had been there that night. The Joker appears in the book for a laugh, but while the Clown Prince of Crime Joke was once a fun character to write, Dini wants no part of him after what he's been through. Dini wants to get back into the

At times he thinks he minds of the characters he'd written for years, but he can't do it until they help him get control of his mind first.

Russo, the artist, is no stranger to Vertigo Comics he drew what many consider to be one of Vertigo's greatest stories, "100 Bullets" — and the bloody attack is viciously brought to life by Russo's well-known shadowy art style.

"Dark Night" feels like the type of tale Vertigo Comics hasn't been able to tell for some time. But instead of wanting more, you read it hoping Dini will never have to write anything like this again.

Things to Do

BANGOR - Ron Chase discussing his novel "The Great Mars Hill Bank Robbery," 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 22. Bangor Public Library. Free. bangorpubliclibrary.org.

BANGOR — Peter Neill, author of "The Once and Future Ocean," discussing why the ocean matters, 6 p.m. Thursday, June 23, Bangor Public Library. bangorpubliclibrary.org

BANGOR — River City Cinema presents "Summer of Love" in its outdoor summer movie series, sundown, Pickering Square: "Pillow Talk," June 24; "Breakfast at Tiffany's," July 1; "Harold and Maude," July 8; "The Princess Bride," July 15; "Say Anything," July 22; "You've Got Mail," July 29. Rain date, Aug. 5. Free.

BAR HARBOR — Abbe Museum Educator and Passamaquoddy George Neptune walking tour to visit places significant to Wabanaki history and culture, including information on local Wabanaki placenames, traditional songs and creation stories, 10-11:30 a.m. Friday, June 24, meeting at the museum, 26 Mount Desert St. \$10 for members; \$20 for nonmembers; free for under age 10. To buy tickets, 288-3519.

BLUE HILL — Herbalist Stephanie Tourles of Orland, author of "Naturally Bug-Free: Learn how to Protect Your Family and Pets," talking about creating chemical-free bug repellents for people, flea and tick repellents for dogs and cats, and chemical-free insecticides for the home, 7-8:30 p.m.

Thursday, June 23, Blue Hill Public Library. Free and open to all. 374-5515.

BREWER — Bangor Singles Club dances, 8 p.m.-midnight Fridays, Brewer Eagles Club, 22 Atlantic Ave.: Steve and the Good Old Boys, June 24. Marilyn, 827-5751

CAMDEN — Illustrated talk with Anne O'Regan, who traveled through California, Oregon and Washington, completing a thru-hike five months later in Manning Park, Canada, 7-8 p.m. Thursday, June 23, Camden Public Library, 55 Main St. 236-3440.

CARMEL — Adult coloring event with tips on materials to use, 6 p.m. Thursday, June 23, Simpson Memorial Library, 8 Plymouth Road. Participants may bring their own color pages and materials, or use the library's color pages and color pencils. 848-7145.

DEER ISLE — "Imaging the Sea" exhibit featuring photographs taken by members of Deer Isle's fishing community, through July 17, Kingman Gallery, 117 Center District Crossroad. Benefits Island Fishermen's Wives Association. Gallery hours, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday; 1-5 p.m. Sunday. 348-9333.

EASTPORT — The Eastport Moonlight Movies, 8 p.m. Fridays, Sutherland Amphitheater, 80 Water St.: June 24, "Penguins of Madagascar." 214-0040 or lolly@sweetiesdowneast.

EASTPORT — Eastport Strings Summer Intensive program, Music from Bach to the Beatles, 3-6 p.m. through Thursday,

June 23, Eastport Arts Center, 36 Washington St. Fun and educational program for youth and adult string players. Includes arts and crafts, string playing and skillbuilding. Snacks will be served. Arts center handicapped-accessible. Public concert by participants, 7 p.m. Thursday, June 23. Advance registration required by contacting Alice St. Clair, 853-0823 or alice@schuth.com. Eastportartscenter.org.

EDDINGTON — Pie sale, 4-6 p.m. Friday, June 24, Comins Hall, 1387 Main Road. Proceeds benefit preservation of Comins Hall.CominsHall.org.

ELLSWORTH — Six-wicket golf croquet, 2-4 p.m. Tuesdays, June-October, Woodlawn Museum, Gardens & Park, 19 Black House Drive, Route 172. \$10 per week for noncroquet members. Equipment provided if needed. No experience necessary. 667-8671 or woodlawnmuseum.com.

LUBEC — SummerKeys' The Mary Potterton Memorial Concert 2016 Series with John Newell on piano, Ina Litera on viola and Matt Goeke on cello, 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 22, Lubec Congregational Christian Church. Free, but piano tuning donations accepted. 733-2316, sksmail@ summerkeys.com or summerkeys.com.

NORTHPORT — Belfast Garden Club Open Garden Days, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Friday, June 24, Block residence, 1485 Atlantic Highway. Bring picnic lunch to enjoy at outdoor tables with water views. \$5 at the residence. Benefits the garden club. BelfastGar-

denClub.org or Martha Laitin, 323-2368

ORONO — University of Maine School of Performing Arts selections from an opera in one act, "Until the War Is Over," 7:30 p.m. Thursday, June 23, Black Box Theatre, Class of 1944 Hall. Also, lecture based on "Bid Me to Live" bv H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), by poet Jennifer Moxley, 7 p.m. Free. 581-4703.

OTIS — Vacation Bible School for children in grades one through six, 9 a.m.-noon through Friday, June 24, Otis Baptist Church, Route 180. Games, snacks, crafts, songs and adventure. Theme is "Cave Quest: Jesus Is the Light of the World." Free. To register, 537-2065.

PORTLAND — Reunion of USS Forrest B. Royal DD872, Thursday through Sunday, June 23. Ron Larson, reunion coordinator, 1240 Franklin St., Wisconsin Rapids WI 54494-2807. mosbyusn@wctc.net or 715-423-8905.

PORTLAND — Maine College of Art's second annual Art in Exodus exhibition, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays through June 24, Porteous Building, 522 Congress St. In recogni-

tion of World Refugee Day on June 20.

PORTLAND — "TITANIC: The Artifact Exhibition," through Oct. 14, Portland Science Center, 68 Commercial St. Prices \$17-\$19.50. 888-718-4253, Info@PortlandScience-Center.com or www.portlandsciencecenter.com.

PRESQUE ISLE — Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce's annual strawberry shortcake sale, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Thursday, June 23, parking lot of The Aroostook Medical Center's North Street Health Center. Pre-orders at 764-6561 or by email at Ifrederick@centralaroostookchamber.com. Shortcakes are \$3.50 each. Orders of 10 or more qualify for free delivery.

ROCKLAND — Two solo shows, through June 26, Landing Gallery, 409 Main St. "Postcards from Home," oil paintings by Sarah Faragher; "Passages: Time and the Sea," 27 new ceramic boats by David Riley Peterson. 239-1223 or LandingArt.

ROCKPORT — Trivia Night hosted by DJ Jammin' Jeff, 6-8 p.m. Friday, June 24, Penobscot Bay YMCA, 116 Union St. Light snacks

will be provided. \$25 per team of three to five participants. Benefits YMCA aquatics department Learn to Swim Program. To register, 236-3375 or stop by.

SEARSPORT — Historians and authors Libby Bischof, Susan Danly and Earle G. Shettleworth Jr. discussing and signing their book, "Maine Photography: A History, 1840-2015," 5:30 p.m. Thursday, June 23, Penobscot Marine Museum's Carver Memorial Gallery, 11 Church St. penobscotmarinemuseum. org; visitors center, 548-0334; administrative offices, 548-2529.

WISCASSET — Ian Fowler, director of the Osher Map Library and Smith Center for Cartographic Education, University of Southern Maine, "Mapping Revolutionary Maine: George Sproule's 1772 Map of the Midcoast," 7-8:30 p.m. Thursday, June 23, Historic New England, Nickels-Sortwell House barn, Federal Street. \$5 Historic New England members; \$10 others. 882-7169 or historicnewengland.org/ events-programs.

For a complete listing of calendar items or to submit your event, visit www.bangordailynews.com.

Wednesday prime time

(6:30) ★★ Aliens vs. Preda-

tor: Requiem (2007)

(6:10) ★★★ The Stanford

MAX

SHOW

STARZ

MOVIES

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(5:50) *** True Grit (1969) | ** Guarding Tess (1994, Comedy-Dra-ma) (ESP) Shirley MacLaine. (PG-13) | two personalities fight over the same woman. (R)

:15) ★ Wild Hogs (2007, Comedy) (ESP) Tim Allen.
our friends take a motorcycle road trip. (PG-13) Unexpected reunion.

□ United the company of the company

our friends take a motorcycle road trip. (PG-13)

'Loose cannon': Science writer explains her curious curiosity

BY JONEL ALECCIA

THE SEATTLE TIMES (TNS)

When most people consider the hardships of war, they focus on the fear and the fighting, the noble cause and the selfless sacrifice.

When best-selling science writer Mary Roach tackled the topic, she focused on maggots, stink bombs and diarrhea. But that's to be expected

from Roach, the writer known for her funny, unflinching books about the nitty-gritty research behind subjects as diverse as death, sex and space travel.

"I'm a little bit of a loose cannon," Roach, 57, admitted in a recent phone interview about her sixth book, "Grunt: The Curious Science of Humans at War.

Roach said she came up with the idea for the new book while on assignment in India, researching a story about the world's hottest chili pepper. She learned that the Indian defense ministry had actually manufactured a nonlethal weapon from the pepper, so she headed to the lab to check it out.

"Not only was there that," Roach explained, speaking from the Washington, D.C., hotel where she was staying while on her book tour. "They were working on a leech repellent, and that was right up my alley.'

"It planted in my head this idea that military science is a whole hidden world related to the day-to-day hardships of being a warrior," she added.

The book, published by W.W. Norton & Co., takes a close look at how scientists are working to help soldiers cope with the other enemies in a war zone, including sweltering heat, cacophonous noise and what Roach describes as "ill-timed gastrointestinal urgency."

As in her other books, Roach goes to straight to the sources, whether it's to Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti, East Africa, or under the sea in the nuclear submarine USS Tennessee. Seeing the places in person is vital, she said.

narrative," she explained. 'You can have quotes from talking heads on the phone, but the reader isn't led into details with conversations and character.

Access is everything, Roach explained. For this book, she wanted to cover an Army medevac operation but couldn't get approval. Instead, she covers the training in a chapter on realistic military simulations.

"It has everything to do with whether I can go somewhere and observe something that will be fresh and surprising," Roach said.

Roach approaches her subjects as an outsider, someone with no formal scientific training — she has a bachelor's degree in psychology. She simply asks the sometimes-gross questions everybody wonders about.

Hence a chapter in "Grunt" on work to perfect penis transplants for soldiers whose genitals are mutilated in battle. And, yes, a chapter on why diarrhea can be a threat to national security.

Roach takes two to three years to research and write a book and said she's divided about which part of the process is most enjoyable.

"The reporting is amazing," she said. "If it isn't fun, I don't include it. I'm a very self-indulgent writer.

Fans may think the au-"Otherwise, I don't have a thor of "Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers,' "Bonk: The Curious Coupling of Science and Sex' and "Gulp: Adventures on Alimentary Canal" would have a long list of oneword subjects just waiting to be explored.

But Roach said she often finishes one book without knowing what the next will be. In a recent interview with "Fresh Air" host Terry Gross on National Public Radio, Roach mused she might someday tackle the

science of aging. Joking, she suggested her next title: "Geezer."