

Simply Complex

MAGAZINE



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CENTRAL
CAROLINA
COMIC CON

Scott Pilgrim Review

Superheroes &
Video Games

Exclusive
Insights:

*Redefining
Creativity*

*On Owning
Your Own Style*

*More than
Just Trends*



Happy Black History Month!

Table of Contents

Tap the underlined titles below to navigate through the pages

<u>Central Carolina</u> <u>Comic-Con</u>		3
<u>Sott Pilgrim</u> <u>Review</u>		8
<u>The Brilliance of</u> <u>Superhero Games</u>		14

"The future belongs to those who prepare for it today."
– Malcolm X

Central Carolina Comic Con

Hello All,

It's been a while, hasn't it? I apologize for the gap between blog posts. I've been busy this past month, getting a lot of things together. But since I've been gone, I have a lot to show for it.

Last month

my best friend and I went to Columbia's local comic con (a trip that was generously funded by my mom—thanks, Mom). Lately, I've been making more of an effort to truly engage with my city and get to know it better. These blog posts have become not just a fun exercise in writing but also an opportunity to highlight my community while exploring it myself.

Seeing the flyers around town made attending a must, and I'm glad I went because my time there was nothing short of a blast. Not because I walked out with tons of merch or had some life-changing experience, but because there's something special about being surrounded by people who share the same niche, esoteric interests as you. It was also incredible to see so many Black and Brown people expressing those parts of themselves in a public space.



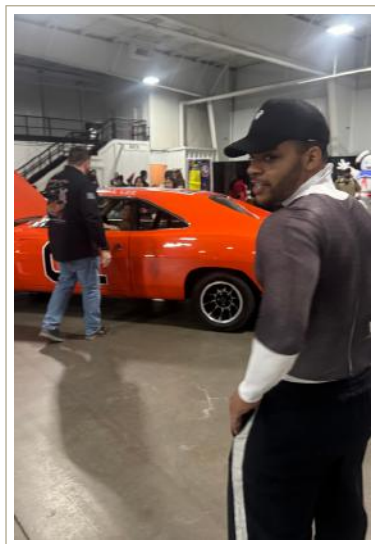
DRESS REHEARSAL!



Photos Provided By Markel Ellis

The morning kicked off with my best friend, who not only brought the costumes but also captured this month's cover photo. He showed up armed with costumes, camera equipment, and a bag of McDonald's.

One quick photo shoot and a McGriddle later, we were ready to roll. Originally, I was supposed to wear this wig he got, but it was beyond saving—there was no way I was putting that thing on my head. So, I ditched it. If my cosplay suffered for it, so be it. After rummaging through the costume box, he locked in as Danny Phantom, and I committed to Static Shock. With our outfits set, jokes exchanged, and spirits high, it was go time.



It's Go time

The convention hall was small but packed with energy. Parking was surprisingly easy—though attending on a Sunday probably helped. The ticketing process was simple and painless, and before we knew it, we had our wristbands and stepped inside.

The first thing that hit us was the lineup of vendors and creators selling artwork, comics, and collectibles. Every table had something unique—prints, posters, handcrafted items, and even indie comics. But what made it stand out was that it didn't feel like a flea market full of cheaply made products designed just to take your money.

Beyond the merch, every vendor we met had a story. These weren't just sellers; they were artists, writers, and creators with goals and dreams, just like everyone else in the room. That made the whole experience feel more personal. Some of the standout moments? Sitting in a vintage car (which made me feel so freaking cool), seeing a massive collection of Ghostbusters gear, and coming across vendors selling swords and custom-painted Nerf guns. My friend grabbed a few souvenirs, I picked up a poster, and we took some pretty memorable shots.



THE THIRD SPACE

As I said earlier, going to a convention isn't just about buying merch or dressing up—it's about finding a space where you belong. Nerds are everywhere, but growing up, it didn't always feel that way.

When I was younger, before the internet was what it is now, events like these weren't easy to hear about—unless you knew the right people, had a ride, and somehow had the money. And as a preteen (or even a teenager), those weren't things I had in excess. Now, being older and having the freedom to make my own decisions, this opportunity made the kid in me light up.

Dressing up, taking pictures, and just having fun with my best friend was enough to make the experience worth it. But it was even better because I got to share it with people who look like me, have experiences like mine, and love the same things I do. If you told me 10 years ago that I'd see something like this in my city, I'd have called you a liar.

Growing up, being into anime and comics wasn't always easy. I used to hide my manga because kids could be ruthless. Not only did they clown you for liking something different, but sometimes there just wasn't anyone around who shared your interests. You had to keep it to yourself. But now? Now, we have spaces like this. For the longest time, I thought Comic Con was only in San Diego and that you had to be rich to go. But thanks to the internet and how connected we've all become, nerd culture has exploded. Now, we have local conventions, streaming services for anime, and entire communities dedicated to our favorite things. We're here, and we're here to stay.



A third place is a social space that's separate from home and work, where people can connect with others.



Final Thoughts

I loved seeing the variety of people and stories on display. Conventions showcase the best of the best—whether it's indie comic creators like myself, artists selling their work, or vendors turning childhood nostalgia into something new. For once, you can be yourself around people who get it.

I had an amazing time, not just because I was with my best friend but because it's nice knowing that my city is putting in the effort to promote events like this. It was fun dressing up as Static Shock, fun meeting other comic creators, and fun just being me.

Would I go again? Absolutely.

Would I recommend it? Without a doubt.

And who knows—maybe next time, I'll be on the other side of the vendor table.

SCOTT PILGRIM

A PRECIOUS LITTLE REVIEW



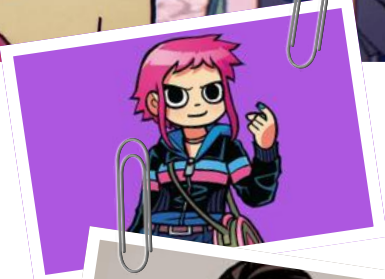
If **you've** ever been swept up in a whirlwind romance, an awkward love triangle, or an epic battle against evil exes, then you'd probably enjoy Scott Pilgrim. Whether you're a comic book enthusiast, a movie buff, or just someone looking for a story that combines humor, action, and heart, Scott Pilgrim offers something for everyone. I recently read through the comics and watched the movie, and I have to say—it was a ride. Both versions are distinct, yet they share that same quirky, offbeat energy that's hard to ignore. From the pages of the comics to the big screen, Scott Pilgrim is something special.



Scott Pilgrim - Comics Review

Reading Scott Pilgrim was an experience, to say the least. I really liked the slower moments in the series—there's something about characters just talking, expositing, and letting the dialogue breathe in ways that feels so natural. The comic panels are simple, yet they still carry that *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and *Captain Underpants* charm. I read all six issues during my time off over Christmas and the holidays, and in all honesty, they were amazing.

One of my favorite characters in the series was Knives. Her character felt so real, especially considering how much Scott impacted her life. She's very young when the story starts, and her initial relationship with Scott shapes so much of her arc throughout the series. It even got to the point where her dad had to get involved—things were that intense! Watching her grow, not just from a lovestruck teen into someone stronger, but also seeing how she makes up with Scott by the end of her arc, was really emotional and mature. It shows that, even though her journey is complicated, she ends up finding her own strength, plays a big role in Scott's redemption, and finally learns how to stand on her own two feet!

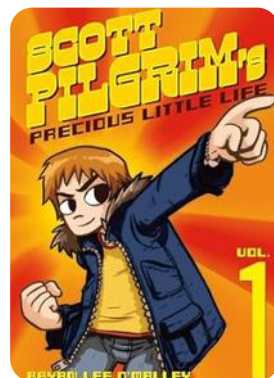
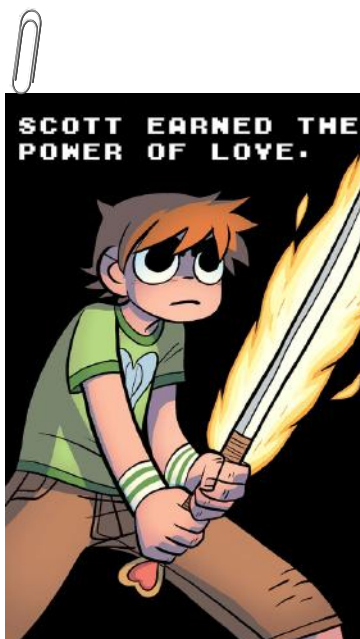


Scott Pilgrim has a way of blending the bigger lessons with the humor, like Scott learning that the power of love is best complemented by the power of understanding. It's a powerful message, and it's something that feels earned by the end of the series. But what I really appreciate about Scott Pilgrim is how it doesn't let Scott off the hook—he's a flawed character. He treats people, especially women, pretty badly at times, and seeing him wrestle with that is part of what makes him so relatable.

There are plenty of moments that highlight this, like the way Scott fights his exes, including Lucas Lee (Evil Ex #2), who literally explodes after Scott challenges him to a skateboarding competition. It's absurd, but it fits the tone perfectly. The series is full of quirky, fun references to video games, and I loved how it feels like a love letter to gamers. Every fight, every ex, and every volume feel like a new level, and the way it's all executed is just so creative. Towards the end of the series, O'Malley really pushes the bounds of comics and storytelling, experimenting with panel layouts and pacing in a way that makes the final volumes feel more dynamic and immersive.

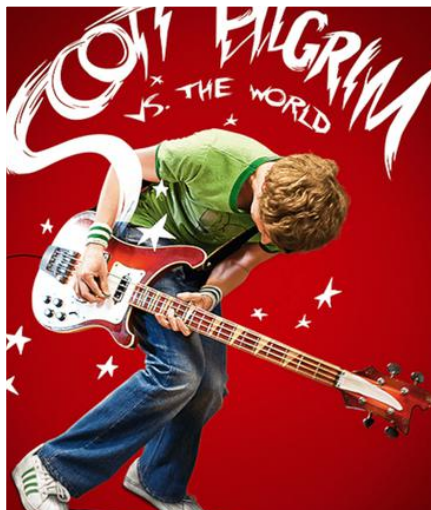
O'Malley's writing style is just so much fun. He plays with the format, with characters whose backstories are sometimes mentioned only in passing, or not at all. There's even a moment where they joke about how one character's backstory is taking up too much of the volume, so they need to move on. It's these little, humorous touches that make the series feel fresh and full of life. The dialogue feels natural, like moments or conversations you've probably experienced in real life. You see Scott and his friends dealing with their own lives and struggles, and it makes them easy to relate to.

After finally sitting down and getting invested in the story, I'm so glad I did. The fights were incredible, the art got better with each issue, and it all built to something that felt incredibly satisfying. If it isn't already, I think Scott Pilgrim could very well become your next favorite series.



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Movie Review

SCOTT PILGRIM VS. THE WORLD

So it's currently 4:24 PM, and I just finished watching *Scott Pilgrim vs. The World*. The movie is very good—it has its own unique identity, which a lot of films struggle to capture. The comic was definitely an amalgamation of everything Bryan Lee O'Malley loved, and the movie brings that same energy to life. The way the characters talk and interact still captures the spirit of the original, and even though the film rushes through a lot of the comic's slower, reflective moments, it still feels like its own separate but enjoyable experience.

I was very impressed because the movie stands on its own while still staying true to what made the comic work in the first place. It doesn't just copy the comic—it takes what works in a comic format and adapts it to film, while giving it its own cinematic style. The effects, the actors, and the story are all so well done, and the action is absolutely unreal. One thing I can always say about *Scott Pilgrim* is that you can always tell that anything related to it is made with a lot of love.

One of the parts I really appreciate about the movie is how it handles Knives' character again. Her relationship with Scott is one of the more mature aspects of *Scott Pilgrim*, and it's treated with a lot of care here. It's especially great to see her growth as she ends up teaming up with Scott at the end, showing that she was never just a one-dimensional love interest for Scott, but a defining character in his story as well. The actress who played Knives (Ellen Wong) really nailed it—she brought so much energy and sincerity to the role, which made every scene she was in feel believable. Their initial breakup stings even more in the movie because of how much depth she brings to the character.





The fights in the movie are incredible. They take what was already amazing in the comic and elevate it to a new level. They're still creative, over-the-top, and packed with energy. What I also loved was how the movie enhances the humor from the comic. The comic relied on visual gags, but the film uses the medium of film to really amp it up. The timing and delivery of jokes are on point, and the visual effects just make everything pop in a way that's perfect for this world.



The movie also has the added benefit of an amazing soundtrack. Brie Larson's take on "Black Sheep" is an instant classic and adds so much to the film's vibe. It's a perfect fit for the overall energy of the movie. The actors also shine in their performances, whether it's in the action scenes, the comedy, or even the musical moments. Michael Cera is fantastic as Scott—he captures the awkwardness and charm of the character while still making this take on Scott feel authentic. Watching it now, I could definitely see myself having fallen in love with this movie in high school.

It just screams everything nerd. It's an action movie, yeah, but it elevates the formula and the genre. It always finds time to do something new to keep you engaged, and all in all, it's just a really good time—a fun movie to watch with friends.





Final Thoughts

Scott Pilgrim is an incredible story, no matter if you're reading the comic or watching the movie. You can tell that O'Malley put his heart into it, and that passion shows through in both formats. The movie stands on its own but respects the source material, making it something you can enjoy as both a fan of the comic and a newcomer.

And with the new Netflix series out, it feels like *Scott Pilgrim* is about to reach a whole new audience. Whether you're reading, watching, or just vibing with the soundtrack, *Scott Pilgrim* is a story that sticks with you—quirky, heartfelt, and unforgettable.



Buy the Movie on Amazon -
<https://amzn.to/3CJ37bW>

THE BRILLIANCE OF SUPERHERO GAMES



SIMPLE BUT COMPLEX

Everyone loves superheroes. They've become even bigger with the explosion of the MCU and various TV shows, both animated and live-action, that have carried their legacy forward. But something that I feel isn't appreciated enough is the impact that superheroes have also had on gaming.

Superhero games are more than just action-packed adventures—they're immersive experiences that allow players to truly *become* these characters in a way no other medium can replicate. A superhero game, according to Google, is a game that features a superhero or superheroes, often involving physical or mental challenges. But the best superhero games go beyond that simple definition. IGN's review of *Spider-Man 2* puts it best:

"Superhero games shouldn't just let you play as another powerful video game protagonist; they should truly capture a character and all that goes with them."

This is what makes a great superhero game. It's not just about giving you superpowers—it's about making you *feel* like the character, giving you control over their world, choices, and abilities. Whether you're swinging through New York as Spider-Man, hunting criminals in Gotham as Batman, or making morally complex choices as Cole MacGrath in *Infamous*, the best superhero games respect and honor your agency. You're not just playing *as* them—you *are* them.

THE SPIDER-MAN LEGACY IN GAMING

Take Spider-Man. Over the years, he's had—what, 15, 20 games? With that many, you'd think the formula would get stale. But each Spider-Man game is unique, shaped by the era in which it was released and the technology available at the time.

For example, Spider-Man: Web of Shadows (2008) had a dynamic morality system, letting you switch between Peter Parker's heroic side and a darker, more aggressive symbiote-driven persona. Then you have Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions (2010), which introduced a multi-Spider-Man storyline, letting you play as different versions of the hero across four distinct art styles. Even earlier, Ultimate Spider-Man (2005) on the GameCube fully embraced its comic book origins, making you feel like you were flipping through the pages of a graphic novel brought to life.

And now, with the Spider-Man games on PS5, it feels like all those years of trial and innovation have led to something truly special. The engaging story, breathtaking visuals, and refined web-swinging mechanics make it one of the most immersive superhero experiences ever. The city feels alive, combat is fluid, and every movement feels like something straight out of a Marvel movie. It's a culmination of everything that has made Spider-Man games great over the years, perfected for modern audiences.



THE ARKHAM SERIES: REDEFINING SUPERHERO GAMES

While Spider-Man has had an enduring legacy in gaming, the Arkham series was the game-changer that redefined the entire genre. Before Arkham Asylum (2009), superhero games weren't taken as seriously. Many were movie tie-ins or simplistic beat-em-ups with little depth. Then Rocksteady came in and reinvented what a superhero game could be.

The Arkham series didn't just make a good Batman game—it made you feel like Batman. It captured everything about the Dark Knight: his detective skills, his combat prowess, his gadgets, and his ability to strike fear into his enemies. The free-flow combat system, where Batman seamlessly chains attacks between enemies, became a staple of action games and has been emulated in countless titles since. Detective Mode introduced a new way to engage with environments, blending puzzle-solving with investigation, making you think like Gotham's greatest detective.

I've been replaying the Arkham games on Twitch recently, and it's been a trip down memory lane. These games hold a special place in my heart—especially Arkham City and Lego Batman 2, which were the reasons I saved up money to buy my first Xbox 360. That tells you how much these games meant to me growing up.

While Arkham Asylum introduced the mechanics, Arkham City took everything to another level. Gotham became an open-world playground filled with secrets, villains, and hidden Easter eggs. Everywhere you turned, there was something new to discover—whether it was an ambush, a Riddler challenge, or a surprise encounter with one of Batman's many foes. The story was gripping, the characters were fully realized, and the ending? One of the most climactic conclusions in gaming history. It cemented Arkham City as one of the greatest superhero games of all time.

The impact of the Arkham series can still be felt today. Modern games continue to borrow from its fluid combat system, stealth mechanics, and storytelling approach. It didn't just define Batman games—it set a new standard for the entire superhero genre.



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BEYOND MARVEL AND DC: SUPERHERO GAMES WITHOUT CAPES

Thanks to the expansive world of video games, we've seen superhero-style experiences beyond just Marvel and DC properties.

Take Sucker Punch's *Infamous* series. These games don't feature a well-known comic book character, but they feel like superhero stories. They have a distinct stylized aesthetic, a gritty, realistic tone, and the kind of world-altering powers that make you feel like a force of nature. Playing as Cole MacGrath, you can either embrace heroism or descend into villainy, and the world reacts accordingly. Your friends, your choices, and even the city itself shift depending on how you play.

Then you have *Saints Row* and *Prototype*. While not traditional superhero games, they capture that same power fantasy. *Saints Row IV* (2013) essentially turns you into a super-powered being, letting you leap over buildings and blast enemies with absurd abilities. *Prototype* (2009) takes a darker approach, putting you in control of Alex Mercer, a god-like antihero with shapeshifting powers. These games may not involve capes or masks, but they deliver on the same thrill of feeling unstoppable.



That's the beauty of superhero gaming—it's not just about the name recognition of a Marvel or DC character. It's about giving players the ability to experience power in a way that's interactive and immersive.



THE FUTURE OF SUPERHERO GAMING

We're in the middle of a superhero gaming renaissance. Right now, there's an influx of upcoming superhero titles, including Insomniac's *Wolverine* game (which, unfortunately, has already been leaked), the upcoming *Captain America & Black Panther* game, *Marvel Rivals*, and WB's *Suicide Squad: Kill the Justice League*.

People love these games because they make us feel connected to these characters. Watching a superhero in a movie is fun, but playing as one makes the experience more intimate. You're not just watching Spider-Man save the city—you are Spider-Man. When Cole MacGrath has to make a life-altering decision, you feel that weight because, for the past six hours, you've been experiencing the world through his eyes. You feel intertwined with the narrative in a way that only gaming can provide.

Final Thoughts

Looking at all these games, one thing becomes clear: superhero games aren't just a trend—they've built their own identity in gaming. They're not just about controlling a hero; they're about embodying them, stepping into their world, and experiencing their challenges firsthand. From *Spider-Man* to *Arkham* to *Infamous*, these games let us live out the fantasies we've all dreamed about. They give us the chance to step into the shoes of our favorite characters and explore the worlds they inhabit. And the best part? This is just the beginning. With so many more superhero games on the horizon, we're in for a whole lot more superhero action. And I can't wait to see where the genre goes next.



BOOKS I'M READING

The Danger of Not Having Mental Toughness

ONLY YOU HAVE THE POWER TO LIMIT YOURSELF

KENNETH STRONG II



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“TAKE WHAT GOD HAS PLACED IN YOUR CABINET AND
USE IT TO COME BACK STRONGER AND HEALTHIER.”