

HU25: The HaasVoel Underground Legacy.

A lot happens in twenty five years, such a pity we forget most of it. The ordinary drudgery of daily living wipes away all the good memories we accumulate in a single lifetime. We seldom share the really interesting moments with anyone - social media does not count, that's crap and you know it. We're fortunate to share those special moments with people that looking back on we laugh at the sheer stupidity of our youth. Time marcheth on, people change, the world changes, constant and inevitable. I battled every compulsion to throw a few words together and post it, the safe, comfortable consistency of decades writing in repetition but these aren't my traditional immature macabre monologues I suspect at least a single person reads regularly. Immense volumes of material produced for a non-existent audience, I have written the entirety of a generation who in my opinion only really contribute to the betterment of all posthumously as compost for the soil. Longevity is a marathon fueled by the desire to never settle, life won't permit you to settle because there will be train wrecks, loud noises, shit loads of congestion and brief windows of dead silence for you to grow as a person, then you die. I'm a sensible adult after all with all the responsibilities ordinary living gifts unto me yet I wish the chaos of my life on no one, it's mine to loathe and enjoy equally. Never mind that it's not relevant, this is the HaasVoel Underground still challenging your mind and challenging everything else so where are we after twenty five years of keeping it to the underground?

Still underground pushing up daisies, keeping company with the dead counting earthworms. Tis the horror of creation for the absent audience, creating something for everyone then creating something else for ourselves, alas we are ahead of our time and the world is not ready to see what we have to show. Our legacy will flow out through the universe forevermore. We still do this because none remember; society holds no memory and that does not sit well with us, conformity of the masses. Not us. We want people to remember as we remember. What ever happened to Susan whatever her name was?

Nobody remembers her fictional relationship with Frank in 1999, when one casual conversation started it all, but Steve remembers, Steve never forgets and Steve believes we owe it to Susan at least after twenty five years of nobody remembering. But herein lies our problem; Susan, at least in our universe never existed but Steve remains insistent, for reasons of his own. We went searching. Social media is useless, no point scouring that hateful wasteland hoping someone might remember a non-existent Susan any more than we do, because she doesn't exist. Our fruitless inquiry stonewalled with the redundancy of; come to think of it, Steve won't let this go and as much as this infuriates us HU needed to find at least one person to remember Susan. Steve's hangup isn't one crazy little man's irrational determination to manifest a fictional person into reality, no irony there, he wanted us to remember Susan. Like the member of a band you forgot played on the B sides of the early tour dates to that damn good actor whose name escapes you but you recognise from nearly every movie you've seen, Steve wanted to prove to us how much of that was Susan for the HaasVoel Underground. The creepy little weirdo was dead on the money. Susan was the spirit of Haas, patient zero, the elemental by which our creation was made possible and we didn't remember her. We are the HaasVoel Underground and you are invited to join us to commemorate the marginal success of our marginal accomplishment by sharing our stories, we love telling stories and trying to figure out the bizarre mystery of what ever happened to Susan. There is a lot of great stuff to work with but we went

digging for the rare gems of HU you can't find with a Google search. We sat down for some conversation, like old friends do in the comfort of their living spaces where their spoken word is recorded for a podcast. We'll share with you what we remember.

1999:

A punk kid stood on a balcony smoking a cigarette on his coffee break while chatting to a friend about some party they attended. Matt and I worked at a coffee shop, it was boring at times but what treasured memories everyone has of the Riverfront when it was in operation are tales for another time but as I recall we, that being the staff body in variety, would spark up random topics of conversation to pass the time waiting for customers or waiting for the shift change or waiting for something to happen. 'So I heard Frank was there,' Matt starts, 'yep, he was spinning the decks, heard he's back in town for good,' I casually retort, 'here to stay,' as our conversation starts to synchronize, 'too bad about Susan.' Enter into frame a third party midway through conversation, our then manager mistaking this conversation to be about two very real people who coincided by their namesake. 'What about Susan and Frank?' That moment of insanity sparked with brilliance to quickly form a fictional backstory I'd be retelling decades later, 'her and Frank had a massive fight at the club,' I wait out the momentary stunned silence, 'omg, they are so splitting up, I knew it,' our manager takes the conversation in another direction and another dimension, 'poor Susan, the bitch had it coming,' 'poor Frank,' I start to sow the seeds of gossip judging by the curious glance I received, Matt and I knew what gossip would transpire and where that gossip went from there I cannot say but eventually everyone knew about Frank, everyone was talking about Frank and Susan and their fictional affairs and everyone we knew desperately wanted to party with Frank while Susan quietly faded into the ether. Allow me to rewind this origin tale slightly to confess to my deliberate misleading. Frank, or the idea of Frank being the ultimate party monster birthed in the same manner as his legend. Matt and I had a running joke in passing one another we would exchange pleasantries and ask about Frank and maybe drop a suggestive details about the larger than life persona we spoke of, much to the confusion of those keeping company with us who knew nothing about Frank but when one baits a hook just right curiosity demanded answers and Frank floated along in the background. Admittedly our manager may have held aforementioned knowledge of our Frank and the addition of a name, unbeknown to Matt and I, turned Frank's trajectory in an unexpected direction. I knew eventually we would be called out and people would want to meet Frank and I knew we couldn't kayfabe someone as Frank in a small town where gossip is reliable intel so I decided to make Frank. 'Build that bitch to give Mary Shelly a hard-on.' Bless you Matt, your brilliance remains with us all, I did just that.

2000:

Frank partied like it was 1999. The word of Frank Niemand started to spread around courtesy of the fantastical tales Matt and I made abundant lore; Frank being shot at random or thrown from a moving vehicle after a binge. Frank's elusive nature furthered the growing intrigue to meet the man everyone had heard something about or at least thought they knew about him. Some doubted his existence, I anticipated this and were they dead wrong. While we built more hype, never oversell anything you cannot deliver on and boy howdy did we oversell the shit out of what we could when we could and absolutely validating every conceivable detail as it emerged.

As angels would have sung from the heavens Frank was born, it wasn't in the Bible but he came from the Vaal Triangle though nobody could recall this familiar character. I, Master Hex Frankenstein laboured to assemble Frank. No further information was available at the time because we simply hadn't made it up outside the various accounts of Frank's fantastic interactions in the mentioned area being a matter of public record; his current location always remained undisclosed. It would be another eighteen months before Frank Niemand took physical form, I had a lot of shit to figure out as I walked this part of the journey alone.

2001:

Master Hex and the other guy. 'He walked clear of the darkness all men fear most. Wise, ancient and somber stands a man separate from his own shadow. Spirit dedicated to the universe. His journey began staring at a poster. A surfer depicted in the pouring rain staring back at the camera with the slogan "do you think I care what the weatherman says?" The master ascended to assemble the HaasVoel Underground. One cold night after binge drinking the HaasVoel Underground and Frank Niemand were created by a small team of amigos; baptized by alcohol Frankfort Daniel Michael Rudolf Charles Niemandbelangrik came into existence. I was switched out and stitched up to look like a poorly taxidermied SlipKnot fanboy.

2002:

Better call Steve. Steve was the voice of reason and has been a constant pain in our collective arses ever since. So Steve decreed of the HU:

1: People are free to believe whatever they want, we're not here to judge however correction is required for science fact versus bat crap crazy theory - theory means we haven't conclusively proven it. Namely; the Earth is not flat, fact. UFOs exist, fact. People abducted by extra terrestrial beings are communicating with sentient life beyond our planet, still a theory. Vaccines are not an evil conspiracy. Anyone who believes modern medicine is unhealthy should continue licking dry stones as a means to cure cancer.

2: Religion is fiction. While we neither condone nor condemn Religion we don't believe in it. Beliefs serve a purpose in a personal capacity exercised by individuals privately. We oppose the commercial weaponisation of Religion as a cult, all cults are evil. We do not believe in any higher being of divine status or intelligent design expecting absolute obedience without evidence for their existence. We believe in scientific principle, physical interaction with the known universe.

3: Common sense prevails. The core value of the HU.

And it was there that the purpose of the HaasVoel Underground was to challenge your mind, challenge everything else and always keep it to the underground.

With the foundation set we were open for business and it was come all ye weirdness when the gnomes arrived, the little Fuckers haven't left but got to work building the underground universe. We quickly set to work doing nothing, Frank spent a lot of time riding in the back of cars or sitting on Justin's sofa or being shoved into a dark cupboard or lumped into the boot of Justin's VW because Frank made granny uncomfortable. Nothing more sobering than looking up in the rearview mirror at two in the morning to see a lump sway and slide on your backseat, startling

stuff. Ironically both my car and Justin's flat were burgled while Frank was present and in plain sight; my advice, get a dog.

2003:

Our YouTube debut, it's weird. @HaasVoelTV. Those early posts are cringeworthy, a celebration of awkward learning on the fly short clips of our best laid efforts of me throwing Frank around a dirty garage, I spent most of the time kicking up dust.

2004:

Rentacrowd debut. HU tested brand expansion into international markets, Britannia all the way. Frank decided he wanted to publish stuff so we ran a monthly newsletter; more on those 60 issues came from my pre blogging insomnia episodes after everyone had logged off, that's hilarious to think not so long ago you could log off from social media. The sound tapes are archived to our site, maybe they're on YouTube too, who knows, go check it out.

Gone Fishing:

In all the years I have known Nick one thing stands out most in my memory; the reason I no longer go fishing. Fishing as I have learnt can be as extreme as any other activity but I assure you no fish were harmed in the events of what to date was my last fishing trip. Having arrived to meet up with friends already camped on the banks of the mighty Vaal River, Saturday afternoon sundowners became Saturday cocktails became Sunday morning border coffees with some fishing being done. Trouble raised its nasty head in a little motor boat filled with a bunch of, not fishermen. Somewhere is written a rule that fishermen and boating enthusiasts are sworn enemies on the water. I don't quite understand boating; the idea of driving up stream, turning around and driving back down stream is ridiculous and can result in the boat's motor running across cast lines in the water thereby entangling and snapping them – not to mention the odd chance the line catches and the fishing rod is pulled into the water. Add to that the constant irritation of a buzzing sound coming and going disturbs the peace and scares the fish. After several clear, possibly polite but very audible requests by us to the boat pilot to steer clear of the lines in the water, such sentiments echoed by neighbouring fishermen on the bank alongside us, because we all need to share and try to get along. Sadly boat pilots like most pilots favour showmanship over compliance and after a few runs he nicked a few of our lines in the water. Well now what's to be done, such callous acts of defiance do not go unresolved – I think the ancient saying quotes. I head back to my car and retrieve my paintball gun, take up position in a thicket of trees on the river bank and wait for the boat's return run because bravo was not done for the day just yet. In passing I fired off a few dry fire shots – all noise but no paintballs in the direction of our motor boat nuisance and hooray they got the idea to move off for a short while. Lines were reset and recast and a moment of calm returned, for a moment. The persistent little boat returned in order for the pilot to prove something to his passengers, in my opinion the passengers spurred him on a bit. The new action was hard turns to disrupt the waters and drift our fishing lines into each other. Those of you who know Nick will know he champions to right wrongs of others. He stands up for what he believes in and opposes any wrong doer because injustice should never go unchallenged. Such fortitude I have always admired and respected of him. As such he reaches for his own paintball gun, issues fair warning to the boat pilot to move

off, and fires a line of paintballs at the boat. It was awesome and the pilot took a hint to hightail it out of dodge. Hooray again, the boats were gone and we could merrily continue fishing. Later in the afternoon as we were packing up to leave we heard the boat returning. Things took a serious turn when the boat moored next to the bank in front of us and several policemen disembarked. I need to mention something here because the very first thing one of the occupants on the boat started pointing at me shouting from behind his wall of policemen was 'That guy, him with the long hair, arrest him.' Now for those of you who know me also now I cannot keep my mouth shut and to such childish accusations I calmly replied 'get off your boat and come say that here mate.' None that mattered much once Nick and the constable started talking, Nick explained he had shot at the boat and why he had done so; the boat pilot had joined the discussion and was explaining how several paintballs had struck his boat, without any explanation as to his reason for being a moron to begin with. One thing lead to another and the constable enquired if the boat pilot wanted to press charges, I'm not sure what the initial answer was but then seeing Nick being slapped with a pair of irons and directed back to the boat allows for some memory fogginess. Remembering my previous sentiment of Nick championing all that is right. While one constable interviewed and detained him another constable went searching our camp for evidence and in shock and horror he found my paintball gun, now being confiscated as evidence. Having been taught to always do what's right and seeing no reason to object, everything was proceeding to the nearest police station for processing. Life is all about timing because what happened next was absolutely perfect. Nick approaching the boat noticed the paint marks on the side of the hull, more importantly the colour, to which he asked the constable to check the colour of the paint loaded in my paintball gun. The constable squeezed a pellet broken to reveal the paint colours were different. With the evidence no longer admissible and I no longer the 'guy with the long hair' suspect things were turning around. The boat pilot realizing irregularities were now evident retracted his initial desire to press charges and a civilized exchange of words between him and Nick resolved this dispute with apologies and wiping the excess paint from the side of the boat. His explanation of events cleared up any confusion. This was simply action and reaction; Not omitting the finer details. The paintball gun Nick used upon the boat left the camp site prior the police arrival; he'd loaded it in his mom's car who'd left earlier - mom always looked out for their boys. The paint colour was different, green as shot up the side of the boat and yellow as squeezed out onto the constable's boot. Nobody suffered any injury other than to their egos and the boat did not sink like the Bismarck at war. Such moments seem reckless, unnecessary and perhaps extreme and often result in stern sobering events that are laughable and humorous on retelling but memory is the unseen dictograph carefully recording the virtues and vices of human interaction. Nick is a man of high valour, true morals and creative fishing methodology; a technique I have yet to master.

2005:

Social media, we miss Todd from MySpace. We discovered Facebook but still prefer MySpace, we ran a Twitter account but prefer being offline. Social media is the world's ugly put on display but it wasn't like that in the beginning.

2006:

That night in London. We seized an opportunity to take RentaCrowd abroad, packing a bag we flew to England. Oxford was awesome, Swindon was awesome, London was awesome; beer memories. Our well laid plans turned south when schedule conflicts changed and we were heading for London a lot sooner than expected. London is an interesting place, haunted historically and culturally. There I was renting shared accommodation in a council flat in Southfields for the summer. I'd arrived at Kings Cross mid Wimbledon, our party was done, I needed to get working. Sparing the details a fruitless fortnight later I was near broke and ready to head home, trip cut extremely short. In my haste I stopped in a crowd outside a Tube station, this was July 7th 2006, the anniversary of the Tube bombings one year prior. In that moment of silence my haste subsided, I paid my respects to people I didn't know but seemed connected to through the flow of the universe and I moved on. I have learned from tragedy that we as people are connected; I sat in disbelief in front of my television watching the towers in New York collapse. I realized adolescence was more complicated after reading about Columbine in Time magazine as I knew the significance of standing outside that train station in quiet remembrance. A night or two later, now approaching my departure for home I felt tense, anxious and an urgency to be back home. Nothing out of the ordinary happened except for the dream. I fell asleep on my bed, no covers courtesy of the summer heat, when the sensation of floating took hold of me. I slowly lifted from the bed like I was floating toward the ceiling. I cannot describe the feelings that rushed through me other than they rushed through all at once and I felt an urgent need to go home, for reasons I did not know. In my single thought of home my attention waned and I fell back down like a stone. The bump on the bed woke me and my roommate who, half drunk, wanted to know why I had jumped onto the bed. Weird. The remainder of my time in London I brooded anxious and impatient, I left a few days later. On my return I spoke to Nick about London, he seemed intrigued by my account but weirder still he recalled experiencing something similar at his time of departure for home several months earlier. The backstory here Nick spent time in London the year before, though not directly impacted by the terror attacks he recalled the sense of urgency to return home shortly thereafter.

The Curse of Christmas. For very human being on planet Earth December is the season of festivity that brings everyone together to celebrate in whichever manner they choose to observe the day we call Xmas; ergo my preferred spelling the multitudinous incarnations and historical plagiarism patchwork that assembles this holiday is agreeable as the one day every year people celebrate being people. With every passing year I appreciate more of the universal appeal, forego less of the ridiculous notion that Christmas, when spelled this way, is a curse and reminisce with memories good and bad of the December past I have experienced. Christmas best serves the imaginations of children; my favourite festive holidays were those spent under a big tree rummaging through mountains of gift wrapped boxes while stuffing my face with candied assortments in the company of family. The excitement of it all fills the memories of a happy carefree youth. We had not had a care in the world until the AA batteries in that cool new toy ran flat. Those are my most treasured Christmas memories that, admittedly I experienced again briefly in my young adult life but let's keep them safely locked away in the memory chest for now. Death came for Yule and took with him some good people. I recall several consecutive years when loved ones were lost and the spirit and cheer along with them, more than three in a row is a curse but let's not dwell on superstitions because it's Christmas time.

I do not associate these two events together, this was a weird year but maybe there was slight disruption in the universe that everyone felt.

2007:

Spreading Among Many. The Haasvoel Underground has arisen. Buried deep beneath the normality of society lies the heart of the underground. Many such underground movements are well known, others less, but they exist nonetheless. These movements tirelessly pursue the truths of the world, as to enlighten masses of people living in a cocooned environment whereby they're completely devoid of reality. The Haasvoel Underground is such a movement.

Challenge your mind, challenge everything else.

First blog post - March 16 2007

HU forged out mainstream in the Western Cape. Circling back to those sleepless nights sitting in front of my laptop, alone were it not for the company of Steve. The HU set down stakes. England being a bust I needed a career, I stumbled into Information Technology and realized being good at what you do doesn't mean it's what you want to do forever but I worked hard and opportunity came knocking for a hot headed confident hot shot upstart wanting rapid advancement within a company. I crammed what I could into a Volkswagen and drove to Cape Town. I set up shop and the HaasVoel Underground was off to the races. I worked my day job as a traveling computer mechanic and dedicated nights to building the HU, insomnia and coffee kept the madness at bay. I was alone, Steve was there but otherwise alone in an apartment sitting in front of a laptop assembling the underground. I'd built the monster, now I needed villagers to torment. This was pre social media but we managed, we had Google and MySpace and this strange antiquated practice of text messaging limited to 300 characters. We had our heading, built our platform and partied hard. Into the digital unknown. After correcting the screwy looking timeline we were heading in a direction rather than using angry squirrels to herd cats. Frank and I were building an underground empire and still had no profit to show for it, money is overrated when you're having fun pretending to be king of the world.

2008:

Blogs. Like any good rock ballad about love it takes years of heartfelt trials, tribulations, happiness and the lonely pain of ending a relationship experience and about 42 seconds to write about it. I wrote, and wrote, and wrote some more. My writing outlet was transforming and blogging becoming my therapeutic outlet. I miss VampireFreaks, i posted a ton of really dark and depressing stuff there, probably lead to a few emo suicides after reading. A romance ended, I processed it and moved on.

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2009:

The 10th reunion, little Frank Niemand grew up, he filled out.

2010:

HUW closed but we kept the title belt. HaasVoel Underground Wrestling never materialized beyond a few broken tables, dented chairs and a crappy backyard built ring. Our cage was rusted through in places as was our roster. We didn't run gimmicks or feuds or pay-per-view shows; without an audience HUW was dead in the water. Our backyard brawls were fun but hazardous and believe me multiple chairs shots to the head have long term effects, as does going through tables so be kind to body kids because turning forty and feeling eighty five is no joke. We honestly can't remember much, it was entertaining. So why did Frank keep the belt? Oddly enough the belt is named Susan, trying to remember The HaasVoel Underground Wrestling Undisputed Title was a headache after all those chair shots and table bumps. Susan fell into disrepair but has been restored and placed on display in my workspace.

2011:

Dearest Catherine

I trust this letter finds you in good standing. I write to you offering my deepest condolences upon hearing news of your beloved William's passing, truly he was a magnificent *Carassius auratus* and a treasured member of your clan. Regrettably I am unable to attend William's eulogy as my poor health prohibits any travel I may have planned. Fortuitous diagnosis from Papa Legba, a remarkable practitioner of traditional medicine, is that my *Veisalgia* is in remission. However, I am in mild discomfort thinking about the gin inventory that is beginning to run low, please send replenishments at your soonest convenience. Further news I have none since our previous correspondence, thank you again for your thought provoking insights on the stimulatory contributions of *Psilocybe cubensis*. As per your request I am in discussion with the local herbalist to procure both *Sativa* and *Indica* seeds for your spice garden, I am told the finest and rarest strains are difficult to acquire in the civilized world.

Sincerest

William

Wedding, beheading and HU coming close to calling it a day. Sometimes your favourite band breaks up, calls it quits or packs it in. Things happen and people get tired of the space they're in. Unconquerable grown up stuff threatened to kill the buzz causing Frank to lose his head. Like literally he lost his frickin head, it's on the mantelpiece in the family dining room. We were going more in separate directions, doing other things with other people but defiant. We swore a blood oath to never break up the band but we hadn't laid out any HU legacy so, begrudgingly we had to be adults and do all the shitty adult stuff to keep HU, which was inactive at the time, ticking over while planning a wedding and shifting career goals while moving to a new town and dealing with the early onset of dementia (in a family member) without so much as a moment to discuss Frank's non existent emotions or stop to admire Princess Katherine's wedding gown.

2012:

It's been one hell of a ride, we've had an awesome time but all bad things must end. We've done a lot for our country, hahaha no we haven't but change is inevitable and South African society is declining, that's not for us and we are done with her. The party goes on elsewhere and we're not done with her, it's been solid but we moved on. Our long awaited journey awaits from beyond the horizon, we too journey to the West. We got this far which is more than we

expected, each time we called it done the next thing arose and we persevered. We discussed retirement, went on hiatus and nearly quit the universe altogether but something keeps calling us on. We're not done yet, we're in suspended animation. No explanations, no apologies, no excuses, not now, not ever.

The HaasVoel Underground was officially on hiatus. Our online presence barely beating above flatline after going dark on social media. We were outdated, irrelevant, old school, boring and not creating anything substantial for the copious consumption of the millennial masse. Our site changed into a store room where old things are archived in hope that future humans might discover this forgotten mausoleum. I kept writing blogs nobody reads, Frank kept posting to YouTube infrequently for a non-existent audience. The HU hit bottom below bottom, the dim light slowly fading, we were fading to nothing unless Frank picked up a guitar and I picked up a pen.

2013:

Spatchcock. The idea rattled around in my head like those catchy songs you hear playing on the radio

2014:

404 record not found. Sorry but these things happen.

2015: The day the Earth stuttered.

2016: Declassified archives, check our website.

2017: Party on Frank, party on Steve

2018:

Steve retired.

He wrote a moving farewell message, it's here somewhere.

2019:

The 20th reunion was interrupted by Covid-19, fuck you China and your coronavirus pandemic you need to forevermore apologise because every global wrong doing going forward is ALL THEIR FAULT.

2020:

Going offline. Our decision for leaving social media was motivated as environmentally friendly, emotionally holistic and non-binary specific oriented healing Frank Niemand needed to dedicate his spirit energy to a life of peace, love and happiness as he pursues universal enlightenment from finger painting cubist abstract nude portraits of morbidly obese transgender sex dolls.

2021:

What the fuck is a tiktok?

2022: File corrupt or missing.

2023: Legacy of the freaks. Greetings future people, please take note.

2024:

01/11/2024 marks the 25th anniversary of the HaasVoel Underground.

I've decided to open an online franchise chain of second hand ebook stores. Frank has his studio, those portraits aren't altogether unpleasant. We have the HaasVoel Underground and we're not done yet, we'll keep going until our hearts stop baby. The HaasVoel Underground is here, this is part of our legacy and maybe we'll do this again. This is our gift to the universe, thank you.

In Conclusion:

Somewhere in the Multiverse:

1. The MCU doesn't exist.
2. Elon Musk owns all social media, and it's awesome.
3. The WWE owns Disney, WrestleMania at Disneyland.
4. Cancel culture got canceled, common sense prevails.

Notes:

Try to cover each year on a timeline, this is what we remember
Limit to 50k words.

HU Stories:

The HUW belt. Drop a photograph

The Balcony Incident, as retold by Frank.

Dining at the Capri, as retold by Frank.

Frank's Dong and other misplaced appendages, what we can recall.

Ghost stories:

That night in London, July 2006

The haunting in Malvern, Garth was troubled. 2005

The dreams that motivated me to write, the search for happily ever after. 06/07

Post credit photograph: Frank holding a sign reading: Thanks Susan 🙌