

Bones
Chi Laughlin

PAGE 1 (EIGHT PANELS)

Title: Bones

Page 1, Panel 1

A photograph of TWISTER, a jovial, bearded man in his 40s. He wears a baseball cap with a block letter "C" emblazoned on the front, and bears a resemblance to the actor Ralph Fiennes if Ralph Fiennes had a beard. I know this because I once saw Ralph Fiennes with a beard in person and you wouldn't believe how much he looked like Twister. Dead ringers, no lie. The beard is dark brown, thick but not too long. In real life, Twister had the loudest, most infectious laugh I've ever heard; That should show in the deep crow's feet around his eyes. He's smiling widely in the moment this photograph was taken, as if that laugh is about to come bursting out of the image.

This panel is taken up entirely by a photograph. It should float kind of loosely in the top left corner of the page. In fact, the panel could just be the photograph itself, as if it's been placed on top of the page, with no borders, overlapping the gutters beneath.

CAPTION 1:

Being a dad is a fucking weird sometimes, man.

PAGE 1, Panel 2

A wide borderless panel across the top of the page. This is an establishing shot of a two story house on an idyllic small town suburban street. It's a sunny spring day and the windows and doors stand open. A well-traveled black pick-up truck sits in the driveway. In the bushes that skirt the house, flowers are in bloom. A large tree, an oak or an elm, grows up beside the house and towers above it. It's the very picture of domesticity.

The word balloon emanates from inside the house.

BONES 2:

Like, a few months ago, my step-daughter went out on a date with this kid she sees.

PAGE 1, Panel 3

Another vertical panel across the page, this one with a border. We're inside the house now, in the living room. It's clean and well kept. Lovely curtained windows let in the sunshine. On the wall is a large clock, and several photographs of young girls at different stages of life. There's a lot of love in this home. It's the very picture of domesticity.

There might be a cat sprawled out on the floor somewhere. Maybe it got up and walked away.

Two long sofas stand against two of the room's adjacent walls, so that the two figures seated on them face each other at a ninety degree angle with a coffee table on the floor between them. The two figures are BONES and CHI, two men in their...well, let's just say middle age.

Chi wears jeans and a black hoodie, and leans back into his sofa with practiced comfort. He's been here before.

Bones wears a t-shirt, jeans and basketball shoes. He's tall and lean. Even though Chi is fairly tall, Bones has a good four inches on him. He wears his head and upper lip clean shaven, but keeps a long tuft of billy goat hair growing from his chin. He has tattoos, but none of this David Beckham shit; just a couple of clean tats on each arm and they've been there awhile. He drinks a cup of coffee as he speaks.

In many ways, especially the crows feet around the eyes, he should bear a slight resemblance to Twister. Remember Twister? He was in that photo from panel 1. You remember Twister. Just keep that in mind because we're going to circle back.

CAPTION 3:

This is Ohio.

CAPTION 4:

This is Bones. I've known him since I was eight years old.

CAPTION 5:

There aren't that many people any of us can really say that about.

BONES 6:

He gets here to pick her up, but she's a teenager, she's still getting ready. So I'm sitting here alone with this guy.

PAGE 1, Panel 4

A medium shot favoring Bones, with Chi in the foreground. Bones is a good storyteller, and he leans forward, taking Chi into his confidence.

CAPTION 7:

It's an exclusive club, and its members have seen you at your best and worst.

BONES 8:

So I sit next to him--he's already nervous--and I lean in real close, and I say...

PAGE 1, Panel 5

Closer on Bones. His face is all business as he reenacts the scene. The poor kid must have been seriously intimidated.

CAPTION 9:

If they're close enough, they've seen your rise and your fall. They've seen you bottom out and pick yourself back up again.

BONES 10:

Anything you do to her...I'm gonna do to you....

PAGE 1, Panel 6

Even tighter on Bones. He's still got that serious look on his face, but his eyes have gone wide enough now to seem just a little bit crazy.

BONES 11:

...and trust me, you won't be my first.

PAGE 1, Panel 7

We're back to the wide on Bones and Chi. Bones is laughing his ass off, nearly spilling his coffee in the process. Chi's laughing too, but for Bones, this is a seismic event that the neighbors can probably hear. All of the neighbors. Mr. Rogers can probably hear it in his neighborhood and he's been dead for almost twenty years. It's funnier than the story itself.

SFX 12: HAHAAHAHAHAHAHA. (Big and manic, like the Joker.)

PAGE 1, Panel 8

Medium on Bones and Chi, favoring Bones as he pulls a cigarette from a pack. The laughter has been like sex for him and he's coming down now, but still smiling.

CAPTION 13:

Now and then I get the chance to visit. Bones always takes me in.

BONES 14:

I had some girl's dad say that same thing to me when I was his age. Dude, that shit is crazy, but it's effective.

PAGE 2 (EIGHT PANELS)

PAGE 2, Panel 1

A wide, borderless panel. We're outside now, behind the house. Bones and Chi sit at a metal table on a wooden deck. Beyond the deck, a luscious lawn stretches out before them, enclosed by a beautiful white fence. Potted plants and flowers are mounted around the railing of the deck. It's the very picture of domesticity. Have I said that? Chi reaches his finger out to a fallen leaf near one of the plants on the railing. Bones smokes his cigarette.

CHI 1:

You're doing well, man. All of this. I'm really happy for you.

BONES 2:

Thanks, brother. How are you?

CHI 3:

I'm okay.

PAGE 2, Panel 2

We're closer on the two of them, favoring Chi. He seems lost in thought and vacantly works the leaf between his fingers.

BONES 4:

Okay?

CHI 5:

Yeah. I dunno. I mean...

CHI 6:

There is something I wanted to talk to you about.

PAGE 2, Panel 3

Similar to the previous panel, but now we're more focused on Bones. He's leaning forward, listening attentively, a far more serious aspect than he's shown us so far.

CHI 7:

I feel awkward saying it, but, I just...It would mean a lot to me.

BONES 8:

Dude, you're scaring me. What?

PAGE 2, Panel 4

Close single on Chi, alone in the panel, completely absorbed with the leaf in his hand. He can't bring himself to look at Bones as he says the words.

CHI 9:

I was wondering if...

CHI 10:

Shit...

CHI 11:

I'd like to smoke some pot with you and your dad.

PAGE 2, Panel 5

We're back to a wider shot of the two of them, possibly from a higher angle, balanced enough in the composition to show both of their faces. Bones, genuinely relieved, is smiling and leaning back again. Chi, still avoiding eye contact, looks down at the leaf in his hands; Bones's joke doesn't even register.

NOTE: Anytime Bones lets out a single laugh like the one here, it should not appear as a sound effect, like the explosive laughter from page 1. Instead, it should remain inside the word balloon, but the letters should be larger, block letters, separate from the rest of the text. It would even be

okay if the surrounding edges of the word balloon fracture a little bit into those jagged edges you used to see around the "POW"s in old Batman comics.

BONES 12:

HA!! I thought you were going to say you had cancer or something.

CHI 13:

Just...if you don't mind, I mean.

PAGE 2, Panel 6

A closer two shot, this time over Bones's shoulder, on Chi. Chi finally looks up at him.

BONES 14:

Okay, yeah. If that's what you want, but...

CHI 15:

But what?

PAGE 2, Panel 7

A single close shot on Bones. Again, he's quite serious here, leaning forward. He's concerned in a way that's decidedly parental.

BONES 16:

I just don't get it. If you'd asked me twenty years ago, it would have made a lot more sense. But what the hell...

PAGE 2, Panel 8

We're wider again. Bones is in the background, leaning forward. In the foreground, Chi is in profile, sullen, avoiding eye contact.

BONES 17:

...why now?

PAGE 3 (SIX PANELS)

PAGE 3, Panel 1

Close on Chi, with Bones dirty in the foreground. Chi is sitting up now, letting out a sigh, ready to let it all out. He's looking at his friend again.

CHI 1:
I dunno, man.

CHI 2:
Here's the thing. You and I are a lot a like...but we're a lot different, too.

Page 3, Panel 2

We're wide, in Bones's childhood living room. It's a shade darker, a touch more cluttered, than Bones's current home. There's love here, too, but it's a messy love. Across the background, young Chi and young Bones, probably age nine or ten, and Bones's mother, WEEZY, a pleasantly plump woman with shoulder-length brown hair. Chi is baby-faced, with an unnaturally blonde bowl cut and a football jersey; Bones has a sort of blonde 1970s Jeff Beck shag haircut and wears a cub scout uniform. The two boys sit on a sofa eating pizza, laughing their asses off. Weezy, in a nightgown, sits in a big cushioned chair, hiding her face in her hands, completely embarrassed.

In the foreground, sort of turned to the side, Twister stands in the middle of the room in a poor man's Tiger style Kung Fu pose, wearing nothing but a white bed sheet draped over his body like a toga. We know that this is all he's wearing because, in the back, facing us, it's riding up to reveal his naked ass. It should not be suggested, however, that the kids are seeing anything in front.

CAPTION 3:
When we were kids, I think everybody knew your dad was getting high. He'd go off in his room forever, and then he'd come out...man, he was such a blast when he was stoned.

PAGE 3, Panel 3

A long, dark hallway with a door at the end. The door is slightly ajar, smoke coming out. This is presumably Bones's childhood home.

CAPTION 4:
But we didn't talk about it. It was funny, but it was still just a little shady.

CAPTION 5:

And what did I know about weed back then? What I saw on TV? What I heard from my parents or at school?

PAGE 3, Panel 4

A wide exterior shot of a convenience store parking lot. This is Ohio in the 1980s, so let's make it a Lawson's store. A group of pothead kids stand around smoking. They have long hair, denim jackets, and heavy metal t-shirts. There's something dark and menacing here: heavy shadows, train tracks running alongside the store. This is definitely more Larry Clark than Kevin Smith. These kids are lost--unloved. My heart breaks for them.

CAPTION 6:

I knew the kids smoking pot were the ones dropping out, loafing around town, getting sent off to juvie...or jail. I knew it was bad news.

CAPTION 7:

And it was something I swore I'd never do.

PAGE 3, Panel 5

We're in the cluttered, dimly lit kitchen of an apartment being rented to kids in their late teens or early twenties. Not a lot of love here to speak of. Bones, now in his late teens or early twenties, sits at a card table with a couple of other guys the same age. It's the early 90s, and the others should be dressed appropriately. Tough guys. The tabletop is covered with beer cans, ashtrays and playing cards. Maybe a bottle of ketchup or some fast food wrappers. Bones is wearing a baseball cap and tank top, smoking a pipe and flexing with the others. Chi stands in the background, leaning against a the kitchen counter, apart from the group. He's heavy set, in a baggy black t-shirt and a crew cut, drinking a bottle of soda.

CAPTION 8:

And then we got older. A lot of guys were smoking it. So were you.

CAPTION 9:

And it scared me.

CAPTION 10:

I'd known you my whole life, but just like that, we were growing apart.

PAGE 3, Panel 6

We're back in the present, on Bones's back porch, focused on Chi, Bones dirty in the foreground. Chi is still lost in the memory, wrestling with the difficulty of having felt this way.

CHI 11:

I didn't want to go down that path, you know? Because to me, you were pissing your life away.

CHI 12:

It's hard for me to say that--but that's what I thought about you.

PAGE 4 (FIVE PANELS)

PAGE 4, Panel 1

Tight on Chi, his eyebrows raised in disbelief. He cannot believe how time will change things.

CHI 1:

But now?

PAGE 4, Panel 2

Chi, walking down a residential street in Brooklyn, passing a well-dressed, middle-aged guy out walking his dog. The guy smokes a joint as casual as can be.

CAPTION 2:

I step outside my apartment in New York and the smell of weed just hangs in the air...like bacon and eggs.

CAPTION 3:

All day long like that. And not just my neighborhood. That's the whole city.

PAGE 4, Panel 3

Another flashback. This time we're inside a big appliance factory. Maybe they're making wash machines. Workers on the assembly line crane their heads around to see a late-20s version of Chi, much leaner than we've seen him, wearing safety goggles and an apron over jeans, t-shirt and work boots. He's holding up his right hand, which is bleeding profusely, and speaking to an angry-looking woman in slacks and a polo shirt who points at him and yells.

CAPTION 4:

When I worked in the factory, if I got hurt, I could stand there bleeding out, and they wouldn't lift a finger to help me until I took a drug test.

CAPTION 5:

And if that shit came back positive...forget it.

PAGE 4, Panel 4

We're now in a modern open office in New York City. Three or four people sit in a row, working away on computers. They're editors or designers or animators. Okay. Come on, they're probably animators. But they're completely focused on the work at hand.

CAPTION 6:

Now...I work in offices where people are stoned all day long. And it's understood that they're probably doing a better job because of it.

PAGE 4, Panel 5

Weed everywhere. This could be a big, borderless panel at the bottom of the page. Chi walks down a Manhattan street, through a cloud of smoke. A dealer on the street holds out a hand, offering to sell him weed. A food truck parked on the curb sells edibles. Images hover in the air around Chi's head...a marijuana leaf...buds...various candies...a television screen on which Anthony Bourdain rolls a joint...An instagram post of a bug-eyed Kevin Smith...Snoop Dogg...Seth Rogen...various elderly men and women.

CAPTION 7:

That's the world now.

CAPTION 8:

In twenty years there's going to be a dispensary next to every Starbucks in America.

PAGE 5 (EIGHT PANELS)

PAGE 5, Panel 1

We're at some trendy, big city bar. It could be an office holiday party or a film festival. It could just be a typical weekend night in the city: busy, with lots of people clustered together in groups. Everybody is elegant and everybody is drinking. Chi, wearing a pretentious tweed jacket with

suede patches on the elbows--over the same black hoodie as before--is talking to a girl. She's throwing her head back in laughter.

CAPTION 1:

And I'm pretty sure that day is gonna come when I'm out at some party somewhere...

CAPTION 2:

And some girl is gonna ask me to smoke with her. And I know I'm gonna say yeah.

PAGE 5, Panel 2

We push in close on the girl, with Chi in the foreground. She's holding up a pipe, and smiling.

CAPTION 3:

Why?

CAPTION 4:

Because she's pretty? Or rich?

CAPTION 5:

She sure as hell isn't pissing her life away.

CAPTION 6:

Or maybe just because I've got society in my ear, telling me that it's all good.

PAGE 5, Panel 3

It's nighttime, just outside the bar. We're on Chi and the girl. She's taking a hit off a pipe while Chi looks on.

CAPTION 7:

Maybe it is.

CAPTION 8:

But what does that say about me...

PAGE 5, Panel 4

Closer on the two of them as she passes the pipe and lighter to Chi.

CAPTION 9:

If I say yes to her after all these years of saying no to you?

CAPTION 10:

What kind of friend does that make me?

PAGE 5, Panel 5

Close on Chi, the pipe in his mouth, getting ready to light up.

CAPTION 11:

How can I live with that?

PAGE 5, Panel 6

Back in the present, on Bones's back porch. This is a medium on Chi, with Bones in the foreground.

CHI 12:

Shit. She doesn't even exist. But I won't treat her like she's better than you.

CHI 13:

If I'm going to do this, even just once, I want to do it with you and your dad.

PAGE 5, Panel 7

Close on Bones, touched by all he's heard. Chi sits dirty in the foreground.

BONES 14:

I'll go get my dad.

PAGE 5, Panel 8

We pull out to a wide, high angle shot of Chi sitting alone on the porch, looking out across the yard, and Bones heading into the house, the screen door closing behind him.

PAGE 6 (NINE PANELS)

PAGE 6, Panel 1

This is a medium shot from just over Chi's shoulder, looking at Bones, who's just returned and standing in the open doorway, a metal urn in his hands. Taped to the front of the urn and clearly visible is the photograph of Twister from the very first panel of our story.

BONES 1:

Come on. We'll go out to the woodshed.

PAGE 6, Panel 2

From high overhead, Bones, urn in hand, leads Chi along a path from the back porch, across the yard, to a little shed behind the house. We should be high enough up to possibly see some tree branches in the close foreground.

BONES 2:

Last month I took the girls out fishing and brought him along. It was a spot he used to take me to.

BONES 3:

I sprinkled some of his ashes into the water. I think he would have liked that.

PAGE 6, Panel 3

Inside the shed, Bones sits in one of two lawn chairs placed side by side, and sets the urn down on a milk crate between them, in just such a way that the photograph of Twister will face the same direction as Bones and Chi. Bones should be in the chair on the left, while Chi stands and prepares to sit in the other.

BONES 4:

He would have really liked this, too.

PAGE 6, Panel 4

Close on Bones bringing a recently rolled joint up to his mouth to lick it.

BONES 5:

Normally, out here by myself, I'd smoke a bowl...

PAGE 6, Panel 5

A very close, clean shot of the joint in Bones's palm as he offers it to Chi for inspection.

BONES 6:

But this feels right for the occasion.

PAGE 6, Panel 6

On BONES as he takes a hit.

SFX 7: Pffffffftttt.

PAGE 6, Panel 7

He holds the joint out to Chi.

BONES 8:

Inhale it, then just hold it in your lungs for a bit. Don't overdo it though.

PAGE 6, Panel 8

Close on Chi as he takes a hit. (Sorry, mom.)

SFX 9: Pfft.

PAGE 6, Panel 9

Then breaks out coughing. Chi holds the pipe in one hand and coughs into the other. This is a wider shot, with Bones in the background, laughing.

SFX 10: KOFF KOFF

BONES 11:

HA! That's okay.

PAGE 7 (NINE PANELS)

Page 7, Panel 1

All nine panels on this page should be identical--three across and three down--with the exception of the word balloons and possibly the smoke drifting through the frame. We're at a slightly low position, centered on the urn, with Twister's photograph looking directly at us and smiling. We can see the edge of Bones's arm/hand/leg/chair on the left of the frame, and the edge of Chi's arm/hand/leg/chair on the right, but we don't see either of their faces or anything above chest level. We should see the smoke drifting through the panels, but never the joint itself.

BONES 1:

You should be feeling that pretty soon.

Page 7, Panels 2-7

Identical to panel 1, with the exception of the smoke

Page 7, Panel 8

Identical to panel 1, with the exception of the smoke

CHI 2:

Wait. Did you just...what did you just say?

Page 7, Panel 9

This is largely identical to the previous panels, except for Bones's thunderous laughter, which calls back to the laughter on page 1. The edge of Bones's arm/hand/leg might be moving along with the laugh. The SFX of the laugh should fill as much of the panel as possible, surrounding the urn and the photo in just such a way as to make it seem like Twister is the one laughing.

SFX 3: HAHAHAHAHAHAAAA.

CAPTION 4:

End.