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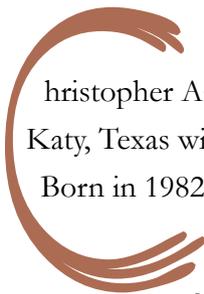
WRITER

Chris  
Hoppe



# THE BRIEFEST of CHRONICLINGS

by Christopher Aaron Hoppe

 Christopher Aaron Hoppe was, is, and will be an author, father, and a husband who lives in Katy, Texas with his wife Monica and 5 children. He is originally from Sugarland, Texas. Born in 1982, he began to show inclinations towards creativity at a young age.

Following a four-year stint in San Diego, California with the United States Navy right out of high school, Chris returned home to Texas to be with his friends and family in 2004.

He attended college at the University of Houston where he studied English and Philosophy. Graduating in 2009, Chris landed a string of subsequent jobs and career paths before settling into his current career with a major oil and gas company as a contract engineer. Exciting times.

There are the basics.

## Tiny Words on a Page



Front Row: Cohen, Charlotte, Austin, Bowie  
Rear Row: Monica (Mom), Meagan, Chris Hoppe. (Dad)

Photographer: Josh Hoppe (Author's brother)

Ever since discovering words and language and prose and figurative speech as a boy, I was spellbound by the places that could be crafted, the worlds that could be explored, and the mundane that could be made to sing and dance off the page. *Hatchet* by Gary Paulson was a favorite of mine, as were tales from Jack London, Frank Peretti, Jules Vern, and others. My imagination was always trying to find any way it could to burst out.

I was Bastion from *The Neverending Story* or wanted to be. I would have made an excellent Atreyu as well, not discounting his horse getting swallowed by the Swamps of Sadness. Either would have worked; they both got to ride Falkor after all.

Gary Drury Publishing published my first short story "Nine Pounds" in 2004 while I was still in the service and another yarn in 2005. It was a dark time personally, and I remember the stories being



dark, and probably not as invigorating (I haven't read them in years). However, I have them and keep them still, as reminders, like tattoos shoved into drawers somewhere, their colors dusted with shadows but never forgotten. Other stories took root during that time that weren't submitted for publication either, and might never be. I played much of my writing close to the vest during that time, as it were. I still do.

We had been in the Persian Gulf, yay-yippee-fun, sailing and policing, set to leave and return home on September 13, 2001. This did not happen. Our ship, the John Paul Jones, was the first-responder to Operation Enduring Freedom, and we spent days and days and days peppering an Afghani landscape with Tomahawk missiles. This felt real and right and satisfying inside my nineteen-year-old mind. Alas, as time passed, those misplaced moods vanished and were replaced with guilt and sadness and regret. And hatred.

One never recovers fully from that sort of humor, and I am no exception. That time in my life still haunts me, just as it haunted my writing in the years that followed that escapade of revenge on the other side of the world.

Nevertheless, time, like that drawer-ridden tattoo, is a scar; it heals, but never lets you forget.

I like that.



In 2018, Gary Drury Publishing published my book “Hail”. It had been a labor of love finalizing that story of sea and ice rain and seafloor tsunamis and post-apocalyptic pirates. And I'm glad it found a home on the printed page.



**One of my favorite excerpts:**

“Toby returns the submersible to the surface amid new clusters of jutting ice to the northeast. *The Amber* greets him with a smile, and he takes stock of his provisions: overripe fruit and tuna (the latter easily shanked with a spear gun), glacier water that stinks of ozone, some diesel containers, sixteen cigarettes, and a little under eleven hours until Cold Belt makes another pass.

**Ice knives.**

Keeping *The Amber's* systems up while he went down with LUCI drains a tremendous amount of power, solar, diesel, and mental alike.

Toby retrieves a large map from the wheelhouse and duct tapes it to the bulkhead outside where he can study it in a better light. He runs a series of simple algorithms through the radar interface-- LUCI could have pumped these out in seconds, but to hell with her--and develops a rough picture of where the bulk of the ice had fallen. Northeast. He would sail northwest, to start. He has to see what is out there.

He throws *The Amber* into gear and pivots her bow away from his small sanctuary. It'll be necessary to find other safe pockets of the open sky such as this, places where the atmospheric activity is relatively light. Hiding. But he has to see. He has to find a safe place.”



Photographer:  
Family Member

## Early Day and Soapboxes

The first story I recall writing as an adult was titled “Swells” (unpublished), and it was about a sailor on a naval destroyer who had joined the Navy because he always felt wrong in his own skin whilst landlocked. He enjoyed the green, glowing effervescence that dolphined along in the sidewake of the ship at night. Nonetheless, that effervescence was alive! Maturing it took form and swooped our hero into the ocean to become one of them, returning him to where he truly belonged, beneath those swells.

Another fellow I served with on the ship, a much older and higher rank than me, read “Swells” and told me that if this was the first piece I had ever written, he was going to break my thumbs. I had only written it because he had told me that he was writing a story, and I wanted to impress him. I read his story and decided that I could do better, and I did. I had had the practice growing up (writing about hunts with my dad, documenting the outlandish dreams I had had the night before, make



Photographer: Family Member

shifting ridiculous scripts for faux James Bond movies with my younger brother, etc.). But I didn't rain on that fellow's parade. Amicably, he let me keep my thumbs.

Consequently, I draw much of my influence and inspiration from natural beauty and isolation (the forest, the sea, outer space, even my own backyard). Isolation can be damning in bulk, nonetheless deserving in smallish doses. Someone once told me to never spend too much time trapped between my own ears, which is true. Accordingly, allotting one's self some solitude and allowing one's voice to come piercing through onto a page or a screen mocking you with a blinking cursor is one of the most rewarding experiences imaginable.

So, write. Even if you don't publish, even if you're the only one that ever sees it, even if you scribble for hours and burn the pages. Write. You owe it to yourself if it's a thing that you feel is owed.



## Getting a Bit Personal?

These days, I live a comfortable life, employed and happy and paid, albeit a bit hectic from time to time (did I mention the 5 children?). There's also 4 dogs and a cat named Zelda. So many tiny mammals. So many stories told and yet to be explored and shared. Those are the best stories, the ones yet to be written.

Meanwhile, I sunlight as a technical writer/contract engineer and moonlight as a writer, when the urge appeals. My wife, Monica, is a geophysicist. She will destroy you with her calculus and is the most intelligent person I have ever met. This is why I always remember to remember our anniversary.

I am a collector of memories, as we all are or should be. But the only physical thing I collect is hardback, first edition Stephen King and Kurt Vonnegut Jr. novels, which is just as inexpensive as you can imagine it might be. That might be a lie. I do own every sonic screwdriver from every iteration of The Doctor from *Doctor Who*. Matt Smith is “the bomb dot com,” as the youth might say.



Photographer: Family Member

## The Sideshow

I also enjoy a host of other side activities. Film making is and always will be a passion of mine. I enjoy making sound effects (foley art) but have also dabbled in sound production, scoring, film editing, directing, screenwriting (of course,) and set design. And acting, but who hasn't?

I am an amateur carpenter and painter, and I've also dropped enough whitetail deer to satisfy my hunting urges of the moment. I was in a band called Tin Floor (guitar, mandolin, bass) for around 4 years with some close friends. Music is writing after all, and lyrics are poetry.



Artwork: Chris A. Hoppe, Photographer: Family Member



Poetry. This might be my favorite side dish. Brief and palpable and packing a punch. As such, I offer one, dearest reader, for the holiday season:

## “December”

*Will you remember this December?  
A hurricane of hurry down and Christmas glimmering heavenly peas?  
The children know, have to by non, or should at least.  
Winter desert's tiny Jesus would approve.  
Is Santa coming to town? Perhaps an Uber by freeway down?  
A venti, gingerbread, non-fat gown of green and gold, at least?*

*And if indeed the one I need is safe and sound and nestled tightly,  
Then, bolder men might fain and own and rightly pitch a scene and play pretender.*

*So, snowless so we range and ride and mangerless abide  
Cutscreens of once-green wasted wishes.  
Now sleep. And you shall. Everywhere you know.  
And in days filled with heart-carols, once more we dream of white.  
And through some tears on fated years,  
On reindeer sound and warmth around,  
Near fire constant flickering bright,  
Let's remember this December,  
And kiss-greet lamps creating light.  
Burning fears away by the sound, by sight.*

*Will you remember this December?  
I might.*

End



Photographer: Family Member



## And on It Goes

No writer puts ink to paper without aspirations of seeing their work on a printed page. That is a long path. It takes time and patience, rejection and elation at your own words. So, love your words, and share them. You cannot expect a stranger to love your words if you don't. That might be the greatest lesson I ever learned.

To quote Matt Smith as the 11<sup>th</sup> Doctor, written by the great Steven Moffat:

“We’re all stories in the end. Just make it a good one, eh?”

I hope you do.



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