

# Faixa Preta

## *A Dream Comes Full Circle*

By Edward Pollard | Illustrations Chadwick J. Coleman

Use of the phrase “circle of life” typically refers to the notion of events repeating over time - that this is evidence of a purpose greater than any one lifetime can express. Each generation must nonetheless learn its own lessons, no matter how familiar the dilemma. In many respects this is what 4<sup>th</sup>-degree Brazilian jiu-jitsu black belt John Machado is dramatizing with *Faixa Preta* through the humble medium of the comic book.

In recent years, characters and stories imported from their origins in cheap newsprint have had a huge impact on the entertainment industry. Comics have become big business at the box office, on television and in videogame systems; there’s no denying the power of imagination that comic book creators have spent decades unleashing. Fans have grown up and carried their favorites into maturity, their loyalty deeply rooted in what many consider a modern mythology.

As for Machado, comics have been close to his heart since he was a boy running downstairs to chat with the Italian magazine seller in front of his apartment building. He’d pick up the latest issues of Maurício de Sousa’s *Chico Bento*, his personal favorite, or *Monica’s Gang*, a much beloved series that loosely resembles *Peanuts*. As he grew older he moved on to the more complex adventures of *Tarzan*, *Tintin* and the *Marvel Comics* line of costumed superheroes. It is thus not surprising that Machado dipped into the comic book medium to tell his story, but just how autobiographical is *Faixa Preta*?

“It’s a fiction, but one that’s based on my life experiences, things I witnessed”, he says. “I access material from my life in martial arts and other personal adventures, but the plot line is totally open so it’s not straight autobiography.”

Machado returned to the illustrated story form after meeting young filmmaker Jan Lucanus in 2006 through one of his jiu-jitsu students. At the time, Lucanus was focusing on movie projects and hadn’t mentioned that his fledgling media company. Dubbed *Creative Impulse Entertainment*, the company was producing a new line of com-

