# No Biz For You

How Not To Do Business, Wix.



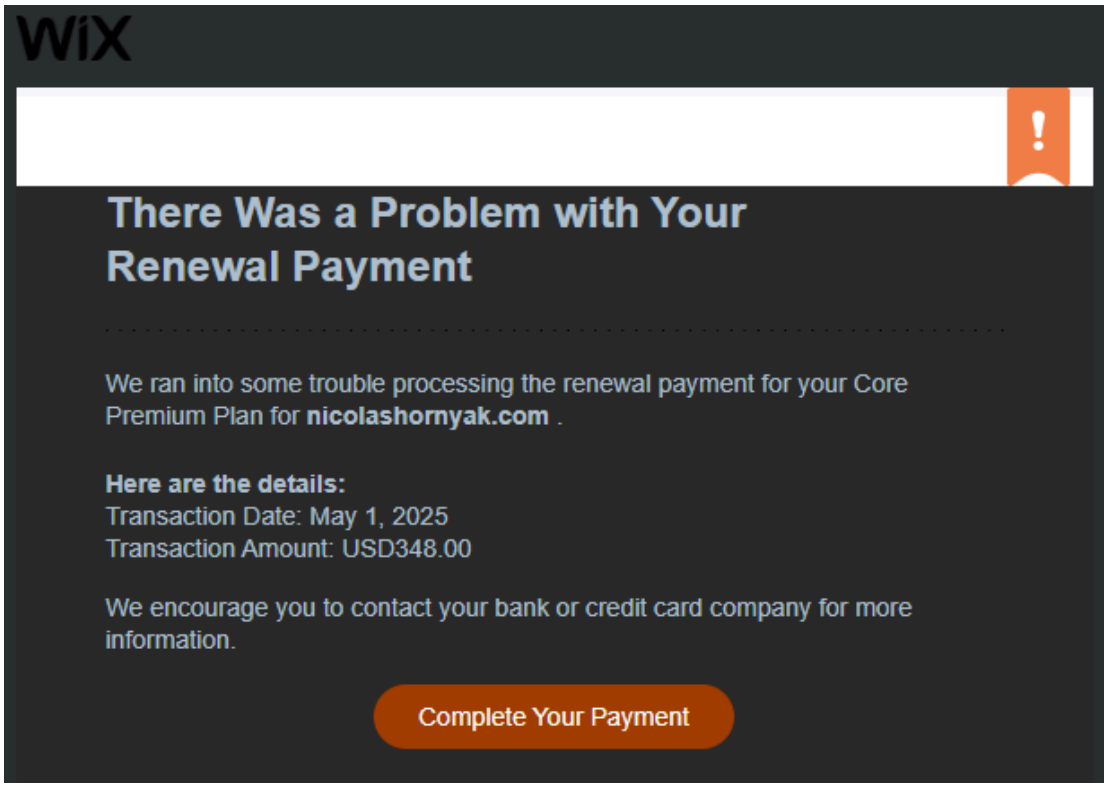
NICOLAS HORNYAK
MAY 15, 2025

You may have noticed that something is different about my website.

That took time, which admittedly has value, but it's also free and usable if I'm using my own time. Different conversation, though. Let's start at the beginning.

At the time of writing this first paragraph into my pocket notebook, which is rapidly running out of pages (finally), I've gotten the email from Wix.

12:06 am, May 1st, when they intended to charge me. And couldn't.

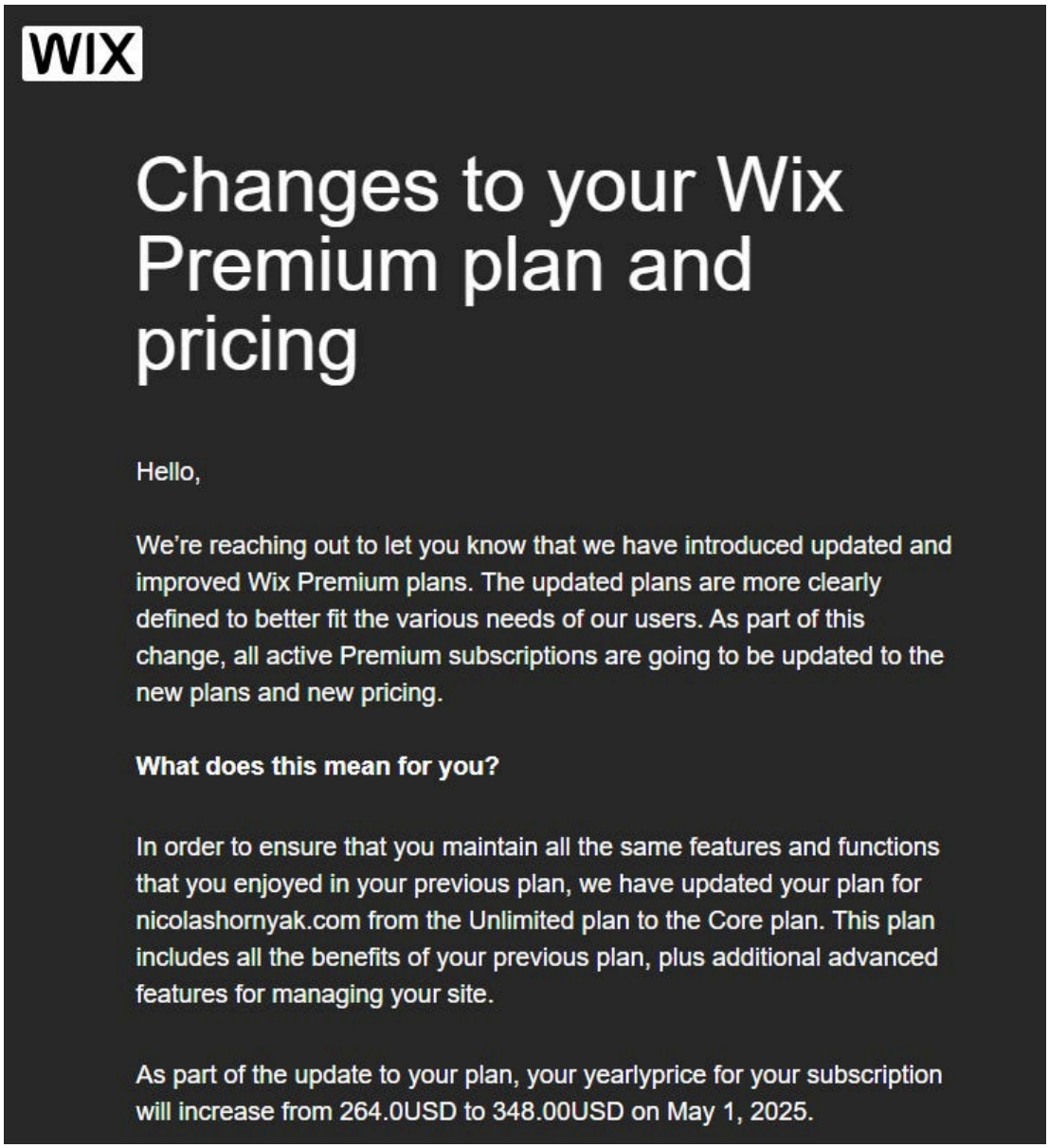



Gasp! Blasting business expenses on main?? The horror!!!

But see, here's the thing. They keep raising the price.

It went up last year, too. Massively. We're talking another hundred bucks annually. But at the time, it was still convenient for me to pay that price for their Unlimited plan for the next 12 months. I also know businesses raise their prices every year. So let's say that $264 (about $22 a month) still had clear value to me, but I was probably entering the market.

Two months ago, they emailed this *gem:*




You don't need to read the rest of the email. It's all corporate lingo.

TL;DR I was somehow getting *downgraded* from the "Unlimited" plan to some bullshit "Core" plan. I didn't even bother comparing features after I read that the other tiers were "Business" and "Business Elite."

And then the *audacity* to be told that I'm going to pony up an extra $100 bucks a year?

Instant loss of trust.

I immediately checked the auto-renewal, and imagine my pleasant surprise when I saw that I put it on a credit card that I got rid of in 2024. No need to change that.

Y'all, I got upcharged AND downgraded. And they're going to keep raising the prices.

Sorry, not sorry, I already get the rent raised every year.

Sorry, not sorry, my car insurance and parking space fees are always going up.

Sorry, not sorry, the freaking *grocery prices* are skyrocketing.

You know it. I know it.

They keep raising the prices.

They call it inflation, we get that under control, and they never pull the prices back until it's all in the shitter.

And quite frankly, everybody wants in on that. Expecting our rampant consumption habits to eat those prices like the good little Americans we are.

But foundationally? It's not working for me.

Minimum wage is stagnating. Inflation is ruining the value of our paychecks.

Oh, and they keep raising the prices.

Wix, you're totally not reading this blog, but this payment problem you keep sending emails about? Not an accident. It's an old credit card that I

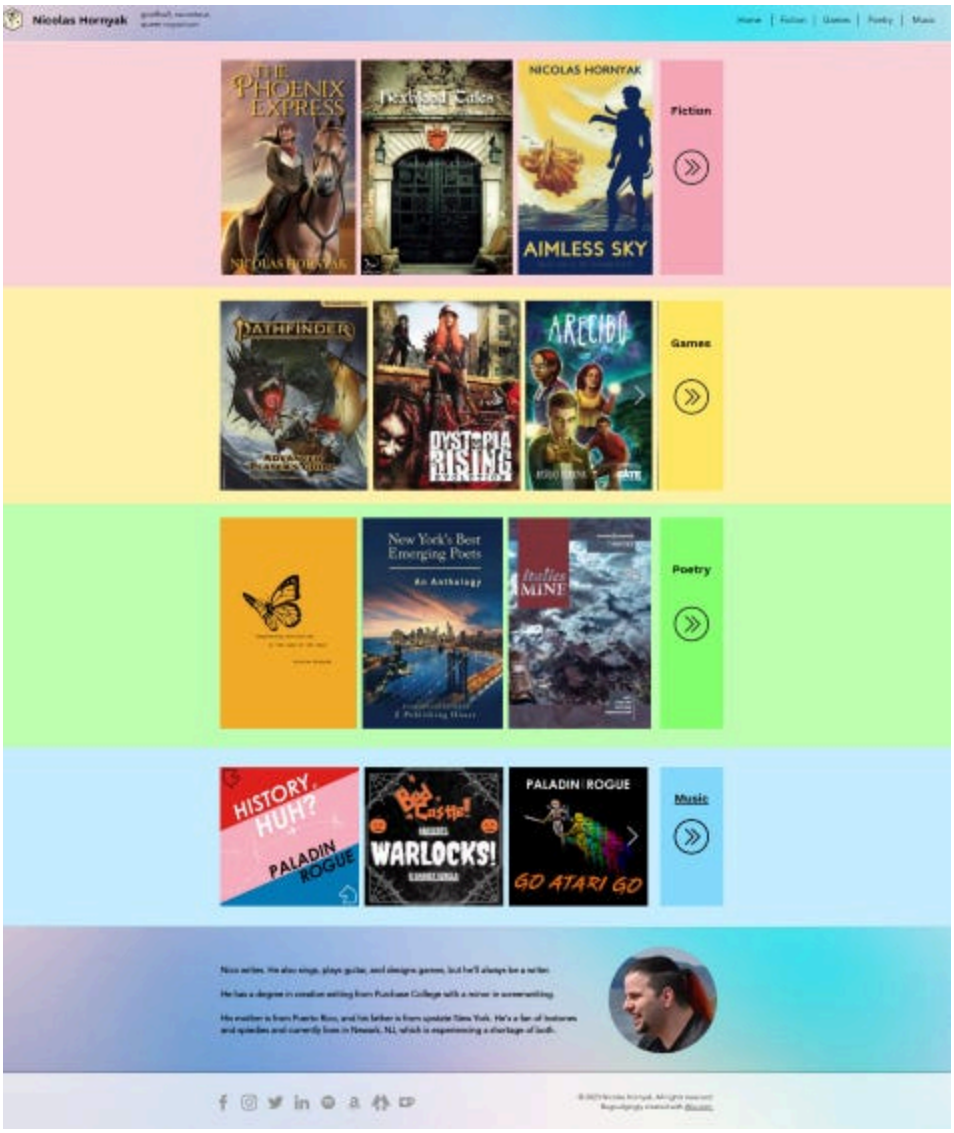
canceled, and I have no plans to update it.

Deal with it.

And as for you, dear reader, let me share how I spent a Saturday watching movies with friends while plucking away at an old laptop. Because this site is *better*.

## How to Build A Website for Under $100 A Year

My previous website was okay. *However*, it wasn't an effective "author" or "artist" site. It leaned into the color palette for a long dormant larp idea (*Cortesía,* which briefly became *Danger and Love in the Air* before I shelved it) and would've compounded nicely with the theming for *Human Hawke*, if I'd gotten around to publishing that before writing *Whiskey Dogs.*




Part of this project included the optional step of recording my old website for posterity and reference. Long Live the Aurora Site!

The problem was that it wanted to be everything. It was trying to act as my creative resume, so you dropped by nicolashornyak.com and got a sense of everything I'd ever done. And you could drill down into my journey through each of these mediums as well.

There were a couple of problems with this approach. One, it had no clear sense of "what's Nico up to right now?" and "what's the latest?"

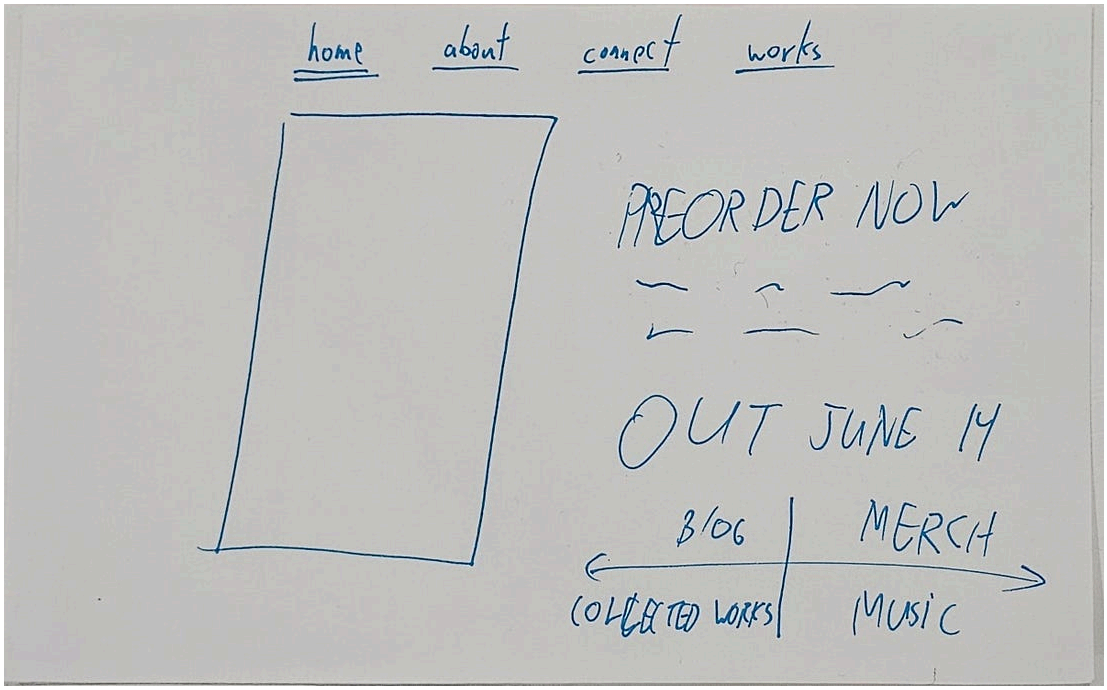
Two: nobody cared.

I'll be the first to admit it: if somebody cared *just enough* to plug my name into their browser and land on my website, they weren't going any further. It's bold, yes, but it's a bunch of cover art. And people tune out artists talking about their art as much as they tune out homeless people on the street. Ergo, nobody cared.

## Inspiration and Prototyping

Not a lot of people know this, but I was the very first person to complete the Google UX Design Certificate offered by Grow With Google, by virtue of being in the beta test while I was still working part-time. Spoiler alert: I did not end up in UX Design, which is sort of tragic. Then again, the field overpromises the availability of UX jobs, UI jobs, etc., and then compounds that with "senior" positions as far as the eye can see.

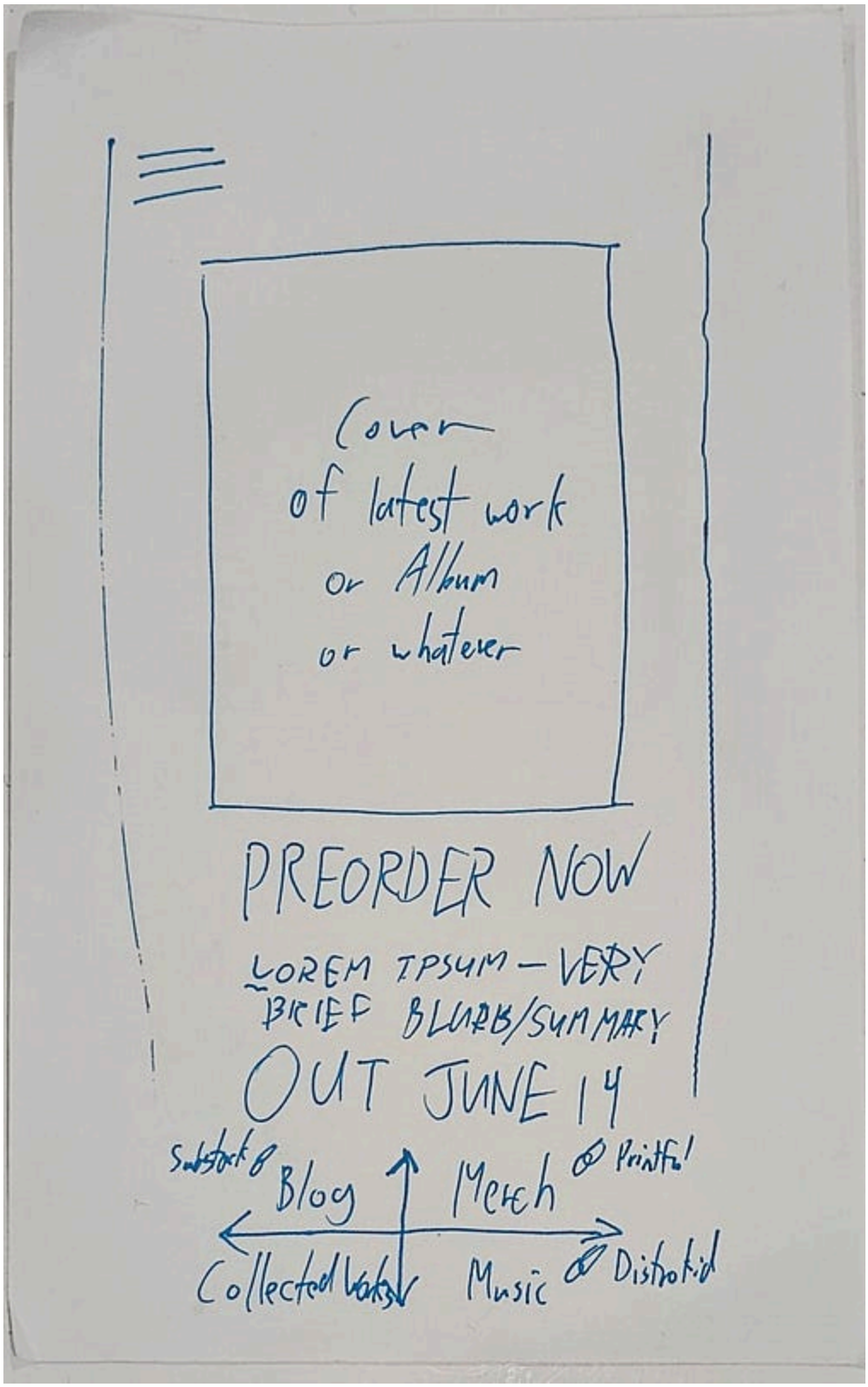
It did teach me the value of prototyping, though. So I sketched some rough ideas of what I wanted the new website to do.




Prototype thinking about computers.

At the core, I wanted it to say, "This is the latest! I am promoting this! Go preorder! Go buy!" I also didn't want it to be crowded or end up with too many pages to manage on the side directly. Ideally, you can also change the background and the font color without difficulty, so that when *Whiskey Dogs* is in the rearview mirror, and (tentatively) *Human Hawke* is up to bat, the site can match those color palettes far more easily.

Of course, I drew this, scanned it on my phone, then remembered that as much as my job and hobbies want me to use a monitor, I'm still using my phone the most. And I guess that's true of most of us.




Same as above, but *vertical*. (Phone mode.)

It looks like a Linktree now, but with the links last instead of first?

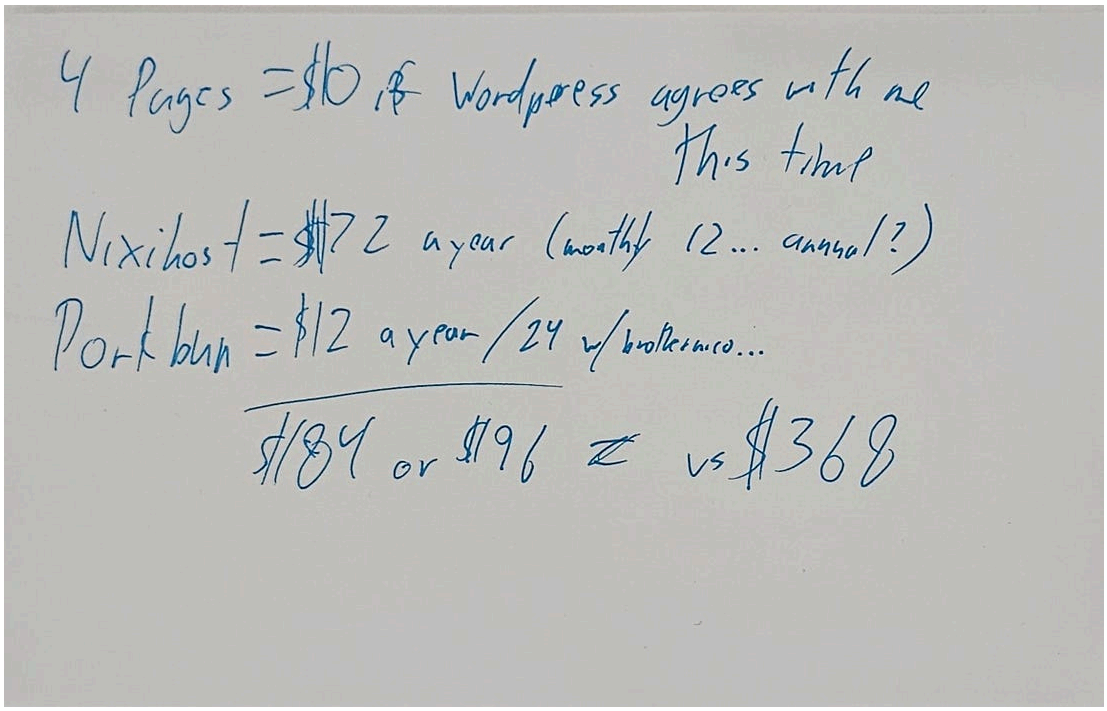
Side note: clean up your Linktree. It's messier than you think.

This prototype also highlighted that juggling separate structures for desktop, tablet, and phone screens wasn't going to fly. But what I call the Compass remained on the right track. It's a set of buttons that lead off-site to where I house my blog (here on Substack), my new merch (Printful), and the latest music I've produced (Distrokid).

How to build this, though? Well, first, I need to host it. Need the custom domain (or two). And then I had to conquer my nemesis: *WordPress*.

It turns out this part was easier than I thought it would be. I buy domains from Porkbun because they're cheap and no-nonsense. And then I host sites on Nixihost because they're cheap, albeit a little barebones on the backend. But it just works.

No lie, here's the math:



Featuring the beautiful blue ink of my rollerball pen and terrible penmanship.

Translation: Porkbun is $12 annually for a domain, but I have bought both nicolashornyak.com and brothernico.com, so I'm paying $24 annually for this part.

Nixihost is $6 monthly for the cheapest plan, but then I uncovered the annual plan, which takes off a dollar a month. That's $60 annually now.

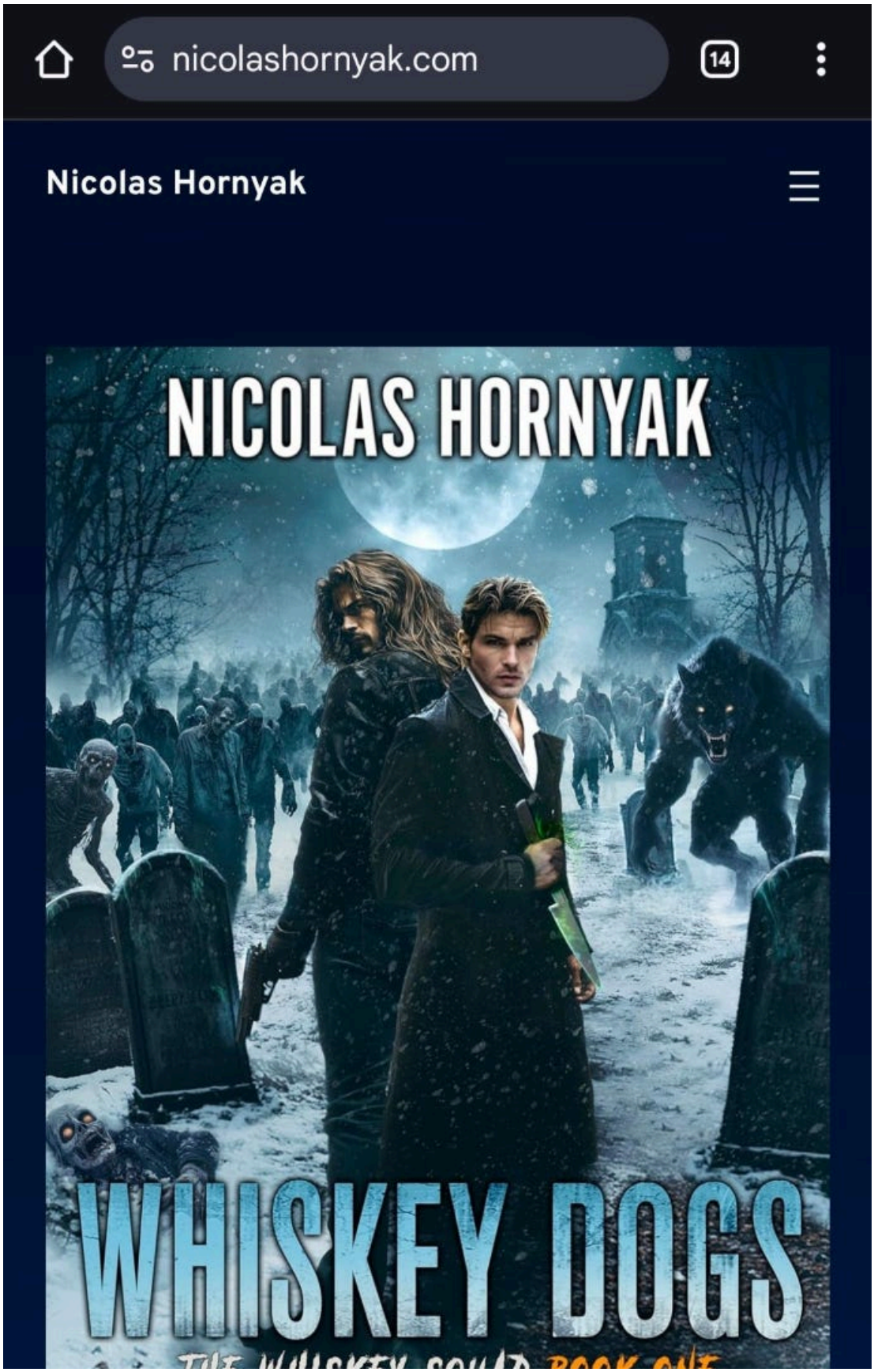
Which leads me to my historic nemesis: *WordPress*.

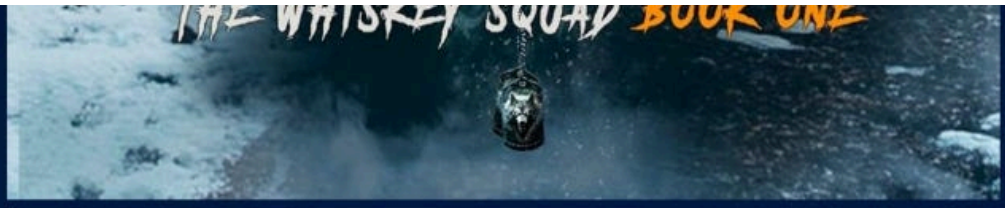
I'd struggled with WordPress before. I said never again.

But WordPress is open-source, and with a hosting solution in hand, I discovered how to install it on my site in Nixihost, and decided to conquer it once and for all.

$0 for WordPress. For a grand total of **$84 per year.**

But what's it look like now? What could that possibly get me, that would compare to a website that would cost me **$348 per year *before* the domain**?


nicolashornyak.com
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Nicolas Hornyak
NICOLAS HORNYAK
WHISKEY DOGS




# OUT JUNE 14

Werewolves of Philadelphia, Unite!

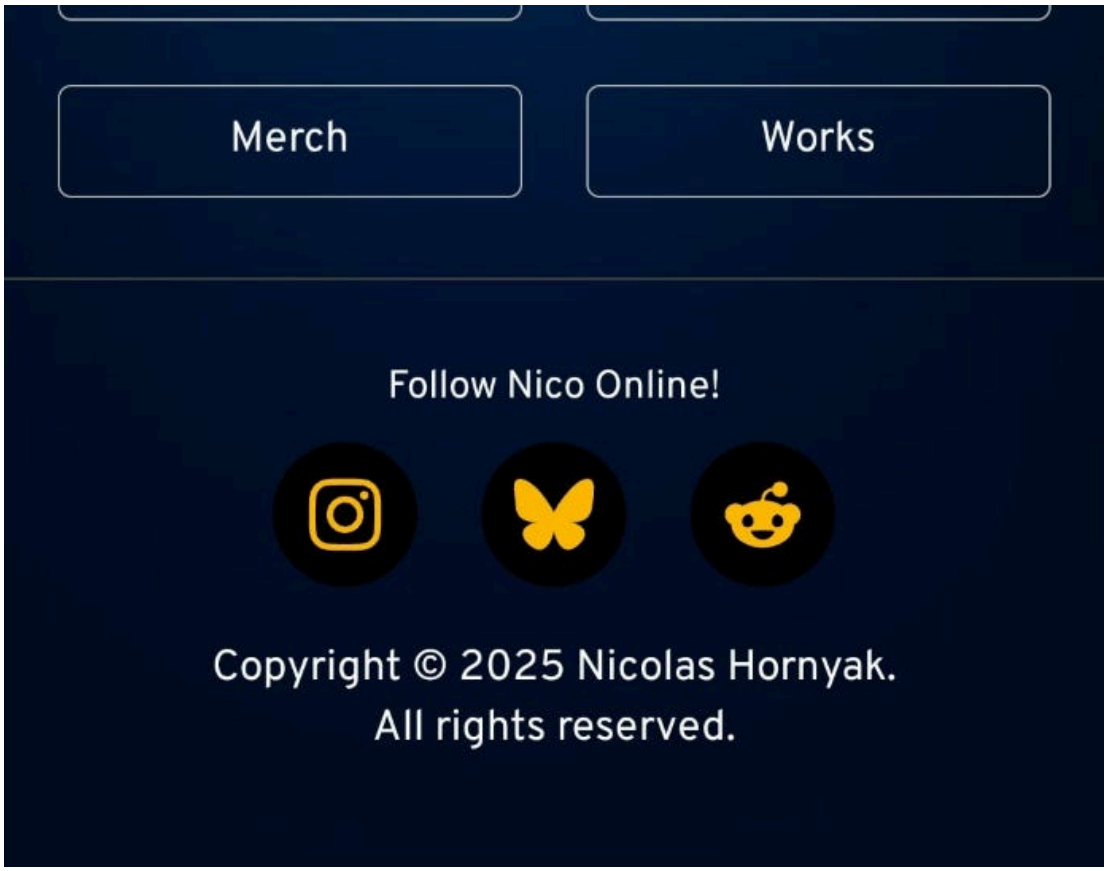
After Winston lands himself on the news for flipping a car, he finds himself in the crosshairs of a kill squad targeting werewolves across Philly. And he hasn't shapeshifted in years.

Enter Manolo, the veteran whiskey who takes him in after his apartment is burned to the ground. But when they suddenly find themselves fighting zombies and investigating ghost sightings, Winston learns that magic is real.

And one dangerous discovery could change everything.

**Preorder Now!**

Blog | Music



Suck it, Wix.

# To Do

*Whiskey Dogs*, the final draft, is **complete.**

In fact, it's been in the hands of a few ARC readers for the past month.

But I want more eyes and more reviews! If you want to get your hands on a copy in exchange for a review, there's a limited number of spots on Booksprout! Go, go, go!

(If I know you personally, though, you can ask me directly. I'd appreciate the review greatly!)

***Whiskey Dogs is out June 14! Preorder here!***




I mentioned in my last blog post that something else was in the works.

Part of it is the new website, from which you could click through to what's actually new: I have ***DOODLE MERCH!***

Started out with a new tablet, ended up with these little doodles that friends wanted stickers of. Well, now they can have stickers, pins, shirts —and so can you!

Writing for the Whiskey Dogs sequel is on pause for now. Will come back around to it once the dust clears on this release. Until then, I'm reading a bunch.

I read *Anne of Green Gables* for the first time (and sobbed like a baby at the end). Long live the public domain!

Now, I'm currently reading *The Weirdness: A Novel* by Jeremy P. Bushnell. I couldn't pass up the cover, and so far, I'm enjoying it. It's this weird blend of modern literary fiction and magical realism that doesn't want to be too fantasy? I'm still deciding if this is a side effect of writing

a book that is weird and has meta commentary on how things like bananas are weird, but it's witty and good fun for me at the moment.

I've decided that *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Diaz will be my next book, as I neglected to read it while in college, even though I was supposed to at one point or another. I think. I thrifted a copy on Mother's Day, so it'll be my first physical read in a while.

Welcome to my interdisciplinary artist era.

No longer overpaying for my website,
Nico