August 2026

I'm calling this the in-between space. My own personal Dusk, if you will.

Life these days is a series of big events and milestones masquerading as their own separate crises.

I went to a last-minute wedding in mid-July.

I released a new book at the start of August.

Then I spent two weeks rehearsing for a music gig, which was in turn to promote a larp that I'm helping run tonight. So I've been planning that game for the last two weeks.

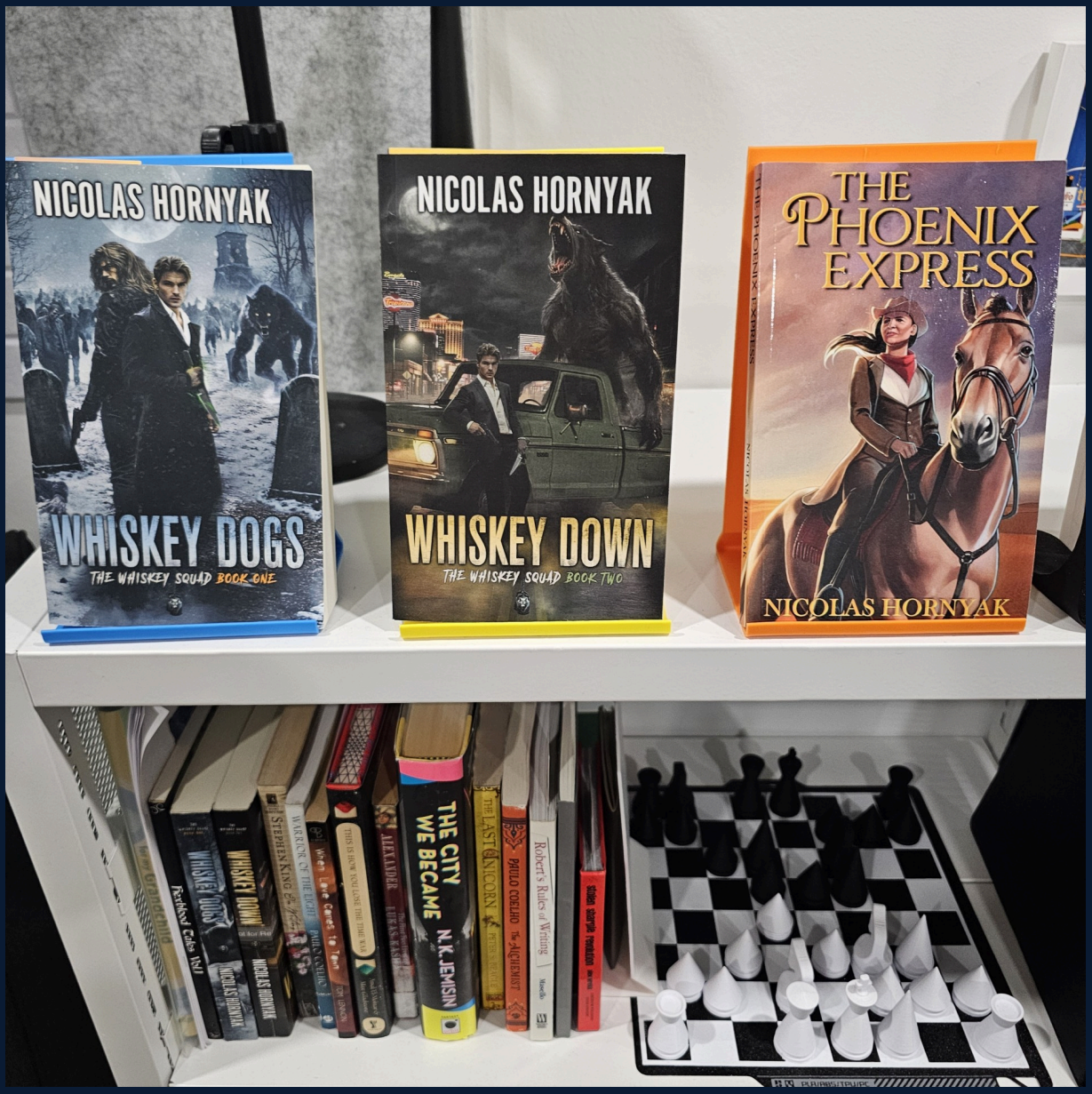
Come Labor Day weekend, I'm back on the wedding planning and doing our tasting. Two weeks after that, my sister's birthday. I imagine we may try to squeeze in another larp, even though I know that a monthly event will wreck me if we keep doing it when quota is due at work.

Two weeks after that, I pay the final vendors. Another two weeks pass, I get married. I go on honeymoon.

Then what?

Things are already trying to plop themselves on my calendar in November. I am vaguely aware of my birthday that month. But honestly? That's when life gets a much-deserved reset. Something is changing. Something wants to give.

But I'll be back to writing every day, that's for sure.



My books, my bookshelf, and one of my chess sets.

Boring business stuff

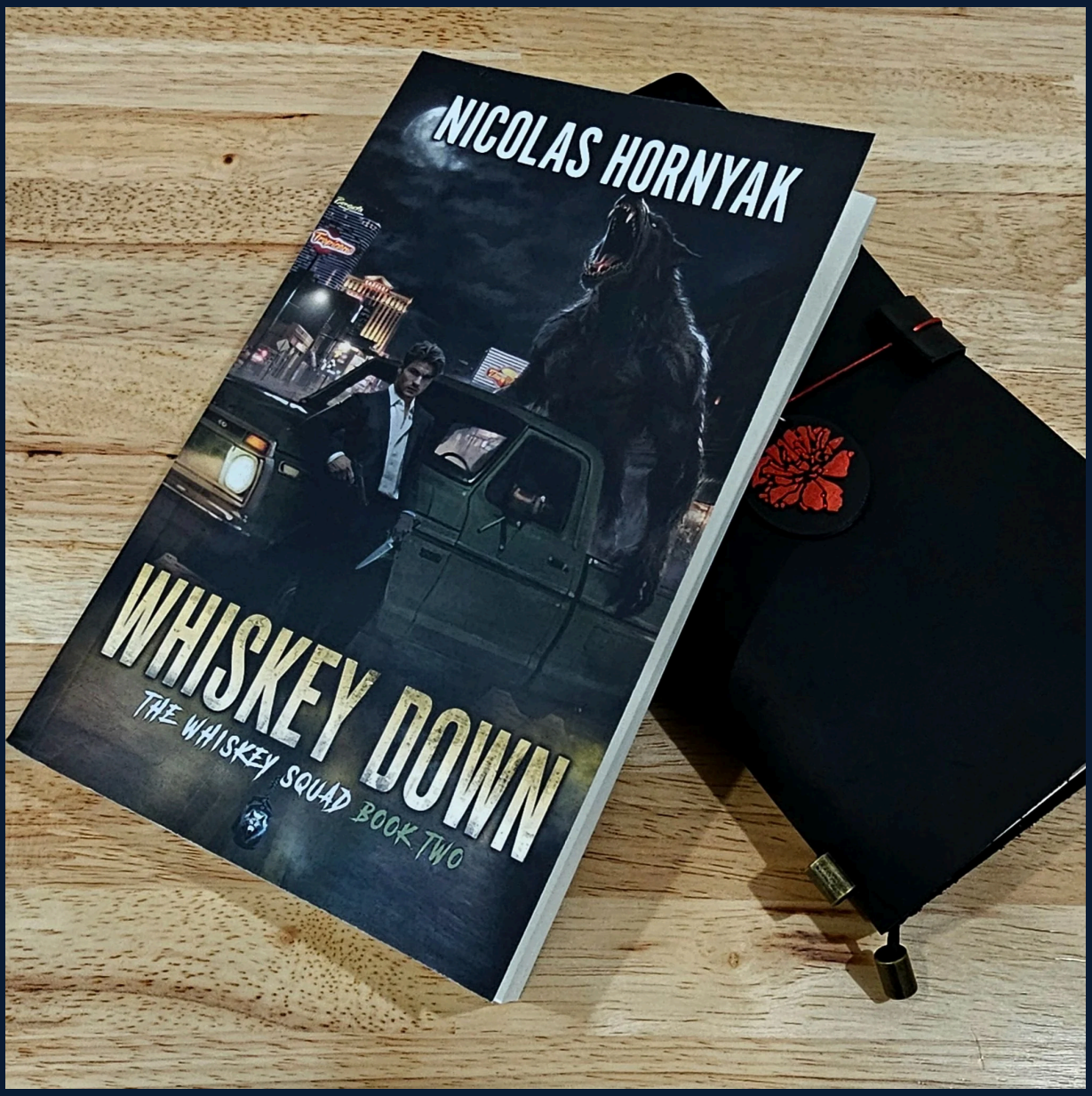
I don't know where else to put this, but this month, I've also been executing my first ad campaign. The results have been, tentatively speaking, good. The intent has been to resurface *Whiskey Dogs*, so that new readers pick up *Whiskey Down* in turn.

We've had dozens of readers, both checking it out on Kindle Unlimited or purchasing their own e-books. The royalties *greatly outpaced* ad spend for the first three weeks, then there was some odd pricing shift I couldn't stay on top of, so that gap narrowed. But it's very satisfying to watch it happen, and I'll be taking a new crack at it in September.

Read-through could be better. We're hovering around 30-40%, I think. A solid read-through rate is 50-60%. Urban fantasy trends higher than that.

But I haven't looked deeper into either my own data or how traditional vs indie publishing compares in this rate. The 30% is also an estimate based on book purchases; it could be a lot higher with Kindle Unlimited factored in.

All this to say: I'm pleased, but the experiments continue!



Reusing this picture because I'm lazy and don't have time to take a new one.

Updates

Whiskey Down is OUT NOW! If you've already read it, please consider leaving a review as a show of support. They're more important for indie authors than ever before!

I continue to diet and exercise. Personal goals. Not swimming every day, but most days. I'm down about 20 pounds.

Tonight, I will be running a D&D larp, *The Dread Ball: Preludes* out in Astoria, Queens. You'll probably get this email around game start, actually.

It is slow on updates this time of year though. I am heavy on daydreams.

I think the last page of Whiskey Down says the third book will be called *Whiskey Dawn.* In my head, I'm already contemplating the name *American Whiskey* as a possible fourth book title. Take with that what you will.



My friend's book, and the ITEINK X4 I'm using for ebooks.
3D printed case is my own design.

Recommendations

I've put down *Soul Music* by Terry Pratchett. I don't think there's anything wrong with it, but it's not keeping my attention, and I picked up some other books along the way instead.

Working on a Song by Anaïs Mitchell is one of those books. Following the return of my hyperfocus on Hadestown, I gave this a read. There's a lot of little stories about how lyrics came to be, what lyrics left along the way, and the different productions of the show before Broadway. I found it interesting at first, but then felt like it was more lyrics than insight. This is probably part of the reason why I failed Theatre History in college.

(analog) Cruising by Leo Herrera caught my eye next as a queer individual. WARNING: This book is extremely spicy. Read with caution. I love how it reads as both vignettes and memoirs. It's given me some thoughts on Winston's character history, but either way, I devoured this book in one sitting.

I am currently reading Check Engine by Kate Gomes. Kate is a friend of mine through my fiance, and shortly before release, she approached me for my thoughts on indie publishing strategies. I was chuffed to say the least, but also extremely compelled by the concept of this creative nonfiction piece. I am taking my time with it, but so far, I really like it.

On the music front: the new Phoebe Bridgers album, *Lost Weekend,* dropped. It's fantastic. Easily my favorite work of hers yet. A fan of mine came to me and said the first song, "The Outside" reminded me of Winston, and honestly, I can see it. But the whole album is amazing. Go check it out.

"23" by Lime Garden bopped into my life and throttled my playlist. Especially the lyric "At 23 I had the world in my hands / And at 24 I just lost it" - honestly both tragic and hilarious.

There is another *birds for some reason* video I'm obsessed with.

And a friend of mine said "Honey Boy (feat. Nile Rodgers & Shenseea" by Purple Disco Machine & Benjamin Ingrosso reminded her of me. Another bop for the playlist.

Future's coming on,
~ Nico

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