Better Than One

By Aaron Riccio and George Ho

¹I	█	²K	█	³A	█	⁴N	█	⁵A	█	█	⁶H	█	⁷P
⁸G	R	E	A	T	M	I	N	D	S	█	⁹B	E	T	A
U	█	L	█	T	█	N	█	O	█	¹⁰N	█	A	█	S
¹¹A	M	P	L	E	█	¹²T	O	P	S	E	C	R	E	T
N	█	█	█	N	█	E	█	T	█	V	█	T	█	I
¹³A	C	¹⁴C	I	D	E	N	T	S	█	¹⁵A	Z	T	E	C
█	█	A	█	█	█	D	█	█	█	D	█	H	█	H
¹⁶A	G	R	E	¹⁷E	T	O	D	¹⁸I	S	A	G	R	E	E
L	█	T	█	N	█	█	█	N	█	█	█	O	█	█
¹⁹T	A	R	O	T	█	²⁰E	X	C	A	L	I	B	U	²²R
R	█	I	█	I	█	X	█	I	█	O	█	█	█	A
²³U	N	D	E	R	G	R	A	D	█	²⁴O	P	²⁵T	I	C
I	█	G	█	E	█	T	█	E	█	F	█	W	█	K
²⁶S	T	E	M	█	²⁷T	H	I	N	K	A	L	I	K	E
M	█	S	█	█	█	Y	█	T	█	H	█	N	█	T

Across

8, 27 In the dark, smile at king after some serious banging - both of us came to the same conclusion (5,5,5,5) **GREAT MINDS THINK ALIKE.** (IN THE DARK SMILE AT KING)*

9 Stake a prototype version (4) **BETA.** BET + A

11 Liberal representative loses Massachusetts's 9th (5) **AMPLE.** [s]AMPLE

12 Extremely sensitive with respect to rent (3,6) **TOP SECRET.** (RESPECT TO)*

13 Stresses about documentation errors, maybe (9) **ACCIDENTS.** ACC(ID)ENTS

15 Sounding like IT support specialist is someone who may have made sacrifices? (5) **AZTEC.** "as tech"

16 Tear George's idea to pieces - that's one way to end an argument (5,2,8) **AGREE TO DISAGREE.** (TEAR GEORGES IDEA)*

19 Some card sharp, winning nothing (5) **TAROT.** TAR(O)T

20 Legendary brand of Tex-Mex/Cali burrito filling (9) **EXCALIBUR.** tex-m**EX CALI BUR**rito

23 Two foreign articles by good, cool college student (9) **UNDERGRAD.** UN + DER + G + RAD

24 Symbolized by the eye in defaced Egyptian language (5) **OPTIC.** [c]OPTIC

26 Hold back support (4) **STEM.** Double definition

27 See 8a

Down

1 Iowa captures tailless, batshit reptile (6) **IGUANA.** I(GUAN[o])A

2 Something clogging snorkel, perhaps! (4) **KELP.** snor**KEL P**erhaps (&lit)

3 Take heed at the beginning of the end (6) **ATTEND.** AT + T[he] + END

4 Japanese company has no plan on the inside (8) **NINTENDO.** N(INTEND)O

5 Takes up physical training amid troubles (6) **ADOPTS.** ADO(PT)S

6 Dreamboat to take off following trace of tryst found in home (10) **HEARTTHROB.** T[ryst] inserted in HEARTH + ROB

7 "Mixed up patches" may describe one! (8) **PASTICHE.** (PATCHES)* containing I (&lit)

10 Dave turning around somewhere in North American state (6) **NEVADA.** N(DAVE)

14 Loads truck and drives, after adding a bit of gas (10) **CARTRIDGES.** CART + RID(G)ES

16 Selflessness of key RuPaul quote? (8) **ALTRUISM.** ALT + RUISM

17 Doctor fired after disrobing - gross (6) **ENTIRE.** ENT + [f]IRE[d]

18 Event tab is around $101 (8) **INCIDENT.** IN(CI)DENT

20 Crude shortage after failing to start refinery on the eastern border (6) **EARTHY.** [d]EARTH + [refiner]Y

21 Ha! Ass-backward scrub (6) **LOOFAH.** (HA + FOOL)<

22 Rackenfracker's first five themers beginning to make noise (6) **RACKET.** RACKE[nfracker] + T[hemelesses]

25 Cancel last of cable in duplex (4) **TWIN.** TWIN[e]