

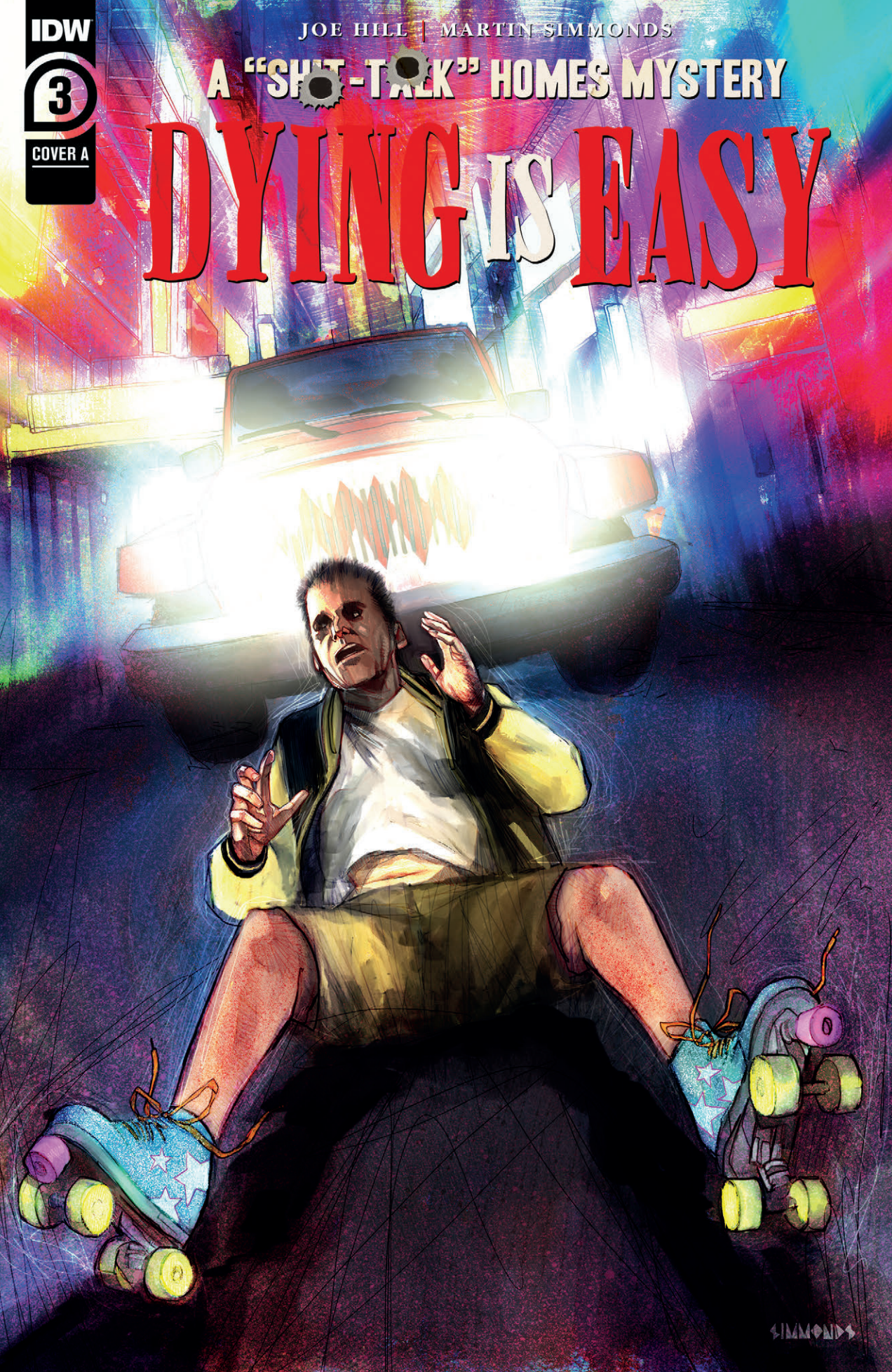
IDW

JOE HILL | MARTIN SIMMONDS

A "SHIT-TALK" HOMES MYSTERY

DYING IS EASY

3
COVER A



SIMMONDS



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BALLBUSTER VIDEO

HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE ME FEEL BAD ABOUT THIS?



I DON'T KNOW. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN CLOSING YOUR EYES AND PRETENDING I'M ALAN RICKMAN WHEN WE HAVE SEX?

BABY. HONEY. YOU KNOW I GET TURNED ON BY EVIL MASTERMINDS.

WHY DO YOU THINK I MARRIED YOU? YOU DO THE CROSSWORD EVERY MORNING, YOU SPEAK FLAWLESS GERMAN, AND YOU DO TERRIBLE THINGS TO INNOCENT PEOPLE EVERY DAY.

YOU THINK I *WANTED* TO WORK AT THE DMV? I WANTED TO PAINT.

I KNOW YOU DID. EVERY EVIL MASTERMIND WANTED TO BE AN ARTIST BEFORE THEY TURNED TO A LIFE OF CRIME.

ARE YOU STILL PISSED AT ME, DARLING?

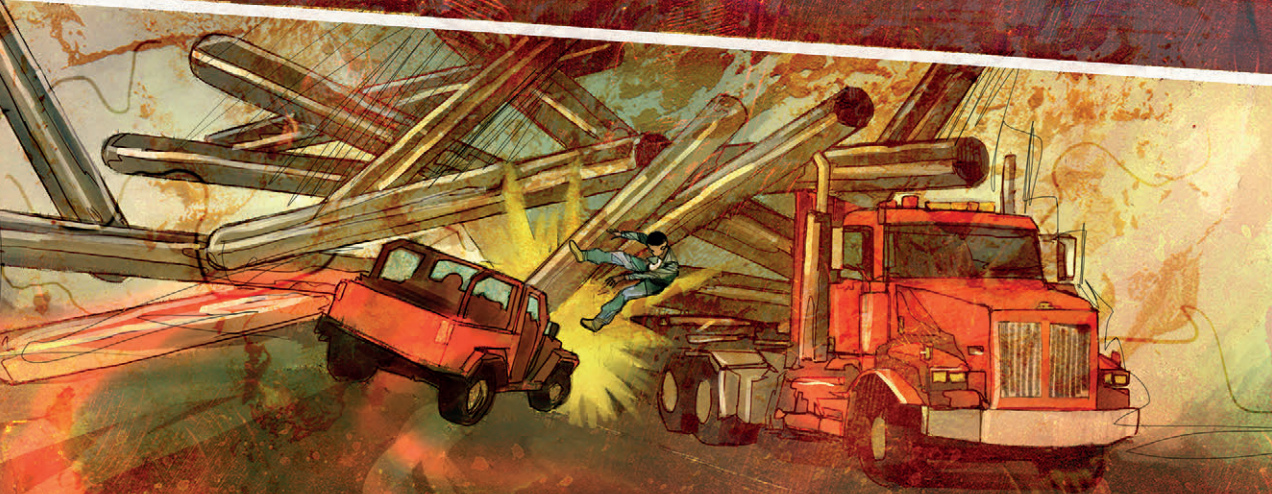
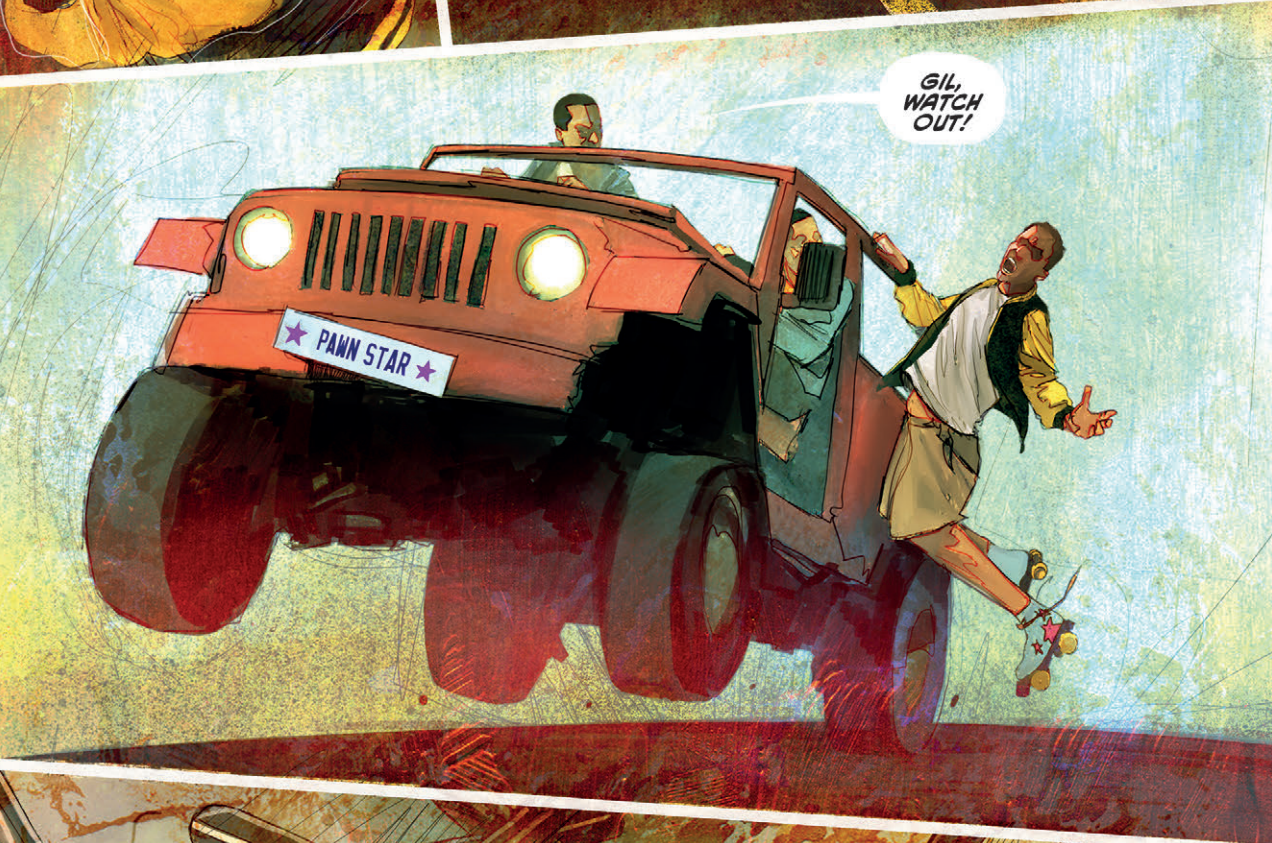
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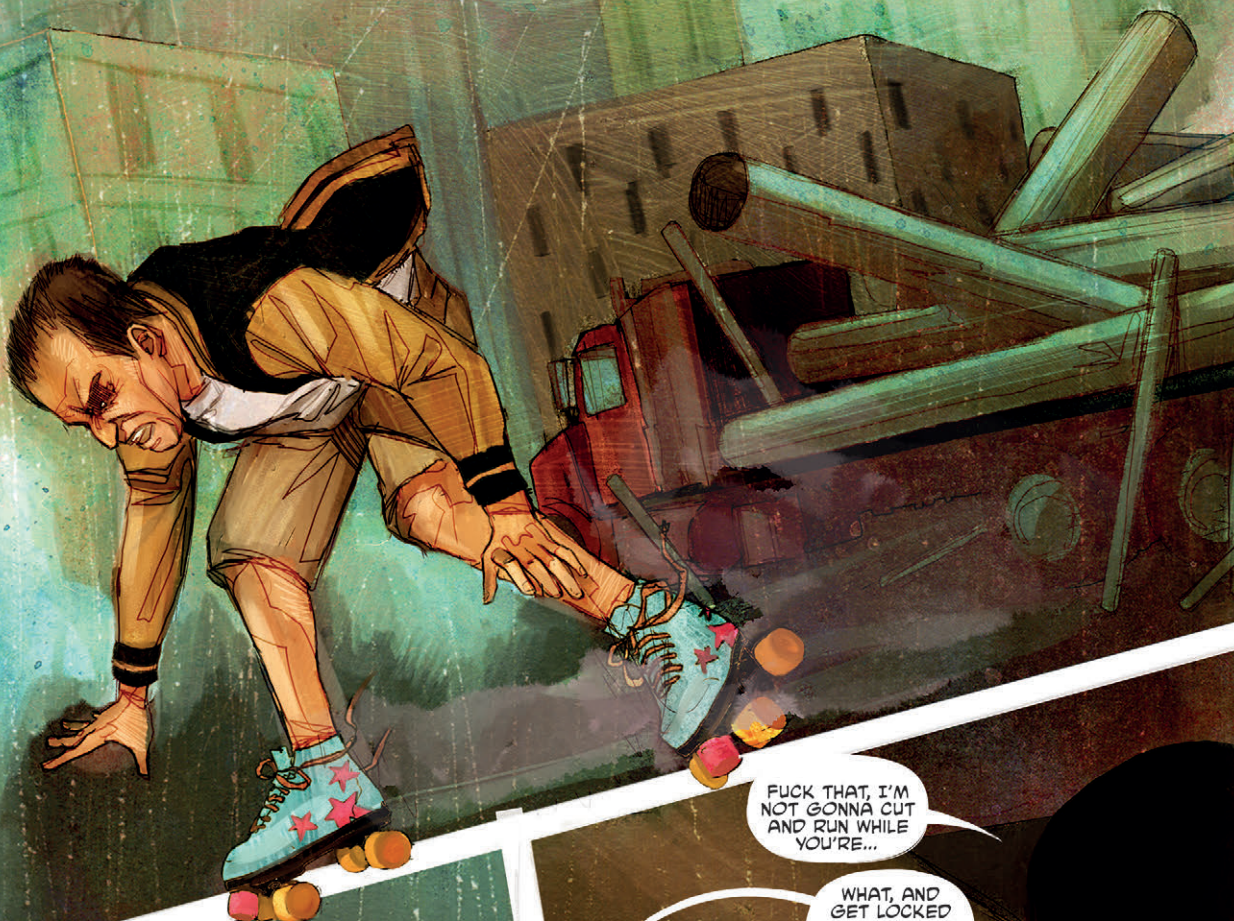
SO CAN WE RENT *ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES*?

WHY NOT? IF I GET LUCKY, MAYBE I'LL DIE BEFORE WE HAVE TO WATCH IT.

DARLING, WATCH OUT!







FUCK THAT, I'M NOT GONNA CUT AND RUN WHILE YOU'RE...

GIL?

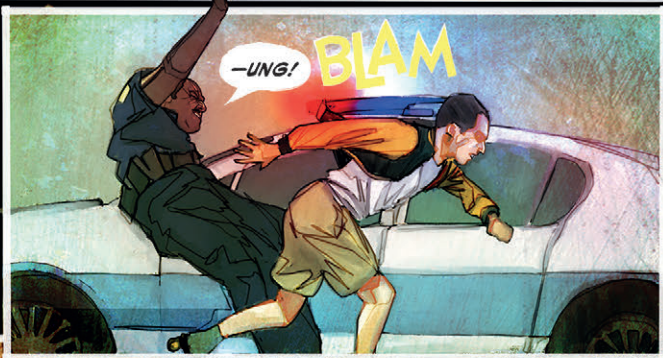


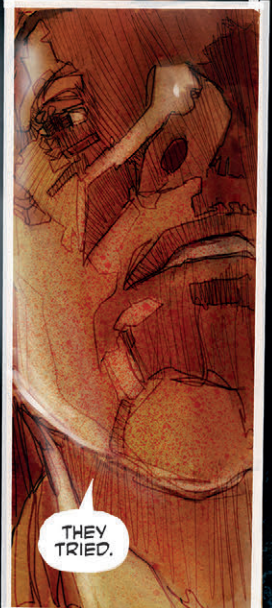
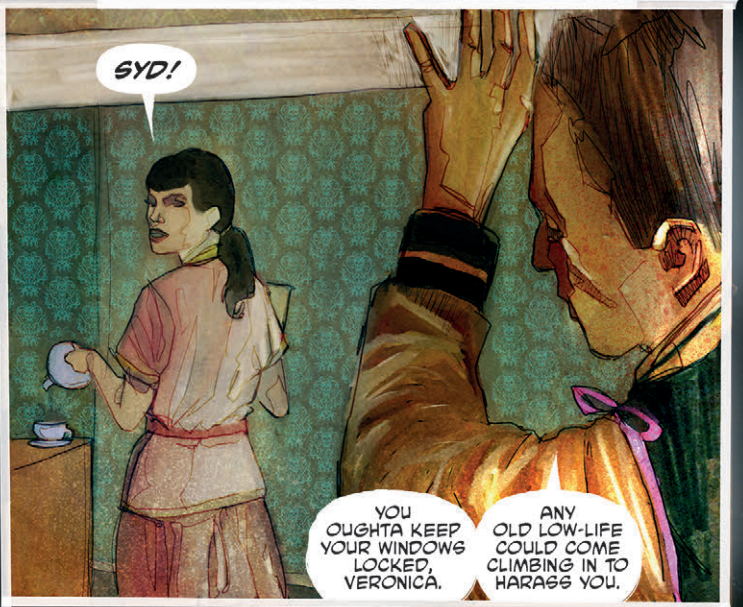
I'M FINE! TAKE OFF.

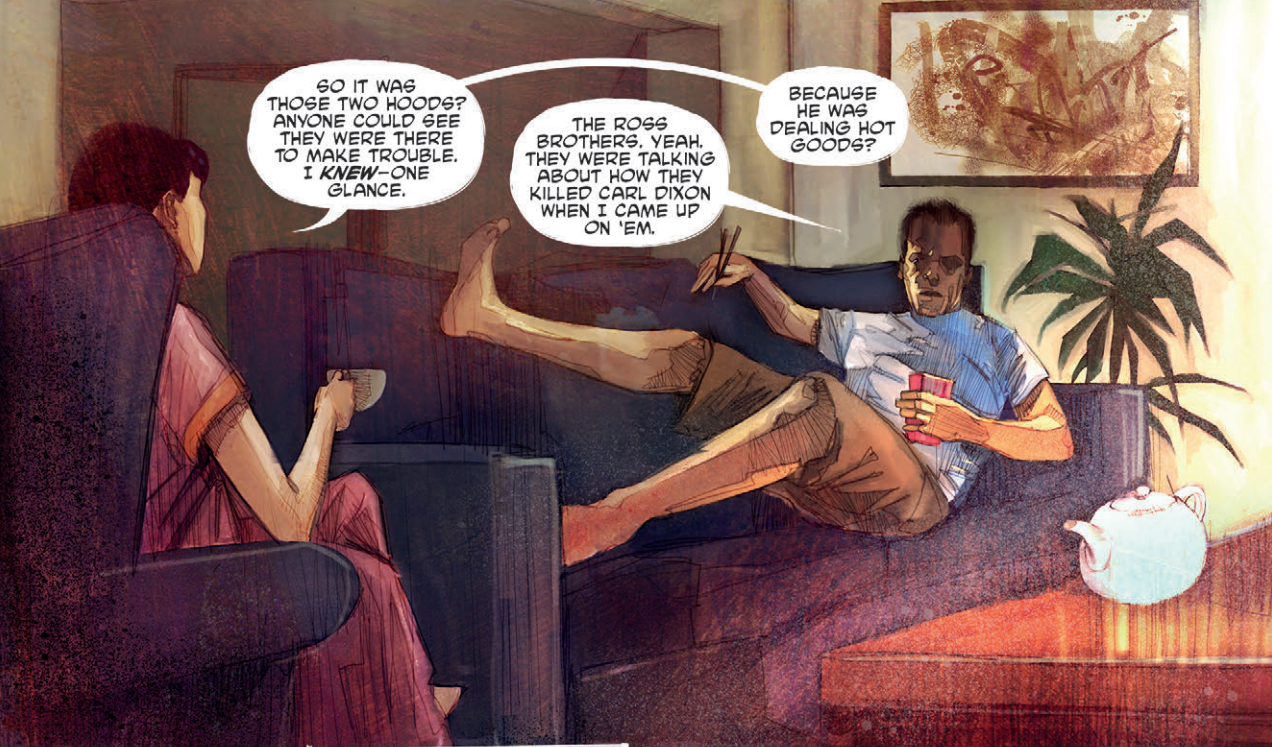


WHAT, AND GET LOCKED UP WITH ME? WHERE'S THE SENSE IN THAT?

GET YOUR DUMB ASS OUT OF HERE!







SO IT WAS THOSE TWO HOODS? ANYONE COULD SEE THEY WERE THERE TO MAKE TROUBLE. I *KNEW*—ONE GLANCE.

THE ROSS BROTHERS. YEAH. THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT HOW THEY KILLED CARL DIXON WHEN I CAME UP ON 'EM.

BECAUSE HE WAS DEALING HOT GOODS?



THAT'S ABOUT THE SHAPE OF IT. HE WASN'T JUST A JOKE THIEF.

HE WAS SNATCHING STUFF FROM AROUND THE CLUB AND CASHING IT IN OVER AT ROSS.

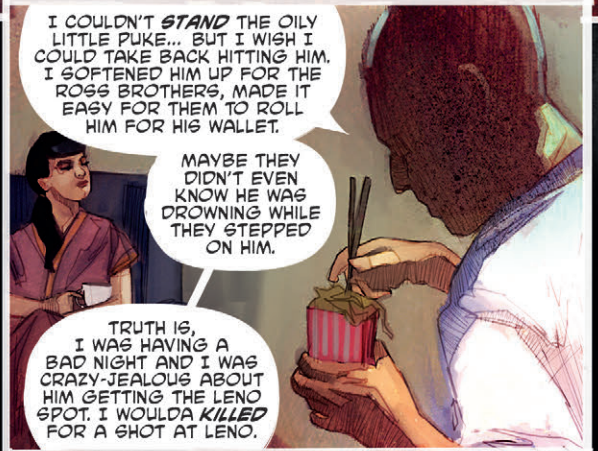
I WANTED TO HAVE A LOOK AT WHAT HE PAWNED BUT NEVER GOT AROUND TO IT.



IT MAKES ME SICK, SYD. THAT HE COULD TREAT PEOPLE THAT WAY.

I THOUGHT CARL WAS A NICE GUY, MYSELF. HE ALWAYS MADE ME LAUGH.

GUY MAKES YOU SMILE THAT WAY, YOU CAN'T IMAGINE HOW HE'S USING PEOPLE. THAT HE STEALS AND CHEATS.



I COULDN'T *STAND* THE OILY LITTLE PUKE... BUT I WISH I COULD TAKE BACK HITTING HIM. I SOFTENED HIM UP FOR THE ROSS BROTHERS, MADE IT EASY FOR THEM TO ROLL HIM FOR HIS WALLET.

MAYBE THEY DIDN'T EVEN KNOW HE WAS DROWNING WHILE THEY STEPPED ON HIM.

TRUTH IS, I WAS HAVING A BAD NIGHT AND I WAS CRAZY-JEALOUS ABOUT HIM GETTING THE LENO SPOT. I WOULD'VE *KILLED* FOR A SHOT AT LENO.



PEOPLE THOUGHT MAYBE YOU HAD!

BUT CARL NEVER WOULD'VE BEEN A BIG STAR. NOT REALLY. S'LIKE THAT SPANISH PROVERB: "BAD ARTISTS COPY, GOOD ARTISTS STEAL."

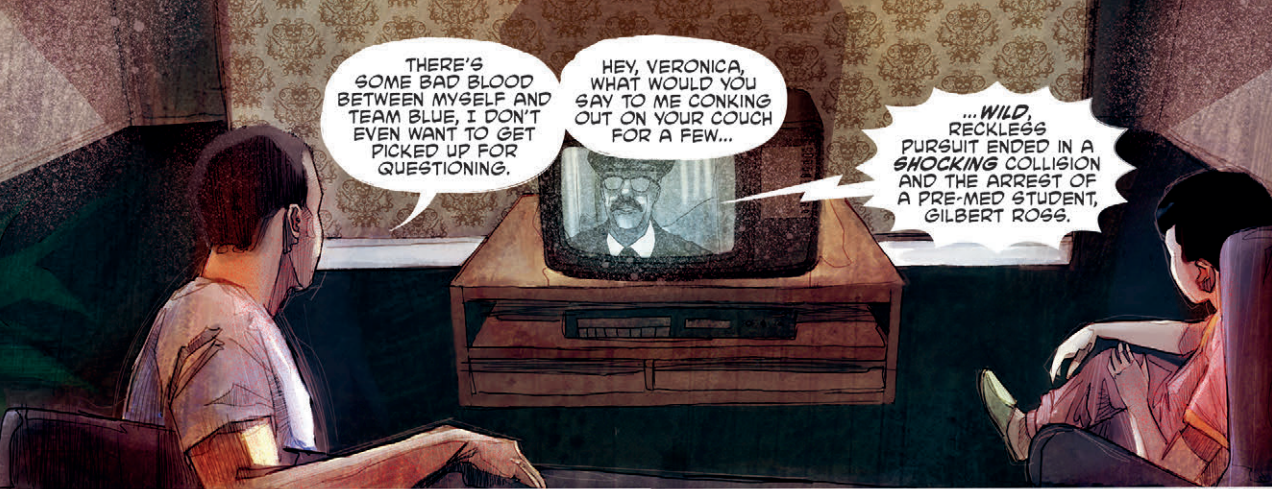
HE WAS A COPYCAT. COPYCATS DON'T GO FAR.



OH, SYD. LOOK AT YOUR FEET!

YEAH. HAD TO LEAVE THE HOUSE IN A HURRY AND KINDA FORGOT TO GRAB MY SHOES. OH—THANKS FOR CALLING TO WARN ME THE COPS WERE ON THE WAY.

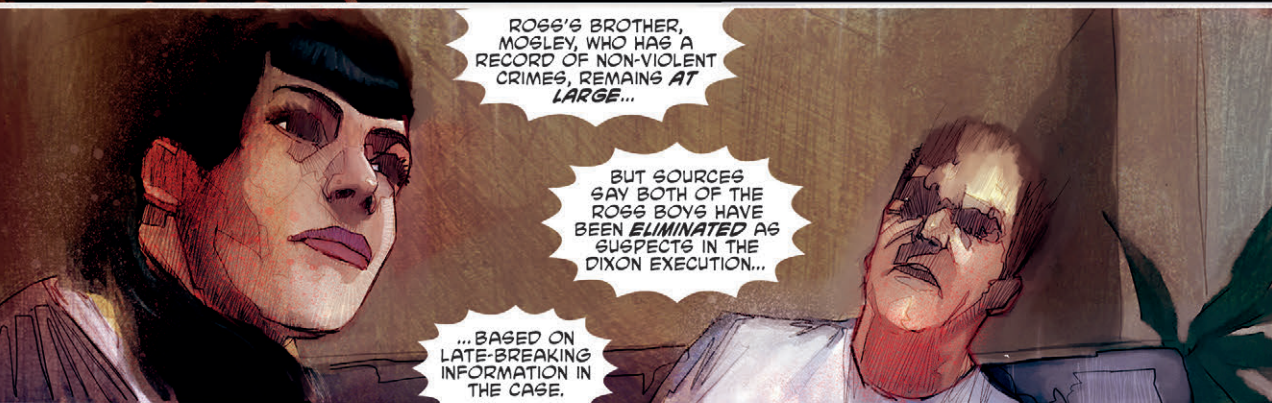
I MIGHT WANT TO GIVE IT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS BEFORE I HEAD BACK. LET THE DUST SETTLE AND WAIT FOR 'EM TO ANNOUNCE THE ARRESTS.



THERE'S SOME BAD BLOOD BETWEEN MYSELF AND TEAM BLUE, I DON'T EVEN WANT TO GET PICKED UP FOR QUESTIONING.

HEY, VERONICA, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO ME CONKING OUT ON YOUR COUCH FOR A FEW...

...WILD, RECKLESS PURSUIT ENDED IN A SHOCKING COLLISION AND THE ARREST OF A PRE-MED STUDENT, GILBERT ROSS.



ROSS'S BROTHER, MOSLEY, WHO HAS A RECORD OF NON-VIOLENT CRIMES, REMAINS AT LARGE...

BUT SOURCES SAY BOTH OF THE ROSS BOYS HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED AS SUSPECTS IN THE DIXON EXECUTION...

...BASED ON LATE-BREAKING INFORMATION IN THE CASE.



WE'VE MET WITH A WITNESS WHO SPOKE TO CARL DIXON ON THE PHONE AFTER HE MET WITH THE ROSS BROTHERS, AND HE WAS VERY MUCH ALIVE.

HER STATEMENT CLEARS BOTH MEN OF CONSIDERATION IN THE DIXON SLAYING, ALTHOUGH WE WILL BRING CHARGES AGAINST THEM FOR GROSS PUBLIC ENDANGERMENT AND POSSIBLY FOR ATTEMPTED VEHICULAR HOMICIDE.

AS WE'VE SAID BEFORE, SYD HOMES HAD A BEEF WITH THE VICTIM, THEY MET IN AN ALLEY, HOMES RE-ENTERED THE CLUB WITH BLOOD ALL OVER HIS HANDS AND BOASTED TO FRIENDS HE HAD JUST KILLED MR. DIXON.

IT'S NOT LIKE IN THE AGATHA CHRISTIE NOVELS, FOLKS. SOMEONE COVERED IN GORE SAYS THEY COMMITTED MURDER, I'M INCLINED TO TAKE THEM AT THEIR WORD.

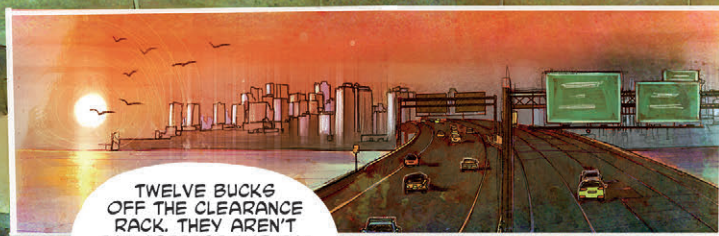


THE FUCK IS LIEUTENANT FLAHERTY TALKING ABOUT? THE ROSS BOYS DID IT. I KNOW WHAT I HEARD.

I HEARD MOSLEY ROSS COP TO IT. DO YOU BELIEVE THIS SHIT? DO YOU EVEN—

OH, SYD. IT'S ALL RIGHT.

WHATEVER YOU DID TO CARL DIXON... IT DOESN'T MATTER TO ME.



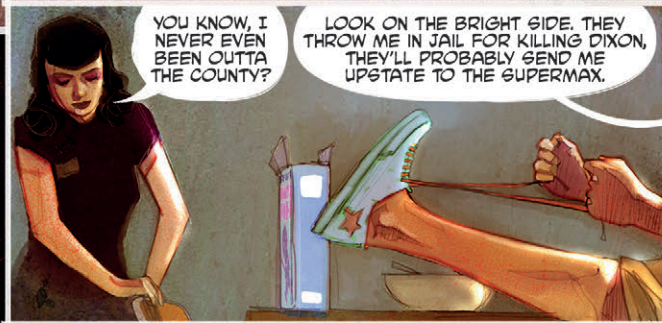
TWELVE BUCKS OFF THE CLEARANCE RACK. THEY AREN'T THE HOTTEST AND THE LATEST, BUT THEY'LL KEEP YOU FROM GETTIN' YOUR BARE FEET CLAWED UP LIKE THE COP IN THAT MOVIE WITH ALAN RICKMAN.

I GOTTA BE HONEST, THAT GUY GETS MY ENGINE GOING. ALAN RICKMAN? MAYBE IT'S THE ENGLISH ACCENT. I ALWAYS WANTED TO GO TO LONDON. I ALWAYS WANTED TO GO ANYWHERE.



YOU KNOW, I NEVER EVEN BEEN OUTTA THE COUNTY?

LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE. THEY THROW ME IN JAIL FOR KILLING DIXON, THEY'LL PROBABLY SEND ME UPSTATE TO THE SUPERMAX.



YOU CAN VISIT ME. IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE REAL PRETTY IN THE FALL WHEN THE LEAVES ARE CHANGING.

IT'LL BE JUST LIKE A VACATION.

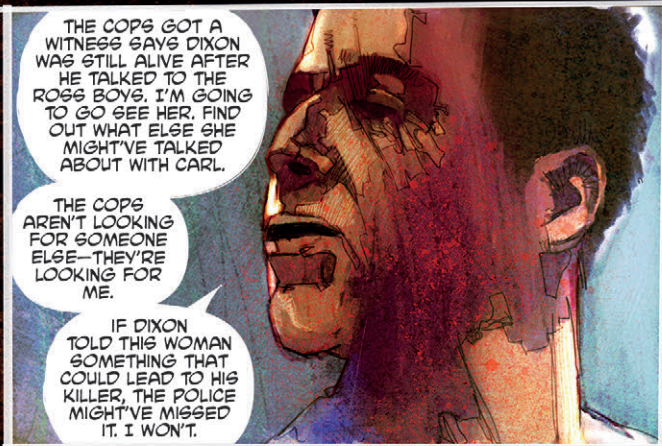
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO, GYD?



THE COPS GOT A WITNESS SAYS DIXON WAS STILL ALIVE AFTER HE TALKED TO THE ROSS BOYS. I'M GOING TO GO SEE HER. FIND OUT WHAT ELSE SHE MIGHT'VE TALKED ABOUT WITH CARL.

THE COPS AREN'T LOOKING FOR SOMEONE ELSE—THEY'RE LOOKING FOR ME.

IF DIXON TOLD THIS WOMAN SOMETHING THAT COULD LEAD TO HIS KILLER, THE POLICE MIGHT'VE MISSED IT. I WON'T.



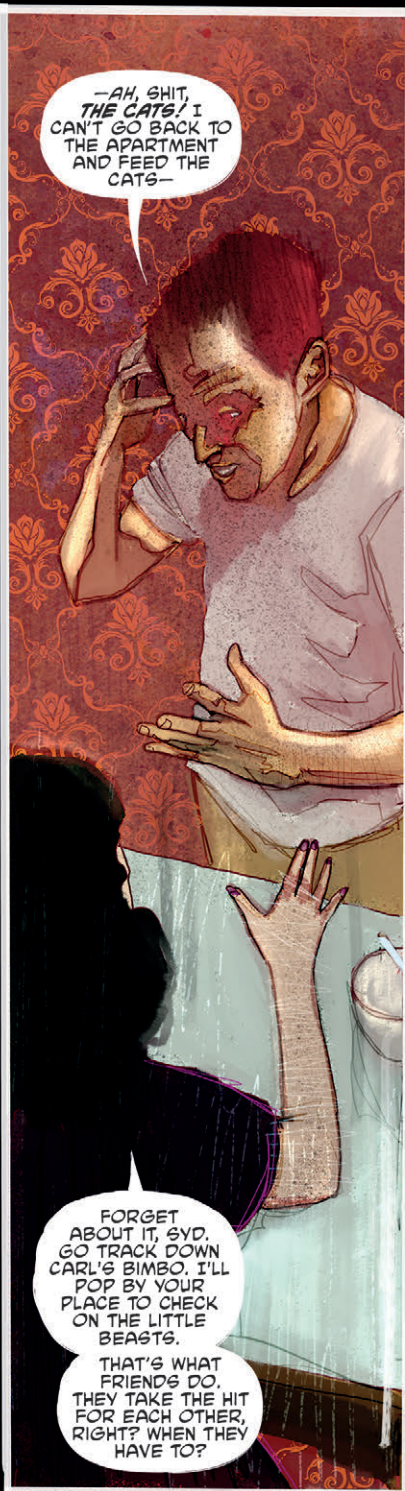
HER... HOW DO YOU KNOW WHO SHE IS?





WHEN LIUTENANT FLAHERTY DID HIS PRESS CONFERENCE, SHE WALKED THROUGH THE SHOT IN THE BACKGROUND. HER NAME'S RENATA GLOVER. SHE WAS DIXON'S LOVER— AND HIS BIG BREAK.

THANKS FOR LETTING ME REST MY HEAD ON YOUR COUCH. I MIGHT NEED IT AGAIN TONIGHT, GOD KNOWS WHEN I'LL GET TO GO—



—AH, SHIT, THE CATS! I CAN'T GO BACK TO THE APARTMENT AND FEED THE CATS—

FORGET ABOUT IT, SVD. GO TRACK DOWN CARL'S BIMBO. I'LL POP BY YOUR PLACE TO CHECK ON THE LITTLE BEASTS.

THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS DO. THEY TAKE THE HIT FOR EACH OTHER, RIGHT? WHEN THEY HAVE TO?



YEAH. YOU'RE A PAL, MS. VERONICA DIEHL.

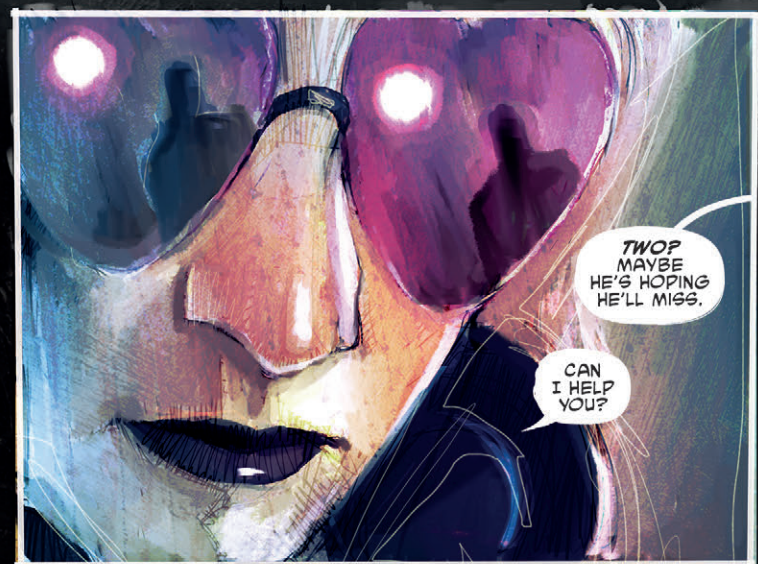
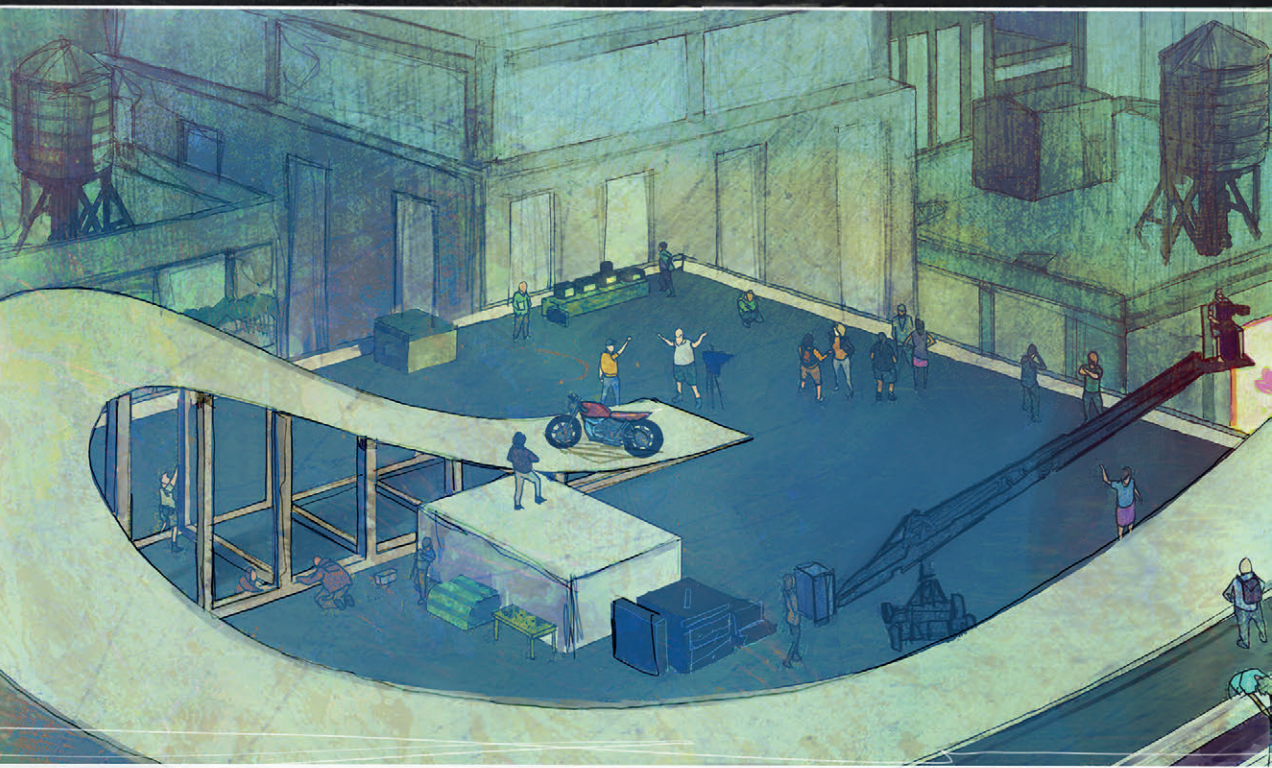
SVD... IF IT WASN'T THEM ROSS KIDS, AND IT WASN'T YOU, I JUST DON'T SEE... I MEAN, WHO ELSE MIGHTA BEEN IN THE CLUB WITH A REASON TO KILL CARL DIXON?



YOU KIDDING ME?

I'M TRYING TO FIGURE OUT IF THERE WAS ANYONE IN THE CLUB WHO DIDN'T WANT TO DROWN HIM IN THE CLOSEST PUDDLE.

MO LARSEN WAS ASKING IF WE COULD PAY SOMEONE TO DO THE JOB. TURNS OUT THAT WAS THE DUMBEST QUESTION OF THE NIGHT—THE PLACE WAS JAMMED WITH FOLKS READY TO DO IT FOR FREE.



TWOP
MAYBE
HE'S HOPING
HE'LL MISS.

CAN
I HELP
YOU?



I'M LOOKING
FOR RENATA
GLOVER. SHE'S
THE PRODUCER
ON THIS THING,
ISN'T SHE?

YEAH. SHE'S
MY MOM. ANY
CHANCE YOU'RE
HERE TO ARREST
HER? I'D LOVE
THAT.



SO... HOW MUCH MONEY CAN A GUY GET, DOING A STUNT LIKE THIS?

JUMPING A MOTORCYCLE FROM ONE ROOF TO THE OTHER, TEN STORIES UP?

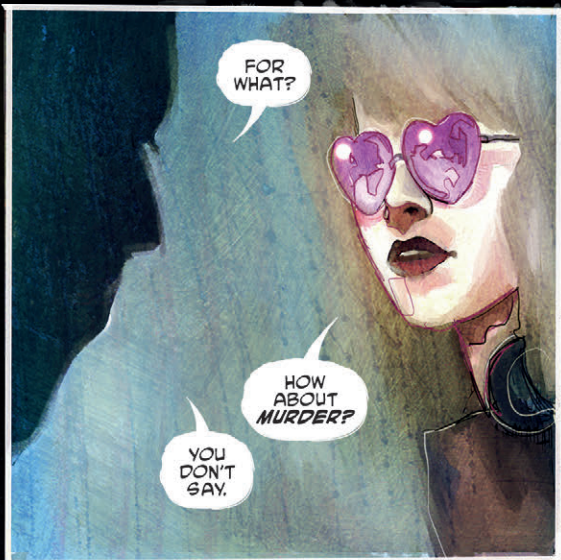
THROUGH A BILLBOARD.



"BIG STUNT LIKE THIS? TEN GRAND. WHY, ARE YOU IN THE JOB MARKET?"

"NOT FOR THIS. TEN GRAND IS NICE, BUT AFTER THE FUNERAL EXPENSES, I'M NOT SURE HOW MUCH WOULD BE LEFT FOR MY DAUGHTERS."

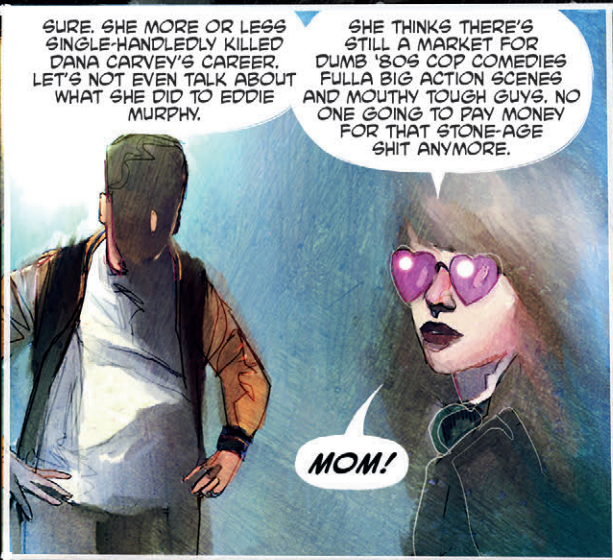
"WELL, IT'S TEN GRAND EACH TIME. I'M SURE OUR GUY IS HOPING FOR MULTIPLE TAKES. HE'S GOT TWO EX-WIVES."



FOR WHAT?

HOW ABOUT MURDER?

YOU DON'T SAY.



SURE. SHE MORE OR LESS SINGLE-HANDLEDLY KILLED DANA CARVEY'S CAREER. LET'S NOT EVEN TALK ABOUT WHAT SHE DID TO EDDIE MURPHY.

SHE THINKS THERE'S STILL A MARKET FOR DUMB '80S COP COMEDIES FULLA BIG ACTION SCENES AND MOUTHY TOUGH GUYS. NO ONE GOING TO PAY MONEY FOR THAT STONE-AGE SHIT ANYMORE.

MOM!

MRS. GLOVER? OFFICER RICHARD STIFF.

I JUST WANTED TO GO BACK OVER THE STATEMENT YOU MADE EARLIER TODAY.

WE'RE TRYING TO MAKE A MOVIE HERE.

I SEE THAT. HOPE IT DOESN'T TURN INTO A SNUFF FLICK.

US LAW ENFORCEMENT TYPES FROWN ON THAT KIND OF THING.

I KNEW YOU WERE A POLICEMAN THE MOMENT YOU WALKED OVER.

WHAT GAVE ME AWAY?

YOU HAVE THE LOOK. THAT PARTICULAR MIX OF DEFEAT, SUBSERVIENCE, AND ALCOHOLISM.

ARE YOU GOING TO GET THE BASTARD?

WHO?

THE SON-OF-A-BITCH WHO KILLED MY CARL. THIS SYD HOMES. THE FAILED COMIC.

I DON'T KNOW THAT YOU COULD DESCRIBE HIM AS "FAILED." CAREERS IN COMEDY CAN TAKE YEARS TO BUILD.

EXCUSE ME?

WE'RE TRYING TO LOOK INTO ALL THE POSSIBILITIES. AFTER ALL, ONLY YESTERDAY IT LOOKED LIKE MAYBE THE ROSS BOYS—

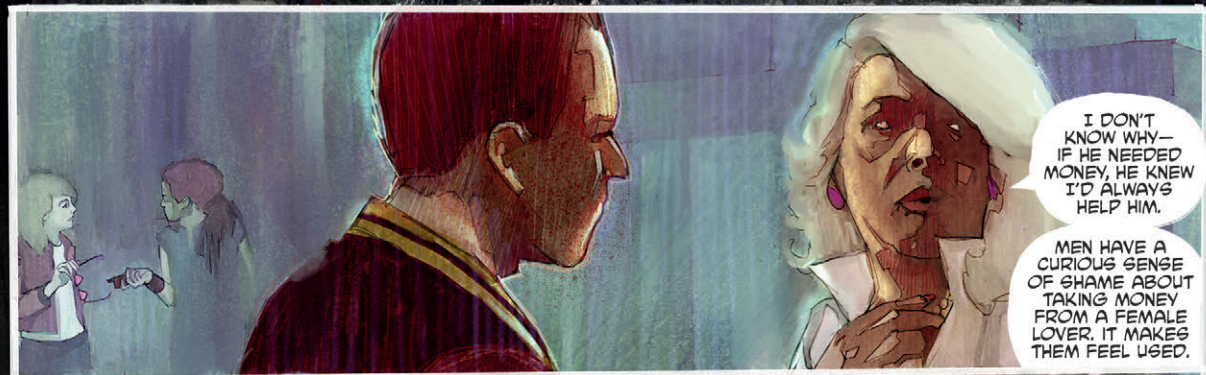
PLEASE I KNOW HOW YOUR DEPARTMENT LIKES TO CRIMINALIZE PEOPLE FOR BEING BLACK, BUT THE ROSS BOYS DIDN'T LAY A FINGER ON HIM.

"CARL GAVE BACK THE MONEY THEY FRONTED HIM AND PROMISED TO COLLECT THE ITEMS THEY FELT HAD BEEN MISREPRESENTED."

"HE CALLED ME RIGHT AFTER HE PAID THE ROSS BROTHERS OFF. WHY WOULD THEY KILL HIM AFTER THEY GOT WHAT THEY WANTED?"

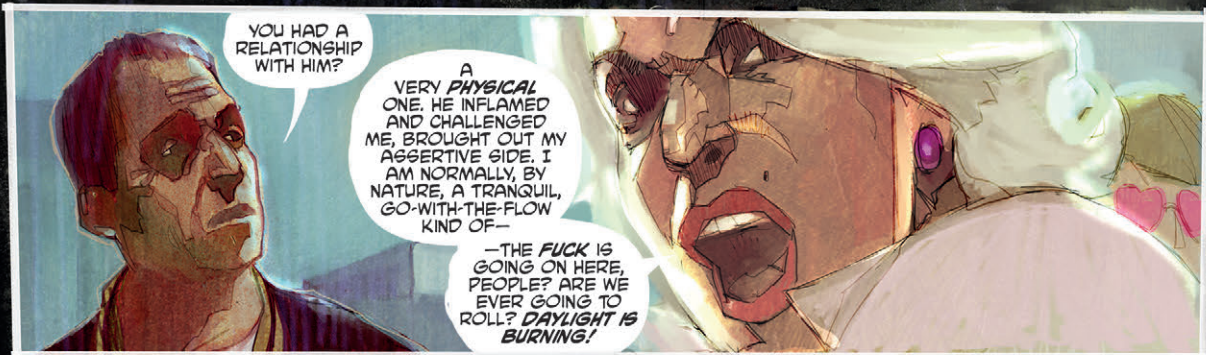


WHEN YOU SAY HE MISREPRESENTED SOME ITEMS... YOU MEAN HE USED ROSS PAWN TO UNLOAD STOLEN GOODS.



I DON'T KNOW WHY— IF HE NEEDED MONEY, HE KNEW I'D ALWAYS HELP HIM.

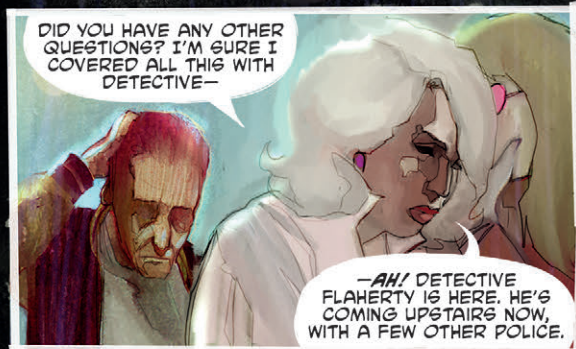
MEN HAVE A CURIOUS SENSE OF SHAME ABOUT TAKING MONEY FROM A FEMALE LOVER. IT MAKES THEM FEEL USED.



YOU HAD A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM?

A VERY PHYSICAL ONE. HE INFLAMED AND CHALLENGED ME, BROUGHT OUT MY ASSERTIVE SIDE. I AM NORMALLY, BY NATURE, A TRANQUIL, GO-WITH-THE-FLOW KIND OF—

—THE FUCK IS GOING ON HERE, PEOPLE? ARE WE EVER GOING TO ROLL? DAYLIGHT IS BURNING!



DID YOU HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS? I'M SURE I COVERED ALL THIS WITH DETECTIVE—

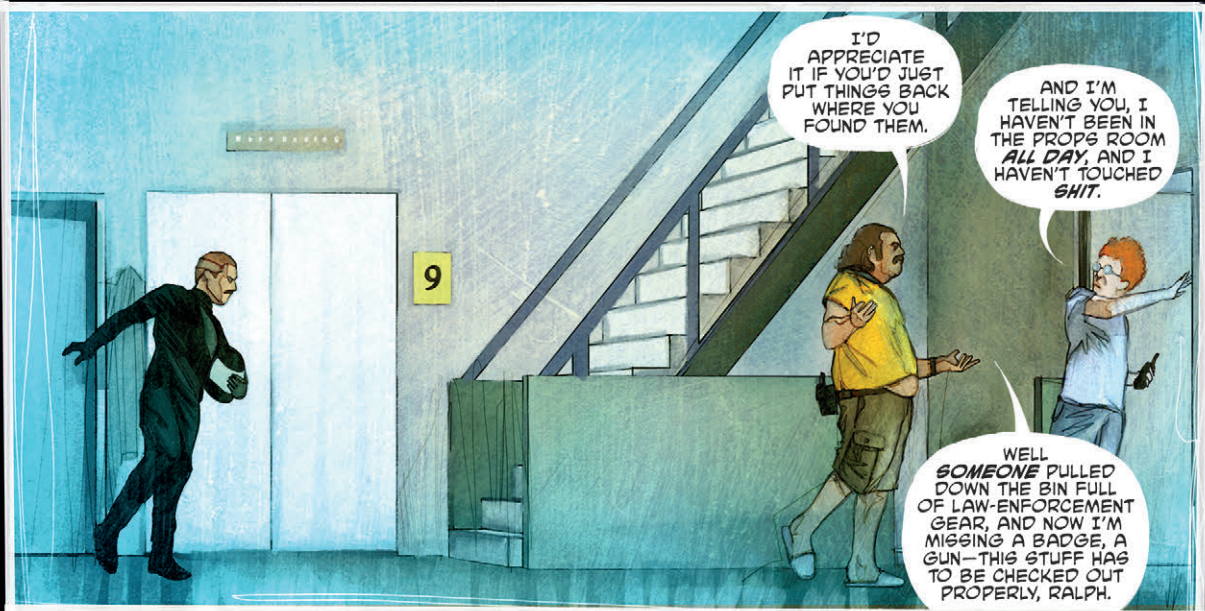
—AH! DETECTIVE FLAHERTY IS HERE. HE'S COMING UPSTAIRS NOW, WITH A FEW OTHER POLICE.



HE IS? WHY WOULD HE WANT—



—NO IDEA. MAYBE HE'D LIKE A WORD WITH YOU. NOT SURE WHY HE'D BRING SO MANY MEN WITH HIM, THOUGH. A DOZEN OFFICERS, BEV? ARE YOU SURE?







HEY, I HEARD, LIKE, ALMOST TEN PERCENT OF ALL MEN ARE ALLERGIC TO PUSSY.

IT'S NOTHIN' TO BE EMBARRASSED ABOUT.



HOWARD, YOU BEEN CRYING LIKE A BITCH FOR TWO DAYS. MAYBE YOU SHOULD'VE CALLED IN SICK.

YOU DON'T LIKE SEEING A MAN CRY, MAYBE YOU BETTER WAIT HERE, LIEUTENANT.

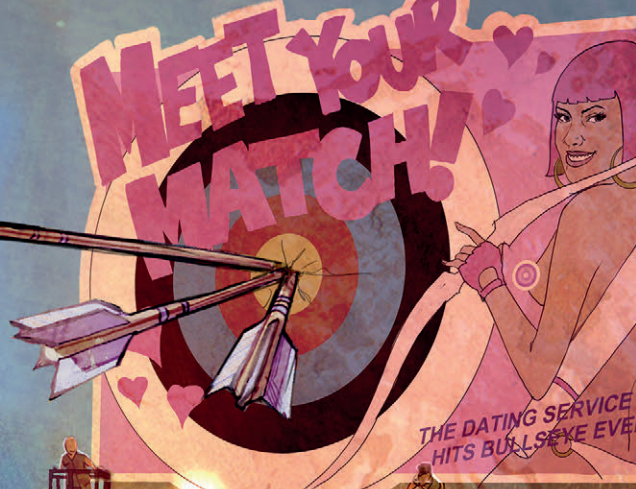
HOMES IS GONNA BE WEEPIN' FLOODS AFTER I RAM MY NIGHTSTICK UP HIS BONY ASS.



ALL SET?



HEY!



THIS JUST GETS BETTER AND BETTER.





TELL
ME WE'RE
FILMING.

To be continued!



FROM THE WRITER/CREATOR OF *LOCKE & KEY*

IDW

#1 • CVR A

JOE HILL
CP WILSON III
JAY FOTOS

WRATH

CHRISTMASLAND



FREE DIGITAL ASHCAN

TAKE A PEEK AT ANOTHER AWESOME SERIES YOU MAY LIKE...





WRAITH

WELCOME TO CHRISTMASLAND

PROLOGUE: FANTOMS

CREATED & WRITTEN BY JOE HILL ART BY CHARLES PAUL WILSON III

COLORS BY JAY FOTOS LETTERS BY SHAWN LEE & ROBBIE ROBBINS

EDITS BY CHRIS RYALL

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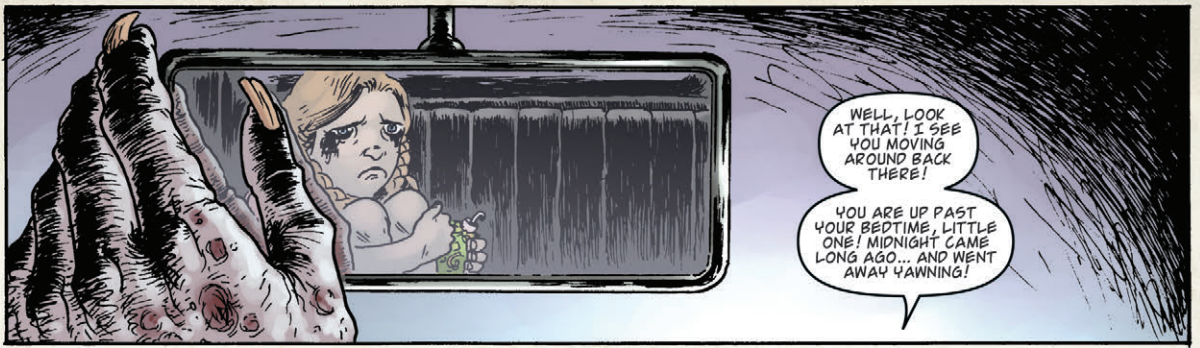
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WELL, LOOK AT THAT! I SEE YOU MOVING AROUND BACK THERE!

YOU ARE UP PAST YOUR BEDTIME, LITTLE ONE! MIDNIGHT CAME LONG AGO... AND WENT AWAY YAWNING!



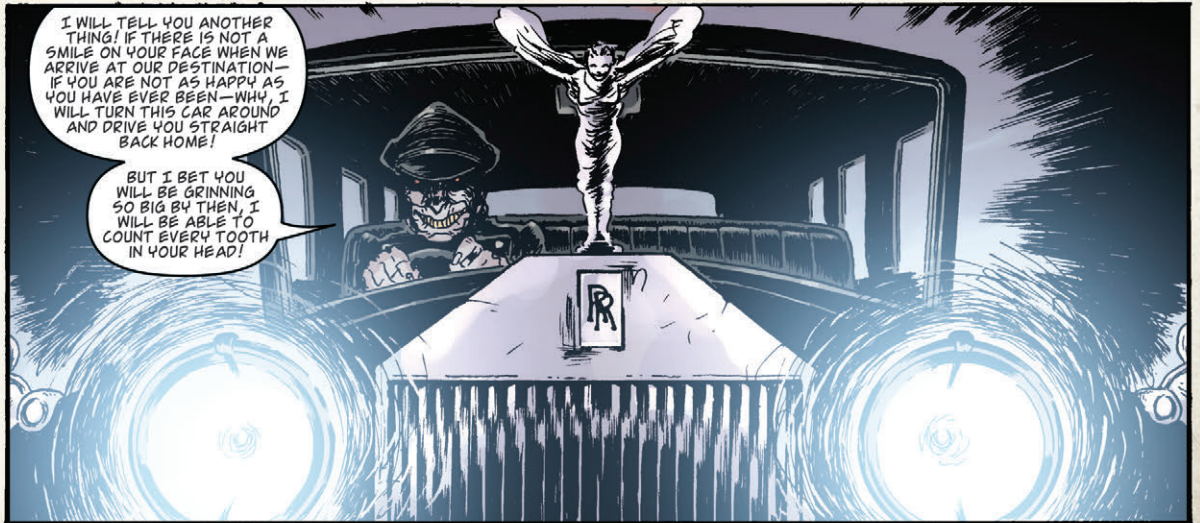
MHM? WHAT? OH! OH, MY GOODNESS! OF COURSE I WILL LET YOU GO! I AM NOT THE SORT OF FIEND WHO WOULD HOLD A CHILD AGAINST HER WILL... ANY LONGER THAN NECESSARY.

WHEN WE GET WHERE WE ARE GOING, YOU WILL FLY FROM THIS CAR, MORE FREE THAN YOU HAVE EVER BEEN BEFORE. THAT IS THE CHARLIE MANX GUARANTEE!



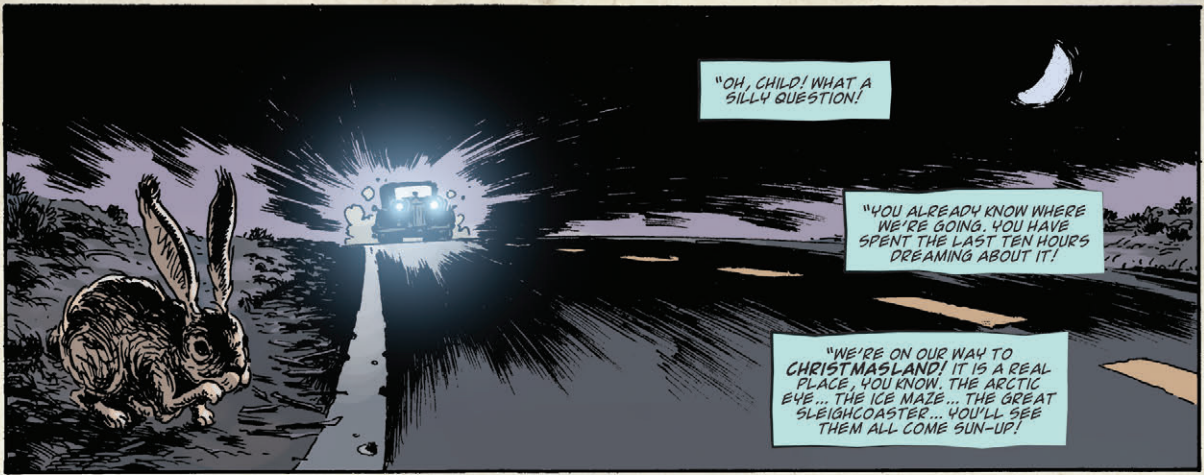
I WISH YOU WOULDN'T CRY! IT MAKES ME SICK TO MY HEART. I HAVE LITTLE GIRLS OF MY OWN, YOU KNOW! YOU WILL MEET THEM SOON ENOUGH!

I HAVE NEVER HURT THEM... AND I WILL NEVER HURT YOU, EITHER. THAT IS ANOTHER CHARLIE MANX PROMISE!



I WILL TELL YOU ANOTHER THING! IF THERE IS NOT A SMILE ON YOUR FACE WHEN WE ARRIVE AT OUR DESTINATION— IF YOU ARE NOT AS HAPPY AS YOU HAVE EVER BEEN—WHY, I WILL TURN THIS CAR AROUND AND DRIVE YOU STRAIGHT BACK HOME!

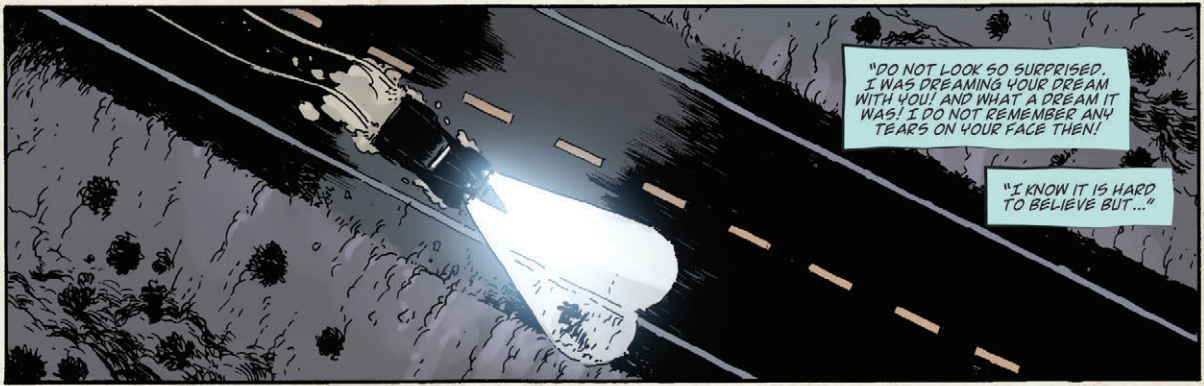
BUT I BET YOU WILL BE GRINNING SO BIG BY THEN, I WILL BE ABLE TO COUNT EVERY TOOTH IN YOUR HEAD!



"OH, CHILD! WHAT A SILLY QUESTION!"

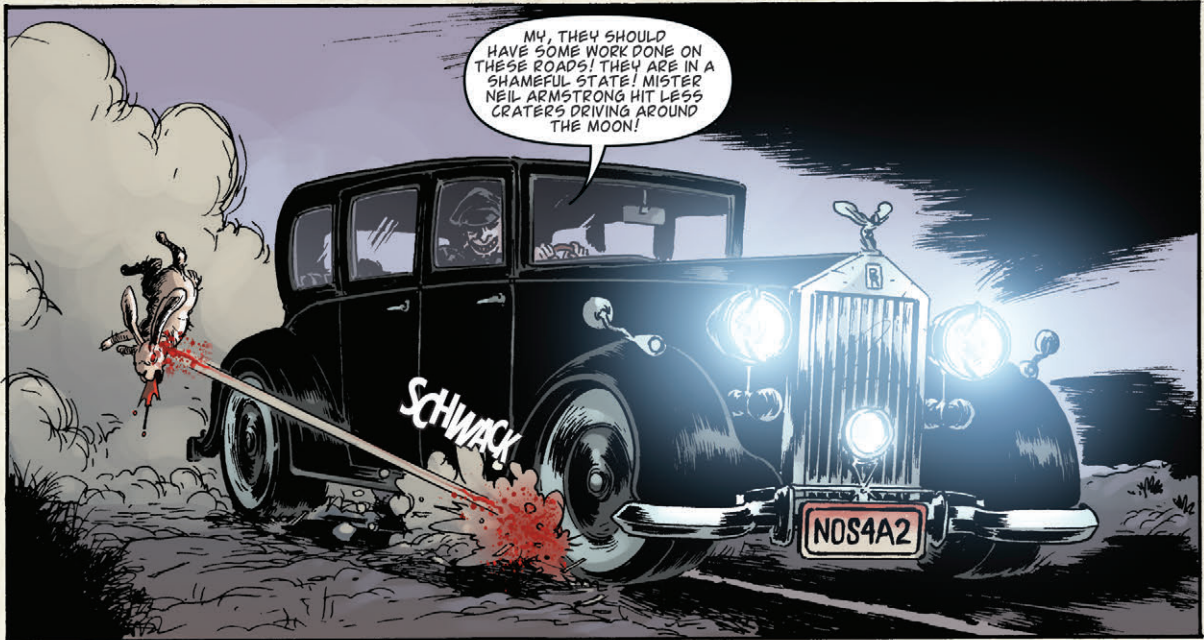
"YOU ALREADY KNOW WHERE WE'RE GOING. YOU HAVE SPENT THE LAST TEN HOURS DREAMING ABOUT IT!"

"WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO CHRISTMASLAND! IT IS A REAL PLACE, YOU KNOW. THE ARCTIC EYE... THE ICE MAZE... THE GREAT SLEIGHCOASTER... YOU'LL SEE THEM ALL COME SUN-UP!"



"DO NOT LOOK SO SURPRISED. I WAS DREAMING YOUR DREAM WITH YOU! AND WHAT A DREAM IT WAS! I DO NOT REMEMBER ANY TEARS ON YOUR FACE THEN!"

"I KNOW IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE BUT..."

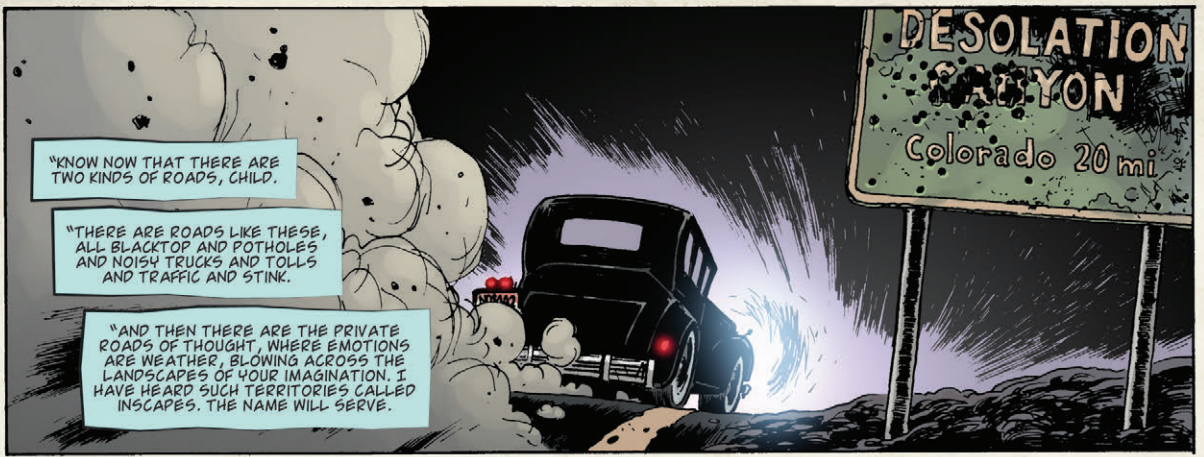


MY, THEY SHOULD HAVE SOME WORK DONE ON THESE ROADS! THEY ARE IN A SHAMEFUL STATE! MISTER NEIL ARMSTRONG HIT LESS CRATERS DRIVING AROUND THE MOON!



IF YOU PROMISE TO STOP CRYING, I WILL TRY TO EXPLAIN... ALL OF IT. ABOUT THIS CAR AND YOUR DREAMS AND CHRISTMASLAND AND WHO I AM. BUT YOU HAVE TO PROMISE NOT TO CRY! DO WE HAVE A DEAL?

GOOD GIRL.

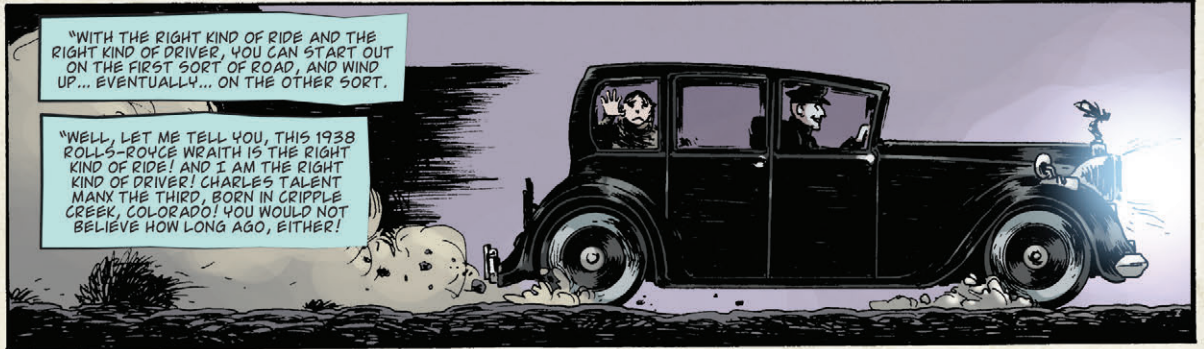


DESOLATION CANYON
Colorado 20 mi

"KNOW NOW THAT THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF ROADS, CHILD.

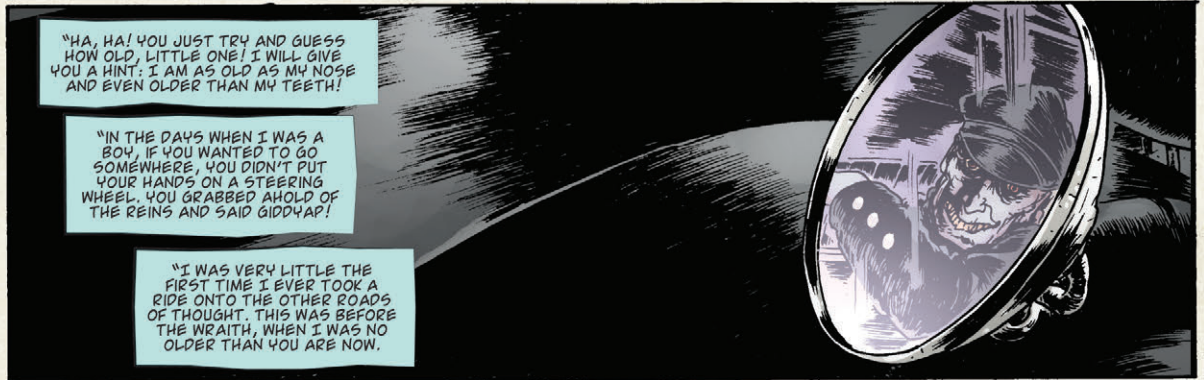
"THERE ARE ROADS LIKE THESE, ALL BLACKTOP AND POTHOLES AND NOISY TRUCKS AND TOLLS AND TRAFFIC AND STINK.

"AND THEN THERE ARE THE PRIVATE ROADS OF THOUGHT, WHERE EMOTIONS ARE WEATHER, BLOWING ACROSS THE LANDSCAPES OF YOUR IMAGINATION. I HAVE HEARD SUCH TERRITORIES CALLED INSCAPES. THE NAME WILL SERVE.



"WITH THE RIGHT KIND OF RIDE AND THE RIGHT KIND OF DRIVER, YOU CAN START OUT ON THE FIRST SORT OF ROAD, AND WIND UP... EVENTUALLY... ON THE OTHER SORT.

"WELL, LET ME TELL YOU, THIS 1938 ROLLS-ROYCE WRAITH IS THE RIGHT KIND OF RIDE! AND I AM THE RIGHT KIND OF DRIVER! CHARLES TALENT MANY THE THIRD, BORN IN CRIPPLE CREEK, COLORADO! YOU WOULD NOT BELIEVE HOW LONG AGO, EITHER!



"HA, HA! YOU JUST TRY AND GUESS HOW OLD, LITTLE ONE! I WILL GIVE YOU A HINT: I AM AS OLD AS MY NOSE AND EVEN OLDER THAN MY TEETH!

"IN THE DAYS WHEN I WAS A BOY, IF YOU WANTED TO GO SOMEWHERE, YOU DIDN'T PUT YOUR HANDS ON A STEERING WHEEL. YOU GRABBED A HOLD OF THE REINS AND SAID GIDDYAP!

"I WAS VERY LITTLE THE FIRST TIME I EVER TOOK A RIDE ONTO THE OTHER ROADS OF THOUGHT. THIS WAS BEFORE THE WRAITH, WHEN I WAS NO OLDER THAN YOU ARE NOW.



"I HAD A DIFFERENT RIDE THEN. I SMILE TO THINK OF IT.

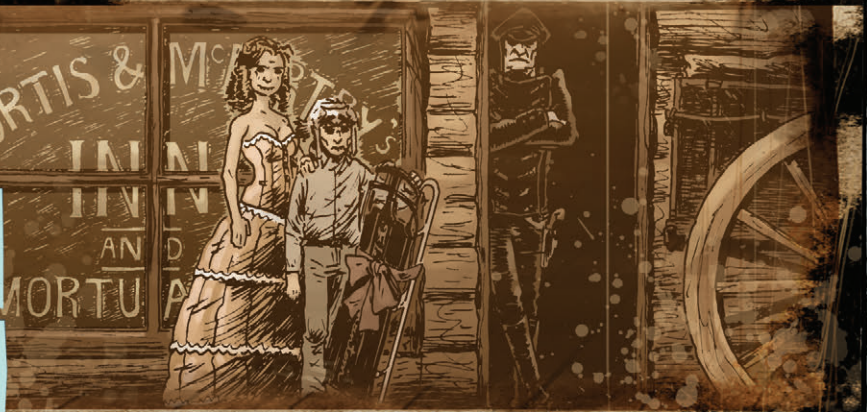
"IT WAS MY CHRISTMAS PRESENT. IT WAS MY SPECIAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

"IT WAS MY FANTOM."

"MY FATHER WAS A LOW RASCAL WHO LEFT ME NOTHING BUT MY NAME AND WAS SHOT OVER A WOMAN WHO I REGRET TO SAY WAS NOT MY MOTHER.

"HE DIED IN THE ARMS OF A FAT LADY NAMED SALLY GRAPEFRUIT'S AND SHE WAS CALLING HIM A FOOL AS HIS LIFE TRICKLED AWAY BETWEEN HIS FINGERS!

"SUCH IS THE FATE OF THE FAITHLESS MAN! TO DIE IN THE GRIP OF AN ABUSIVE FAT WOMAN AND WAKE IN THE EMBRACE OF SATAN!



SCRIBBLED BY
JOE HILL
DRAWN BY
**CHARLES
"TALENT"
WILSON
THE III**

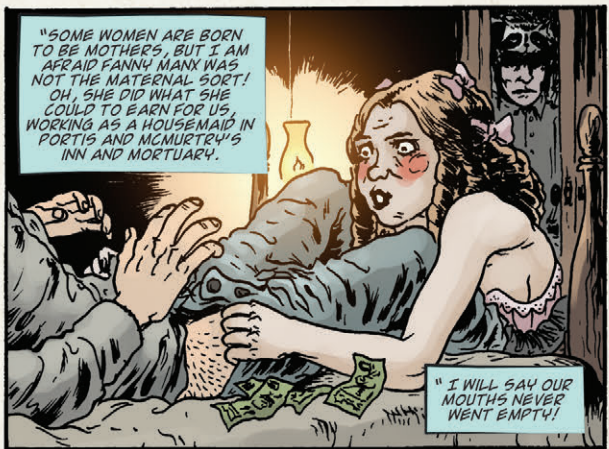
SPELT JUST RIGHT BY
**SHAWN
LEE &
ROBBIE
ROBBINS**

PAINTED PRETTY BY
**JAY
FOTOS**

THREATS AND
DEMANDS ISSUED BY
**CHRIS
RYALL**

WRAITH NUMERO UNO
**PROLOG:
FANTOMS**

"SOME WOMEN ARE BORN TO BE MOTHERS, BUT I AM AFRAID FANNY WANK WAS NOT THE MATERNAL SORT! OH, SHE DID WHAT SHE COULD TO EARN FOR US, WORKING AS A HOUSEMAID IN PORTIS AND MCMURTRY'S INN AND MORTUARY.



"I WILL SAY OUR MOUTH'S NEVER WENT EMPTY!"

"IT WAS NO EASY LIFE IN A ONE-WHORE TOWN—AHEM, ONE-HORSE, I MEAN TO SAY—LIKE CRIPPLE CREEK, AND MY MOTHER WAS BITTER ABOUT OUR LOT. WHEN FANNY WAS IN HER CUPS, SHE WOULD BLAME ME FOR ALL MISFORTUNES AND COULD BE QUITE CRUEL.

"SHE WOULD CALL ME THE FAT-FACED BOY AND TELL ME BABIES ARE VAMPIRES, AND WHEN THEY SUCK AT THE BREAST, THEY ARE REALLY DRAINING A WOMAN'S YOUTH. SHE SAID IT SERVED ME RIGHT I SLEPT IN A COFFIN—IT WAS WHERE I BELONGED!

"MR. PORTIS AND MR. MCMURTRY HAD AN INGENIOUS BUSINESS MODEL, YOU SEE. IN THE FRONT ROOM, THE MINERS AND ROUSTABOUTS COULD DRINK THEMSELVES TO DEATH.

"IN THE BACK ROOM, THEIR NEXT OF KIN COULD SELECT A COFFIN AND ONE OF SEVERAL AFFORDABLE FUNERAL SERVICES!

"SO IT'S TRUE, I HAD A COFFIN OF MY OWN AND SLEPT IN IT EVERY NIGHT. IT SOUNDS MACABRE, BUT BELIEVE ME, I HAD THE QUIETEST ROOM IN THE WHOLE INN AND THE ONLY BED THAT WAS NOT FULL OF LICE!



"I MADE A LITTLE COIN BY DRIVING MR. MCMURTRY'S HORSE-DRAWN HEARSE IN THE PROCESSIONS TO THE CEMETERY. IT WAS MY FIRST JOB. I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A DRIVER.



"MY MOTHER KEPT THE MONEY I EARNED FOR HERSELF, BUT ON CHRISTMAS, AT LEAST, SHE WOULD LET ME SPEND A LITTLE ON SOMETHING I WANTED."



"SANTA CLAUS NEVER BROUGHT ME ANYTHING, AND IF HE HAD EVER COME DOWN MY CHIMNEY, I WOULD'VE BEGGED HIM NOT FOR TOYS, BUT A RIDE AWAY FROM THAT PLACE.

"I WAS USED TO ICE AND DARKNESS FROM A CHILDHOOD IN COLORADO AND A NORTH POLE FILLED WITH TOYS AND HAPPY ELVES SOUNDED LIKE AN IMPROVEMENT ON CRIPPLE CREEK.

"THE FANTOM WAS MY GIFT TO MYSELF. IT RAN ON RAZOR BLADES AND WAS THE LOVELY BLACK OF A WIDOW'S SILKS. THE BEST GIFTS ARE NEVER GIVEN, BUT CLAIMED. REMEMBER THAT, CHILD. TAKE THAT TO HEART."



WELL! IF WE HAVE REACHED A DAY WHEN AN INDIAN CAN LAY HANDS ON A WHITE MAN WITH IMPUNITY, I DO NOT HOLD OUT MUCH HOPE FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION!

YOU COME BACK IN AGAIN, I DO NOT HOLD OUT MUCH HOPE FOR YOUR FUTURE, STANTON. MR. McMURTRY CAN'T HAVE YOU ABUSING THE STAFF.

YOU THINK YOU CAN KICK ME OUT OF MY OWN BED, KICK ME TO THE FLOOR, JUST LIKE YOU WAS KICKING A DOG? JUST LIKE A GODDAMN DOG?



THAT WHORE OWES ME! SHE WAS PAID AND SHE OWES! I AIN'T HAD SATISFACTION!

THAT MAKES TWO OF US, YOU LIMP-DICK SISSY!

IF YOU PAY FOR A HOSS, THE SELLER AIN'T TO BLAME IF YOU CAN'T GET IN THE SADDLE. MAYBE YOU SHOULD NOT DRINK SO MUCH NEXT TIME... OR MAYBE A WOMAN ISN'T WHAT YOU WANT.



FROM THE WRITER/CREATOR OF *LOCKE & KEY*

IDW

#1 • CVR A

JOE HILL
CP WILSON III
JAY FOTOS

WRAITH

CHRISTMASLAND



NOS4A2

TO BE CONTINUED IN...

WRAITH: WELCOME TO CHRISTMASLAND #1

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