

GORDON RENNIE • TIERNEN TREVALLION

# ABSALOM

## GHOSTS OF LONDON



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# ABSALOM

## GHOSTS OF LONDON



ABSALOM CREATED BY GORDON RENNIE AND TIERNEN TREVALLION





# NOBLESSE OBLIGE

Script: Gordon Rennie

Art: Tiernen Trevallion

Letters: Simon Bowland

Originally published in *2000 AD* Progs 1732-1739



SOMEWHERE IN CUMBRIA:

NUMBER SIX!  
GET THE DOOR  
LOCKED ON  
NUMBER SIX!



OH GOD--/  
TOO LATE!



SKASSH



LONDON, SIX HOURS LATER:

NAUGHTY  
NAUGHTY  
NAUGHTY.





RIGHT. SO WHO ELSE WANTS TO PLAY SILLY BUGGERS?

CRAZY OLD MAN, YOU THINK YOU ARE *PROTECTED* BECAUSE YOU ARE SOME KIND OF POLICEMAN?

I HAVE KILLED MANY POLICEMEN. IN MY OWN COUNTRY, IN OTHER COUNTRIES. MAYBE I ADD YOU TO MY COLLECTION.

"PROTECTED"? OH SUNSHINE, YOU DON'T KNOW THE HALF OF IT...

INSPECTOR HARRY ABSALOM. IF YOU HAVEN'T HEARD OF ME, MAYBE YOU'VE HEARD OF THE NOT-VERY-NICE PEOPLE I WORK FOR. THAT'S THEIR *SIGIL* RIGHT THERE ON MY WARRANT CARD.

HAD A GOOD LOOK AT IT? KNOW WHAT IT MEANS? GOOD...



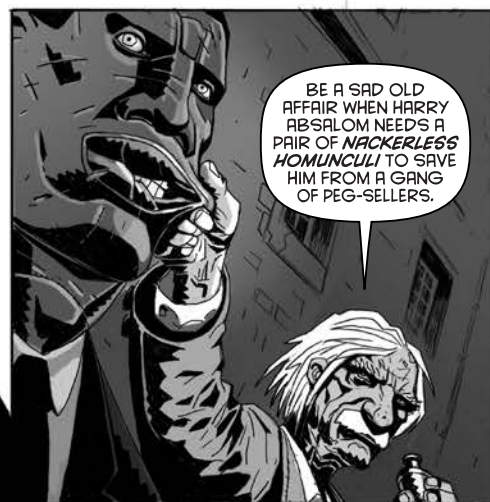
"...THEN LET'S BE HAVING YOU ALL, THEN."

...BLOODY PATHETIC. BUNCH OF PAPRIKA-EATERS USING REMOTE VIEWING AND GYPO-MAGIC TO SCAM CREDIT-CARD NUMBERS OUT OF PEOPLE'S HEADS.

THIS IS WHAT WE'VE BEEN BLOODY REDUCED TO NOW, IS IT?











WITH ALL DISRESPECT, SIR, YOU DON'T SEND FOR ME WHEN THERE'S BEEN "AN INCIDENT".

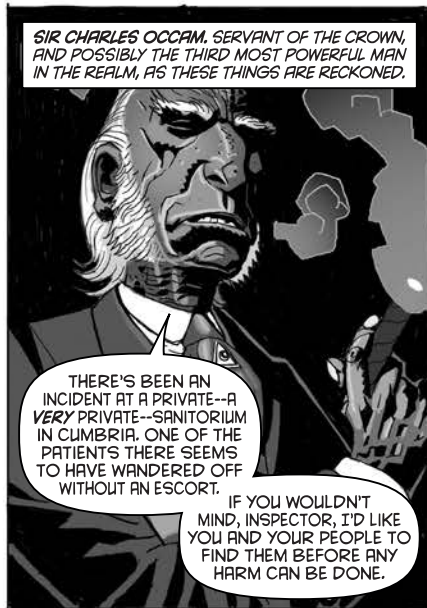
YOU ONLY BRING ME IN WHEN SOMETHING **BLOODY FOUL AND AWFUL** HAS HAPPENED, AND YOU NEED IT FLUSHED AWAY OUT OF HARM'S WAY SHARPISH.

HMM, I'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN WHAT AN **UNMITIGATED PLEASURE** YOUR COMPANY IS, INSPECTOR.



HURRY IT UP, WILL YOU? I'M A **DYING MAN**, REMEMBER?

YES, CANCER, ISN'T IT? MUST BE TERRIBLY PAINFUL. MY SYMPATHIES.



SIR CHARLES OCCAM. SERVANT OF THE CROWN, AND POSSIBLY THE THIRD MOST POWERFUL MAN IN THE REALM, AS THESE THINGS ARE RECKONED.

THERE'S BEEN AN INCIDENT AT A PRIVATE--A **VERY** PRIVATE--SANATORIUM IN CUMBRIA. ONE OF THE PATIENTS THERE SEEMS TO HAVE WANDERED OFF WITHOUT AN ESCORT.

IF YOU WOULDN'T MIND, INSPECTOR, I'D LIKE YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE TO FIND THEM BEFORE ANY HARM CAN BE DONE.



CUMBRIA...YOU MEAN THAT **PRIVATE CONCENTRATION CAMP** FOR MEMBERS OF THE **RATHBORNE FAMILY**.

I DO.

THEN I WAS RIGHT...



...BECAUSE IF JUST ONE OF THE THINGS THEY KEEP THERE HAS GOT OUT, THEN "**BLOODY FOUL AND AWFUL**" DOESN'T EVEN BEGIN TO COVER WHAT'S PROBABLY GOING TO HAPPEN.



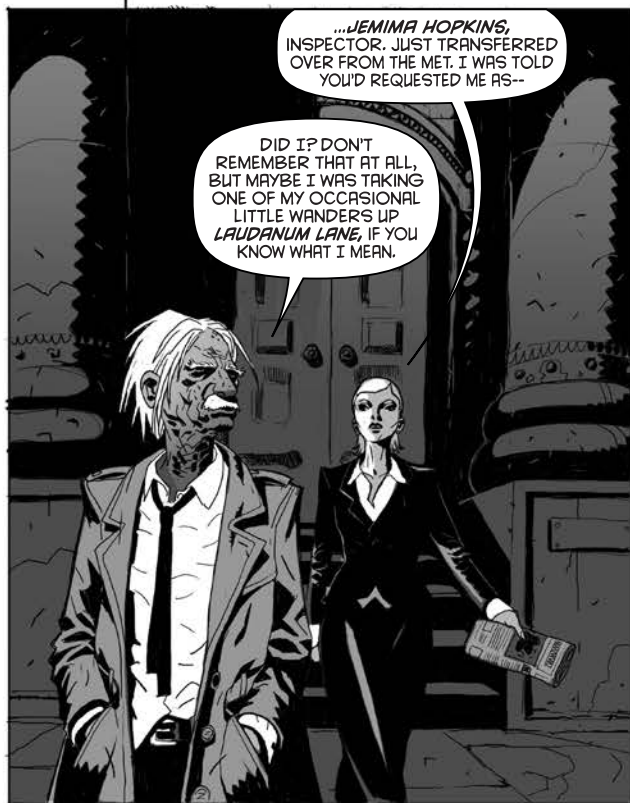
WE HAVE EVERY FAITH THAT YOU AND YOUR STERLING TEAM WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN, INSPECTOR. ANY QUESTIONS?

JUST ONE...



"WHO'S THE FANCY PIECE OF SKIRT OUTSIDE?"

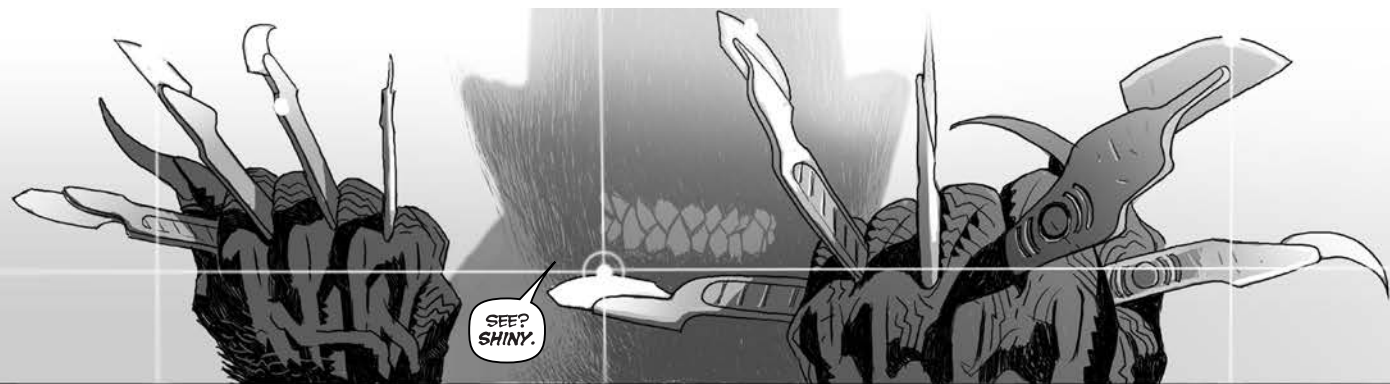












SEE?  
SHINY.



um, INSPECTOR?  
ARE YOU SURE YOU  
SHOULD BE DRIVING  
THIS FAST WHILE  
DRINKING?

DRINKING,  
DETECTIVE SERGEANT?  
YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG  
IDEA...



...IT'S LAUDANUM.  
STRICTLY *MEDICINAL*.  
WHISKY IN IT'S JUST TO  
TAKE THE EDGE OFF.

THAT MY PHONE?  
BE A LOVE AND REACH  
INTO MY POCKET,  
WILL YOU?



WHO'S THAT,  
THEN? THE FORCE'S  
VERY OWN *DARK*  
AVENGER?

ALL THESE  
YEARS, HARRY, AND  
THAT ONE'S STILL  
FRESH AS EVER.

REMEMBER  
YOU TOLD US TO WATCH  
OUT FOR SHOUTS ON  
ANYTHING *BLOODY FOUL*  
AND *AWFUL*? WELL, I'VE  
GOT SOMETHING...



...*HARLEY STREET*  
CONSULTANT, MURDERED  
IN HIS SURGERY, ALONG  
WITH SOME POOR SOD OF  
A RECEPTIONIST.

ALWAYS  
BEEN AN *NHS MAN*,  
MYSELF. WHY'S THIS  
LANDING IN OUR  
PATCH?



BECAUSE THE  
KILLER PEELED THE  
BLOKE'S FACE OFF AND  
LEFT IT PINNED TO THE  
CEILING WITH SURGICAL  
SCALPELS.

THAT *BLOODY*  
*FOUL* AND *AWFUL*  
ENOUGH, YOU  
RECKON?



AND GUESS  
WHERE THE VICTIM USED  
TO PUT IN AN HONEST  
SHIFT BEFORE HE WENT  
PRIVATE?

A CERTAIN  
*EXCLUSIVE CLINIC*  
IN *CUMBRIA*? GOOD  
WORK, SON. STAY  
ON IT.

WHAT'RE YOU  
DOING, HARRY, IF  
I MAY BE SO BOLD  
TO ASK?





TAKING THE *NEW ONE* HERE ON A TOUR OF THE *WHISPERING GALLERY*, TO SEE WHAT WORD IS ROUND THE MANOR.



YOU CAN PUT IT BACK IN MY TROUSER POCKET NOW, LOVE, AND MIND HOW YOU GO. YOUR HANDS AREN'T THE WARMEST.

AND CHEER UP--



"--HOW MANY TIMES DO YOU GET TO MEET A *REAL LIVE VAMPIRE* ON YOUR FIRST DAY AT WORK?"

A VAMPIRE?

WELL, NEAR AS YOU'LL GET. TROUBLE IS GETTING HIM TO APPEAR.



YOU'RE NOT A *CAT LOVER*, ARE YOU?

NOT PARTICULARLY.

SMASHING. ANIMAL LOVERS DON'T SEEM TO LAST LONG IN THIS JOB. NOT TO WORRY, *DC BONETTI* HERE WILL DO THE NECESSARIES.



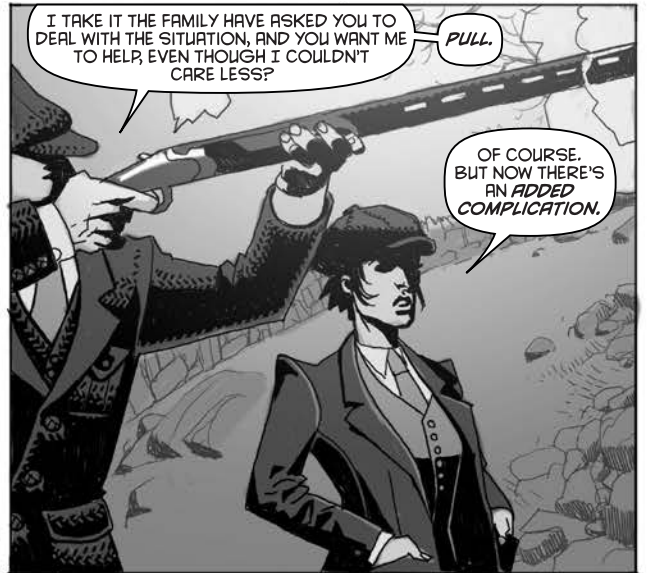
KRR-AWK!

FRESH BLOOD. SEE? THAT'S WHAT HE LIKES. NOW, IF WE JUST LEAVE IT OUT FOR HIM, MAYBE HE'LL--











THE TOWER OF LONDON, 1578:

I WILL SCRAPE  
THE MEAT FROM YOUR  
BONES AND MAKE YOU EAT  
IT! I WILL DO THIS, AND  
WORSE, TO YOU UNTIL YOU  
BEG FOR DEATH!

THEN I WILL KILL  
YOU, AND DAMN YOUR SOUL  
TO HELL, WHERE I WILL WAIT  
TO TORTURE YOU FOR ALL  
ETERNITY IN WAYS YOU CAN'T  
EVEN YET IMAGINE!

AND IT'S  
BEEN DOING  
THIS FOR HOW  
LONG?

THREE WEEKS, MY  
LORD. WE'VE CUT OUT  
ITS TONGUE FOUR TIMES  
NOW, BUT IT DOESN'T  
SEEM TO MAKE MUCH  
DIFFERENCE.

YOU DID WELL  
TO GET WORD  
TO ME. WHAT'S  
YOUR NAME?

ABBSALOM,  
SIR.

ABBSALOM.  
I'LL REMEMBER THAT  
NAME. YOU'LL FIND **LORD  
RATHBORNE** OF THE STAR  
CHAMBER A POWERFUL  
ALLY TO HAVE ON  
YOUR SIDE.

NOW CLEAR THE  
ROOM AND LEAVE  
ME ALONE WITH  
THIS THING.

ON BEHALF OF  
HER ROYAL MAJESTY,  
**HELL'S EMISSARY**  
AND I HAVE BUSINESS  
TO NEGOTIATE...



LONDON, NOW:



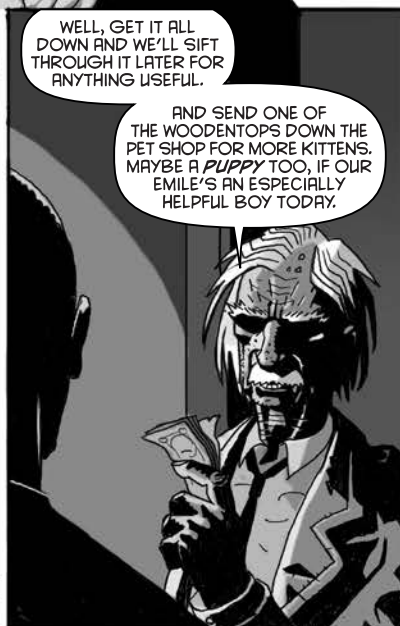
...IT'S COUSIN JASPER. THEY SAID HE HAD DIED IN INFANCY, BUT I KNEW HE HADN'T. THE STATUES IN THE STONE GARDEN TOLD ME. THEY TELL ME LOTS OF THINGS.

CAN I GET ANOTHER KITTEN NOW, PLEASE?



HOW LONG'S HE BEEN GOING ON LIKE THIS?

YOU KNOW EMILE. GIVE HIM HALF A CHANCE AND HE'D JABBER ON TILL HIS BLOODY TONGUE FELL OUT.



WELL, GET IT ALL DOWN AND WE'LL SIFT THROUGH IT LATER FOR ANYTHING USEFUL.

AND SEND ONE OF THE WOODENTOPS DOWN THE PET SHOP FOR MORE KITTENS. MAYBE A *PUPPY* TOO, IF OUR EMILE'S AN ESPECIALLY HELPFUL BOY TODAY.



DOES... DOES HE HAVE TO DO *THAT* THING...

...THAT THING, WITH THE ANIMALS?

NOT REALLY HIS FAULT, LOVE. IT'S THE WAY HE WAS BORN. IT'S THE WAY THEY WERE *ALL* BORN.



1578.

WHAT?

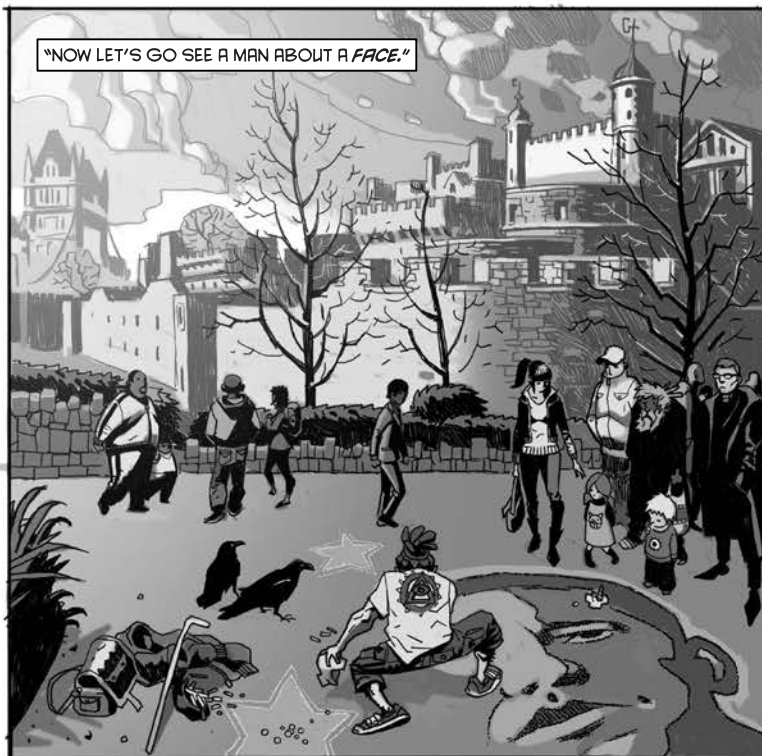
THE ANSWER TO WHAT YOU'RE THINKING. IT'S "1578".



THAT WAS WHEN THE ENGLISH CROWN CONCLUDED A TREATY WITH THE *POWERS OF HELL*, AND SEALED THE DEAL WITH INTER-MARRIAGE BETWEEN DEMONS AND CERTAIN POWERFUL ARISTOCRATIC FAMILIES.

*THAT'S* HOW LONG THIS WHOLE BLOODY, BUGGERED-UP BUSINESS HAS BEEN GOING ON.





"NOW LET'S GO SEE A MAN ABOUT A *FACE*."



SMELL OF POLICE CANTEN FOOD, SUPERMARKET BRAND WHISKY, LAST NIGHT'S INDIAN TAKEAWAY AND WHAT MUST BE THE LAST SUPPLY OF HAI KARATE AFTERSHAVE THIS SIDE OF 1983.

MIND WHERE YOU'RE PUTTING YOUR FEET, HARRY--I'VE JUST FINISHED THAT *PRINCESS DI* YOU'RE STANDING ALL OVER.

THEN YOU CAN ALWAYS TELL THE TOURISTS THAT'S HER *AFTER* THE CRASH, CAN'T YOU?



THAT'S ALL I GET--"COUSIN JASPER"?



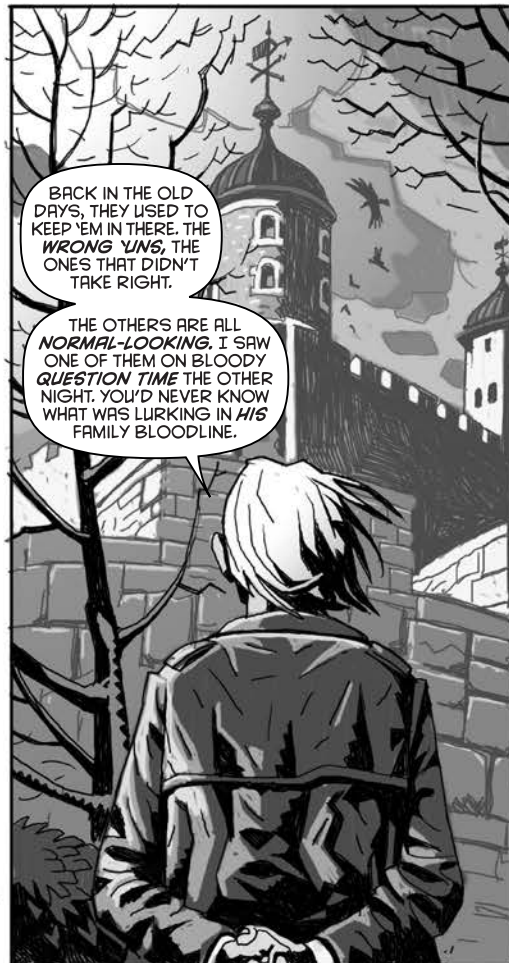
SMART LAD LIKE YOU, THAT'S ALL YOU NEED.

GET CRACKING ON IT, THEN. USUAL RATES APPLY.

SO WE'RE CHASING...SOME KIND OF *ARISTOCRATIC DEMON HALFBREED*?

THAT'S A BLOODY RELIEF.

YOU'VE NO IDEA HOW LONG IT OFTEN TAKES FOR THE NEW RECRUITS TO WRAP THEIR NOGGIN ROUND WHAT THIS JOB'S ALL ABOUT.



BACK IN THE OLD DAYS, THEY USED TO KEEP 'EM THERE. THE *WRONG Y'NS*, THE ONES THAT DIDN'T TAKE RIGHT.

THE OTHERS ARE ALL *NORMAL-LOOKING*. I SAW ONE OF THEM ON BLOODY *QUESTION TIME* THE OTHER NIGHT. YOU'D NEVER KNOW WHAT WAS LURKING IN *HIS* FAMILY BLOODLINE.





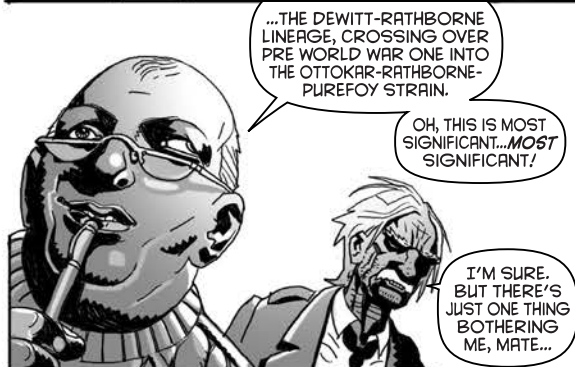
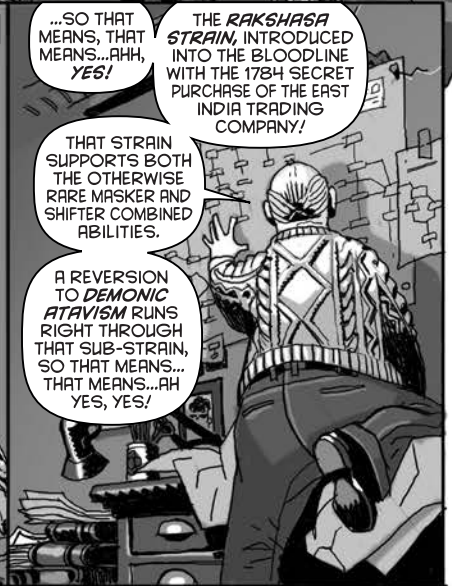




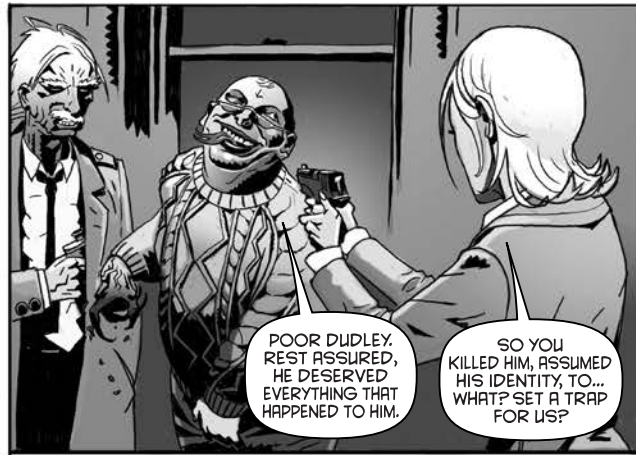








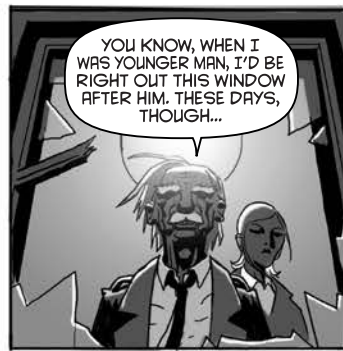








COUSINS  
SEBASTIAN  
AND VERITY.  
HOW LOVELY  
TO SEE YOU.



YOU KNOW, WHEN I  
WAS YOUNGER MAN, I'D BE  
RIGHT OUT THIS WINDOW  
AFTER HIM. THESE DAYS,  
THOUGH...



...STAIRS  
IT IS.

GET ON  
THE BLOWER AND GET  
THE HEAVY SQUAD ROUND  
HERE, PRONTO. WE'VE GOT  
TO CONTAIN THIS THING  
BEFORE IT ALL ENDS UP ON  
YOU'VE BEEN BLOODY  
FRAMED!



HALT. YOU ARE  
NOT PERMITTED  
TO INTERFERE IN  
RATHBORNE FAMILY  
BUSINESS.

OH, JUST  
BLOODY SHOOT  
THEM, WILL YOU,  
LOVE?

I CAN'T!  
THEY'RE--



UNARMED  
CIVILIANS? ARE  
THEY BUGGERY.



BLAM  
BLAM  
BLAM

WE'RE JUST  
SHEEP TO THEIR OWNERS,  
REMEMBER? AND YOU DON'T  
HIRE SHEEP TO SERVE YOU  
TEA AND CRUMPLETS ON THE  
CROQUET LAWN.

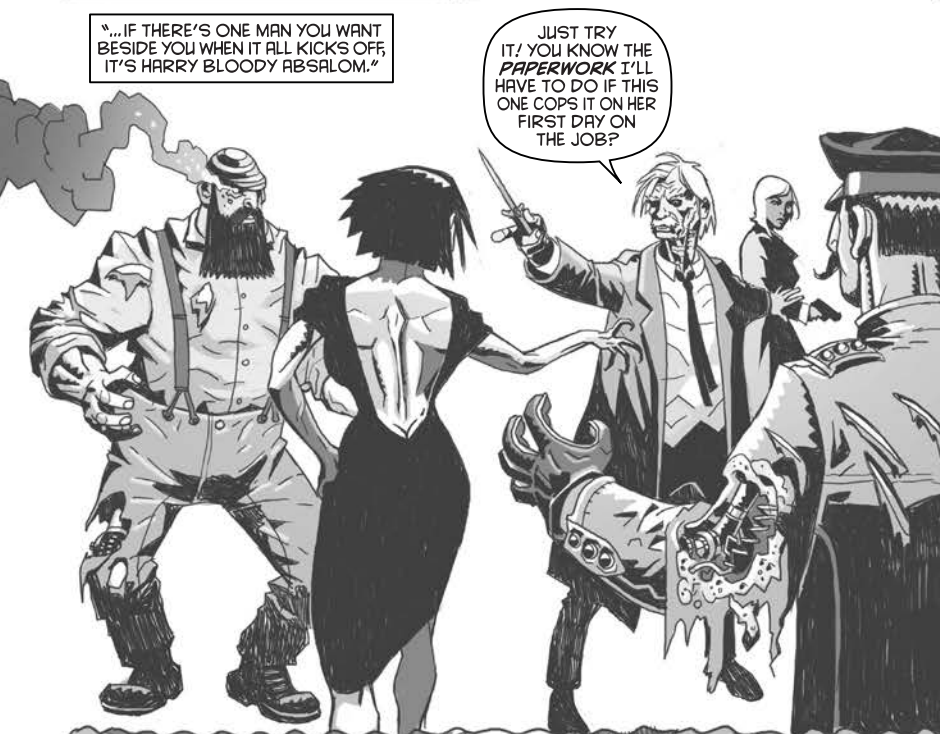
















THOSE THINGS... THE  
DETECTIVE CONSTABLES...  
THEY'RE NOT HUMAN,  
ARE THEY?

THE LADS? NO.  
THEY'RE *HOMUNCULI*.  
HARRY HAS THEM  
*GROWN* SPECIAL, AT  
SOME PLACE OUT IN  
THE WEST COUNTRY.



"THEY'RE NONE TOO  
BRIGHT... HEH, A BIT  
LIKE YOUR AVERAGE  
*REAL D.C.*...."



"...BUT THEY GET THE JOB DONE."



LISTEN, I KNOW  
IT'S LATE, AND I KNOW WE  
DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS NOW--  
NOT *OFFICIALLY*, I MEAN,  
ALTHOUGH THEY'LL HAVE TO  
BE SOME KIND OF LOAD OF  
OLD BOLLOCK'S REPORT  
SUBMITTED EVENTUALLY--  
BUT--



--BUT YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW MUCH I REMEMBER,  
IN CASE IT'S TOTALLY SPAZZED ME OUT, AND I HAVE  
TO SPEND THE REST OF MY CAREER HANDING  
OUT CRIME-PREVENTION LEAFLETS AND GIVING  
KIDDYFIDDLER WARNING TALKS TO GROUPS  
OF BORED LITTLE SCHOOL UIRCHINS?

WELL...  
YEAH.



I REMEMBER ALL OF IT,  
DETECTIVE SERGEANT  
SANGSTER.  
*EVERYTHING.*





"WHAT THE THING WE HAD BEEN CHASING DID TO THAT RATHBORNE WOMAN..."



"IT GETTING AWAY..."



"AND WHAT WE DID TO THE LAST OF THEM..."

WELL, LOOK AT YOU. AT LEAST THE TWO HALVES MATCH NOW.

YOU WOULDN'T DARE...



OH YES I BLOODY WOULD.

YOU'RE OFF THE RESERVATION, MATE. YOU'VE VIOLATED THE TERMS OF *THE ACCORD*, AND THAT MEANS I GET TO DO WITH YOU WHATEVER I WANT.



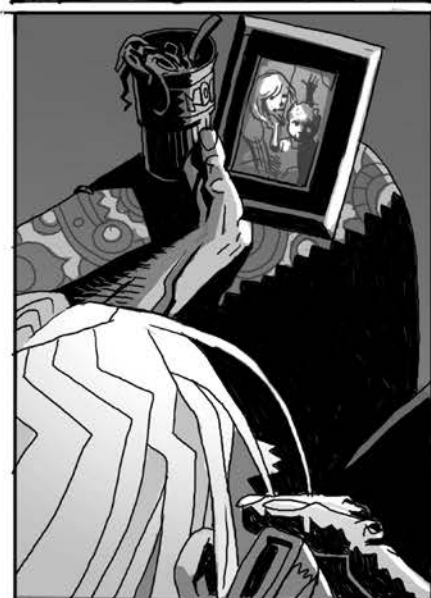
SO HERE WE GO, THEN: "O' YE POWRES OF EARTH AND AIR. BEAR WITNESS TO THE WORDS I SPEAKE--"

OH SOD IT WITH THE HEY NONNY NONNY STUFF--



JUST SHOOT HIM FOR ME, WILL YOU, LOVE?







SOMEWHERE IN KENT, EARLY MORNING:

ALL RIGHT,  
THEN, LET'S GET THIS  
OVER WITH. CAN'T  
KEEP ARISTOCRACY  
WAITING, CAN WE?

IF I DON'T MAKE IT BACK, YOU  
KNOW WHAT TO DO. JUST MAKE  
SURE YOU GET AT LEAST HALF THE  
BASTARDS ON THIS, AND THAT  
THEY KNOW *WHY* THEY'RE  
GETTING IT.

NO WORRIES,  
HARRY. I'LL SEE  
IT GETS DONE.

A LAST WILL  
AND TESTAMENT  
*HITLIST*?  
SERIOUSLY?

THAT'S  
THE GAFFER. IF HE'S  
GOING DOWN, HE'S  
TAKING A FEW OF  
THEM WITH HIM...

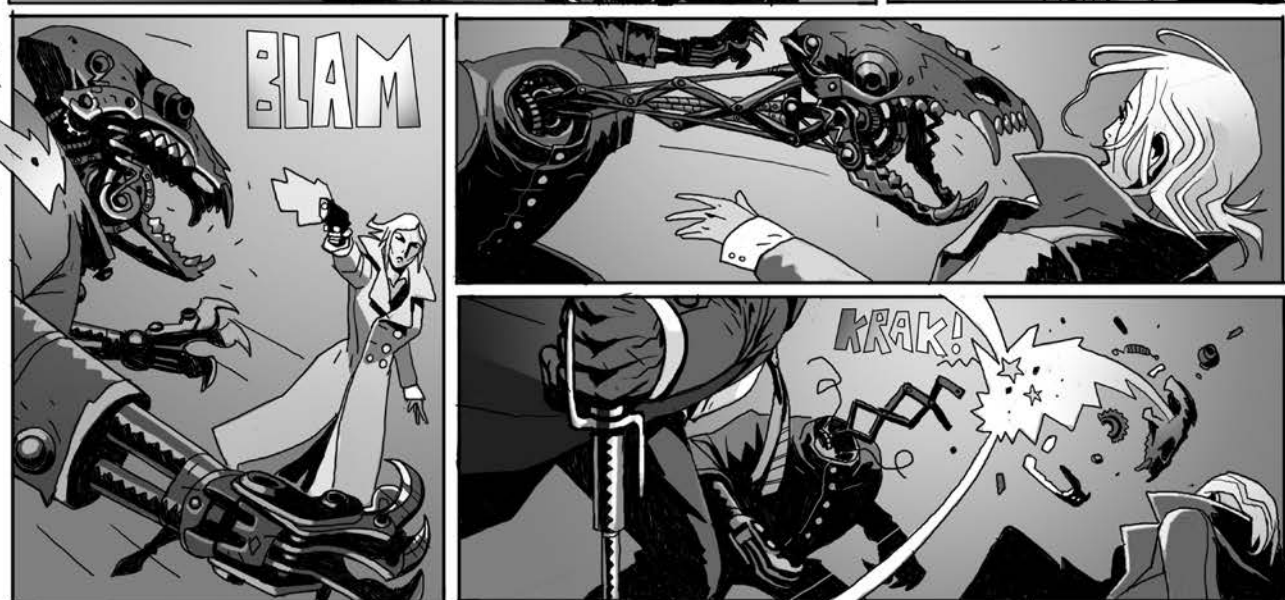
"BLOODY HARRY ABSALOM. IF HE EVER  
DOES CROAK IT, THEY SHOULD STICK  
HIM IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY, WITH ALL  
THE OTHER NATIONAL HEROES."

...AND  
APPARENTLY THAT  
INCLUDES A COUPLE  
OF CELEBRITY CHEFS  
AND A FEW OF THE  
SMUG-LOOKING  
GITS ON THOSE TV  
COMEDY QUIZ  
SHOWS.

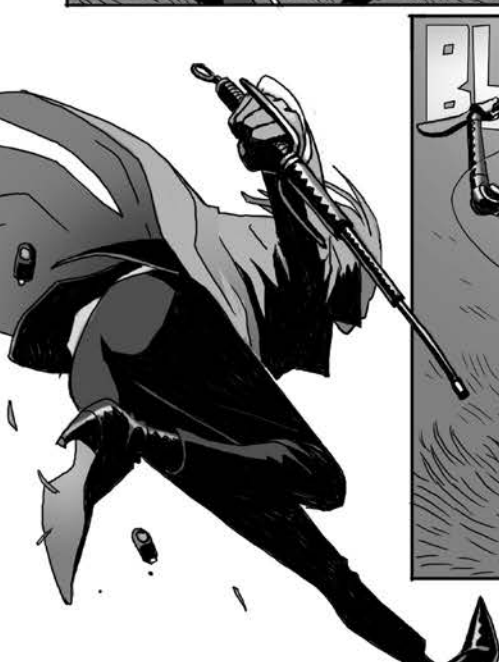




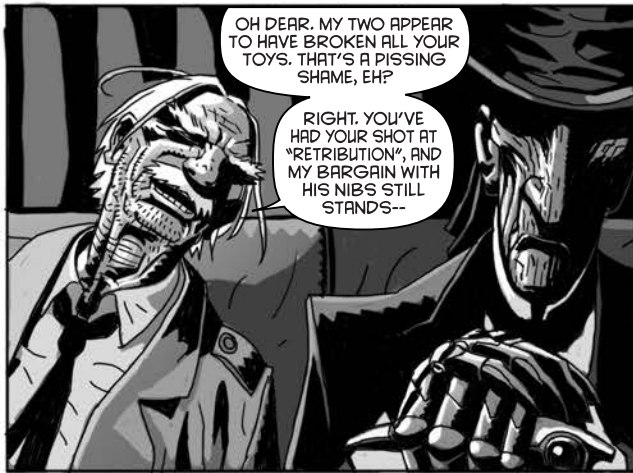




















YOU GETTING ALL THIS, HARRY?

LOUD AND CLEAR. HOW'S THE HAND, BY THE WAY?



HOW DO YOU THINK? HURTS LIKE HELL.

I'VE SENT WORD TO EXETER. YOU'LL BE RIGHT AS RAIN AGAIN ONCE THEY SEND UP THOSE NEW NOSEPICKERS THEY'RE GROWING FOR YOU.

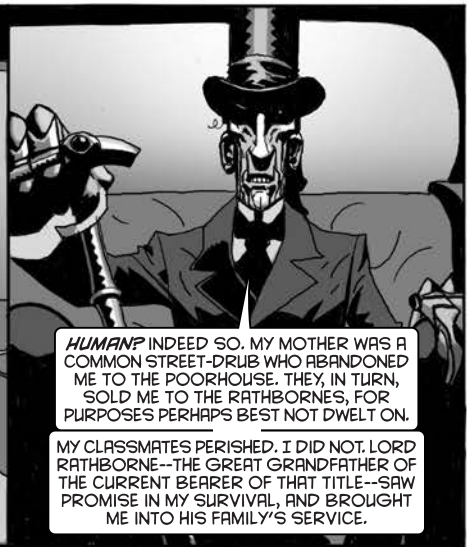


UH, SO HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED FOR THE RATHBORNE FAMILY?

IN MY PRESENT CAPACITY? SINCE EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY, OR THEREABOUTS.



OH. AND, UH, YOU'RE... I MEAN...



*HUMAN?* INDEED SO. MY MOTHER WAS A COMMON STREET-DRUG WHO ABANDONED ME TO THE POORHOUSE. THEY, IN TURN, SOLD ME TO THE RATHBORNES, FOR PURPOSES PERHAPS BEST NOT DWELT ON.

MY CLASSMATES PERISHED. I DID NOT. LORD RATHBORNE--THE GREAT GRANDFATHER OF THE CURRENT BEARER OF THAT TITLE--SAW PROMISE IN MY SURVIVAL, AND BROUGHT ME INTO HIS FAMILY'S SERVICE.



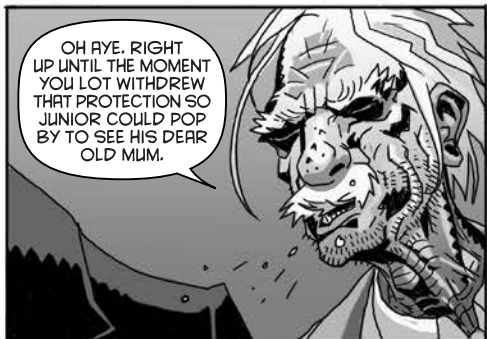
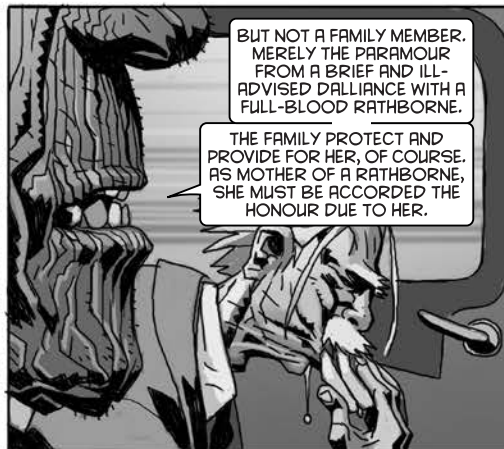
MY SERVICES ARE *VALUED*, SERGEANT HOPKINS. MY EMPLOYER'S WISH FOR ME TO CONTINUE LIVING AND SERVING.

GOOD SERVANTS ARE HARD TO COME BY. ONCE ACQUIRED, AN EMPLOYER IS OFTEN LOATH TO LET THEM GO...



...A SITUATION I BELIEVE THE GOOD INSPECTOR COULD ALSO WELL ATTEST TO.







"...STARTING WITH A *POSTCODE*  
SO WE CAN GO ROUND THERE  
AND GIVE THIS MAD BASTARD A  
RIGHT PROPER KICKING."

IT'S ALWAYS  
THE BLOODY  
TOP ONE,  
ISN'T IT?

SPREAD THE  
LADS OUT--STANDARD  
PENTAGRAM PATTERN ROUND  
THE PLACE. NO ONE'S GETTING  
IN, AND I WANT IT MADE BLOODY  
SURE THAT THING'S NOT  
GETTING OUT.

WHERE'D  
YOU WANT US,  
BOSS?

YOU STAY HERE TOO, LOVE. I NEED YOU  
TO KEEP THE NATIVES HAPPY. ANYONE FROM  
THE LOCAL COPSHOP TURNS UP, JUST GIVE  
'EM SOME BOLLOCKS ABOUT ANTI-  
TERRORIST OPERATIONS.

MY GAFFER  
WANTS THIS ONE  
ALIVE. A REAL LIVE  
RATHBORNE, FOR  
THE LAB BOYS  
TO POKE AND  
PROD AT.

MY EMPLOYERS  
REGRETFULLY SAY  
OTHERWISE. THE  
RENEGADE IS TO  
BE RETURNED  
*UNHARMED* TO THE  
FAMILY. NO MORE  
RATHBORNE BLOOD  
IS TO BE SPILLED.

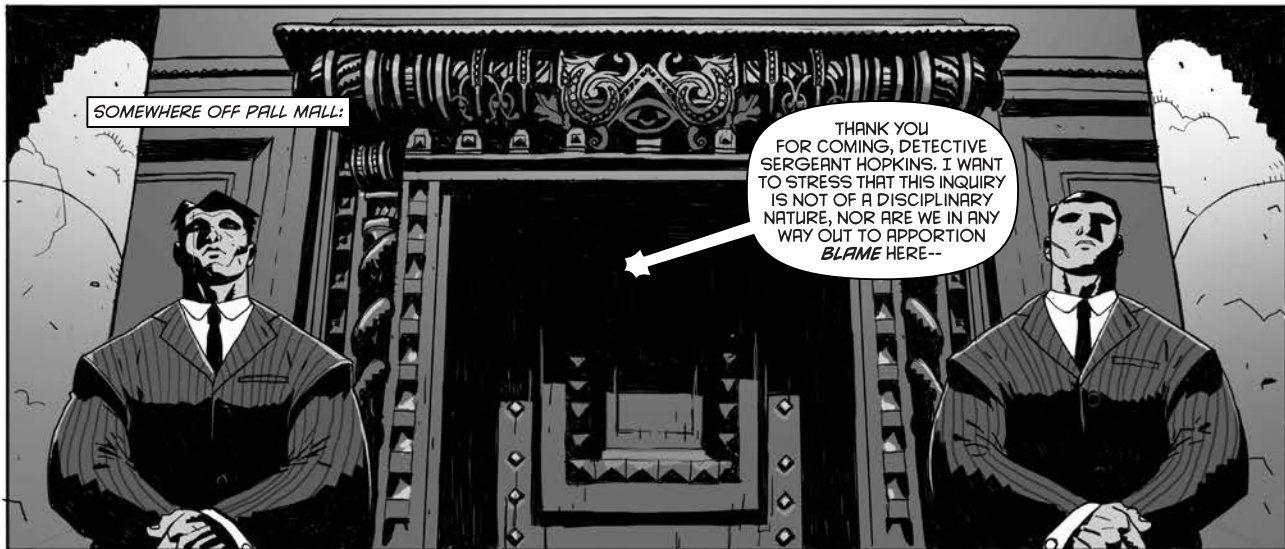
WELL NOW.  
WE'VE GOT A BIT  
OF A *PROBLEM*,  
THEN. SO WHAT ARE  
WE GOING TO DO  
ABOUT IT?











SOMEWHERE OFF PALL MALL:

THANK YOU FOR COMING, DETECTIVE SERGEANT HOPKINS. I WANT TO STRESS THAT THIS INQUIRY IS NOT OF A DISCIPLINARY NATURE, NOR ARE WE IN ANY WAY OUT TO APPORTION *BLAME* HERE--



--WE MERELY WISH TO ASCERTAIN WHAT EXACTLY WENT WRONG WITH INSPECTOR ABSALOM'S ATTEMPTED CAPTURE OF THE RATHBORNE CREATURE.

I'VE ALREADY FILED MY REPORT ON THE MATTER, CORROBORATING EVERYTHING THE INSPECTOR SAID.



INDEED, AND SUCH LOYALTY IS TO BE COMMENDED, BUT *INDULGE* US, DETECTIVE SERGEANT. TELL US AGAIN, FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.



AS I SAID, WE SECURED THE AREA WHILE THE INSPECTOR AND THE REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE RATHBORNE FAMILY ENTERED THE PREMISES.

"AND YOU DIDN'T CONSIDER THE INSPECTOR'S ACTIONS TO BE SOMEWHAT *RECKLESS*?"

"NO, SIR. NOT IN THE LEAST--



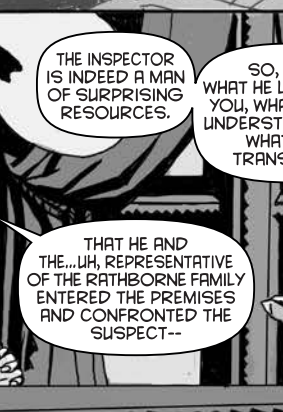




"--FROM THE BRIEF TIME I HAD SPENT WITH THE INSPECTOR, I HAD FULL CONFIDENCE IN HIS ABILITY TO DEAL WITH THE PERCEIVED THREAT LEVEL."



THE INSPECTOR IS INDEED A MAN OF SURPRISING RESOURCES.



SO, FROM WHAT HE LATER TOLD YOU, WHAT IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THEN TRANSPIRED?



THAT HE AND THE...UH, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RATHBORNE FAMILY ENTERED THE PREMISES AND CONFRONTED THE SUSPECT--

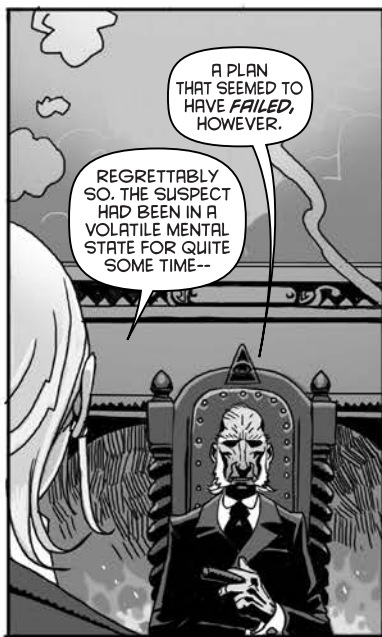


"--THAT THE SUSPECT RESISTED ARREST, VIGOROUSLY SO, APPARENTLY--"



"--MAKING NECESSARY THE USE OF FORCE IN ORDER TO SUBDUED HIM."





A PLAN THAT SEEMED TO HAVE **FAILED**, HOWEVER.

REGRETTABLY SO. THE SUSPECT HAD BEEN IN A VOLATILE MENTAL STATE FOR QUITE SOME TIME--



"--MAKING HIM UNCONTROLLABLE, AND PROBABLY **IMPOSSIBLE** TO SUBDUCE."

GET THAT STITCHED, SUNSHINE!



--WHILE MY EMPLOYERS SHOW AN UNCHARACTERISTIC DEGREE OF **MISGUIDED COMPASSION** WHEN IT COMES TO DEALING WITH THE FAMILY BLACK SHEEP

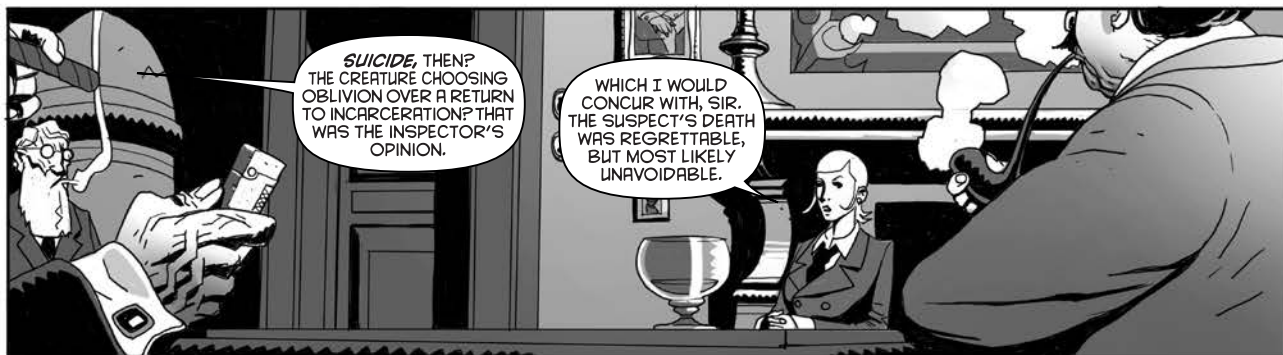


HERE, YOU THINKING WHAT I'M THINKING?



WELL, AT LEAST HE DIDN'T LAND IN THE KIDDIES' PLAYGROUND. THAT'S A RELIEF, EH?





SUICIDE, THEN? THE CREATURE CHOOSING OBLIVION OVER A RETURN TO INCARCERATION? THAT WAS THE INSPECTOR'S OPINION.

WHICH I WOULD CONCUR WITH, SIR. THE SUSPECT'S DEATH WAS REGRETTABLE, BUT MOST LIKELY UNAVOIDABLE.



INDEED. NOW, REGARDING THE "PERSONAGE" REPRESENTING THE RATHBORNES' INTERESTS...

YOU MEAN MISTER CRITCH, SIR?

IF THAT'S WHAT THE CREATURE CALLS ITSELF THESE DAYS, THEN--YES, I DO.

DO YOU HAVE ANY REASON TO THINK THAT HE AND THE INSPECTOR MAY HAVE HAD ANY KIND OF *PRIVATE ARRANGEMENT* BETWEEN THEMSELVES REGARDING THIS AFFAIR?



A MOST SATISFACTORY OUTCOME, INSPECTOR.

AND YOU REQUIRE A *SERVICE* OF ME, SO THAT I MAY HONOUR MY HALF OF OUR BARGAIN?

THESE TWO. I WANT YOU TO FIND THEM FOR ME.



CHILDREN?

MY GRANDKIDS.



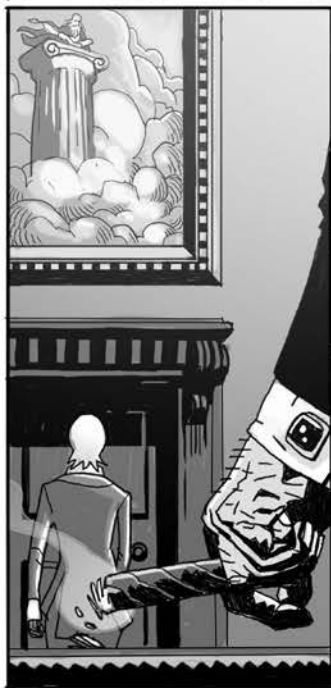
THEY TOOK THEM TWELVE YEARS AGO--OCCAM AND HIS MOB. AS *INSURANCE*, SEE?

LIKE THE *CANCER* WASN'T ENOUGH TO MAKE ME KEEP ON DOING WHAT I DO FOR THEM.



MY SYMPATHIES, INSPECTOR. THEN WE *BOTH* SERVE UNWORTHY TASKMASTERS, IT WOULD SEEM.







# SICK LEAVE

Script: Gordon Rennie

Art: Tiernen Trevallion

Letters: Simon Bowland

Originally published in *2000 AD* Prog 2012





EAST LONDON:

YOU TWO  
TOOK YOUR  
TIME.

SORRY, MATE.  
THERE I WAS, LOOKING  
FORWARD TO A LIE-IN WITH  
THE MISSUS AND A DAY  
OUT WITH THE KIDS, AND  
THEN I THOUGHT--

--"NAH, I'D  
BETTER GET MY SKATES  
ON, AND GO HELP OLD  
BARNEY CRAWL AROUND  
AMONG BROKEN GLASS  
AND DOG CRAP  
IN SOME CHAV-HOLE  
SOMEWHERE."

NOT DOG CRAP GRAFFITI.  
EXCEPT IT'S *CAMOUFLAGÉ*.  
THERE'S SOMETHING  
UNDERNEATH IT.

THIS PLACE  
IS A GHOST TOWN, BUT  
THE WHISPERING GALLERY  
SAYS THERE'S SOMETHING  
GOING ON HERE. I THINK  
IT'S IN THE GRAFFITI.  
OR UNDER IT.

TAKE A LOOK  
AROUND. LOOK  
FOR MORE SITES  
LIKE THIS. LET ME  
KNOW WHAT  
YOU FIND.

GET YOUR NOTEBOOK OUT,  
DS HOPKINS. I THINK WE'RE ABOUT  
TO CRACK THE INFAMOUS DUAL  
CASES OF "MIKEY-T IS AN F'ING  
GRASS" AND "KRAZY-REE SELL  
GOOD WEEDZ".

YOU SOUND  
JUST LIKE HIM,  
YOU KNOW.

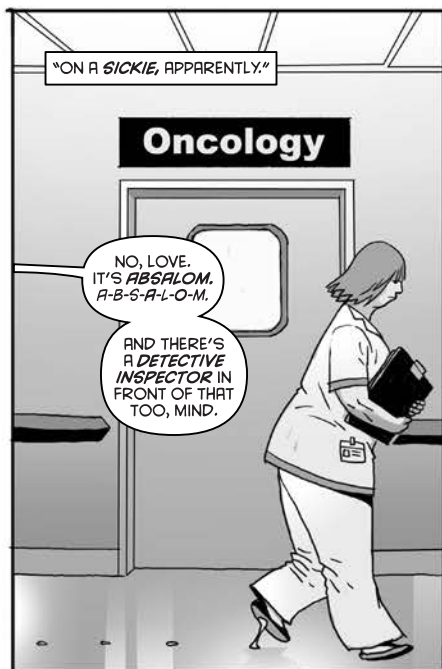
WELL,  
YOU *TRY* TO,  
AT LEAST.

THE  
GAFFER? I'M HIS  
UNDERSTUDY,  
REMEMBER, AND  
I'M STILL LEARNING  
THE PART.

SO  
WHERE IS HE,  
ANYWAY?

ABSALOM?









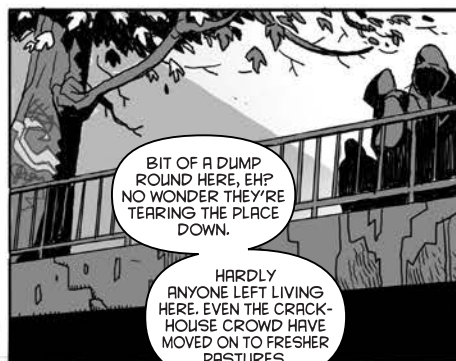
NICE OUTFIT. PUTTING IN FOR A TRANSFER TO THE GYMKHANA SPECIAL BRANCH, ARE WE?

RIDING LESSONS. YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO WAS SUPPOSED TO BE HAVING A DAY OFF TODAY.

BY THE WAY, NICE TO KNOW YOU'RE MARRIED.



Hmmm. DIDN'T I MENTION THAT BEFORE? I'M SURE I DID.



BIT OF A DUMP ROUND HERE, EHP? NO WONDER THEY'RE TEARING THE PLACE DOWN.

HARDLY ANYONE LEFT LIVING HERE. EVEN THE CRACK-HOUSE CROWD HAVE MOVED ON TO FRESHER PASTURES.



OI, OI. LOOK'S LIKE SOME OF THE LOCAL WILDLIFE'S STILL AROUND. LET'S HAVE SOME FUN...



ALL RIGHT, LADS. EARLY DOORS FOR A MUGGING, ISN'T IT?

SEE THIS? THAT'S THE BAD NEWS. NOW UP AGAINST THE WALL AND LET'S SEE WHAT'S IN THOSE POCKETS.

TERENCE...



TERENCE--!

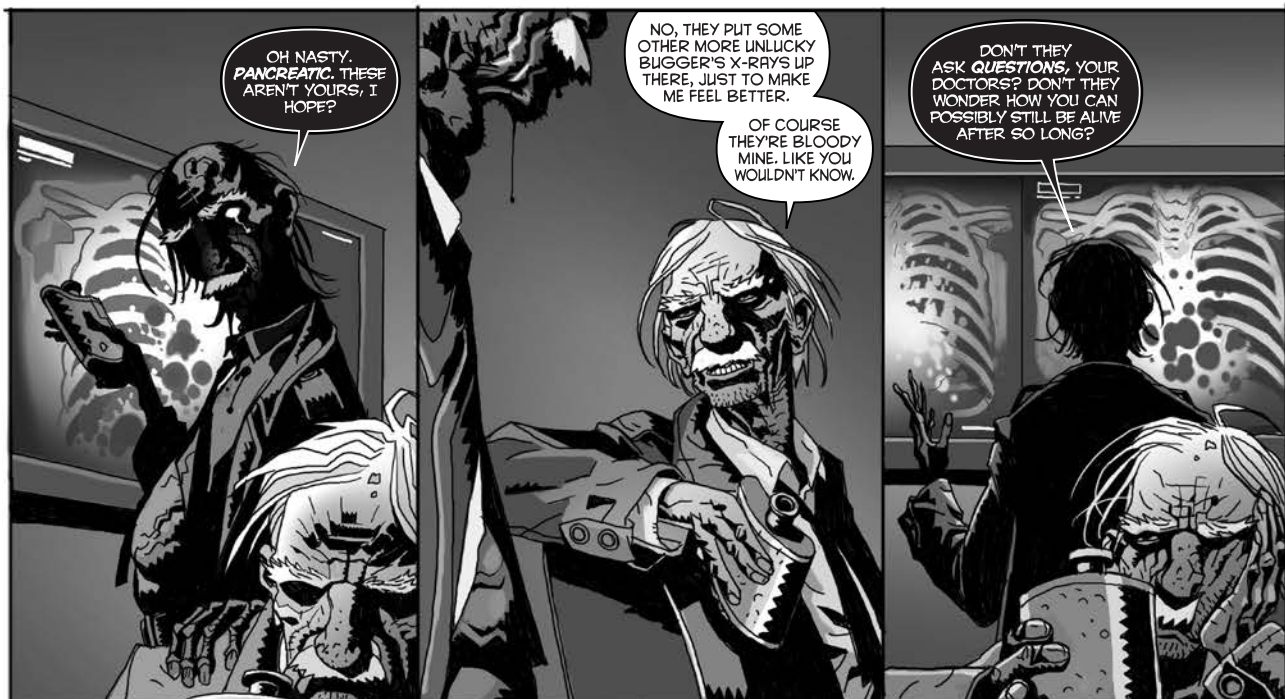












OH NASTY.  
**PANCREATIC.** THESE  
AREN'T YOURS, I  
HOPE?

NO, THEY PUT SOME  
OTHER MORE UNLUCKY  
BUGGER'S X-RAYS UP  
THERE, JUST TO MAKE  
ME FEEL BETTER.

OF COURSE  
THEY'RE BLOODY  
MINE. LIKE YOU  
WOULDN'T KNOW.

DON'T THEY  
ASK **QUESTIONS**, YOUR  
DOCTORS? DON'T THEY  
WONDER HOW YOU CAN  
POSSIBLY STILL BE ALIVE  
AFTER SO LONG?



OH, I'M A BLOODY  
**MEDICAL CURIOSITY**.  
ME. I'VE HAD MORE THINGS  
POKED INTO ME THAN HALF  
THE REGULAR'S UP  
HAMPSTEAD HEATH.

YOU THINK  
I WOULDN'T HAVE  
CASHED MY CHIPS  
IN BY NOW, IF I  
COULD? BUT THEY  
WON'T **LET** ME,  
WILL THEY?



THAT LOT.  
THE GAFFERS. THE  
BLOODY HIGH-AND-  
MIGHTY OF THE  
STYLITE CLUB.

WON'T LET ME  
QUIT. WON'T LET ME DIE IN  
PEACE, NOT EVEN WITH THE  
CANCER. **THE JOB**, THAT'S  
WHAT THEY SAY IS  
IMPORTANT--

MAYBE THEY'RE  
RIGHT. AFTER ALL, IF  
I'M NOT AROUND  
TO DO IT, THEN WHO  
ELSE WILL?

HERE.  
ALLOW ME.

AH YES.  
THE **JOB**. HOW  
LONG HAS IT BEEN  
NOW? FORTY  
YEARS?





AND THE REST. GOT IN THE DOOR BY WORKING THE PHIBES CASE--CHRIST, AND THAT WAS A WEIRD ONE--WITH OLD TROUTY. THEN ON TO THAT CANNIBALS IN THE UNDERGROUND BUSINESS WITH CALHOUN.

INSPECTOR CALHOUN. BY GOD, COULD THAT OLD DEVIL DRINK. SPEAKING OF WHICH--



YOUR GOOD HEALTH.

AND YOURS, HARRY.

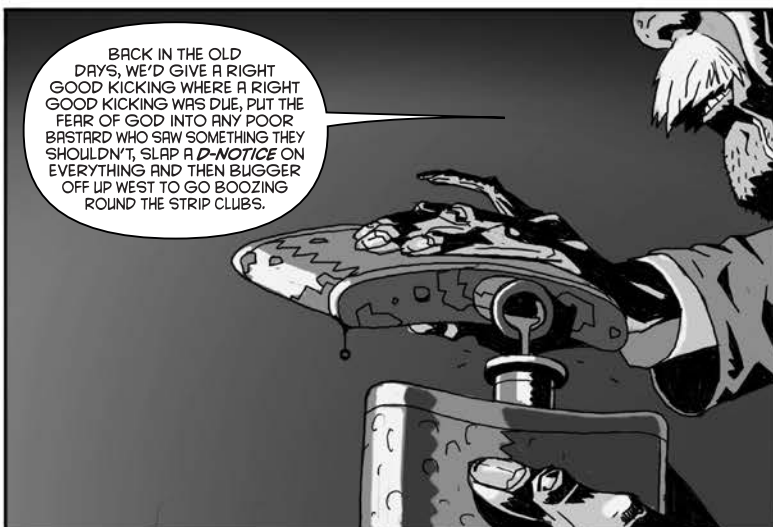
CLINK



I KNEW 'EM ALL. TROUTY AND CALHOUN. JACK REGAN. CHARLIE BARLOW, EVEN THAT IRISH GIT WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THAT ZOMBIE MESS UP MANCHESTER WAY. ALL GONE NOW. SNUFFED IT, OR ROTTING ON A POLICE PENSION IN MARBELLA.

HARRY ABSALOM. THE LAST OF THE OLD GUARD, AND WHO'S GOING TO HOLD THE FORT AFTER HE'S GONE?

YOU DON'T THINK ANY OF YOUR CURRENT LOT CAN FILL A DEAD MAN'S SHOES?



BACK IN THE OLD DAYS, WE'D GIVE A RIGHT GOOD KICKING WHERE A RIGHT GOOD KICKING WAS DUE, PUT THE FEAR OF GOD INTO ANY POOR BASTARD WHO SAW SOMETHING THEY SHOULDN'T, SLAP A D-NOTICE ON EVERYTHING AND THEN BUGGER OFF UP WEST TO GO BOOZING ROUND THE STRIP CLUBS.



THESE DAYS, WELL...IT'S DIFFERENT, ISN'T IT? I'VE GOT A D'S WHO GETS MANICURES AND USES SKIN CREAM--AND I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT THE NEW BIT OF SKIRT...

THIS LOT TODAY? THEY'VE GOT IT EASY...



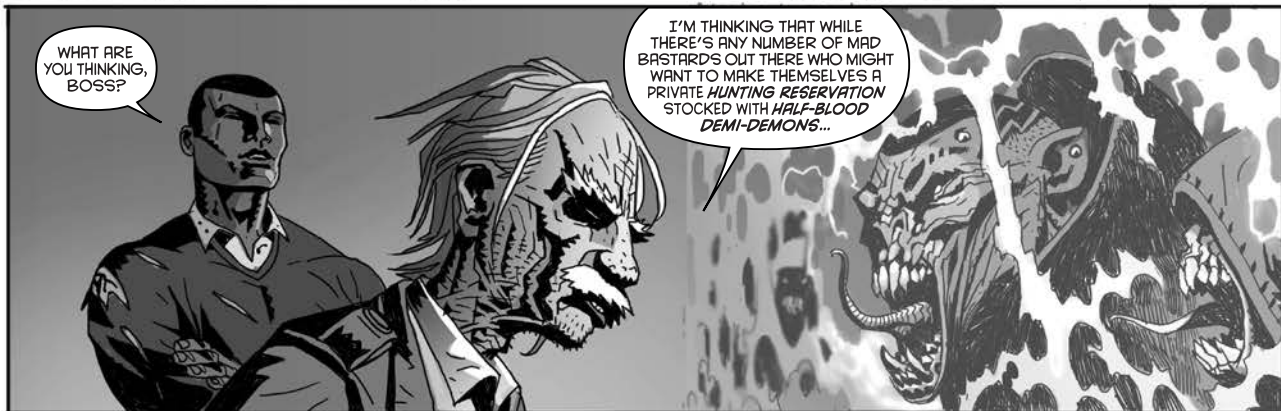
"...JUST AS WELL THINGS ARE  
A LOT *TAMER* NOW THAN THEY  
WERE BACK IN THE OLD DAYS."













# GHOSTS OF LONDON

Script: Gordon Rennie

Art: Tiernen Trevallion

Letters: Ellie De Ville

Originally published in 2000 AD Progs 1765-1771





THE EAST END OF LONDON, 1936:



BLOODY COWARDS!  
**TRAITORS**, THE LOT OF  
THEM — IN LEAGUE WITH THE  
BLOODY KIKES AND  
BOLSHEVIKS!

ERLAND, PLEASE!  
THEY'LL FIND US! WE  
HAVE TO GO!



HE'S RIGHT, ERLAND.  
THE BALLOON'S  
GONE UP. MOSLEY'S  
NEVER GOING TO  
COME BACK FROM  
THIS MESS. IT'S  
OVER!

OVER? FOR  
MOSLEY.  
MAYBE. FOR  
THE UNION,  
TOO.

THEY'LL LOOK BACK  
AT THIS MOMENT, THIS  
COUNTRY'S ENEMIES,  
AND SAY THAT THIS IS  
WHERE THEY BEAT US,  
BUT THEY'LL BE  
WRONG —



IT'S  
NEVER OVER.  
NEVER.





















AYE AYE.  
NOTHING LIKE A  
SURPRISE BIT OF  
**HEAD** TO START  
THE DAY OFF WITH  
A BANG.



LEAVE IT  
OUT, HARRY.  
IT'S NOT EVEN  
LUNCHTIME YET. AND  
WE'VE GOT AN  
AUDIENCE.

SOD OFF.  
NOT THE FIRST TIME  
I'VE HAD TO GET ON  
THE WELLIES TO FISH  
SOME POOR SOD'S  
NAPPER OUT THE  
RIVER.

MIND  
YOU, USUALLY  
IT'S ONLY  
BEEN ONE AT  
A TIME.



GETTING REPORTS OF  
MORE OF THEM BEING  
FOUND AT WOOLWICH,  
GREENWICH AND  
ROUND THE ISLE  
OF DOGS.

WELL, THERE WOULD  
BE, WOULDN'T  
THERE? BLOODY  
**THOUSANDS** OF  
THE THINGS WENT  
INTO THE RIVER  
ONCE UPON  
A TIME.

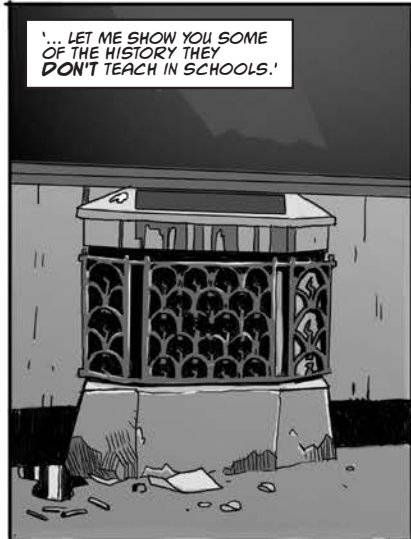


WHAT DO  
YOU MEAN,  
BOSS?

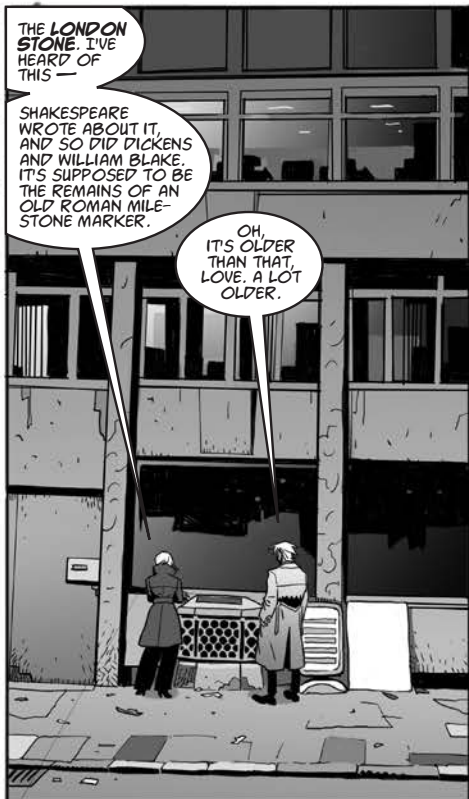
I'M TALKING  
ABOUT 61 AD, WHEN  
**BOUDICEA** HERE AND HER  
ARMY OF PREHISTORIC FOOT-  
BALLERS SACKED OLD LONDON  
TOWN, CUT THE NAPPER OFF  
EVERY ROMAN LIVING IN THE  
PLACE AND CHUCKED 'EM ALL  
INTO THE THAMES.

IT'S  
A HARDLINE  
APPROACH TO ILLEGAL  
IMMIGRATION, I'LL GRANT  
YOU, BUT THEY DIDN'T  
MESS ABOUT MUCH IN  
THOSE DAYS.









THE LONDON STONE. I'VE HEARD OF THIS —

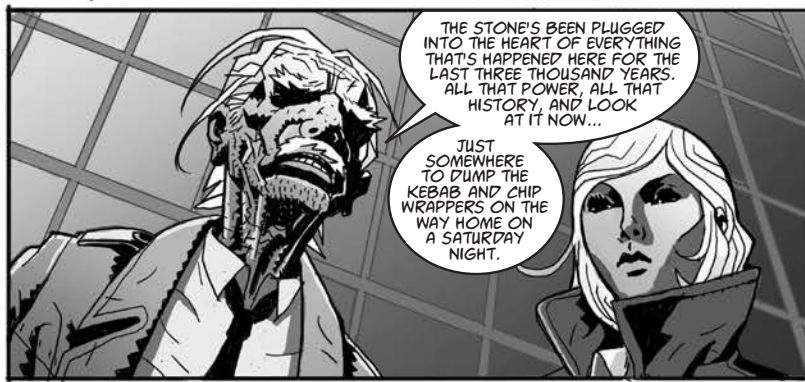
SHAKESPEARE WROTE ABOUT IT, AND SO DID DICKENS AND WILLIAM BLAKE. IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE THE REMAINS OF AN OLD ROMAN MILESTONE MARKER.

OH, IT'S OLDER THAN THAT, LOVE. A LOT OLDER.



SEE THAT UP THERE? ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL ON LUDGATE HILL. BEFORE THE CATHEDRAL, THOUGH, THERE WAS A ROMAN TEMPLE THERE. AND BEFORE THAT, THERE WAS A DRUIDIC STONE CIRCLE THERE, AT THE CENTRE OF A NETWORK OF LEY LINES.

LONDON STANDS ON ANCIENT AND MYSTICAL GROUND, AND JUST BECAUSE THAT SOUNDS LIKE A LOAD OF NEW-AGE BOLLOCKS DOESN'T MEAN IT'S ANY LESS TRUE.



THE STONE'S BEEN PLUGGED INTO THE HEART OF EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED HERE FOR THE LAST THREE THOUSAND YEARS. ALL THAT POWER, ALL THAT HISTORY, AND LOOK AT IT NOW...

JUST SOMEWHERE TO DUMP THE KEBAB AND CHIP WRAPPERS ON THE WAY HOME ON A SATURDAY NIGHT.



JUST AS WELL THAT'S NOT THE REAL STONE IN THERE, EH?

BY THE WAY, YOU KNOW WE'VE PICKED UP A COUPLE OF SHADOWS?

THREE OF THEM. THEY'VE BEEN WITH US SINCE THE EMBANKMENT.



WANT ME TO CALL FOR BACK-UP?



'DON'T BE DAFT, LOVE...











LONDON, NOW...

GET ON THE  
BLOWER PRONTO  
LOVE! TELL 'EM WE'RE  
IN PURSUIT OF A  
SUSPECT AND SEE IF  
YOU CAN'T RUSTLE  
UP SOME BACK-  
UP!



... AND ALSO  
LONDON, 1666:

TELL 'EM  
WE'RE PROCEEDING  
ALONG EASTCHEAP  
IN THE DIRECTION OF  
PUDDING BLEEDIN'  
LANE!











BLOODY HELL.  
AREN'T THERE  
ANY **NORMAL**  
BOOZERS LEFT  
IN LONDON,  
THEN?



IT'S A  
THEME PUB,  
I THINK.

WHAT'S THE  
THEME — BLOODY  
HORRIBLE?

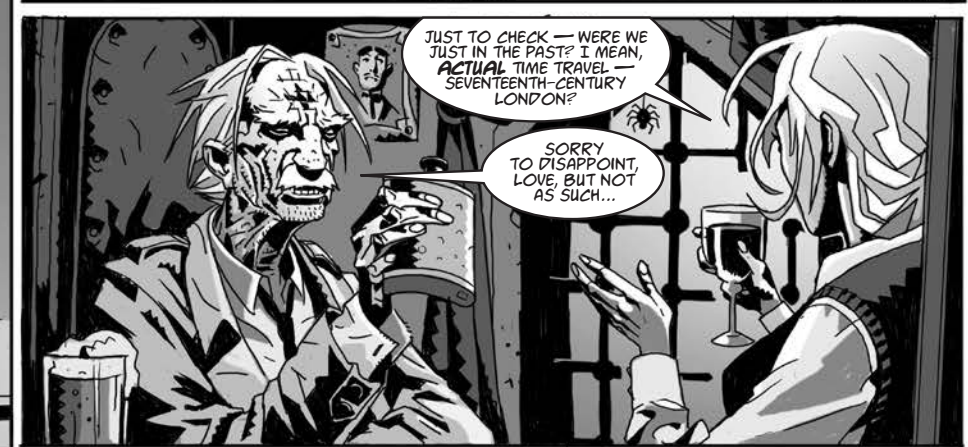
**ORDINARY ENGLISH  
PUB** — THERE'S A THEME FOR  
THEM. RACING ON THE TELLY, PORK  
SCRATCHINGS BEHIND THE BAR, AND  
SOME RACIST NUTJOB MUTTERING TO  
HIMSELF BY THE FRUIT MACHINE.

**S&W  
SPECIALS:**

Shall this *Antler*  
That *Zombie* the  
Bleed o' the? —  
STARTERS:  
A BACE IN THE CIG  
MILK'S :  
A Tug to GUN

JUST TO CHECK — WERE WE  
JUST IN THE PAST? I MEAN,  
**ACTUAL** TIME TRAVEL —  
SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY  
LONDON?

SORRY  
TO DISAPPOINT,  
LOVE, BUT NOT  
AS SUCH...







WE WERE IN A **MEMORY** OF A PAST LONDON. THAT'S WHAT THE STONE IS — A STORAGE BOX FOR ALL THOSE PAST LONDONS, ALL THOSE MEMORIES OF ALL THE GOOD THINGS AND THE BLOODY HORRIBLE THINGS THAT THIS CITY'S ALL ABOUT.

YOU KNOW WHO **CHARLIE PEACE** WAS?

A NOTORIOUS VICTORIAN CRIMINAL.



RIGHT. A PROPER VILLAIN, FROM A PROPER VILLAINOUS AGE.

HE WAS SUPPOSED TO KNOW HOW TO USE THE STONE, GETTING CHASED BY THE ROZZERS? THEN JUST TAKE A SHORTCUT THROUGH THE PLAGUE YEARS, OR LOSE 'EM IN THE CROWD AT THE HANGING OF DICK TURPIN.

PRETTY MUCH THE SAME WAY THAT LITTLE SCROTE LOST US BACK THERE.



I DON'T GET IT. IF THE STONE'S SO POWERFUL —

— THEN WHY IS IT LEFT TO SIT THERE AT THE SIDE OF A LONDON STREET, WHERE EVERY TOM, DICK AND CHARLIE PEACE CAN GET TO IT?

GOOD QUESTION, AND ONE I'D WONDER MYSELF...



'... IF I DIDN'T ALREADY KNOW THAT THAT LUMP OF SURREY ROCK THEY'VE GOT OVER THERE IS ABOUT AS KOSHER AS THE STONE OF DESTINY THAT USED TO SIT IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

'DON'T TELL THE JOCKS THAT LAST PART, MIND. SILLY BLEEDERS PROBABLY STILL THINK WE GAVE 'EM THE **REAL ONE** BACK, AND IT'S LIABE TO MAKE THEM EVEN MORE CHIPPY THAN USUAL.



'IT USED TO BE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET — THE **REAL** STONE, THE ONE SHAKESPEARE WROTE ABOUT — BEFORE THEY MOVED IT TO BECOME PART OF A NEARBY CHURCH.

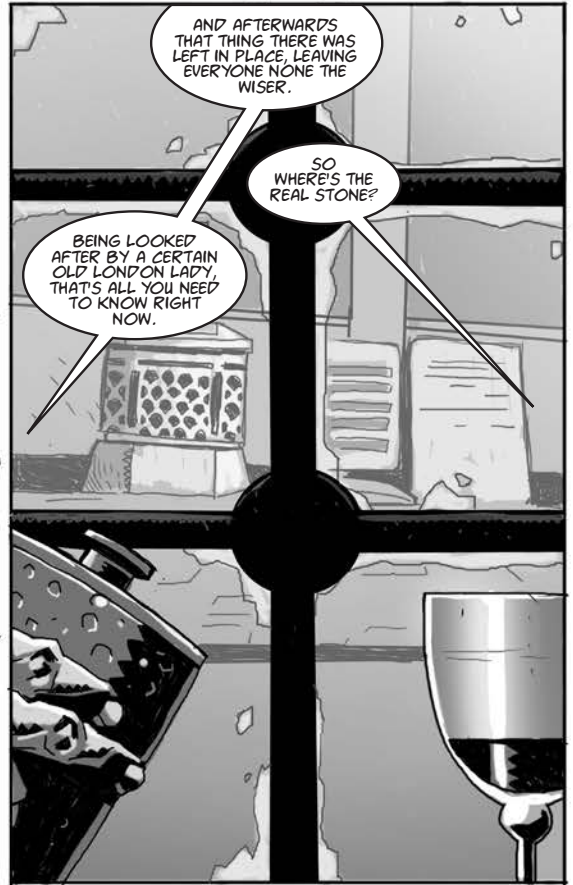


'THEN **WORLD WAR TWO** CAME ALONG, AND THE JERRIES BOMBED HALF OF LONDON TRYING TO DESTROY THE THING — "SO LONG AS THE STONE OF BRITUS IS SAFE, SO LONG SHALL LONDON FLOURISH."





'THEY BELIEVED IT, AND SO DID OUR MOB — THE STONE SURVIVED, AND WAS MOVED TO SOMEWHERE MORE SECURE.'



AND AFTERWARDS THAT THING THERE WAS LEFT IN PLACE, LEAVING EVERYONE NONE THE WISER.

SO WHERE'S THE REAL STONE?

BEING LOOKED AFTER BY A CERTAIN OLD LONDON LADY, THAT'S ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW RIGHT NOW.



THE IMPORTANT THING IS, AT LEAST NOW WE'VE GOT AN ANGLE ON WHO'S TRYING TO MESS ABOUT WITH THE FORCES INSIDE THE STONE.

THAT TOE-RAG THAT GAVE US THE SLIP. WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT HIM?

THAT HE WAS WEARING A RING, WITH AN ODD SYMBOL ON IT.



THIS SYMBOL, THE ORDO DEFENCO ALBIONIS — THE ORDER FOR THE DEFENCE OF ALBION — AND THEIR LATIN'S ABOUT AS FLAKY AS THEIR POLITICS. DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THEM, BUT I KNOW A MAN WHO DOES —

— TROUBLE IS, HE'S NOT A VERY NICE MAN AT ALL, EVEN IF HE IS MY OLD BOSS.

FINISH YOUR DRINK, LOVE, WE'RE GOING TO SEE THE GU'NOR...









WORMWOOD  
SCRUBS PRISON:

YOU  
SENT HIM  
WHERE?

HE'LL  
BE FINE, LOVE.  
LEARNED EVERYTHING  
HE KNOWS FROM ME,  
AND I LEARNED EVERY-  
THING I KNOW FROM  
THE BLOKE WE'RE  
ABOUT TO SEE.

YOUR OLD BOSS,  
WHAT DID HE DO TO  
END  
UP HERE? ON THE TAKE?  
GOT CAUGHT DOING THE  
VERBALS, OR BEATING  
CONFESSIONS OUT OF  
SUSPECTS?

OH,  
NOTHING SO  
MUNDANE FOR THE  
GUV'NOR...



NO, HE ONLY TRIED  
TO OVERTHROW THE  
GOVERNMENT BY OCCULT  
MEANS. SAID IT WAS TOO  
DANGEROUSLY LEFT-  
WING...

... AND THAT  
WAS BACK IN THE  
DAYS WHEN GOOD  
OLD MAGGIE WAS  
STILL AT NUMBER  
TEN, MIND.

HE'S KEPT  
SEGREGATED FROM  
THE OTHER PRISONERS FOR  
HIS OWN PROTECTION  
BECAUSE HE'S AN EX-COP?



NO, BECAUSE HE'S A  
BLOODY MANIAC  
PSYCHO.

RIGHT.  
ANYTHING  
ELSE I SHOULD  
KNOW?

JUST  
THAT IT WAS  
ME THAT PUT  
HIM AWAY...

'... BEST NOT TO MENTION  
IT, THOUGH. HE'S NOT THE  
KIND OF BLOKE YOU WANT  
TO PUT OUT OF SORTS.'

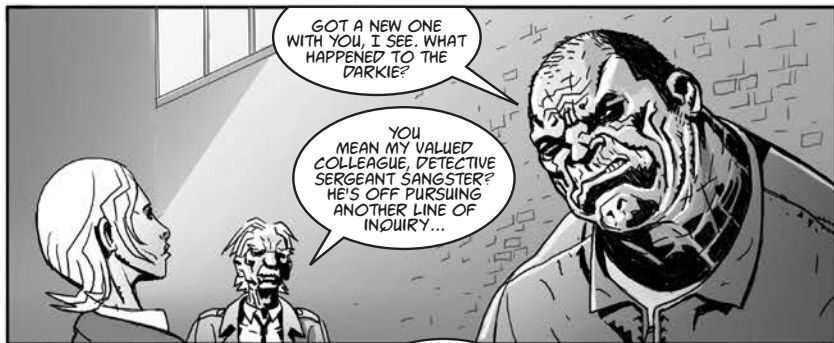
EVENING, GUV'NOR.  
BEEN A GOOD BOY, I  
HOPE? NOT TRIED TO  
SUBSTITUTE THE HEIR TO THE  
THRONE WITH A HOMUNCULUS  
GROWN BY YOUR OLD PALS  
AMONG THE BOYS FROM  
BRAZIL BRIGADE  
AGAIN, HAVE YOU?





'ELLO,  
'ARRY, NO  
HANDSHAKE,  
THEN?

I  
PREFER TO  
KEEP MY DISTANCE  
FROM MAD BASTARDS  
ARMED WITH  
GARDENING TOOLS,  
IF IT'S ALL THE  
SAME.



GOT A NEW ONE  
WITH YOU, I SEE. WHAT  
HAPPENED TO THE  
DARKIE?

YOU  
MEAN MY VALUED  
COLLEAGUE, DETECTIVE  
SERGEANT SANGSTER?  
HE'S OFF PURSUING  
ANOTHER LINE OF  
INQUIRY...



YOU LOT  
WANT TO GO  
BACK WHERE YOU  
CAME FROM!



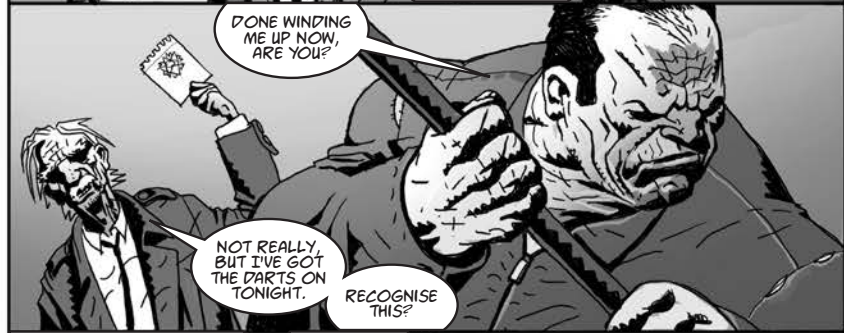
WHAT —  
CHISWICK?



HE'S A BIG FAN OF  
YOURS. SENDS A NICE  
FOOD PARCEL EVERY  
CHRISTMAS, I  
UNDERSTAND.

THAT'S HIM,  
IS IT?

'COURSE, HE  
PISSSES IN IT FIRST,  
I'M ALSO GIVEN TO  
UNDERSTAND.



DONE WINDING  
ME UP NOW,  
ARE YOU?

NOT REALLY,  
BUT I'VE GOT  
THE DARTS ON  
TONIGHT.

RECOGNISE  
THIS?



ORDER FOR THE  
DEFENCE OF ALBION. BUNCH  
OF TOFFEE-NOSED POOFS  
WISHING IT WAS STILL THE DAYS  
WHEN THE PEASANTS KNEW  
THEIR PLACE.

BACK, ARE  
THEY?

THAT'S WHAT  
WE'RE TRYING TO  
FIND OUT.



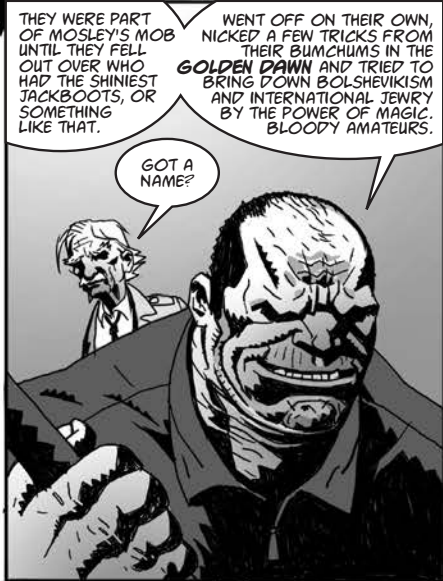


AYE AYE. RECKON YOU MIGHT BE JUST THE CHAP WE'RE LOOKING FOR...



THE OLD FILES ON THEM ARE A LITTLE ON THE LIGHT SIDE. YOUR DOING, I'M GUESSING.

ALWAYS PAYS TO HAVE A LITTLE **INSURANCE** FOR A RAINY DAY. DIDN'T I TRY TO TEACH YOU THAT?



THEY WERE PART OF MOSLEY'S MOB UNTIL THEY FELL OUT OVER WHO HAD THE SHINIEST JACKBOOTS, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

WENT OFF ON THEIR OWN, NICKED A FEW TRICKS FROM THEIR BUMCHUMS IN THE **GOLDEN DAWN** AND TRIED TO BRING DOWN BOLSHEVIKISM AND INTERNATIONAL JEWRY BY THE POWER OF MAGIC. BLOODY AMATEURS.

GOT A NAME?



**ERLAND LYTTON.** SLIMY LITTLE BUGGER. WORKED FOR US WHEN THE WAR BROKE OUT, AND SO MANAGED NOT TO GET LOCKED UP FOR TREASON, LIKE HIS EX-MATE MOSLEY.

RAN INTO HIM IN THE SEVENTIES, WHEN HE TRIED TO HYPNOTISE ME INTO JOINING THE CAUSE. I BROKE HIS ARM FOR HIS TROUBLES, BUT HE'D CLEARLY LEARNED A FEW TRICKS SINCE THE MOSLEY DAYS.



IF WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS TRUE, HE MUST BE OVER A **HUNDRED**. SURELY HE PROBABLY DIED DECADES AGO?





SHE'LL LEARN.

BLOODY 'ELL, SHE IS NEW, ISN'T SHE?

GET ON THE BLOWER, LOVE. SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH D'S SANGSTER.

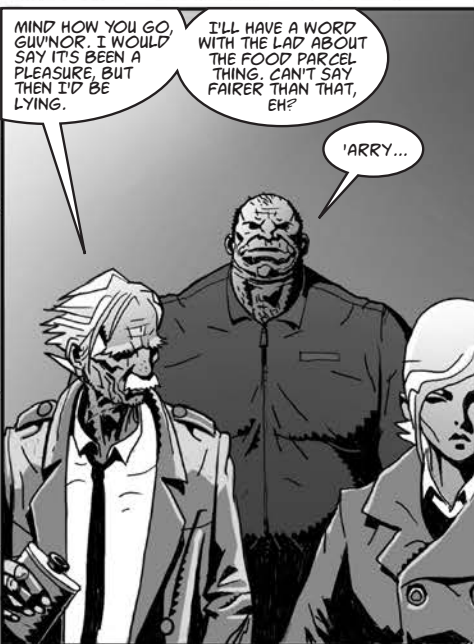


TERENCE? WE'VE GOT SOMETHING. A NAME —

SOME OLD BLOKE CALLED LYTON, BY ANY CHANCE?



GOT A PUBLIC-SPIRITED SOUL HELPING US WITH OUR INQUIRIES. THE NEXT CIRCLE LINE TRAIN'S DUE IN A FEW MINUTES, SO I'M EXPECTING WE'LL HAVE MORE TO GO ON THEN.



MIND HOW YOU GO, GUVNOR. I WOULD SAY IT'S BEEN A PLEASURE, BUT THEN I'D BE LYING.

I'LL HAVE A WORD WITH THE LAD ABOUT THE FOOD PARCEL THING. CAN'T SAY FAIRER THAN THAT, EH?

'ARRY...



I WASN'T KIDDING ABOUT THEM WISHING IT WAS THE GOOD OLD DAYS, WHEN WE ALL STILL TUGGED OUR FORELOCKS TO OUR SOCIAL BETTERS.

THEY WANT TO TURN THE CLOCK BACK, TO SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED IN THE PAST. SOMETHING RIGHT *NASTY*, I'M GUESSING...

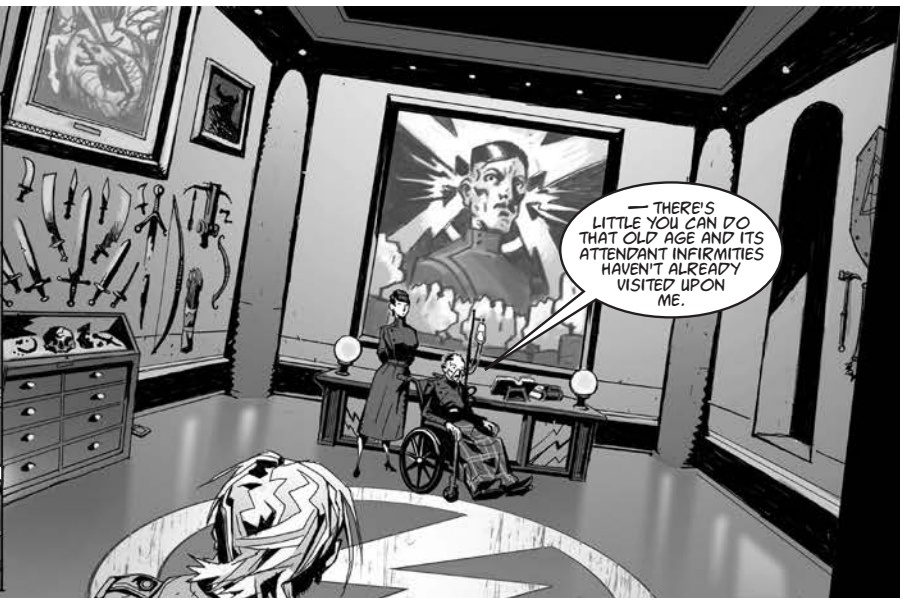








IN HERE, INSPECTOR, BUT SORRY TO DISAPPOINT —



— THERE'S LITTLE YOU CAN DO THAT OLD AGE AND ITS ATTENDANT INFIRMITIES HAVEN'T ALREADY VISITED UPON ME.



OH, I BEG TO DIFFER, CHUM. I CAN HIDE YOUR WERTHER'S ORIGINALS AND STOP YOU FROM WATCHING **COUNT-DOWN**, AND THAT'S JUST FOR STARTERS.

SO WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, YOU WITHERED OLD GIT?



CORONARY HEART DISEASE, EMPHYSEMA AND VARIOUS FORMS OF LATE-STAGE CANCER. DO WHAT YOU WANT, INSPECTOR. I DOUBT HE'D FEEL A THING.

COULD YOU USE SOMETHING ELSE, THOUGH? OUR ANCESTOR USED THAT AT THE BATTLE OF **BOSWORTH FIELD**, AND IT REALLY IS QUITE VALUABLE.



MY GRANDDAUGHTER, AND ALSO MY DOCTOR. FAMILY'S IMPORTANT, DON'T YOU THINK?

SO I IMAGINE YOU'RE HERE ABOUT THE **STONE**?

WHAT DO YOU BLOODY THINK?



'BEING LOOKED AFTER BY A CERTAIN OLD LONDON LADY...' NOW I GET IT...

THE **OLD LADY OF THREADNEEDLE STREET**.

IT'S BEEN HERE SINCE THE WAR. KEPT SAFE AS **THE BANK OF ENGLAND**, YOU MIGHT SAY.





NOW I'M NO EXPERT, BUT I'M GUESSING IT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO BE DOING THAT, RIGHT?



HOW DID YOU DO IT?

ACCESS THE STONE'S POWERS REMOTELY? YEARS OF PATIENCE AND THE ACCUMULATION OF CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES.



IN THE END, A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PERSONAL SACRIFICE WAS ALSO REQUIRED. BUT IT'LL ALL BE WORTH IT. A RETURN TO THE GOLDEN AGE. A NEW AND BETTER BRITAIN.

LOVE A BIT OF PATRIOTISM, ME. COUNT ME IN...

... EXCEPT I GET THE FEELING YOUR BRITAIN AND MINE JUST ISN'T THE SAME ONE AT ALL.



I'M THINKING PIGEON FANCYING AND WHIPPET RACING, BUT YOU'RE THINKING FOX HUNTING AND PEASANT BAITING. I WANT A WORLD WHERE I CAN SIT IN THE PUB AND WATCH THE RACING WITHOUT SOME NUTTER SOUNDING OFF.

YOU WANT ONE WHERE THE IMPORTANT THING IS THE OIKS REMEMBERING HOW TO BOW LOW ENOUGH TO YOU AND YOUR POSH MATES...



SO NOW YOU'RE GOING TO TELL ME HOW TO TURN THE BLOODY THING OFF WITHOUT BLOWING UP HALF THE SQUARE MILE OF LONDON.

OI, EVA BRAUN M.D. — WHAT'S THE HISTORY OF THIS ONE HERE? SOME ANCESTOR PONCE WAVE IT AROUND A BIT AT THE BATTLE OF THE BULLINGTON CLUB?



YOU WOULDN'T DARE...

SEE, I THINK YOU'VE GOT ME CONFUSED WITH ONE OF THOSE NICE COPPERS. THE ONES WITH BOARDS OF INQUIRY AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES.

GO BLEATING TO THE POLICE COMPLAINTS AUTHORITY — THEY'VE NEVER HEARD OF ME. TRY THE HOME OFFICE — THEY WET THEIR SKIVVIES AT THE MENTION OF THE PEOPLE I WORK FOR.



LIQUID MORPHINE. HAVE A SWIG — YOU'LL NEED IT.

SEE, WHEN IT COMES TO ILLNESS AND KNOWING WHAT CAN STILL HURT, NO MATTER HOW MUCH MEDICATION YOU'RE ON, I HAPPEN TO BE A BIT OF AN EXPERT...

... MORE'S THE PITY FOR YOU, SQUIRE.



TELL ME AGAIN HOW THE RADIO THING WORKS?

I THOUGHT I DID, AND IN TERMS YOU'D UNDERSTAND, BUT HERE WE GO AGAIN...

THE STONE'S A **REPOSITORY** FOR LONDON'S HISTORY, CONTAINING THE MEMORIES OF ALL ITS MOST SIGNIFICANT EVENTS.

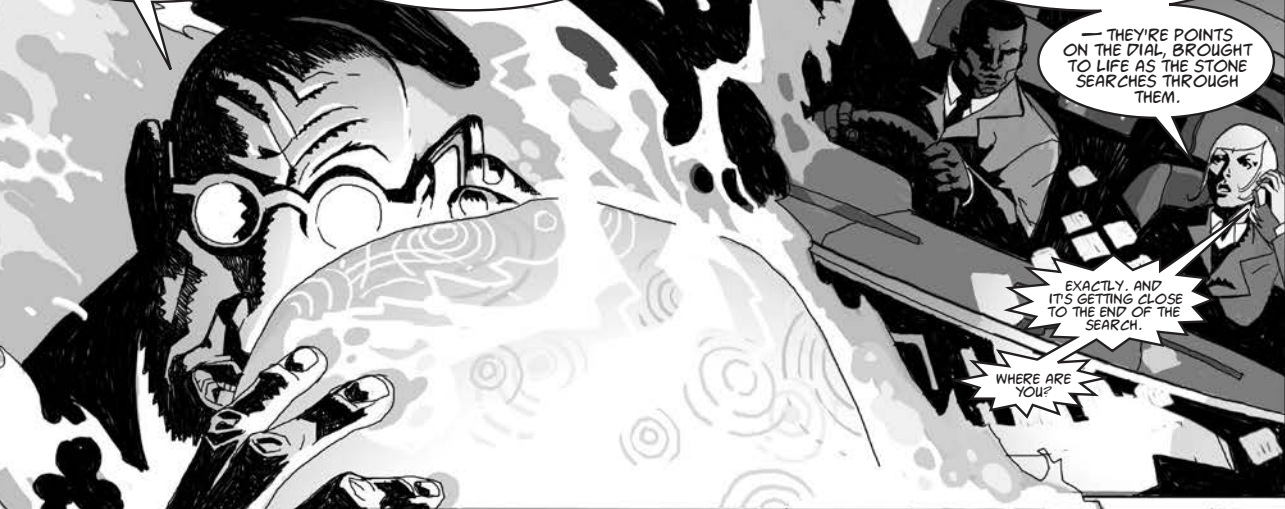
YOU CAN **ACCESS** THOSE MEMORIES, BUT TRYING TO FIND AND REPLAY A SPECIFIC ONE IS LIKE TRYING TO FIND A STATION ON A FAULTY RADIO...

— YOU HAVE TO GO UP AND DOWN ALL THE POINTS ON THE DIAL UNTIL YOU HIT THE ONE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR. AND THAT'S WHY ALL THESE PHENOMENA ARE HAPPENING —

— THEY'RE POINTS ON THE DIAL, BROUGHT TO LIFE AS THE STONE SEARCHES THROUGH THEM.

EXACTLY, AND IT'S GETTING CLOSE TO THE END OF THE SEARCH.

WHERE ARE YOU?



THE EAST END, WHERE YOU SAID THE ENERGY LOCUS SEEMED TO BE FOCUSED. SOUTH OF THE COMMERCIAL ROAD, HEADING INTO SHADWELL. NO SIGN OF —

OH MY GOD... OH MY GOD! STOP THE CAR, TERENCE!







CALL ABSALOM!  
TELL HIM I KNOW  
WHAT LYTTON AND  
HIS PEOPLE ARE  
AFTER...

"IT'S THE BATTLE OF CABLE STREET!  
THEY THINK THEY CAN CHANGE  
HISTORY IN THEIR FAVOUR, IF THEY  
MAKE SURE MOSLEY AND HIS BLACK-  
SHIRTS WIN IT THIS TIME AROUND!"





SOMEWHERE IN  
OXFORDSHIRE,  
NOW...

HHFF...  
WELL, YOU WON'T  
BE NEEDING THAT  
BIT, ANYWAY.  
NOT AT YOUR  
AGE.

BLOODY  
HELL, BUT  
THIS IS THIRSTY-  
GOING, EH?

NOW, WHY DON'T YOU BE  
A NICE BARMY OLD NAZI  
GENT, AND TELL ME HOW TO  
STOP WHAT'S HAPPENING  
AT CABLE STREET, BEFORE  
I DO SOMETHING TO YOU  
THAT NO AMOUNT OF  
NHS WAITING LISTS  
ARE GOING TO  
FIX?

... AND THE EAST END  
OF LONDON, 1936:













HARRY?  
I TOLD YOU, I  
CAN'T EVEN BEGIN TO  
TRY TO SHUT THIS  
THING DOWN WITHOUT  
RISKING —

WAIT...  
WHAT?



RIGHT. NO OFFENCE,  
GUV, BUT HAVE YOU  
SUBSTANTIALLY UPPED  
THE **MORPHINE INTAKE**  
TODAY? 'COS THAT'S GOT  
TO BE THE MADDEST  
BLOODY IDEA  
I'VE —



WHAT  
HE SAYS.  
DO IT.



HARRY? SOMETHING  
GOING ON HERE I  
SHOULD KNOW  
ABOUT?

JUST  
DO WHAT  
YOU'RE TOLD,  
SON...



— SOMEONE'S PLAYING  
BLOODY PUNCH & JUDY  
LARKS WITH US HERE!

SMACK!





WE GO.  
NOW.



I CAN'T! **DS SANGSTER** IS STILL HERE SOMEWHERE —



YOU GO.  
NOT SAFE HERE  
SOON.

OH HELL,  
HARRY, THIS IS  
**TOO MENTAL**, EVEN  
FOR US. THERE'S SO  
MUCH **BAD, BAD** STUFF  
IN HERE, AND THE THING  
YOU WANT ME TO FIND...  
IT'S BURIED SO DEEP  
AND SO FAR BACK  
IN TIME...



'... YOU KNOW, SOMETIMES THERE'S  
A GOOD REASON WHY WE TELL  
OURSELVES THAT WE DON'T KNOW  
ANYTHING ABOUT WHAT WENT ON  
HERE IN **PREHISTORIC TIMES**.'





LONDON, NOW...

HARRY,  
THIS IS **INSANE!**  
WE'VE GONE RIGHT TO  
THE BOTTOM OF THE WELL,  
AND DREDGED  
UP ALL THE MUCK  
THAT WAS WAITING  
DOWN THERE.

THIS ISN'T  
SOME BLOODY  
HISTORY PAGEANT  
WE'VE BROUGHT BACK,  
OR A BIT OF LEGENDS  
OF OLDE LONDON  
TOWN BOLLOCKS. I'M  
TELLING YOU, THIS  
IS **SERIOUS**  
STUFF...

... AND ALSO  
ELSEWHERE:

'... **REAL PRIMAL NASTINESS,**  
FROM THE DAYS WHEN THERE  
WERE EVEN WORSE THINGS ON THE  
LOOSE ROUND HERE THAN PEARLY  
KINGS AND MILLWALL FANS.'

SO HOW DO  
WE TURN IT  
OFF?

YOU **CAN'T**  
GUV. WE'VE OPENED  
THE DOOR, AND NOW THE  
ORIGINAL LONDONERS  
THE THINGS THAT WERE  
HERE BEFORE EVERYONE  
ELSE — ARE COMING  
TO HAVE A SHUFFY  
AT US.











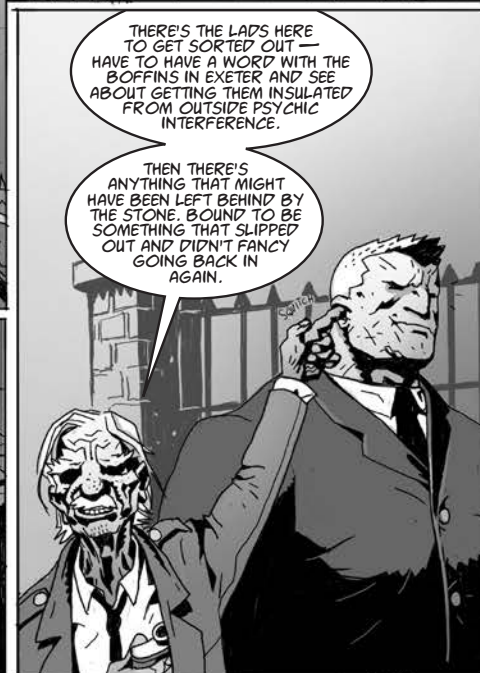






AFTERNOON THERE, GUV'NOR. NEW CELLMATE FOR YOU. NEED YOU TO KEEP AN EYE ON HIM FOR ME.

OH, AND MAKE SURE HE GETS HIS FAIR SHARE OF THOSE SPECIAL FOOD PARCELS, WILL YOU?



THERE'S THE LADS HERE TO GET SORTED OUT — HAVE TO HAVE A WORD WITH THE BOFFINS IN EXETER AND SEE ABOUT GETTING THEM INSULATED FROM OUTSIDE PSYCHIC INTERFERENCE.

THEN THERE'S ANYTHING THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN LEFT BEHIND BY THE STONE. BOUND TO BE SOMETHING THAT SLIPPED OUT AND DIDN'T FANCY GOING BACK IN AGAIN.



HEH HEH HEH!

THAT IT? WE DONE NOW?

LOOSE ENDS LOVE. ALWAYS SOME OF 'EM NEED TIDYING UP.



NOT TO WORRY, THOUGH. IF THEY'RE OUT THERE, WE'LL FIND 'EM SOON ENOUGH...





# SKETCHES





Absolom  
Sketches

Ferron!!



DC HURST



HARRY ABSOLOM



JEMIMA HOPKINS



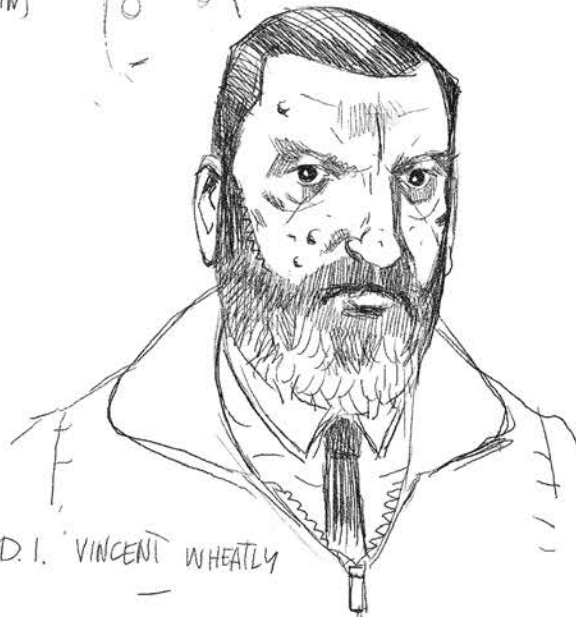
D.S.  
JEMIMA HOPKINS



D.S. TERENCE SANGSTER



BARNABUS CREW



D.I. VINCENT WHEATLY





# COMBAT SERVITORS —



GHURKA — VICTORIAN  
UNIFORM

STUFFED —  
ANIMAL/PET  
WITH CLOCK-  
WORKS AND  
SERVITOR BITS  
—  
MADE UP  
ANIMALS

ADAPTED  
MILITARY SERVITOR  
+ ANCESTOR  
SKULL  
—  
ANTIQUE  
UNIFORM

2 0 11





From

SPRING-HEELED JACK





"THE LADS"



'ACTION MAN



D.C. HURST



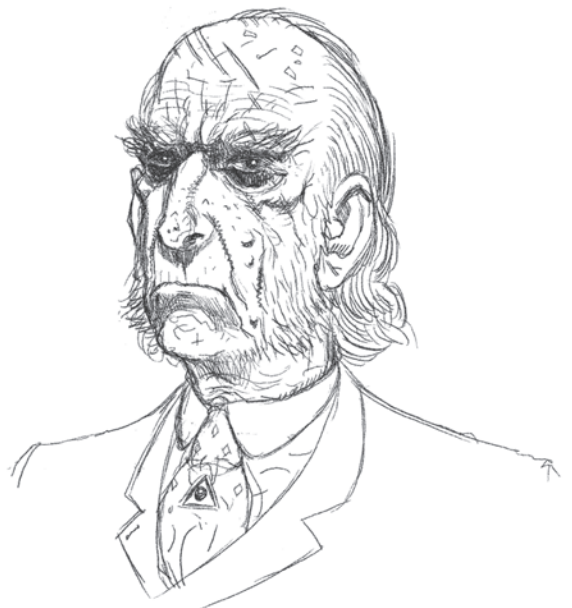
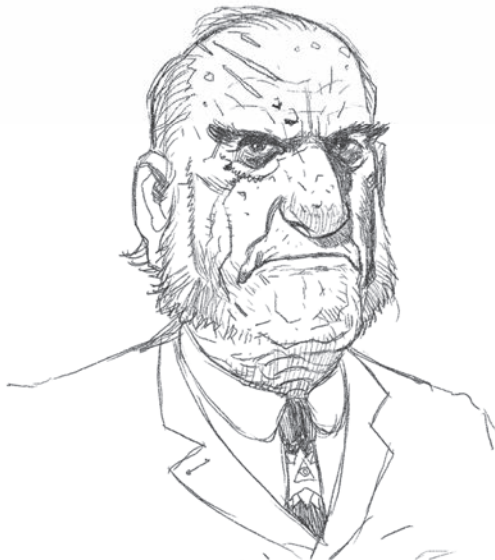


CRITCH

TER



WIERD  
CLOCK WORK EYES



SIR CHARLES OCCAM #2

TER



## WRITER

**Gordon Rennie** is one of *2000 AD* and the *Megazine's* most prolific creators, with co-creative credits for *Caballistics, Inc.*, *Glimmer Rats*, *Missionary Man*, *Necronauts*, *Storming Heaven*, *Rain Dogs* and *Witchworld*. He has also written *Daily Star Dredd* strips, *Judge Dredd*, *Harke and Burr*, *Mean Machine*, *Past Imperfect*, *Pulp Sci-Fi*, *Rogue Trooper*, *Satanus*, *Terror Tales*, *Tharg the Mighty*, *Vector 13*, *Absalom* and *Aquila*.

## ARTIST

**Tiernen Trevallion** has worked as an illustrator since he was convinced to leave school in the mid-eighties. His first comic commissions were for *Inferno Magazine* on the strip *Tales from the Ten-Tailed Cat* and *Daemonifuge 3* with Simon Spurrier for *Warhammer Monthly*. He then pestered Tharg, until 2007, where he was given an Al Ewing-scripted *Terror Tale*, followed by a couple of *Tales from the Black Museum* stories in the *Judge Dredd Magazine*. Now currently illustrating *Absalom*, Tiernen also works on his own projects, some of which involve angry puffins.





## CLEANIN' UP THE MANOR ONE BLEEDIN' DEMON AT A TIME!

**MODERN-DAY LONDON.** Veteran copper, Detective Inspector Harry Absalom, heads a special squad that enforces The Accord - a diplomatic treaty made in the sixteenth century between the throne of England and Hell. If any demonic entities step out of line Harry and his team will track the infernal offenders down and sort them out for good. A miserable old bastard with a knack for finding trouble, Harry is the perfect man for the job!

Written by Gordon Rennie (*Necronauts*) with stunning artwork from new talent Tiernen Trevallion, *Absalom* is a thrill-packed mixture of cops and horrors!



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