



image

252

DIGITAL
EDITION

THE
NEW
252!

SPAWN



John Burt Foster
+ fco



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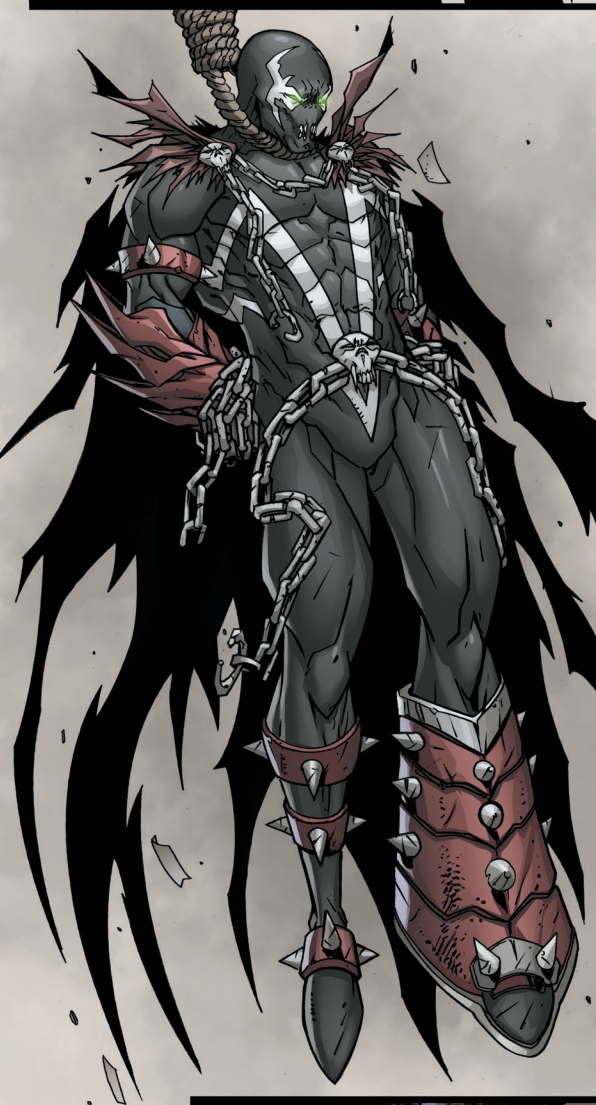
SPAWN CREATED BY

TODD McFARLANE

PREVIOUSLY IN SPAWN

Al Simmons continues his hunt for Wanda's killer only to be hunted by demons who are out to destroy him. The demons are no match for Spawn and are quickly annihilated. Al confronts someone who has been following him. Mike, sent to watch over Al, has some secrets that will not only surprise Al, but also get him the information he needs to save his wife and unborn child.

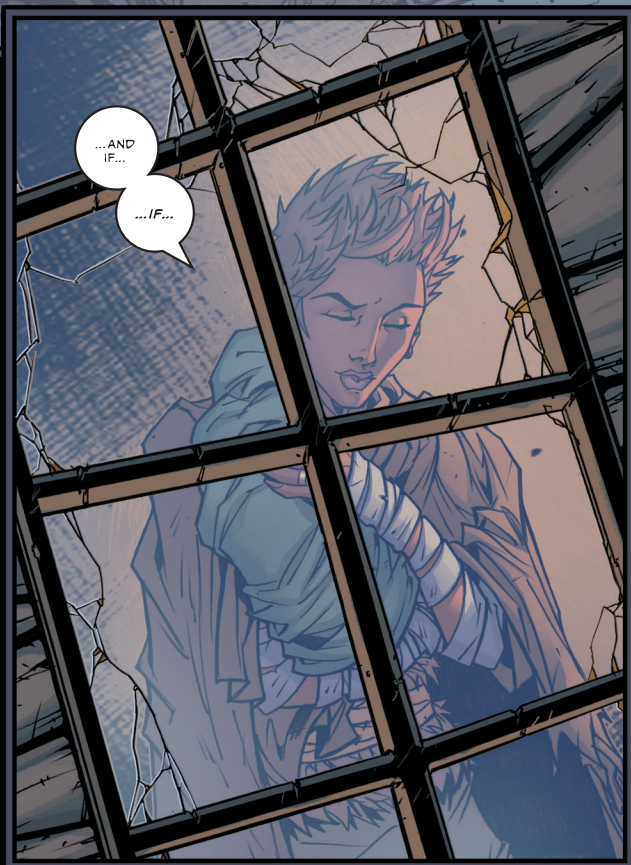






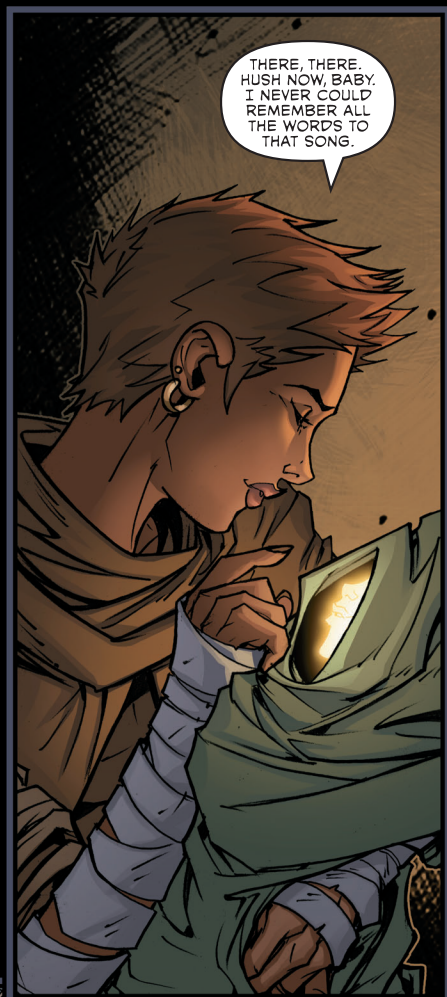
"AND IF THAT
MOCKINGBIRD
DON'T SING,
PAPA'S GONNA
BUY YOU A
DIAMOND RING."

"AND IF THAT DIAMOND
RING TURNS TO BRASS,
PAPA'S GONNA BUY YOU
A LOOKING GLASS."



...AND
IF...

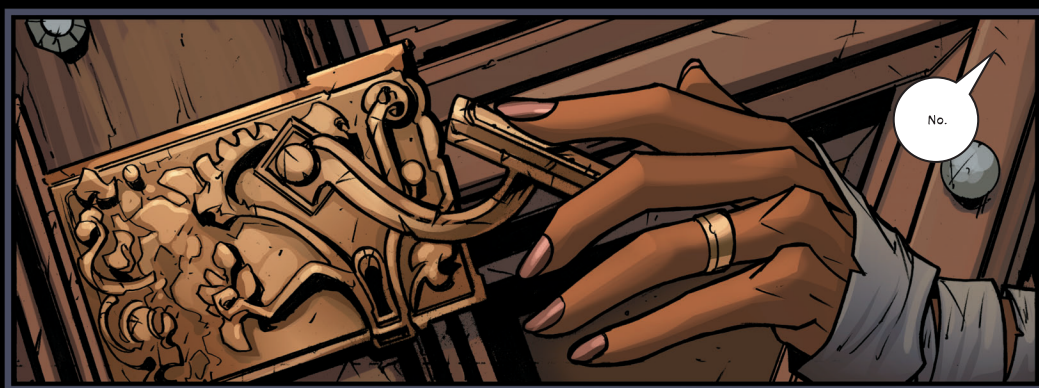
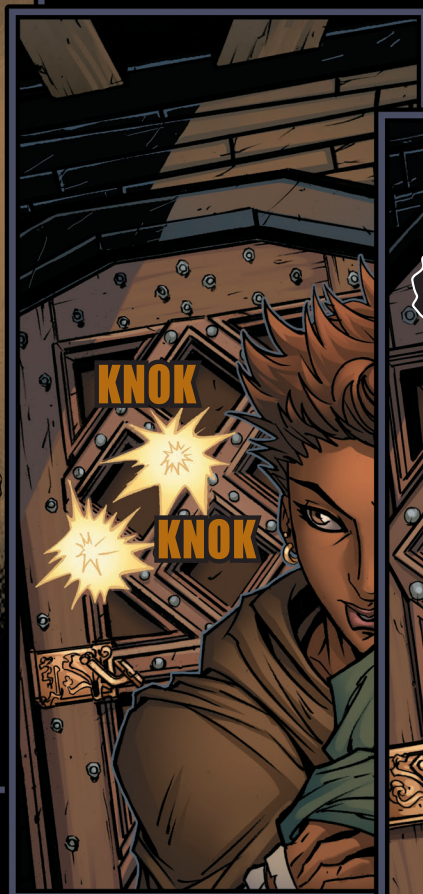
...IF...



THERE, THERE.
HUSH NOW, BABY.
I'VE NEVER COULD
REMEMBER ALL
THE WORDS TO
THAT SONG.



DADDY
WILL SING
THEM TO
YOU, WHEN
HE GETS
HOME.









THE WOLVES...

THEY'RE ON THE MOVE.



WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?



I DON'T KNOW. IT'S SOMETHING I FELT COMPELLED TO SAY. I DO THAT A LOT.

KEEP IT TO YOURSELF NEXT TIME.



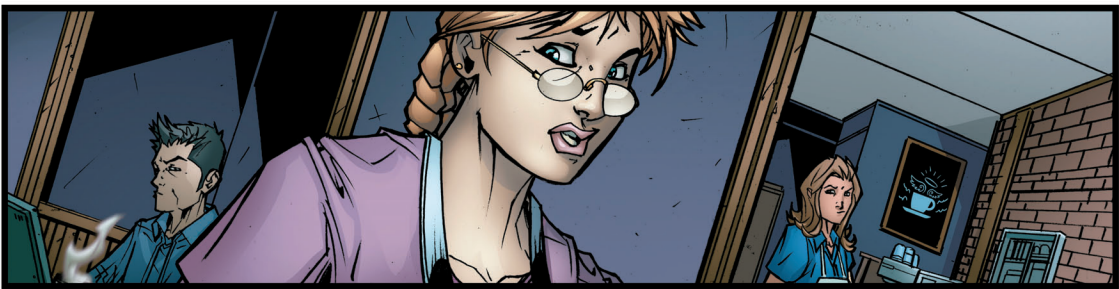
HEARD YOU HAD A BAD DREAM LAST NIGHT, BY THE WAY.

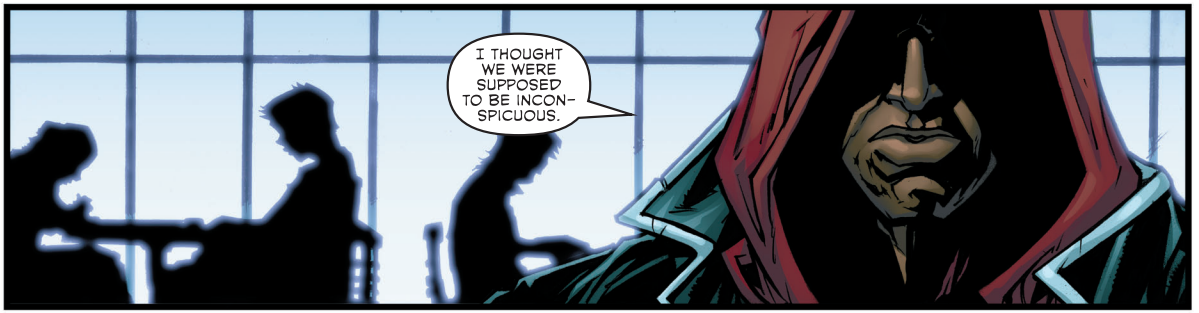
YOU SPYING ON ME, "MIKE?"



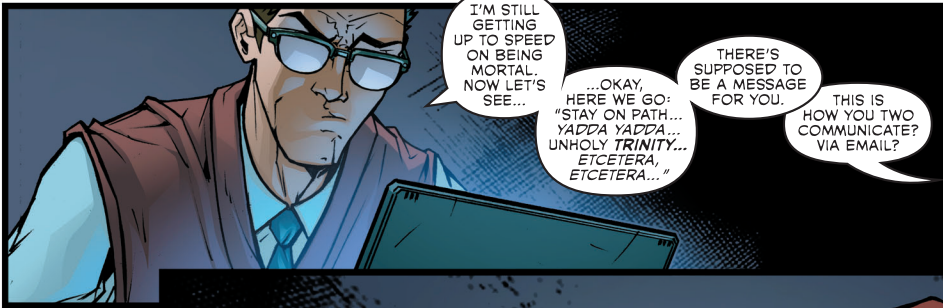
DON'T BE SO CYNICAL. I HEARD YOU CRY OUT WHEN I WENT TO USE THE TOILET. NOW BEAR WITH ME A SECOND...

EXCUSE ME, MISS. DO YOU HAVE A PASSWORD FOR THE INTERNET? I NEED TO DOWNLOAD A MESSAGE FROM GOD.





I THOUGHT WE WERE SUPPOSED TO BE INCONSPICUOUS.



I'M STILL GETTING UP TO SPEED ON BEING MORTAL. NOW LET'S SEE...

...OKAY. HERE WE GO: "STAY ON PATH... YADDA YADDA... UNHOLY TRINITY... ETCETERA..."

THERE'S SUPPOSED TO BE A MESSAGE FOR YOU.

THIS IS HOW YOU TWO COMMUNICATE? VIA EMAIL?

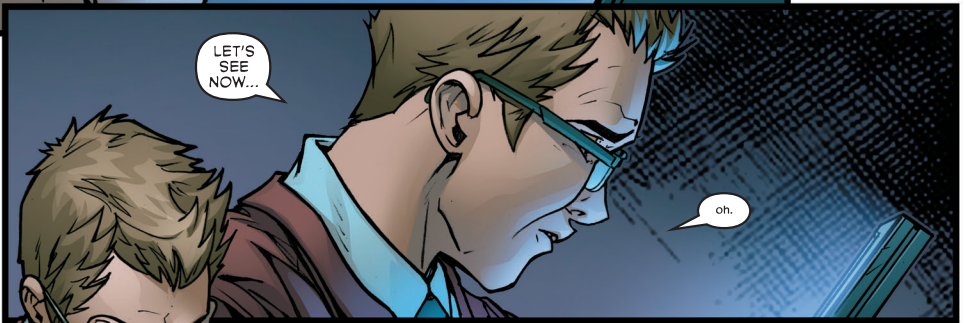


DON'T WORRY. IT'S ENCRYPTED.

GOOD FOR YOU.



I'M SORRY. GOD CAN BE VERY INEFFABLE AT TIMES. AH! HERE IT IS. OKAY. WE HAVE OUR FIRST COMMUNIQUE.



LET'S SEE NOW...

oh.



WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S WRONG?

NOTHING.





"IT CAME UP--ABOUT TEN MINUTES AGO. WE WERE PUSHING META-DATA ACROSS SOME OLD FILES. MIGHT JUST BE A GLITCH IN THE SOFTWARE."

WHAT KIND OF GLITCH?

NOT SURE... FACIAL RECOGNITION SOFTWARE'S HIT AND MISS SOMETIMES, LIKE DIGITAL VOICE TRANSLATION. MAYBE IT'S NOTHING.



WE WERE RUNNING SCANS OF THE SURVEILLANCE TAPES FROM THOSE EAST SIDE RIOTS--WHERE THAT KID GOT SHOT IN THE BACK.

FIGURED IF ANY DOMESTIC TARGETS GOT DUMB ENOUGH TO SHOW UP ON THE STREETS AFTERWARDS, WE'D CATCH THEM IN THE ACT. LOOKS LIKE WE GOT A HIT.

SOFTWARE THINKS IT RECOGNIZES *THIS* GUY. HE'S ONE OF OURS... AT LEAST HE *USED TO BE*.

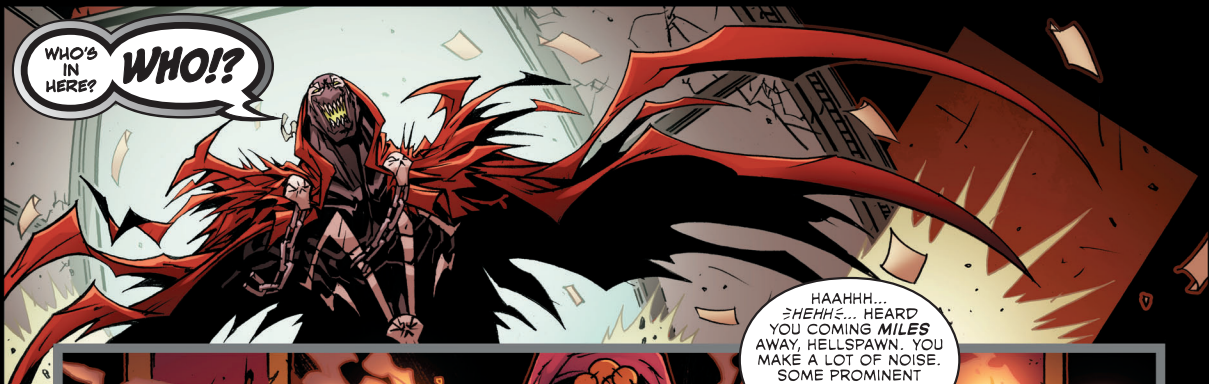


AL SIMMONS: DECEASED.

WELL, NOW.

524-51-8044
SIMMONS, Albert T.





WHO'S IN HERE?
WHO!?

HAAHHH...
ZHEHHE... HEARD
YOU COMING MILES
AWAY. HELLSPAWN. YOU
MAKE A LOT OF NOISE.
SOME PROMINENT
PEOPLE ARE VERY
ANGRY YOU CAME
BACK.

COME.
TAKE A SEAT.
MUCH TO
DISCUSS.



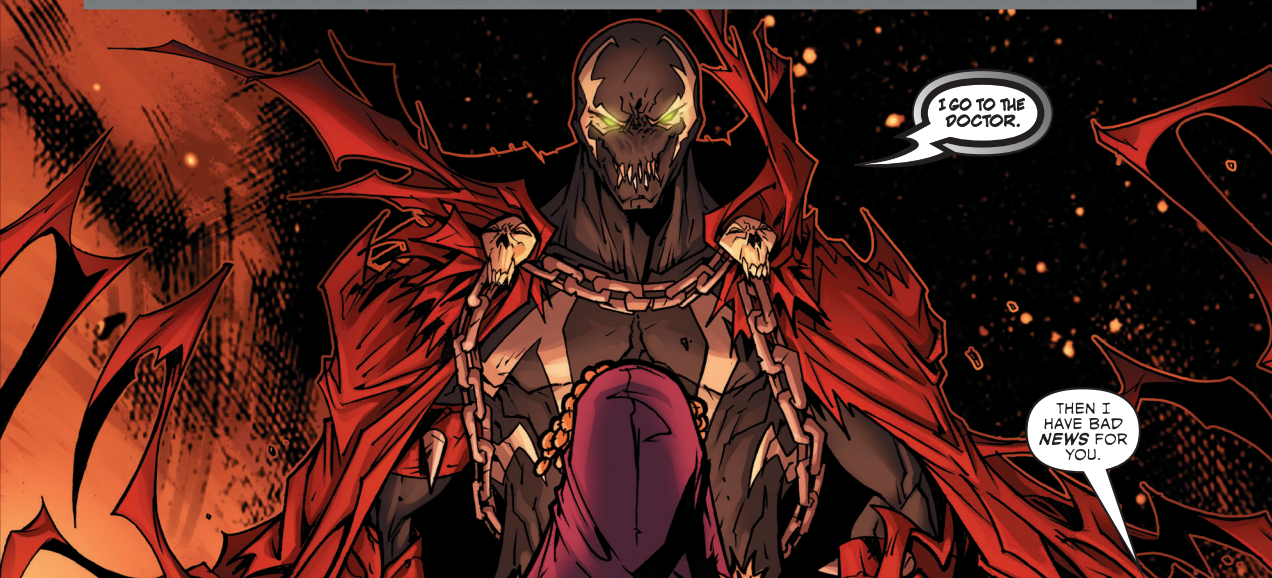
I'VE SEEN
YOU
BEFORE...?

MAYBE.



HAVE
A QUESTION
FOR YOU. IT'S
A QUESTION OF
INTENT.

YOU THINK
YOU HAVE
CANCER. DO YOU
GO TO THE DOCTOR
TO FIND OUT FOR
SURE? OR DO YOU
STAY AWAY AND LIVE
IN FEAR OF THE
ANSWER?



I GO TO THE
DOCTOR.

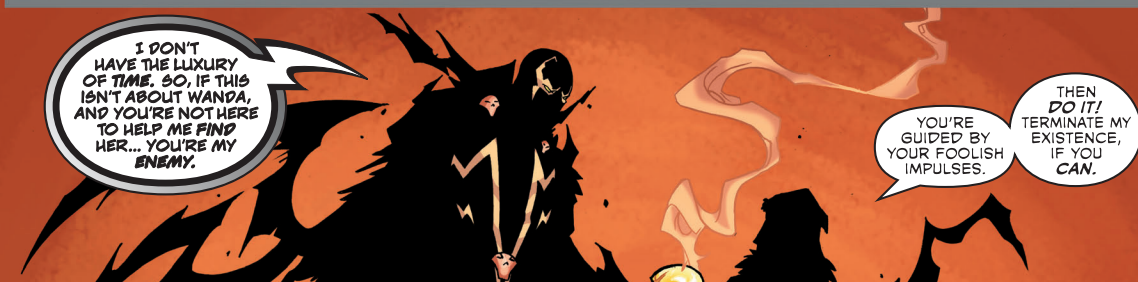
THEN I
HAVE BAD
NEWS FOR
YOU.



MMH...

KILLED
A LOT OF
PEOPLE IN THE
NAME OF YOUR
COUNTRY. BACK
WHEN YOU
LIVED.

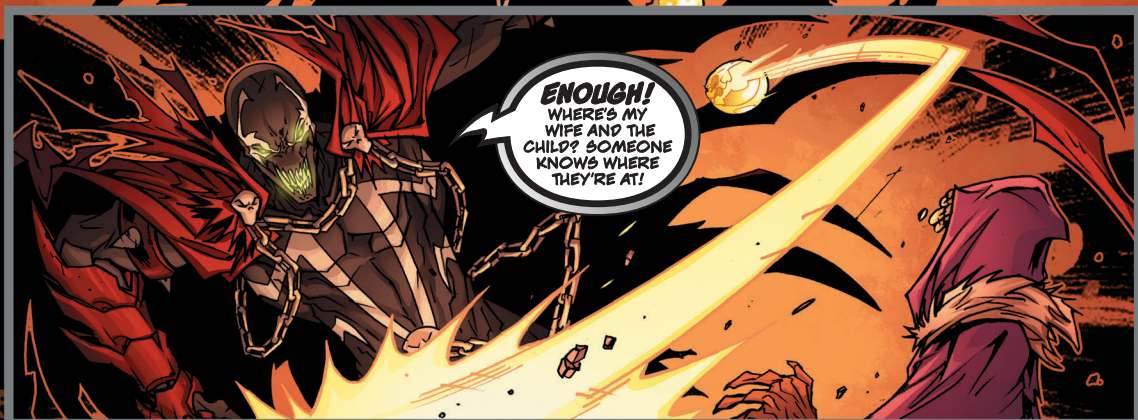
MISGUIDED.
A TYPICAL
AMERICAN
JINGOIST.



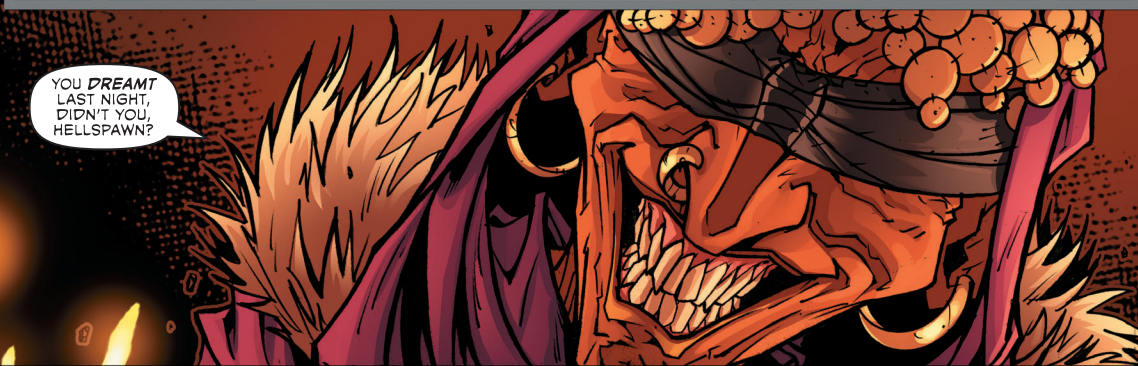
I DON'T
HAVE THE LUXURY
OF TIME. SO, IF THIS
ISN'T ABOUT WANDA,
AND YOU'RE NOT HERE
TO HELP ME FIND
HER... YOU'RE MY
ENEMY.

YOU'RE
GUIDED BY
YOUR FOOLISH
IMPULSES.

THEN
DO IT!
TERMINATE MY
EXISTENCE,
IF YOU
CAN.



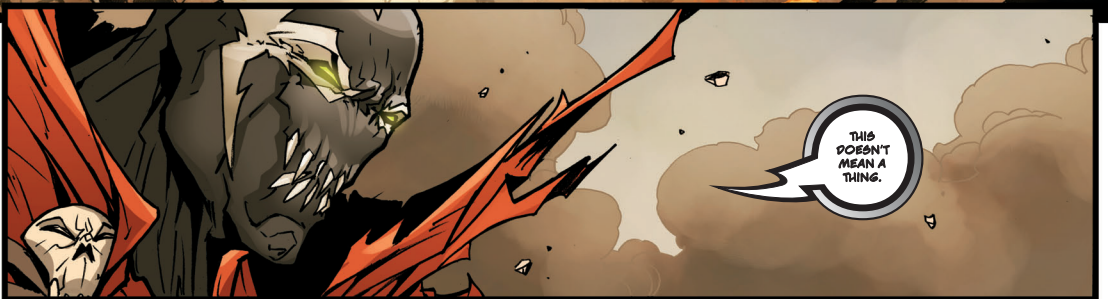
ENOUGH!
WHERE'S MY
WIFE AND THE
CHILD? SOMEONE
KNOWS WHERE
THEY'RE AT!



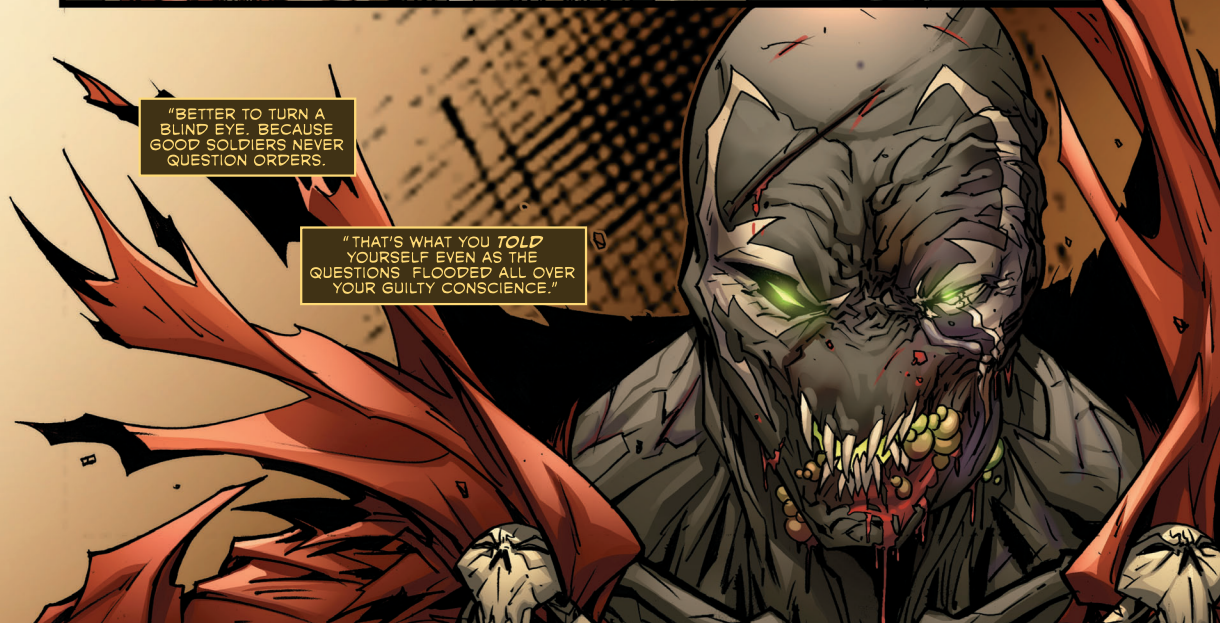
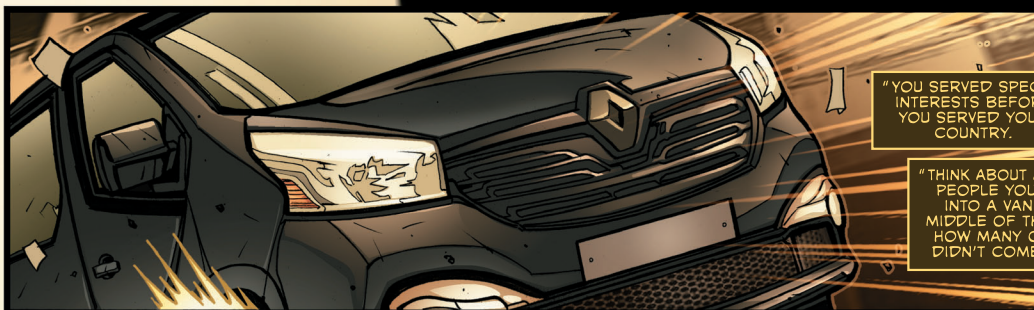
YOU *DREAMT*
LAST NIGHT,
DIDN'T YOU,
HELLSPAWN?



WHAT--







"BETTER TO TURN A BLIND EYE. BECAUSE GOOD SOLDIERS NEVER QUESTION ORDERS."

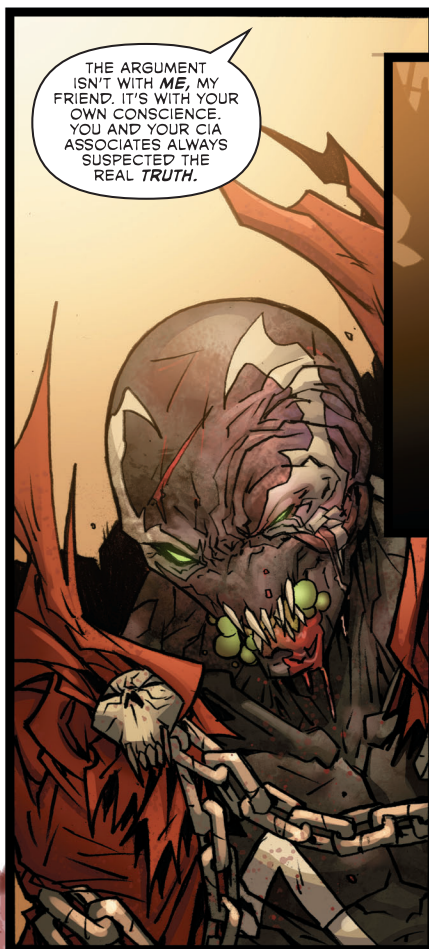
"THAT'S WHAT YOU TOLD YOURSELF EVEN AS THE QUESTIONS FLOODED ALL OVER YOUR GUILTY CONSCIENCE."



YOU HAD QUITE A THING GOING FOR YOURSELF, "MISTER SIMMONS." THE ONLY PEOPLE YOU AND YOUR COHORT ANSWERED TO WERE BEING BEATEN TO A BLOODY PULP IN A CHAIR.

I RAN A FRUIT AND VEGETABLE STALL IN THAT MARKETPLACE. BUT YOU NEEDED A SCAPEGOAT FOR THE ATTACK. AND SO YOU CHOSE ME.

YOU KEEP TELLING YOURSELF THAT, SHITBAG... SHITBAG... IT WON'T ALTER THE FACT YOU SET THAT BOMB OFF AND KILLED TWENTY-FIVE PEOPLE.



THE ARGUMENT ISN'T WITH ME, MY FRIEND. IT'S WITH YOUR OWN CONSCIENCE. YOU AND YOUR CIA ASSOCIATES ALWAYS SUSPECTED THE REAL TRUTH.



"THE SOMALI POLICE NEEDED A SCAPEGOAT FOR ONE OF THEIR F*CK-UPS. YOU HANDED HIM OVER AS A SUSPECT IN A DRUG DEAL. EVEN THOUGH YOU KNEW THEY'D TAKE HIM A HUNDRED YARDS DOWN THE ROAD AND SHOOT HIM IN THE HEAD.

"JUST LIKE YOU KNEW ABOUT YOUR OWN CIA SECRETARY, KENDRA BOOTHE. BRASS SAID SHE WAS HANDING SECRETS TO THE RUSSIANS.



"BUT EVERYONE KNEW SHE WAS SUCKING A SENATOR'S DICK AND HE SIMPLY WANTED HER OUT OF THE WAY.

"THE BOSNIAN, BAJRAMOVIC... YOU PRETENDED HE WAS CONNECTED TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING THROUGH EASTERN EUROPE. HE SWALLOWED HALF AN OCEAN IN THAT INTERROGATION ROOM BEFORE HIS HEART GAVE OUT.



THAT MAN
WHO SET OFF
THAT BOMB WAS
YOUR *OWN*
INTERPRETER.

BAM

"CORPORAL TRAVIS JOHNSON--ONE
OF YOUR OWN. YOU KNEW THOSE
CHARGES OF SELLING DATA TO
THE CHINESE WERE BOGUS.

"BUT SOMEONE NEEDED TO FILL
THE QUOTA. EVEN SOMEONE
WHO LATER HUNG HIMSELF IN
HIS OWN CELL WITH A BELT THAT
YOU 'FORGOT' TO REMOVE
FROM HIS WAISTBAND."

"BUT THE WHOLE THING
WAS JUST A WAY TO COVER
YOUR OWN ASS BECAUSE
PEOPLE WERE ASKING WHY
YOU HADN'T MADE ANY
PROGRESS ON THE CASE.



THOSE INNOCENT PEOPLE ARE NOT THE WHOLE STORY.

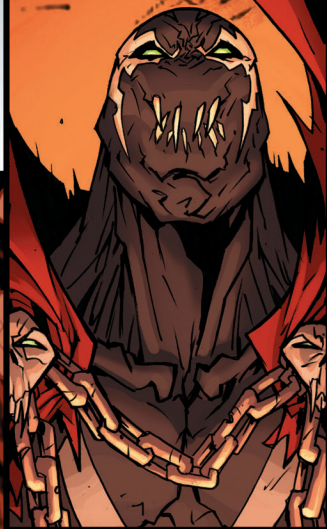
THERE'S MORE.

DO YOU REMEMBER ME?



I REMEMBER. YOU'RE THAT COLOMBIAN GRAND-MOTHER.

AND I WAS FOLLOWING ORDERS. SO, IF IT'S GUILT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, YOU'RE WASTING YOUR BREATH.



DON'T EVEN RECOGNIZE HOW YOU CARRY YOUR OWN GUILT. BUT I DO.



YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE WANTED MY GRAND-SON BECAUSE HE WAS TIED TO THE CARTEL. BUT I WASN'T.

BUT THAT DIDN'T MATTER *DID IT?* YOU TOOK ME TO THAT BARN ANYWAY. AND FOR TWO DAYS YOU WATCHED AS YOUR ASSOCIATE - CUTTER, TORTURED ME FOR INFORMATION YOU KNEW I NEVER HAD.





YOU'RE
NO
DEMON.
YOU...



NOT ONE
OF HELL'S, NO.
I'M ONE OF
YOURS.

BOUND TO
YOU WHETHER
YOU ACCEPT IT
OR NOT.



AND YOU
CARRY US WITH
YOU WHEREVER
YOU GO. IN
SUCH A WAY YOU
CANNOT
FATHOM.



I WAS
A CARPENTER.
I DID NOTHING
TO DESERVE BEING
MURDERED. AND MY
FAMILY-- YOU TOOK ME
FROM THEM. YOU ACT
LIKE A CHILD BECAUSE
YOU WANT A CHANCE
TO BE WITH YOUR
FAMILY AGAIN?



WHEN DID
I EVER HAVE THAT
CHANCE--?



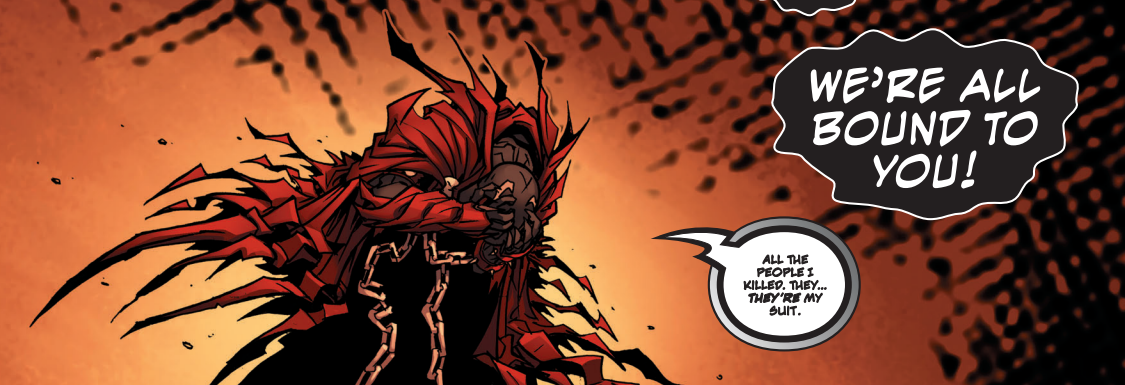
I DIED
BECAUSE OF YOUR
SINS.

I WAS A
SIMPLE
MERCHANT.



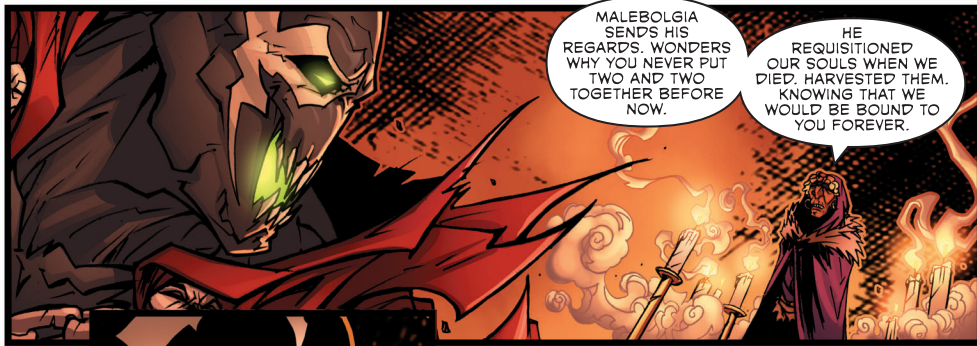
I CAN'T
ESCAPE YOUR
GUILT.

YOU
BETRAYED
ONE OF YOUR
OWN.



WE'RE ALL
BOUND TO
YOU!

ALL THE
PEOPLE'S
KILLED. THEY...
THEY'RE MY
GUILT.



MALEBOLGIA SENDS HIS REGARDS. WONDERS WHY YOU NEVER PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER BEFORE NOW.

HE REQUISITIONED OUR SOULS WHEN WE DIED. HARVESTED THEM. KNOWING THAT WE WOULD BE BOUND TO YOU FOREVER.



I FOLLOWED MY ORDERS!



BUT SECRETLY YOU RELISHED EVERY SINGLE ONE.

WHEN YOU WENT LOOKING FOR MY GRANDSON I HID IN MY HOUSE FOR A WEEK. FEARING YOU MIGHT COME BACK. AND WHEN YOU DIDN'T, SOMEHOW THAT MADE IT WORSE.



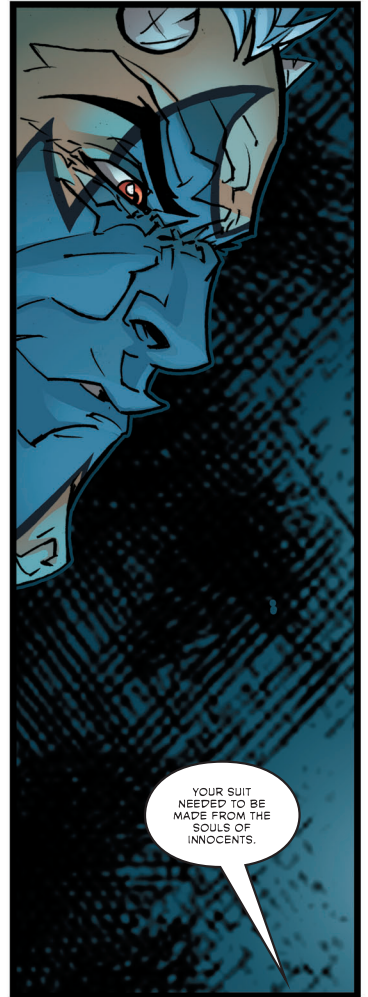
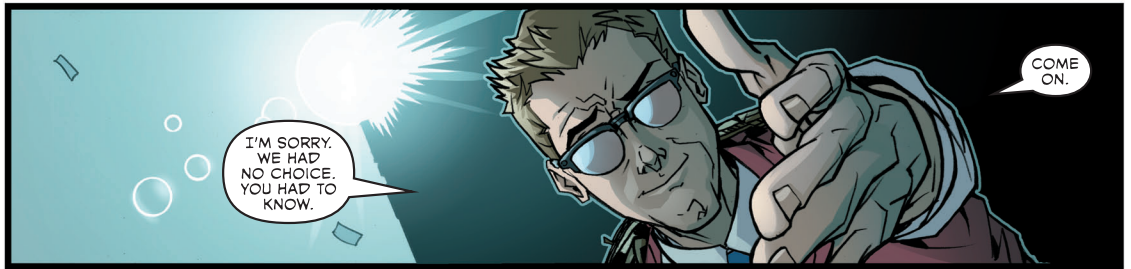
DAYS LATER MY GRANDSON WENT MISSING. AFTER THAT I HAD NOTHING LEFT TO LIVE FOR. SO I WENT BACK INTO THAT BARN AND PUT HIS PISTOL TO MY HEAD.



BLAM



OH, GOD...





"IT MAY BE NOTHING, BUT WE'VE CHECKED THE SOFTWARE AND IT'S FUNCTIONING NORMALLY."

"COULD IT BE A FALSE POSITIVE?"



"IT'S POSSIBLE, BUT ABOUT AS LIKELY AS A FALSE DNA POSITIVE. WE'VE TESTED AND RETESTED."



IT'S NOT THE FIRST TIME WE'VE HEARD RUMORS THIS GUY MAY HAVE RESURFACED. I UNDERSTAND YOU AND HE HAD A HISTORY TOGETHER.

HERE. I PULLED HIS DOSSIER. IT MAKES FOR SOME INTERESTING READING.



AL SIMMONS.

NOW THERE'S A NAME I HAVEN'T HEARD IN TEN YEARS.





SPAWNING GROUND

Hello all,

HAPPY SPAWN MONTH! Twenty-three years ago this month, *Spawn* #1 made its début. Well, that is what the cover says anyways. For those of you who don't know the history behind issue #1 of *Spawn*, in true McFarlane fashion, it has a great origin story.

On June 1st, 1992, when *Spawn* debuted, Todd had his first signing at the Golden Apple Comics on Melrose Ave., in Los Angeles. With astonishing record-breaking sales, *Spawn* #1 sold over one million copies! Todd knew the signing line would wrap around the block, but he didn't realize it would be as long as it actually was. The line was so long, it not only wrapped around the building, but into a residential neighborhood several blocks back.

Being it was such a historic day in comics, some of Todd's fellow Image partners joined in on the action. Can you image being a comic book fan and being at this event? Not only did Todd have his partners there to support him, but he had his eldest daughter, Cyan, with him as well. She was less than a year old! Todd held her the entire time he was signing. As Todd puts it, he had Cyan in one hand and a signing pen in the other. Talk about multi-tasking.

On the 20th anniversary of *Spawn*, Todd went back to Golden Apple Comics to commemorate another milestone in his career and his Image partners and friends who celebrated with him on that historic date in 1992, joined him 20+ years later. Even Cyan came back to celebrate with her dad, but now, she was a grown, 20 year old college student!

So, as Todd says, the lesson from this is:

People think it's easy to be an overnight sensation, but it isn't. It takes years of hard work and grinding away. And THAT one lesson is why Todd is still here and relevant today in the comic, toy, and entertainment industries.

In honor of another successful year of *Spawn*, what a better way to celebrate Spawn month with a new and improved Spawning Ground? For years, Todd has been answering questions, but now, he's decided to turn Spawning Ground over to the FANS! Each month, Todd is going to pose a question on his Facebook Page and have fans answer it. If you want to get in on the action, make sure to follow Todd's Facebook Page (/likeToddMcFarlane).

For this issue, Todd posed the question, "If you could control an army of Spawns, what would your top rule be? Answer the question in 25 words or less". The fans had a lot to say and below are some of the best answers we received on Facebook. I wish I could have put more responses in this issue (because there were so many good ones), but it can only be so long.

Keep up-to-date on all Todd and Spawn news on his Facebook (www.facebook.com/liketoddmcfarlane) or Twitter (@Todd_McFarlane).

Cheers,
Shannon Bailey
Publishing Coordinator

Q: If you could control an army of Spawns, what would your top rule be?

Always do good!
Josh M.

Be brave and if you don't succeed, try, try again.
Amy D.

Every Wednesday, go to the comic store.
Stephanie D.

Top rule: Be excellent to each other.
Jeremiah S.

Never kill unless you or an innocent are in danger.
Brandon W.

The first rule of Spawn Club is you do not talk about Spawn Club.
Chad C.

Be back before dinner.
Christopher M.

No Clowns allowed.
Richardo D.

There is no price too high to save the innocent.
Federico F.

Fear none. Conquer all.
Zach S.

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Never... NEVER feed them after
midnight.
Jeremy J.

Punish the guilty. Protect the
innocent.
Hannibal K.

Top rule...protect Todd!!
Lee D.

Be relentless in the pursuit
of justice.
Leonard P.

Every day is casual Friday.
Chris R.

Two words: Strength and Honor.
Jakub H.

I am you and you are me. Respect
my word and I'll respect yours.
Owen B.

Bring me Scarlett Johansson!
John M.

You MUST wash your cape every
now and then.
Jack D.

An eye for an eye.
Juan S.

Keep balance between good and
evil at all costs.
Cory T.

Don't take the last piece of pizza.
Leave it for your papa.
Jared T.

Be nice until it's time not to
be nice.
Ken F.

Spawns cannot be controlled.
They control us!
William H.

Death comes to the charlatans of
the world and save the cookies
for later.
Bill S.

Like the Phoenix...rise from the
ashes and destroy all evil.
Chuck D.

You can't come inside for dinner
until you've stopped oozing
necro-goo.
Robert B.

Smile while you work.
Josh K.

March as one, but fight as many.
Todd W.

Don't trust Betty White.
Michael Y.

Loyalty is the key and power rules
all. Use both to lead to a sure and
peaceful future.
Tobi O.

Always allow a chance for
redemption...but only once.
Kazyl P.

Don't cross the chains.
Jeremy Z.



NEXT ISSUE

Spawn continues his rein of terror over those who are out to destroy him. Armed with new knowledge and a new weapon, he will continue to conquer those who have come to conquer him.