



image

304

DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN

TODD
MCFARLANE

JASON
SHAWN
ALEXANDER

**HELL
HUNT**
PART 3





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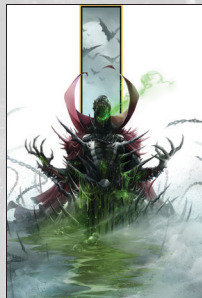
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SPAWN CREATED BY
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PREVIOUSLY IN SPAWN

In Hell Hunt part 2 - Spawn (Al Simmons) comes Face-to-Face with Priest (aka. She-Spawn!). Is she friend or foe now? "Trust No One!" is Spawn's first thought! Their "Dance" progresses, with cooler heads finally winning out. With the Death of NYX brought about by a shocking assailant and the activation of 12 individuals who contain the "Spawn Force", there are bigger things to worry about...Like who is imprisoned in the Vatican, and what are his plans for our Heroes?

FOOLISHLY, ED FRANK
THOUGHT HE COULD
JUST ESCAPE HIS PAST.
DISAPPEAR SOME PLACE
UNTIL HE FIGURED
THINGS OUT.

BUT HE KNEW THAT WAS A PIPE DREAM.
HEAVEN WASN'T JUST GOING TO LET HIM
CHANGE SIDES. THEY'D INVESTED TOO
MUCH TIME INTO HIM BECOMING THEIR
GREAT WARRIOR. THEY CALLED HIM
"REDEEMER" AND UNTIL LAST WEEK
THAT'S ALL HE THOUGHT HE'D EVER BE.



THEN HE HAD
TO MAKE A
CHOICE, ONE
FORCED UPON
HIM BY SPAWN.



WE HAVE
A VISUAL ON
OUR TARGET. HOW
SHOULD WE
PROCEED?

IS HE
ALONE?

NO. HE'S
BEEN HIDING IN A
SMALL TOWN SOUTH OF
THE CANADIAN BORDER.
I THINK HE'S AWARE OF
OUR PRESENCE BUT
HASN'T ENGAGED
YET.

HE'S USING
HIS HUMAN
FORM, THEN?

THAT'S
ALL WE'VE
SEEN THIS
MISSION.

HOW
CLOSE IS HE
TO THE OTHER
HUMANS?

I THINK HE'S
TRYING TO LOSE
US IN A CROWD
HE'S COMING UPON.
I DON'T THINK HE
WANTS A PUBLIC
FIGHT.



TOO BAD
FOR HIM. YOUR
ORDERS ARE TO
ELIMINATE THE
TARGET...



...BY ANY
FORCE
NECESSARY.



AND WE WANT
YOU TO SEND A LOUD AND
AGGRESSIVE
MESSAGE TO THE REST OF
THE WORLD. DO YOU
UNDERSTAND?

COPY THAT.
WE HAVE OUR
ORDERS.

IN A HEARTBEAT, THE
CARNAGE BEGINS, WITHOUT
A MOMENT'S PAUSE BEFORE
THE SAVAGE SLAUGHTER
THEY'RE GOING TO INFLECT.

BRAKKA

BRAKKA

**BRAKKA
BRAKKA
BRAKKA**

**BRAKKA
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**BRAKKA
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**BRAKKA BRAKKA BRAKKA
BRAKKA BRAKKA**

BRAKKA BRAKKA BRAKKA

BRAKKA BRAKKA

BRAKKA

BR



AND INSTEAD OF STANDING HIS GROUND OR TAKING ON HIS NEW FORM,* HE CHOOSES TO FLEE.

*See issue 300—Todd



YOU
COWARD!

BLAM



VIIIP



SHUNK?



KNOW WHAT
GOD DOES TO
TRAITORS?

HE SHOOTS
THEM, IN THE
SNOW, LIKE A
DISEASED
DOG.



DID YOU EVEN
THINK ABOUT WHAT
YOU WERE DOING? THAT
THEY'D COME LOOKING
FOR **EVERYONE**--
ALL OF US!

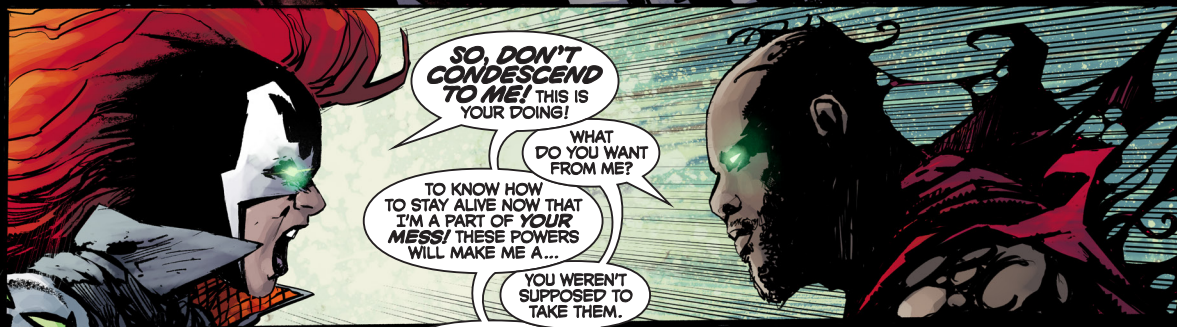
OR DID
THAT NOT
CROSS YOUR
MIND?

LOOK,
I GET YOU'RE
UPSET, BUT...



UPSET?!

THEY
KILLED HER!
BECAUSE
OF YOU!



**SO, DON'T
CONDESCEND
TO ME!** THIS IS
YOUR DOING!

WHAT
DO YOU WANT
FROM ME?

TO KNOW HOW
TO STAY ALIVE NOW THAT
I'M A PART OF **YOUR
MESS!** THESE POWERS
WILL MAKE ME A...

YOU WEREN'T
SUPPOSED TO
TAKE THEM.

TAKE THEM?!
SCREW YOU!

THAT'S
MATURE.

MATURE?

Um... CAN
I SUGGEST
SOMETHING?



NO!

NO!

WITH EMOTIONS RUNNING HIGH FOR EVERYONE, MARC'S INTRUSION CREATES THE AWKWARD SILENCE THEY ALL NEEDED...

I PROMISE, NYX WASN'T SUPPOSED TO DIE. I WAS, NOT HER. IT'S WHY I PLANTED SLIVERS OF MY COSTUME IN OTHERS, SO THEY COULD TAKE OVER ONCE I WAS GONE.

YOU WERE GOING TO KILL YOURSELF?

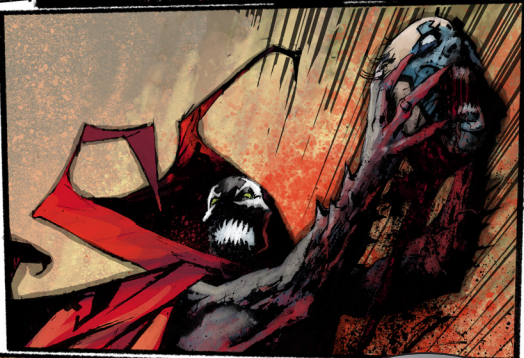
NO. I TRIED THAT BEFORE, IT DIDN'T WORK. ASK JIM DOWNING. NO, WHAT I LEARNED, WHEN I CAME BACK FROM THE 'VOID,' WAS HOW I COULD SLOW THEM DOWN.



AND THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE THAT WORK WAS TO GET HEAVEN AND HELL IN THE SAME PLACE. WITH THE SAME AGENDA.



THAT'S WHY I LET THEM JAIL ME. WHY I WENT PUBLIC WITH MY IDENTITY... TO CONFUSE THEM. I HIT THEIR BUSINESSES AND TURNED THE MEDIA ON THEM.



OF COURSE, THEY WERE GOING TO HUNT ME. BUT THEIR ALLIANCE GAVE ME THE CHANCE I FINALLY NEEDED, BUT WHEN I TRIGGERED MY BOMB IT WAS SUPPOSED TO KILL ALL OF US.





YOU WERE GOING TO KILL YOURSELF?

IF I HAD TO.

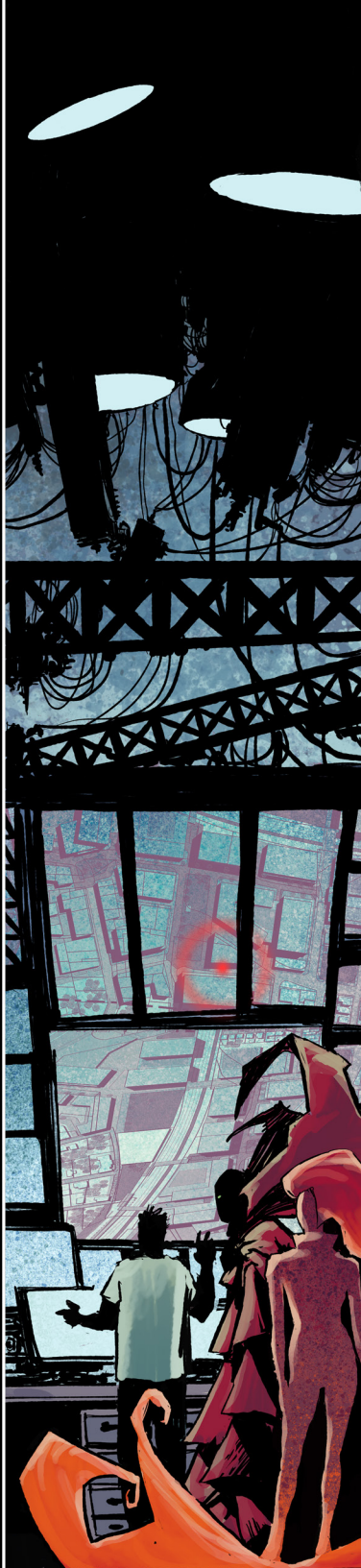
WELL, IT'S HAD THE OPPOSITE EFFECT BECAUSE YOUR "SPAWN FORCE" IS MULTIPLYING. DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHO OR WHAT THEY ARE?

OR WHETHER YOU HAVE ANY CONTROL OVER THEM?

LIKE I SAID, I KNOW WHERE I PLANTED FIVE OF MY SEEDS, BUT THE OTHERS... I'LL HAVE TO MAKE A DETERMINATION ABOUT THEM WHEN I HUNT THEM DOWN. ANY SUGGESTION ON HOW WE SEPARATE THE FIVE I KNOW FROM THE REST?



THERE'S ONE UP IN NORTH DAKOTA THAT SENDING THE SAME CORE ENERGY READING AS THE "DEAD ZONE" IN NEW YORK. IN FACT, IT SEEMS TO HAVE ORIGINATED FROM NEW YORK.



BOYS, I'M ABOUT TO COME UNGLUED... ALL I CARE ABOUT IS WHETHER ANY OF THOSE BLIPS HAVE ANY CONNECTION TO NYX--AND IF THEY DO, I KNOW WHERE I'M GOING.



IT'S EDDIE. IT HAS TO BE.

WHO'S THAT?

AN ANGEL CALLED 'THE REDEEMER.'

THE ONE YOU FELL INTO THE SHADOWS* WITH?

YES, AND I SAW HIM MAKE A PHYSICAL CHANGE IN FRONT OF ME.



THEN YOU'RE RIGHT, THAT HAS TO BE HIM. BUT SOMETHING'S WRONG. HIS MOVEMENT PATTERN HAS BEEN PRETTY ERRATIC SINCE I PICKED UP HIS SIGNAL.

BECAUSE THEY'RE HUNTING HIM.



JUST COMING IN AT THIS EARLY HOUR ARE REPORTS OF WHAT MAY BE A MASS SHOOTING IN WESTHOPE, NORTH DAKOTA, JUST A FEW MILES SOUTH OF THE CANADIAN BORDER.

ARMED MEN REPORTEDLY ENTERED THE TOWN SQUARE AND OPENED FIRE INTO THE CROWD GATHERED FOR A CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY. DETAILS ARE FEW AT THIS TIME, DUE TO THE TINY POPULATION IN THIS REMOTE AREA.

SOCIAL MEDIA, MEANWHILE, IS BEING FLOODED WITH IMAGES OF PANIC AND BLOODSHED. AMONG THE GATHERED REVELERS THERE APPEAR TO BE MANY WHO ARE WOUNDED AND, POSSIBLY, DEAD.

LOCAL COVERAGE CAME TO AN ABRUPT HALT WHEN NEWS CREWS FLED FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY.

WE WILL BE LIVE WITH UPDATES ON THIS STORY AS MORE INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE.

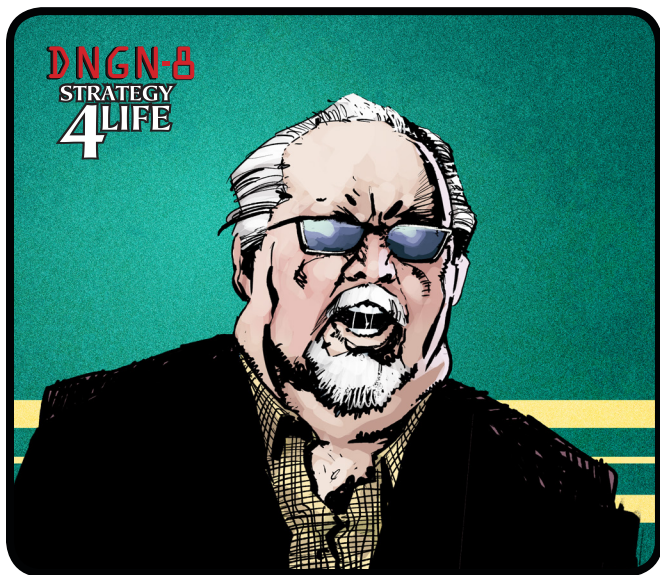


IT IS UNCLEAR IF STATE POLICE ARE ON THE SCENE YET, LET ALONE WHETHER THEY HAVE **ENGAGED** THE GUNMEN.

INFORMATION IS COMING IN VIA **SOCIAL MEDIA**, FASTER THAN IT CAN BE ANALYZED. AS WE SIFT THROUGH INCOMING PHOTOS AND TWEETS, THOUGH, AT LEAST **TWO GUNMEN** HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED. HOWEVER, THEY ARE UNIDENTIFIED. AT THIS MOMENT, NO ONE HAS ANY IDEA AS TO A **MOTIVE**.

THE CONSENSUS SEEMS TO BE THIS: MEN WITH GUNS **OPENED FIRE**, FOLLOWED BY A FLASH OF **GREEN LIGHT**. THERE'S NO WAY AT ALL TO DETERMINE WHETHER THESE EVENTS ARE LINKED. NO ONE HAS OFFERED ANY EXPLANATION, OR EVEN SPECULATION, REGARDING THE **NATURE** OF THE GREEN LIGHT.

YOU CAN DEPEND ON US FOR **ONGOING COVERAGE** AS THIS STORY UNFOLDS.



WHERE THE HECK ARE THE GOOD GUYS WITH THE GUNS?!

THIS IS **NORTH DAKOTA** WE'RE TALKING ABOUT, FOR PETE'S SAKE!

STATE POLICE HAVE CONFIRMED THEY ARE EN ROUTE AS WE SPEAK. "IT'S POSSIBLY AN EXPLOSION OF SOME KIND," IS THE BEST THEY CAN COME UP WITH. **TELL ME ANOTHER ONE, COPPER...** THE SELFIES ARE SHOWING HUNDREDS OF **LITTLE** EXPLOSIONS, AND JUST AS MANY **BULLET** CASINGS. **AND IN FRONT OF A CHRISTMAS TREE!!** THERE USED TO BE RESPECT FOR **TRADITION**, BACK IN BETTER TIMES!!

MOLES, TROLLS, GRASSY KNOLLS... GIVE ME A GOOD **CONSPIRACY** AT THIS TIME OF THE MORNING. I DON'T WANT TO BE THINKING ABOUT BURYING MY RELATIVES IN THE MIDDLE OF **WINTER**.

JESUS!
YOU SAID THEY
WERE TRYING TO
HIDE FROM THE
PUBLIC?

THESE
AREN'T THE
SAME, THEY'RE
ANOTHER
BREED!

I'M
COMING
WITH
YOU.

GOOD!
I COULD
USE THE
HELP.

AND I
COULD USE
THE ANGER
RELEASE.

SNAP

SNAP

KLIK





0:0:1:2

HALF A WORLD AWAY,
IN VATICAN CITY.

HAVE YOU BEEN
ABLE TO ASCERTAIN
THE ORIGIN OF THE
NEW SIGNALS?

WE'RE
WORKING
AS FAST AS WE
CAN, BUT NO
CONCRETE
DATA SO
FAR.

YOU THINK
THIS IS TIED TO
THE ALBANIAN
INCIDENT?

PRETTY SURE.
WHEN OUR SIGNAL
FOR CLOWN CAME OFF
THE BOARD, SEVEN NEW
SIGNALS IMMEDIATELY
APPEARED. IS SPAWN
STILL ALIVE?

WE HAVE
TO ASSUME
ONE OF THOSE
READINGS IS
HIS.

SO... HE SOMEHOW
KILLS CLOWN AND ONE OF
HEAVEN'S TOP OPERATIVES,
THEN MAGICALLY STARTS
MULTIPLYING HIMSELF?
IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE
SAYING?

I'M SAYING
WE'RE MONITORING
EVERY SIGNAL WE CAN.
BUT IT'S TOO EARLY TO
DETERMINE IF THESE NEW
FORCES ARE COMING
FROM HELL'S OR
HEAVEN'S SIDE.

THEN
LET'S FIND OUT!
NOW!
IF WE'RE AT WAR
WITH MORE SPAWNS
THAT'S A **HUGE**
PROBLEM! IT'S TIME
TO RELEASE OUR
"HUNTER!"

IN A SUBTERRANEAN
BASEMENT BELOW
THE VATICAN...

KILL THE
LIGHTS.



WE KNOW
YOU LIKE THE
DARKNESS
BETTER.

AND WE BOTH
KNOW YOU'VE BEEN
DOWN HERE A VERY
LONG TIME. CONSTANTLY
SCREAMING ABOUT YOUR
RIGHTEOUSNESS,
ABOUT YOUR DEVOTION.
WELL, MY SON, THE
LORD HAS SENT ME
A MESSAGE.

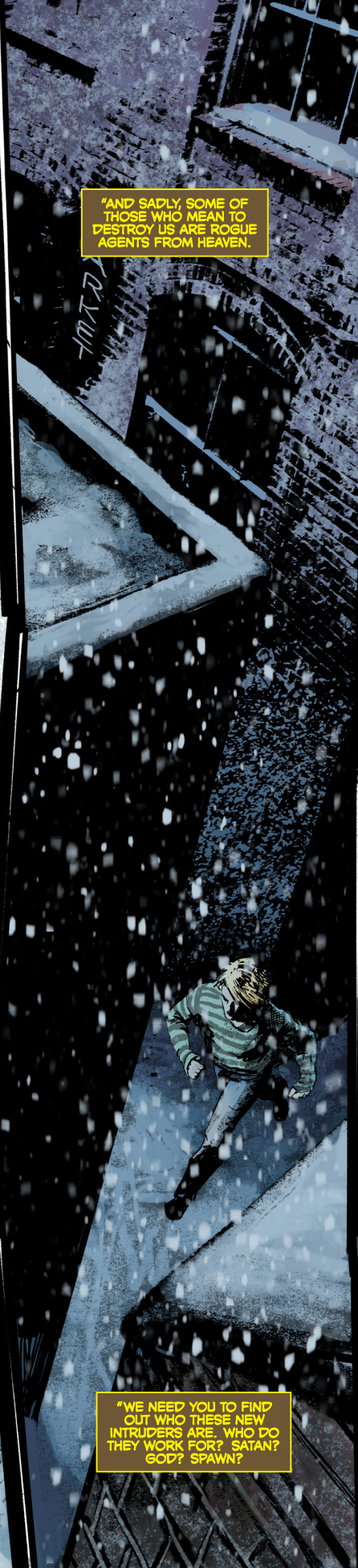
HE
WANTS YOU
TO PERFORM A
MISSION FOR
HIM.

TO
PROVE
IF YOU'RE
TRULY ONE
OF US.





"BECAUSE THERE ARE FORCES
AT PLAY WHO WANT NOTHING
MORE THAN TO DISCREDIT US TO
THE REST OF THE WORLD."



"AND SADLY, SOME OF
THOSE WHO MEAN TO
DESTROY US ARE ROGUE
AGENTS FROM HEAVEN."



"OR ARE THEY
TRAITORS,
LOYAL ONLY TO
THEMSELVES?"



"WE NEED YOU TO FIND
OUT WHO THESE NEW
INTRUDERS ARE. WHO DO
THEY WORK FOR? SATAN?
GOD? SPAWN?"



"ONCE YOU DETERMINE
THOSE ANSWERS, KILL
THOSE YOU THEN DEEM
UNWORTHY!"

YOUR SOUL,
CHILD!--IT'S TIME
YOU LAID IT
BARE!



CHAPTER TWO



“The Miracle”



M.ROSEN (Personal File, Entry 43.C)

Ten days ago, Al did something in Albania. He triggered something. I don't know what he did but what scares me even more... I don't think Al knows what he did either. Whatever it was, he's weaker now. Though, he won't say it outloud. Instead he talks like it's all part of some long-term plan. I think his plans are flawed.

An hour ago (9:43 PM), he showed up with a woman who appears to be another Hellspawn.

He seems to trust her, but the AI Simmons I know (which hasn't been that long) doesn't trust very easily. Further, she brought a data-dump that Al wanted me to decrypt. The problem is that strangers bringing me strange data sets off all kinds of alarms.

Against my better judgment I cracked the files without running any virus detection—so far, the system hasn't crashed. The data mapped some energy signatures that have pinged across the globe since Al "detonated" his costume in Albania. But why do all the signals match the same readings given off by Al's powers?

Al doesn't know why, so I will investigate on my own. Right now, Al and his "sister" are on the trail of one of the markers. But one marker, in upstate New York, its activity seems different than the others. I'll run it through a separate series of algorithms.



IT
CAN'T
BE.



I also just pulled scrambled security footage from a private hospital. Something happened there at the exact same moment Al went "nuclear" in Albania.

This film is showing me...
a miracle!.

It's **Jim Downing!** How does he fit into all of AI's plans? And why didn't AI say anything about this? It's why I keep thinking AI doesn't know what he's triggered. He knew the relationship I had with Jim. How close we were before Jim lapsed into another coma. Jim had to be one of the five people AI placed his "power seeds" into. Possibly even the first one.

My other files are filled with notes, theories and firsthand accounts of my time with Jim. On top of which, Jim may have been the very first piece AI placed on the board. I say "may have been" because AI has plans embedded in other plans. So, I can't be sure. Then, there's the big questions... What side is Jim even one?!? Hell, what side am I on??????

I'm getting worried about AI. He's spreading himself way too thin. The number of enemies he's trying to fight at once... The scale of the war he's battling... It's too much for one man to do alone. Maybe that's why he picked Jim. I know AI said he thought he was going to die in Albania but if he didn't, he'd have the upper-hand... He'd build an army, starting with the first five "seeds" he planted. And, of course, Jim would be one of those five.

AI wants to be the good guy—the hero—but his sins, his anger, they give Simmons a dark side. A side I can't fully trust. Maybe that's why he chose Jim, because he knows Jim's personality's nearly the opposite of his own. A smart leader always finds those who can fill the leader's weaknesses.

I need to find Jim, because he's a target now, too. AI said he rigged the outcome of his fight with Heaven and Hell by placing slivers of his powers in people he believes would take up his cause if (when) he falls. What he didn't do, I'm betting, is give any of those five the option to say no. Or tell them they would become targets. Apparently, one of his "chosen" is already dead—a girl named, Nyx. Did research on her but found nothing. Obviously, that wasn't her real name.

I'll keep investigating because her life could help lead to answers about her death. But, more importantly... Jim's back. And, I don't know what the other's AI "cursed" with his powers are all about, but Jim Downing is a unique beast—his soul has lived in both Heaven and Hell. According to Spawn lore that's a rare combo. He's been **damned** and **saved**. That just might make him a bigger target than AI himself. I wonder... Is AI channeling some of Jim's personality already?

It would be easy to see AI's recent actions as being inspired by Jim's own—going public, seeking the spotlight, letting the world know that Lt. Col. AI Simmons was alive and "well". Would AI have made those moves without Jim's example? Hard to say. Harder to say... How will AI react as his public persona continues to gain attention? Could be a timebomb.

But AI has touched one person he isn't thinking about... **ME!** I'm caught in the middle of events I can barely keep track of much less comprehend. At times I feel like a soldier in an impossible war then I flip to feeling like a prisoner. I'm just human. AI seems to forget that. Everything around us isn't normal except me. I can die! He didn't give me any of his damn powers. Maybe he thinks he can just replace me. Maybe he really doesn't give a shit.

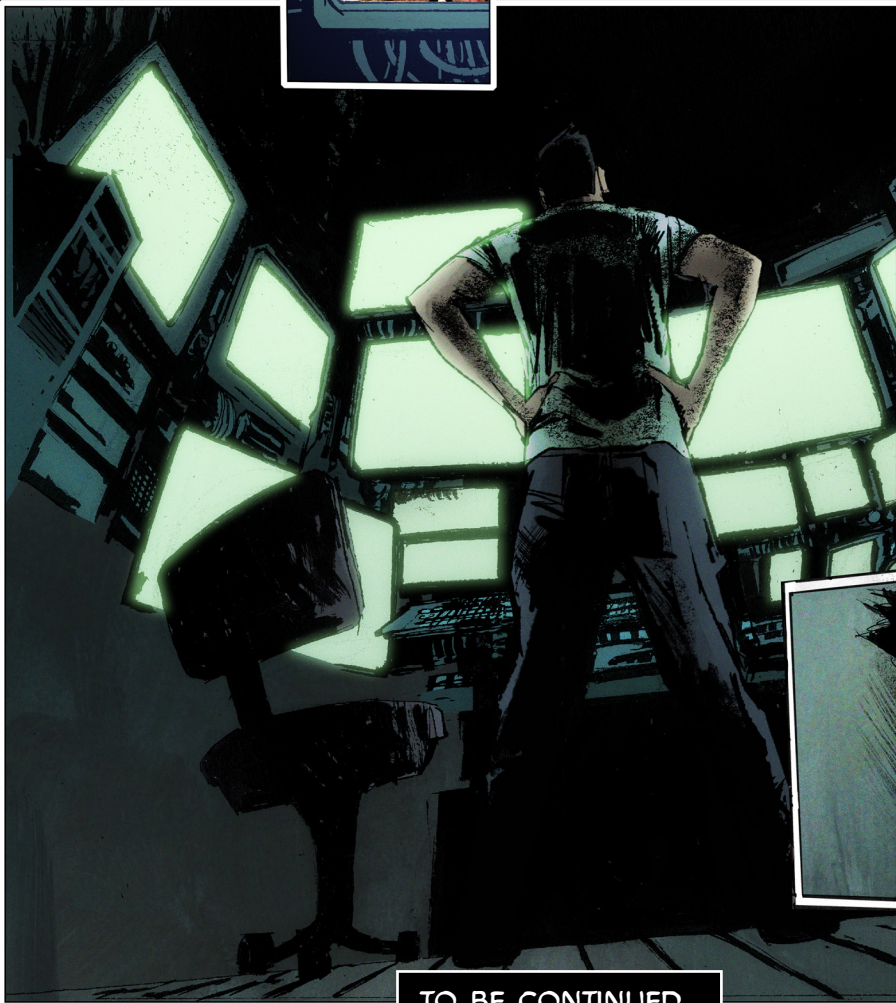




I'd never say it to AI's face, but I can't tell from one minute to the next if he's a man empowered by demonic forces, or a demon hiding in the skin of a man. One second, he appears to be the soldier who'd take a bullet to save a President's life. A beat later he has this feeling about him like he really isn't in control of himself. That's what's scaring me most about all this. That I can't come to grips with being able to totally trust AI.

And what if—really, what if, he truly is the very monster he claims to oppose? I won't be able to stop him because I'm at his mercy. Everyday. That's why I feel like a prisoner sometimes and why I need to find, Jim. Hopefully, he'll be able to tell me if we can put our faith in AI. If we can all help in his war against the evil that swarms around us every second of our lives. I hope Jim tells me the answer is "YES" that AI is the only safeguard preventing our world from utter collapse.

Because if that isn't true, then, like it or not, Jim just might need to save us all.



TO BE CONTINUED...

SPAWNING GROUND

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***CONGRATULATIONS TO JASON AND DINORA!
WE WELCOME YOUR NEWEST ADDITION TO THE***

SPAWN[®] FAMILY

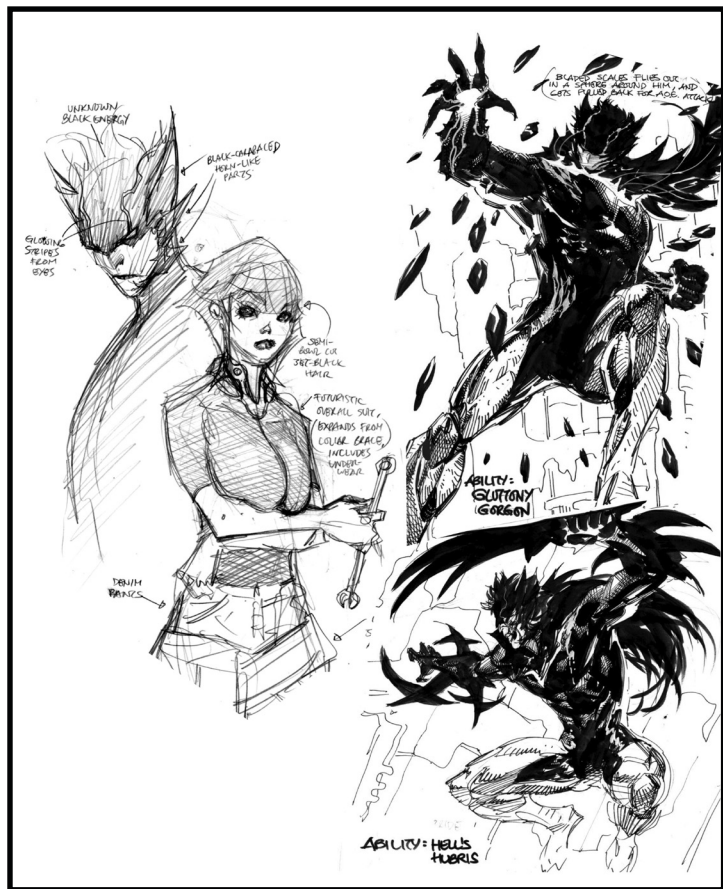


AIDEN DOUGLAS AURELIO ALEXANDER

Happy New Year!

To celebrate the end of the year and to kickstart 2020, here's a special **SNEAK PEEK** at some of Philip Tan's conceptual artwork for his upcoming arc in SPAWN #306-308. These are early character design sketches Philip crafted as he and Todd began breaking the story, which will see Al face a challenge like nothing he's faced before. The future is coming, and it's a killer...

-Jon



Philip Tan's Character Concept Sketchwork for Spawn Upcomming issues 306-308



NEXT ISSUE

"HELL HUNT," Part Four Jessica Priest struggles with her new powers. Eddie Frank fights against the influence of the Redeemer. And Spawn has a final showdown with Medieval Spawn that will alter the course of the war between Heaven and Hell. With this gripping story arc finale, featuring a special 5-page bonus comic drawn by TODD McFARLANE, the hunt is on, and a new era of SPAWN has begun!

COLLECTING SPAWN 1-6



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ENEMY OF THE STATE

The background of the entire poster features a large, menacing figure of Spawn. He has a dark, muscular body, a red cape, and a mask with glowing green eyes. He is wearing a chain around his neck. The background is a deep red with some lighter, smoky or fiery patterns.

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I TOLD YOU,
I CAN TAKE THE PAIN AWAY.

ALL OF IT.

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ISSUE 2



RODNEY BARNES JASON SHAWN ALEXANDER

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SPAWN 305

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PART 4



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