DEATH RAY GRAPHICS

JASON YUNGBLUTH'S

WEAPON BROWN

THE FUNNY PAGES HAVE BEEN WEAPONIZED!

Chuck is a hard-bitten, hard hittin' ex-super soldier scratching out a living amongst the ruins of a crapsack future. Friendless (except for his faithful mutt **Snoop**), Chuck has one mission: stay alive and one step ahead of his creators, the tyrannical **Syndicate.**

But when Chuck stumbles upon a gruesome secret that could save humanity from extinction, he must decide if he can abandon his bitter rage long enough to help a group of outgunned heroes who still believe in hope.

The Syndicate has its own plans for the secret, however. To claim it, they will risk a second Armageddon when they unleash their ultimate weapon: an Nth level killer with a hair trigger... and a stuffed *tiger.*

A brutal parody that pulls no punches, Weapon Brown delivers black eyes to the most famous faces in cartoon history!

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WEAPON B BROWN



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PREFACE

I'm not a big *Peanuts* fan.

This may surprise you, as you are about to read several hundred pages of backhanded homage to that very strip, but it is true. As a boy, I don't recall being moved at all by *Peanuts*. I preferred more trenchant comics like *Doonesbury* and *Bloom County,* and the cartoonist I most wanted to be was Jim Davis.

The animated *Peanuts* specials were a different matter, however. Those Vince Guaraldi scores, the amateur voice acting, the guttural howl of Charlie Brown's agonized "Aaugh!" and the fact that the weirdly honest stories depicted in those cartoons were reserved only for holidays (and occasionally the movie theater) are what made Charlie Brown and Co. resonate with me then and now.

So what explains the coldheartedness I have stirred into my warm nostalgia to concoct this cruel lampoon? For that, you can blame Ronald Reagan.

It was in the 1980s that the seed of *Weapon Brown* was first planted. The Cold War was approaching its apex, and although peace between the superpowers was actually closer than ever, the world still seemed hell-bent for Armageddon. The hawkish posturing of the geriatric President Reagan made his two terms in office feel like an elongated Cuban Missile Crisis, and American entertainment marched to that beat.

Thus, my juvenile mind was buffeted with *WarGames* and *The Day After, The Road Warrior* and *Testament, The Terminator* and *Miracle Mile*. Only a fool could doubt that imminently the Emergency Broadcast System would sound the End of Days and that mohawked cannibals in assless chaps would soon be ruling the highways.

This was the era in which I came of age. Ah, sweet innocence!

Today, the public is jaded on catastrophe. After all, we survived Y2K, a genuine Extinction Level Event timed to coincide with the doomsday year 2000. 9/11 did its best to ring down the curtain of history, but bankrupting a nation is not the same as destroying it (sorry, Osama). 2012? If the Singularity happened, I must have slept through it. And Global Warming is just taking too damn long.

Nuclear war remains the gold standard for the Apocalypse. Whether it is because of its suicidal bleakness or the opportunity it offers to return us to the Wild, Wild West, the idea of humanity smashing up all it has built like the Hulk on angel dust just seems so ... *right*.

And so I am pleased to offer *Weapon Brown* (and its star, the luckless Chuck) not only as a parody but as my own contribution to our collective dream of a glorious Thanatopia.

Weapon Brown is not only about *Peanuts,* however. When *A Peanut Scorned* was first serialized in my comic book anthology *Deep Fried,* Weapon Brown proved to be my most popular creation. The people wanted more, but I had already exhausted most of the obvious *Peanuts* gags. Fortunately, the comics page has notables worth mocking besides "Good Ol' Charlie Brown."

Thus began the next chapter of Chuck's legend -- *Blockhead's War* -- which has run on my website Whatisdeepfried.com for several years now. This volume collects those stories and more to tell Chuck's complete tale.

The process of creating this graphic novel was a learning experience, and you will get to see the evolution of my talent over the course of more than a decade (good grief!) Little experiments in art and writing accumulated along the way, so you may notice that at one point I switch to adding white tone to the artwork for a few pages and then never again, or that periodically my work apes the style of other, better-known artists. It was all just learning on the job.

You may also ask, "What is the difference between a 'fucker' and a 'fukker'?" Chuck only knows.

I've done my best to squeeze in a reference to nearly every comic strip that still survives in living memory (and many that don't), but I am bound to have forgotten a few, so I'm sorry if *Chester Chowderhead* or *The Chamomile Twins* don't get the send-up they deserve. I have also deliberately left out references to famous stars of the funny pages that are better associated with other media, such as Mickey Mouse and Superman. If you are wondering why Spongebob Squarepants or Pikachu are nowhere to be seen in *Weapon Brown,* then my entire premise has probably gone over your head.

This story almost ***had*** to be told. Harlan Ellison's *A Boy and His Dog* is one of the most famous tales of future desolation ever written; Charlie Brown and Snoopy are the world's most famous boy-and-dog. The only thing left to decide was which arm would be mechanical! Also, when you consider the grotesque nature of so many comic strip stars, from Popeye to Pruneface, don't they already appear to hail from a world where horrifying mutations are the norm?

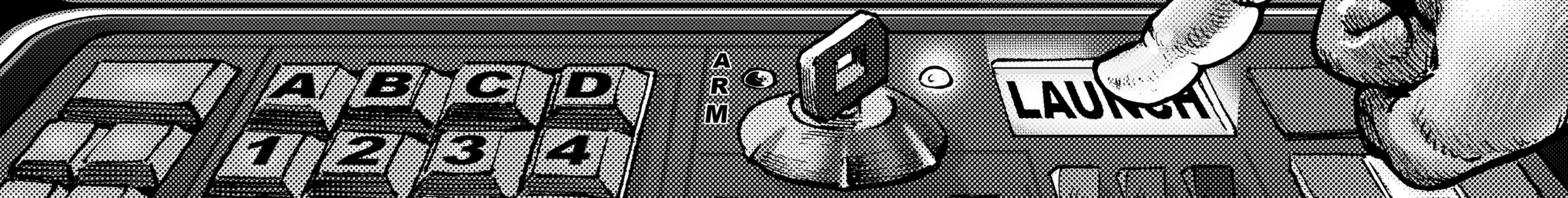
And still there are other reasons to justify this mad experiment. Who hasn't wanted to know what is hidden under Beetle Bailey's helmet, or what sweet Opus would be like if he had wings that worked? Now it can be told.

They are all here: orphans and opossums, cavemen and cats. Your Sunday morning friends are in for a rough, bloody ride, I'm afraid, but that does not mean there isn't affection behind it all.

Although many of the strips running in newspapers today are indeed the rotting corpses and rusting hulls I portray them as, you should know that I once dearly wanted to create a newspaper strip of my own to join their ranks. My love of comic books -- and stories that stretched beyond a few column inches -- pulled my career in another direction. Despite this, these comics were the inspirations of my youth and I respect them still.

And now, without further ado, I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.

-Jason Yungbluth



"It always looks darkest just
before it gets totally **black.**"

— Charles "Charlie" Brown

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THE TREETOPS TATTLER

CITY EDITION

MILQUETOAST IS TOAST!



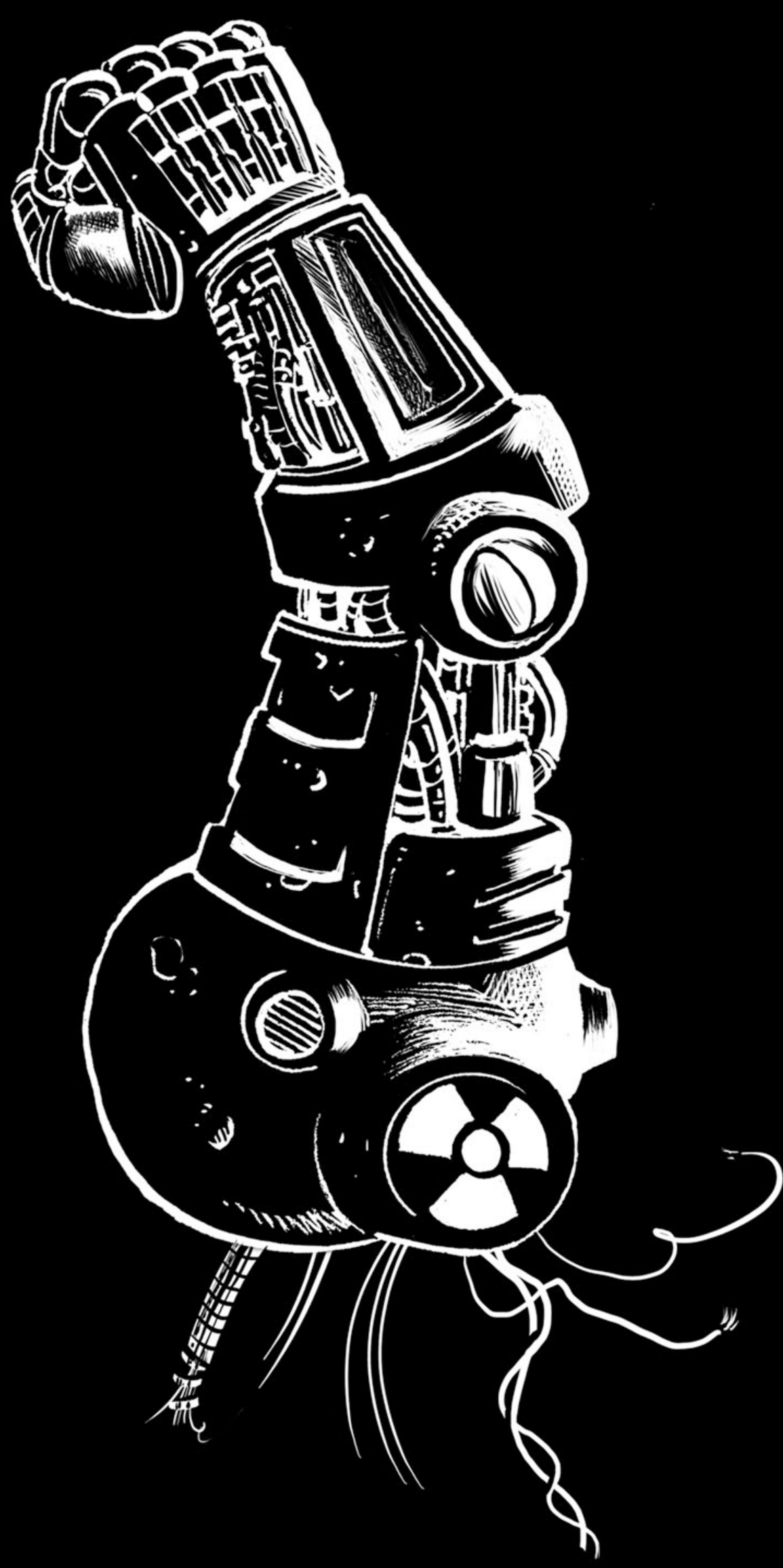
by Cosmo Fishhawk

Crushed by the reality of an unprecedented 54-state rout in last night's election, defeated president Caspar Milquetoast ended his concession speech by drawing a pistol from his waistcoat and placing it in his mouth. The suicide attempt was only thwarted when Vice-President Davenport managed to wrestle the gun from the President's hand.

See **Sore Loser** *Page 4*

ELECTION EVE EXTRA! BIDEN LOW-BROW

PART 1



IT WAS A SUNNY AFTERNOON WHEN THEY CAME.

THE BIRDS THAT LAID **BLACK EGGS.**

I WAS DOING WHAT I DID EVERY SUNNY AFTERNOON.

FAILING.

I FELT THE **HATE** COME, AS FAMILIAR AS MY OWN NAME. HATE FOR A WORLD I WOULD CRUSH IN MY FIST IF I COULD.

BUT SOMETHING WAS DIFFERENT. I COULD FEEL THE FIRE OF MY RAGE ON THE **OUTSIDE** THIS TIME, AS IF SOMEONE HAD OPENED A WINDOW TO LET **HELL** SHINE IN.

I COULD **HEAR** MY HATE, TOO. IT SOUNDED LIKE I ALWAYS KNEW IT WOULD SOUND.

LIKE THE EARTH SPLITTING IN TWO.

ON THE HORIZON, CLOUDS ROSE. ROILING TOWERS OF BLACK AND ORANGE. THEY WERE LIKE TREES. A GROVE OF MALIGNANT FLAME.

IT WAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING I HAD EVER SEEN IN MY LIFE.

I DIDN'T KNOW HOW, BUT I WAS CERTAIN MY MIND HAD TURNED SOME INVISIBLE KEY AND UNLOCKED THE **END.** ALL THE CRUELTIES, ALL THE MOCKING JEERS I HAD EVER ENDURED WERE NOW **SEEDS;** SEEDS THAT WOULD TAKE TO THE WIND, SPREAD EVERYWHERE AND GROW INTO THE BURNING ORCHARDS OF MY **REVENGE.**

I HAD BARELY BEGUN TO REJOICE WHEN THE MAELSTROM OF MY HATE CAME RUSHING BACK TO ME, **EMBRACING** ME, SHOWING ME WHAT IT HAD PLANNED FOR MY ENEMIES.

I SMILED, ENVYING THEM NO LONGER.

THEN, OBLIVION.

BUT OBLIVION DIDN'T LAST.

I'D FAILED AGAIN.

QUARANTINE 23

rats.



LAST CHANCE

FOOD·FUEL·BOOZE

Soylent Blue


YOU! OFF MY PLANET!


NICE PLAYING. THAT GUARALDI?
IT'S A CLASSIC. BEETHOVEN.


HOW WELL DO YOU SING?
DEPENDS. SEE THE TIP JAR?

CLANK
WHOA! FOR THAT KINDA CHANGE I SURE HOPE I KNOW YOUR TUNE.

LET ME HUM YOU A FEW BARS.
"DOCTOR". "VAN PELT".

ER...LOOK FELLA, YOU BETTER TAKE BACK THE CHITS. I DON'T KNOW THAT NAME.

HURRK

THAT'S **NOT** THE SONG I REQUESTED.

GKK... PLEASE ... DON'T KNOW ANY DOCTOR... VAN PELT... KK

THAT ISN'T HOW *I* HEAR IT. **MY** RELIABLE SOURCES SAY YOU'VE BEEN SLIPPING HER THE PICKLE, AND I TRUST THEM. PEOPLE CONFIDE IN YOU WHEN THEY HAVE A **PLAZ GUN** SHOVED UNDER THEIR JAW.

NOW START TALKING, OR TONIGHT **SNOOP** HERE WILL BE SHITTING YOUR **FINGERS.**

WAIT, LOOK...YOU'VE GOT IT ALL BACKWARDS...

VAN PELT... SHE'S A PSYCHO! COMES IN A BUNCHA TIMES AND GETS A THING FOR ME. I WOULDN'T GIVE HER THE TIME OF DAY. SHE'S HOOKED IN WITH THE **SYNDICATE!** I NEED THAT KIND OF SHIT IN MY LIFE, RIGHT?

BUT SHE SPREAD IT AROUND WE WERE A PAIR ANYWAY! I **SWEAR,** I DON'T KNOW WHERE SHE IS!

WHO DOES?

MUH-MINT! SHE KNOWS! SHE'S GOT A WHOREHOUSE IN THE CITY-- "K" DISTRICT!

WHO...WHO THE HELL *ARE* YOU?

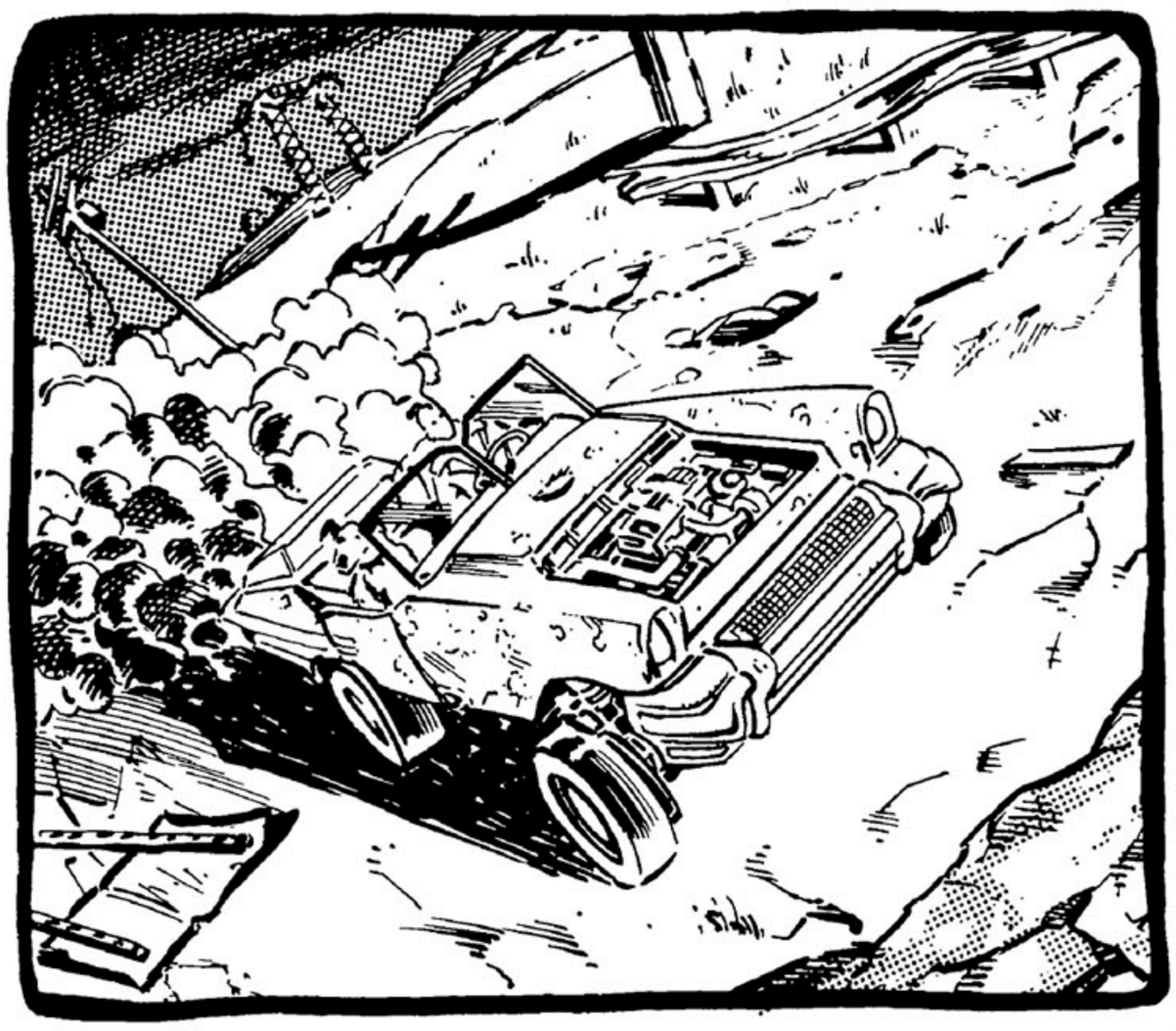
ME?

I'M JUST A ROUND-HEADED KID.

A PEANUT SCORNED

BY JASON YUNGBLUTH

FOR MOST OF MY LIFE MY HEART FELT LIKE AN EMPTY MAILBOX, WAITING FOR SOME PERSON, SOME **FEELING**, TO FILL IT. WHEN THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN I FILLED THE EMPTINESS MYSELF, WITH **DEAD BODIES.** A LOT OF THEM.



THEN ONE DAY SOMEBODY FINALLY DROPPED ME A LINE. A BIG, FAT **VALENTINE.** I PUT MY BAD HABITS ASIDE AND TOOK UP A SIMPLE MAN'S LIFE. A LIFE THAT WAS AS GOOD AS IT GETS FOR ANYONE ON WHAT'S LEFT OF THIS PLANET.



BUT I CAME HOME ONE DAY AND DISCOVERED THAT SOMEONE HAD **STOLEN** MY VALENTINE. I KNEW WHO AND WHY, BUT NOT **WHERE.** FIND-ING OUT MEANT TAKING MY KILLING WAYS OUT OF THE CLOSET AND PUTTING THEM BACK ON. I WASN'T WORRIED. I KNEW THEY'D STILL FIT.

SO NOW HERE I AM, HEADING FOR WHAT THAT DINK CALLED "THE CITY." WHAT A JOKE. THERE **ARE** NO MORE CITIES. JUST THE **BONES** OF THEM, AND THIS ONE IS THE WORST SKELETON OF THEM ALL. AN OPEN AIR SEWER WHERE THE TURDS WALK AND TALK AND CARRY FLECHETTE THROWERS.

IT DOESN'T MATTER. I'LL GO TO HELL AND BACK TO FINISH WHAT I'VE STARTED. A LITTLE MORE HELL THAN USUAL WON'T MAKE MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE.

NO MATTER WHAT, I'M GOING TO **KEEP** MY DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT.



I RECOGNIZED THE ADDRESS THAT THE PIANO JOCKEY GAVE ME, BUT THE STORE SEEMS TO BE UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT. AND I'VE GOT A GOOD IDEA WHOSE.

STAY PUT, MUTT. ONLY MEN GET TO RIDE *THESE* BITCHES.

ROWWWR

HEY, STRANGER. WHAT'S YOUR PLEASURE TONIGHT?

SLAP!

LAST WORDS, SHITRAG?

HOLD IT, FRANKIE.

I'D RECOGNIZE THAT SMACK ANYWHERE.

HEY CHUCK.

PATTY. MY PATTY. SHE ALWAYS TASTES THE SAME.

PEPPERMINT.

AN' THAT'S ALL I COULD HEAR FROM THE BACK O' THE CANTEEN.

BIG GUY. **MEAN** TO THAT PIANO POUNDER. AN', YOU KNOW, I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT WANT TO KNOW HE'S LOOKING.

URRM.

FOR YOU.

ALSO I THOUGHT ...UH...YOU MIGHT...

TRADE ME SOMETHING FOR IT?

PLAP

NOW GET OUT.

YOU'RE AN ABSOLUTE MESS.

A PEANUT SCORNED

CHAPTER 2

SO WHAT'S THE FEED ON THAT MUSCLE WORKING THE DOOR? SOME KIND OF MUTANT?

FRANKLIN? HE'S A "NEGRO." DON'T ASK. I'VE NEVER SEEN ANOTHER ONE AROUND HERE

I WAS SURPRISED TO SEE **YOUR** NAME ON THE BUILDING. LAST TIME I WAS HERE YOU WERE JUST PLAIN OLD PEPPERMINT PATTY, BEST LAY IN THE NORTHERN ZONE.

WELL, VIOLET SET HER SITES ON GREENER SECTORS AND LEFT THE PLACE TO ME.

AND HOW ABOUT YOU? HOW'S LIFE IN THE WASTELANDS BEEN TREATING YOU?

S'KINDA WHAT BRINGS ME TO YOUR DOOR.

DO YOU KNOW A DOCTOR VAN PELT?

LUCY? SURE. SHE'S GOT A SHOP OUT ON THE FRINGE. I SEND THE GIRLS TO HER WHEN THEY NEED SCRAPING.

OF THE Sea ht Tuna

I'VE GOT SOME **BUSINESS** WITH HER. DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'D SHARE THE ADDRESS?

I COULD. DOES THAT MEAN YOU'D BE RUNNING OUT ON ME AGAIN? THIS CITY CAN BE DANGEROUS AT NIGHT.

GOT SOMETHING TO KEEP ME INDOORS?

HOW ABOUT THE SPECIALITY OF THE HOUSE?

THOUGHT THAT WAS YOU.

TIME MARCHES ON.

FOUR EYES! GET IN HERE!

YES SIR.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? SHE'S KIND OF A WEIRD KID, BUT YOU LIKE THAT, DON'T YOU CHUCK?

THE ROAD'S LEFT ME A LITTLE TIRED. HOW ABOUT A SHOW?

ONE THING I CAN SAY FOR PATTY: SHE ALWAYS GIVES GOOD SHOW.

FOR THE REST OF THE NIGHT I WATCH PATTY AND THE GIRL BREAK ALL OF GOD'S LAWS AND SOME HE FORGOT TO WRITE, ALL THE WHILE THAT FRECKLED TEMPTRESS THROWING ME INVITING GLANCES TO JOIN HER IN THE DEEP END.

NOT TONIGHT, THOUGH. OR TOMORROW. NOT UNTIL MY JOB IS FINISHED.

NO PEACE, NO PLEASURE, AND NO GIRL IN MY LIFE BUT ONE.

A RED-HAIRED GIRL.

I DREAM STATIC.

THEN SOMEONE TURNS A DIAL.

WEAPON RED
BOOT UP AND RUN
SYSTEMS DIAGNOSTIC

REPEAT: WEAPON RED, **BOOT UP** AND RUN DIAGNOSTIC PROGRAM 1-B. REPORT SYSTEMS STATUS.

MY FUCKIN' **ARM** HURTS.

RESPONSE ERROR! LOG OUT BETA MODE AND RUN AUXILIARY

D-DOCTOR? THIS IS WEAPON BROWN. HE'S... FREE WILL.

REALLY?

WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT.

HOW LONG 'M I GONNA BE HANGIN' HERE?

OH, SIMPLY DAYS! IT'S CERTAIN TO BE EXTREMELY *UNCOMFORTABLE.*

BUT HERE, YOU MUST BE PARCHED. HAVE SOME ICE CHIPS, WEAPON BROWN.

'M NAME'S CHAR...

GLISH

RESPONSE ERROR! THAT IS **NOT** YOUR NAME! YOU ARE A SILLY **BLOCKHEAD!** NOW *THAT* IS YOUR NAME!

NOK NOK NOK

OWWW!

ALL HAIL **KING BLOCKHEAD!** LONG MAY HIS SKULL BE SQUARE!

S'NOT...NOT MY NAME...

I SAY IT **IS**, DODO BRAIN. AND IF YOU WANT MORE ICE CHIPS IN TWENTY MINUTES INSTEAD OF TWENTY **HOURS**, SO WILL YOU.

NOW...

WHAAAT'S YOUR NAAAAME?

WEAPON BROWN

AH.

BLOCKHEAD.

CORRECT.

YOU AND I?

WE'RE GOING TO HAVE **GOOD TIMES** TOGETHER.

HUNH!

THERE'S ONLY ONE THING I EVER REMEMBER ABOUT MY DREAMS, AND THAT'S THIS:

I LIKE THEM BETTER THAN MY NIGHTMARES.

BYE CHUCK.

YOU SLY DOG.

SCUFF

SCUFF

SCUFF

SCUFF

SCUFF

SCUFF

CLINIC

4th Street

UH.

UNHHH.

HUH. SUCK YOUR DICK?

FOR JUNK?

FUCKING DIRTBAG!

UNH!

WHOK!

THE DOCTOR IS IN

BZLLL

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

MAGIC BEANS.

LEAVE THE DOG OUTSIDE. I DON'T CARE FOR THEIR GERMS.

GRRR

SHUNK

LUCY VAN PELT. WORD IS SHE'S A REAL JEKYL AND HYDE, AND HER JEKYL HALF WAS A STONE COLD **BITCH** TO BEGIN WITH.

SHE WON'T BE COLDER THAN ME, THOUGH. AND IF SHE DOESN'T GIVE ME WHAT I'M AFTER, I'LL COME DOWN ON HER LIKE A MOTHER-FUCKING **ICEBERG.**

YOU VAN PELT? YOU THE ONE I WANT TO SEE?

I'M **DOCTOR** VAN PELT, YES.

BUT I DOUBT VERY MUCH YOU'LL BE GLAD TO SEE ME...

...WEAPON BROWN.

YOU KNOW ME, HUH? HOW'S THAT?

I'M SMART, MISTER BROWN. AND IF **YOU** ARE SMART, YOU WON'T PULL THAT RATHER LARGE **GUN** OF YOURS.

I KNOW WHAT SHE MEANS. KILL RAYS IN THE CEILING. I FELT THEIR TARGETING BEAMS HIT MY SKULL THE MOMENT I WALKED THROUGH THE DOOR.

NO ORDINARY MAN COULD UNHOLSTER HIS ROD FAST ENOUGH, DODGE QUICK ENOUGH, TO TORCH THE RAY PROJECTORS BEFORE THEY CUT HIM INTO SMOKING CHUNKS.

POM

AND I'M NO ORDINARY MAN.

SKRZZZZ

ZA-KOW

SKREEEE

POW

SPANG

BRA-*VO*, WEAPON BROWN. I SEE YOU'VE BEEN KEEPING IN SHAPE. AND NOW YOU ARE PROBABLY WONDERING HOW I KNOW WHO YOU ARE?

I ASSUME YOUR MINDBLOWN LITTLE BROTHER *WARNED* YOU I MIGHT SHOW UP. AND JUST OUT OF CURIOSITY, **WHERE *IS* LINUS?**

LINUS? WHAT HAS THAT **IMBECILE** DONE THIS TIME?

PLAYING DUMB WITH ME IS A DANGEROUS GAME, TOOTS.

YOUR BROTHER RECRUITED MY **GIRLFRIEND** INTO THAT ONE-MAN CULT OF HIS, AT *GUNPOINT*. SO NOW MY FOOT AND HIS ASS HAVE A DATE.

NOW SPILL YOUR GUTS OR I'LL SPILL THEM FOR YOU!

THAT'S A TOUCHING STORY, REALLY. BUT I'M AFRAID THAT I HAVEN'T SPOKEN TO LINUS IN SOME TIME.

OK, LADY. FISH TAKES BAIT. HOW **DO** YOU KNOW ME?

HAVEN'T YOU FIGURED IT OUT YET...

...BLOCKHEAD?

HUNNGH!

AH, WONDERFUL. I SEE THE CONTROL CUES ARE STILL WORKING.

UHH! UNHH!

GOOD OL' WEAPON BROWN. YOU DON'T REMEMBER MUCH ABOUT HOW YOU BECAME A CHARMLESS KILLING MACHINE, DO YOU BLOCKHEAD?

I REMEMBER, THOUGH. I WAS *THERE*. I WAS PART OF PROJECT PEANUTS.

OTHER SCIENTISTS WERE IN CHARGE OF MAKING YOU STRONGER, FASTER. MY JOB WAS ENGINEERING YOUR **OBEDIENCE VECTORS**, AND I FOUND THAT THE BEST RESULTS CAME FROM **CRUSHING YOUR SELF-ESTEEM.**

IN FACT, I HAVE A LITTLE **MEMENTO** LEFT OVER FROM THOSE DAYS RIGHT HERE IN MY DESK DRAWER.

I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU SLIPPED THE SYNDICATE'S **LEASH**, BUT I'M CERTAIN THEY'LL BE GLAD TO HAVE YOU BACK.

BEFORE THAT HAPPENS THOUGH, LET'S **RELIVE** SOME OF THE GOOD TIMES. I'M SURE YOU'RE JUST **DYING** FOR A GAME OF. . .

KICK THE FOOTBALL!

NO.

COME ON, WEAPON BROWN. I'LL HOLD THE FOOTBALL AND YOU COME RUNNING UP AND--

--KICK IT.

I... REMEMBER!

YOU... YOU PULLED IT AWAY! YOU ALWAYS PULLED IT AWAY!

OH, BUT I WON'T **THIS** TIME! IN FACT, I'LL EVEN GIVE YOU A **SIGNED DOCUMENT!**

HA HA HA HA HA!

NOW KICK THE FOOTBALL, WEAPON BROWN. THAT'S AN **ORDER.**

YESSS, THAT'S IT. DO YOU REMEMBER OUR **SPECIAL SONG?**

YOU NEVER DO ANYTHING **RIGHT**...

YOU DON'T PUT ANYTHING IN ITS **PLACE**...

NO WONDER EVERYONE CALLS YOU...

NO!

NO MORE FAILURE FACE!

KLUD

WELL WELL, LUCY. YOU CERTAINLY OPENED UP A DOOR, DIDN'T YOU? I'M GOING TO ENJOY CLOSING IT.

I'VE GOT A NEW GAME WE CAN PLAY.

I CALL IT "BLEED AND SCREAM."

SHINK

NOOOO!

CLINIC

SMACK
GRAR Chomp
SLURP
RRRRR

ROWR?

FORGET ABOUT THAT BIRD, MUTT. I'VE GOT SOMETHING A WHOLE LOT **JUCIER** FOR YOU

SNOOP ENJOYS THE TONGUE SO MUCH I FEEL A LITTLE JEALOUS. BUT THEN, HE DIDN'T GET TO HEAR LUCY BEG FOR HER LIFE WITH A TONGUELESS **MOUTH.** THAT PLEASURE WAS ALL MINE.

SHE GAVE IT UP THOUGH, BETWEEN SCREAMS. LUCY DIDN'T KNOW WHERE LINUS WAS, BUT SHE HAD A PRETTY GOOD IDEA.

I'M HEADING FOR THE PUMPKIN PATCH.

A PEANUT SCORNED

CHAPTER 3

CLAK

KAK

MUNCH

MUNCH

KK

KEK

CRUNCH

MUNCH

KEK

I THINK WE'RE IN THE RIGHT NEIGHBORHOOD, SNOOP.

HERE'S AN AMERICAN SUCCESS STORY:

EARLY IN THE CENTURY, THE DOLLY MADISON CORPORATION REALIZED THAT THEIR PARTICULAR BRAND OF ARTIFICIAL FLAVORINGS WERE A HAIR'S BREADTH AWAY FROM BECOMING **LETHAL TOXINS.**

STOP

AT THE SAME TIME, THEY THEMSELVES WERE A HAIR'S BREADTH AWAY FROM BEING POUNDED INTO **DUST** BY HOSTESS. SO, THEY CONVERT THEIR BUSINESS FROM SNACK CAKES TO **CHEMICAL WEAPONS**, AND THE REST IS HISTORY.

THE **END** OF IT.

THE "PUMPKIN PATCH" WAS GROUND ZERO FOR ONE OF THE **ZINGER BOMBS** THAT HAVE LEFT HALF THE HEMISPHERE UN-INHABITABLE. IT GOT ITS NAME FROM THE FACT THAT ONCE YOU GO IN, ALL THE **SHIT** IN THE AIR IS LIKELY TO MAKE YOU RESEMBLE A **PUMPKIN** ONCE YOU COME OUT.

EXCEPT AS A GENERAL RULE, YOU **NEVER** COME OUT. I KNEW A BOUNTY HUNTER NAMED SHERMY WHO DISAPPEARED FOR GOOD WHEN...

'THE FUCK?

GREEN LEAVES? A ***LIVING*** TREE?

THAT DOESN'T TRACK. NOTHING GROWS IN THE PATCH EXCEPT **RATS** AND **TUMORS.**

SO HOW THE HELL COULD...

GOOD GRIEF!!

CRASH!

SKREEONK

KITE EATER!

SUDDENLY MY DAY TURNS FROM CRAP TO SHIT. A **KITE-EATING TREE!** YOU DON'T SEE *THEM* EVERY DAY, AND WHEN YOU DO, THEY'RE USUALLY THE **LAST** THING YOU SEE.

THEY'RE LEFTOVERS FROM WORLD WAR IV. "ARBOREAL WARFARE DEVICES" DREAMED UP BY THE MILITARY'S HELPFUL GENEGINEERS.

POM

DAMMIT!

TROUBLE IS, THEIR FAVORITE FOOD--AND I'VE NEVER UNDERSTOOD WHY THEY STARTED CALLING CANADIANS "KITES"--DOESN'T *EXIST* ANYMORE.

THE TREES AREN'T TOO CHOOSEY, THOUGH.

SNOOP! NO!

CHOMP

SNOOP!

YERP!

SNOOP'S TOUGH. I THINK HIS MOM GOT HIM FROM HUMPING A PIECE OF **PIG IRON**. BUT TOUGH IS NO PROTECTION AGAINST THE KITE EATER'S **BURNING SAP**.

HUNGRY, HUH? WANT SOME **SUPPER**, LEAFY?

I'VE GOT A **SNACK** FOR YOU!

EAT SHRAP!

SPLAM!

UNHF.

YOU OK SNOOP? LET'S SEE THAT MOUTH.

ROWR

YEP, THAT TREE FUCKED IT UP GOOD. DON'T WORRY, BOY. YOUR MOUTH WILL FEEL A WHOLE LOT BETTER WRAPPED AROUND LINUS' **THROAT**.

THE TREE TOTALED MY RIDE, SO SNOOP AND I HOOF IT TO WHERE LUCY SAID LINUS WAS, QUITE LITERALLY, HOLED UP.

THE BOMB CRATER.

I'VE SPENT THE WALK COMING UP WITH NEW WAYS TO MAKE LINUS SCREAM BEFORE I **END HIM**. NOW THAT WE'RE HERE, I'M PRACTICALLY **WETTING** MYSELF.

BUT THEN MY MIND DRIFTS TO THE BIG "WHAT IF," AND MY EXCITEMENT TURNS TO **COLD SWEAT**.

WHAT IF LINUS HAS MURDERED MY RED-HAIRED GIRL?

I WOULDN'T KILL HIM THEN, OF COURSE.

NO MATTER HOW MUCH HE **BEGGED** ME TO, I WOULD NEVER, **EVER** KILL HIM.

LEVEL 0

beware.

WEAPON BROWN...

IT'S A TRAP.

FINE. FUCK YOU THEN.

A PEANUT SCORNED

CHAPTER 4

CHINK

DO NOT STRUGGLE, GIRL! THE RAPTURE IS UPON US! THE PUMPKIN IS COMING!

MMF!

LONG HAVE I WAITED! LONG HAVE I **BECKONED!** AND NOW THE HOUR HAS COME AT LAST! WITH THIS OFFERING OF VIRGIN FLESH DO I MAKE MY SINCERITY PLAIN!

BE AT EASE, CHILD. YOU ARE BLESSED ABOVE ALL OTHERS. THE MARROW OF YOUR BONES WILL BE THE **MILK** THE GREAT ONE SUCKLES AS HE

GIVE IT A REST, LINUS!

HOW UNEXPECTED! AN INFIDEL VOICE OF DISSENT, AND ONE I KNOW **WELL!** HOW IS IT YOU HAVE FOUND ME, CHARLES?

I LOOKED IN THE YELLOW PAGES UNDER "ASSHOLES-MAJOR." STEP AWAY FROM THE GIRL SO I CAN START HARMING YOU.

THAT IS VERY FUNNY, BUT SHE BELONGS TO THE GREAT ONE AND NONE OTHER.

PERHAPS YOU SHOULD TEND TO YOUR **PET.** IT APPEARS INJURED.

YOU THINK I'M JOKING? I HAVEN'T MADE ANYONE LAUGH IN **TWENTY YEARS.** BUT SNOOP'S JUST FINE, AND EAGER TO GET ***REACQUAINTED.*** JUST HOLD STILL WHILE I BLOW OFF...

WAIT A MINUTE.

PET.

WHERE'S LINUS'...

...BLANKET?!?

POW

AAHHH6H!

GRRARR!!!

RRIPP!

WHAP

YERK!

IDIOT! FUCKING IDIOT!

LINUS AND I ARE BOTH CREATIONS OF PROJECT PEANUTS. THEY TURNED ME INTO A ONE MAN ARMY, AND GAVE HIM PSYCHIC CONTROL OVER A QUASI-SENTIENT, POLYMER-BASED LIFE FORM, HIS "SECURITY BLANKET," THE THING THAT'S KILLING ME NOW.

I CAN'T EVEN SEE HER. THE WOMAN I LOVE. THE WOMAN I FAILED.

I CAN ONLY SEE BLACK. NEXT I'LL SEE HELL. I'M SORRY. OH GOD, I'M SORRY!

SORRY

WAKE UP, FOOL.

LINUS! WHAT...WHY DID YOU KEEP ME ALIVE?

FRIEND, HOW COULD I DENY YOU YOUR CHANCE TO WITNESS THE RAPTURE? AFTER ALL, YOUR VIRGIN LOVER HAS MADE IT ALL POSSIBLE.

VIRGIN? YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR SKULL, LINUS! I TOOK CARE OF **THAT** TWO HOURS AFTER I MET HER!

HER **SPIRIT** IS VIRGIN, IDIOT! SHE HAS A SOUL EVEN **YOUR** FOULNESS CANNOT TAINT!

BUT WHAT DO YOU **NEED** HER FOR? TELL ME WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!

SURE WEAPON BROWN. I CAN TELL YOU WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT.

"THEN I STOOD ON THE SAND OF THE SEA. I SAW A BEAST COMING UP OUT OF THE SEA, HAVING TEN HORNS AND SEVEN HEADS. ON HIS HORNS WERE TEN CROWNS, AND ON HIS HEADS, BLASPHEMOUS NAMES!"

"THEY WORSHIPPED THE DRAGON BECAUSE HE GAVE HIS AUTHORITY TO THE BEAST, AND THEY WORSHIPPED THE BEAST SAYING 'WHO IS LIKE THE BEAST?'"

"'WHO IS ABLE TO MAKE WAR WITH HIM?!'"

SO IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD YOU'RE AFTER? I KNOW YOU PROBABLY DON'T GET THE PAPER DOWN HERE, BUT THE WORLD **ALREADY** ENDED A GENERATION AGO!

MERE PROLOGUE.

SOON WILL COME THE **TRUE** HOLOCAUST! THIS TOXIC BOG, FILLED WITH THE DEATH OF ALL WHO DIED ABOVE, IS THE WOMB FROM WHICH A NEW GOD SHALL BE BORN!

AGRO UN RAMA

A DEITY WHO WILL ERASE THE OLD GOD'S CREATION AND REMAKE THE WORLD IN **HIS** IMAGE!

THE GREAT PUMPKIN!

ONLY I HAVE HEARD HIS VOICE, BUT SOON THE WORLD SHALL KNOW HIM! MY UTMOST SINCERITY WILL DRAW HIM TO OUR PLANE OF EXISTENCE, AND THE GIRL'S SACRIFICE SHALL BIND HIM HERE! YOU WILL BEAR WITNESS TO THIS!

THE FUCK I WILL! BUT JUST ANSWER ME THIS: HOW DID YOU TRACK ME DOWN TO KIDNAP THE GIRL? THERE'S NO WAY YOU COULD HAVE...

YES, YES. YOU'RE CORRECT. I HAD HELP FINDING YOU. HELP FROM THE **HIGH PRIESTESS** OF THE COMING CHURCH OF THE PUMPKIN.

HI BIG BROTHER.

SALLY?

SALLY??

YOU **CUNT!!**

I'M SORRY BIG BROTHER, BUT I **HAD** TO HELP LINUS. ISN'T HE THE **CUTEST THING?**

HE'LL BE THE CUTEST CORPSE WHEN I'M DONE WITH HIM!!

ENOUGH! THE MOMENT IS AT HAND!

FROM THE FORMLESS ETHER I SUMMON THEE! FROM THE MAELSTROM OF CHAOS, LURKING BEYOND THE VEIL OF SANITY, I CALL TO THEE!

BY THY SECRET NAMES DO I INVOKE THY AVATAR! *PEPON GRANDISMO! OMEGA VEGETABLUS!*

ARISE! ARISE AND BAPTIZE THE WORLD WITH THY VENOM!

BEHOLD! THE GREAT PUMPKIN IS COME!

HOLY SCHULZ! LINUS WASN'T KIDDING!

IF I'M GOING TO DO ANYTHING, IT HAS TO BE...

...NOW!

SWEET BABOO, MY BROTHER IS FREE!

I'VE WARNED YOU NOT TO CALL ME THAT! TAKE THE KNIFE AND COMPLETE THE SACRIFICE!

BLANKET! DESTROY HIM!

GUN.

HAVE TO REACH MY...

...GUN!

THE BLANKET HAS ONLY ONE VULNERABLE SPOT: ITS PRIMARY COMPUTER PLEXUS. BUT IT'S SMALL. NO ORDINARY MAN COULD EVER HOPE TO HIT IT WITH ONE SHOT.

SPLAK!

SKKEEE

AND I'M NO ORDINARY MAN!

BUH..BUH.. BLANKET!

SWEET BAB...ER, LINUS? HOW SHOULD I MAKE THE SACRIFICE? STAB HER HEART? CUT HER THROAT?

HE MURDERED MY BLANKET!

WHAT?

!

NO! NO, GREAT ONE! I WORSHIP **YOU** ABOVE ALL OTHERS!

PLEASE...

PLEASE?

SHLUMP

NO!!!

NO!

MY LOVE!

MY...

MY RED-HAIRED GIRL.

AAUGHH!!

ROWR?

RATS.

I TURN MY BACK ON IT ALL. LINUS. MY TREACHEROUS SISTER. THE THING FROM THE PIT.

HER.

TURNING YOUR BACK IS THE FIRST LESSON THEY TEACH YOU IN THIS LIFE. IT'S A HARD WORLD, TOO HARD TO LET A DREAM GO WANDERING OFF BY ITSELF BECAUSE YOU WEREN'T PAYING ATTENTION TO IT. BUT IF YOU DO, FORGET ABOUT IT FAST. YOU WON'T WANT TO SEE WHAT'S LEFT OF YOUR DREAM AFTER THE NIGHTMARES HAVE TAKEN THEIR TURNS ON IT.

IT'S A LESSON I'D FORGOTTEN UNTIL NOW, BUT ONE I CAN STILL OBEY. ALREADY I CAN FEEL MY MEMORIES OF THE GIRL TURNING TO DUST, HITTING THE WIND, LEAVING ME FOREVER. IT'S WHAT HAS TO BE DONE. THEY'D ONLY SLOW ME DOWN, AND A KILLER HAS TO BE FAST.

DID MY TIME WITH HER EVER LET ME BECOME MORE THAN WHAT THEY CREATED IN THE LABS ALL THOSE YEARS AGO? I DON'T KNOW. ALL I KNOW IS WHAT I AM TODAY, AND IF YOU ASK ANYONE WHO CROSSES ME AND LIVES, THEY'LL BE ABLE TO TELL YOU THE SAME. I'M JUST A ROUND-HEADED SON OF A BITCH.

A BOY NAMED WEAPON BROWN.

END.

The Blorn Dragone

$1.300

TENSIONS WITH MONGO RISING

Warships Deployed to Gulf of Arboria

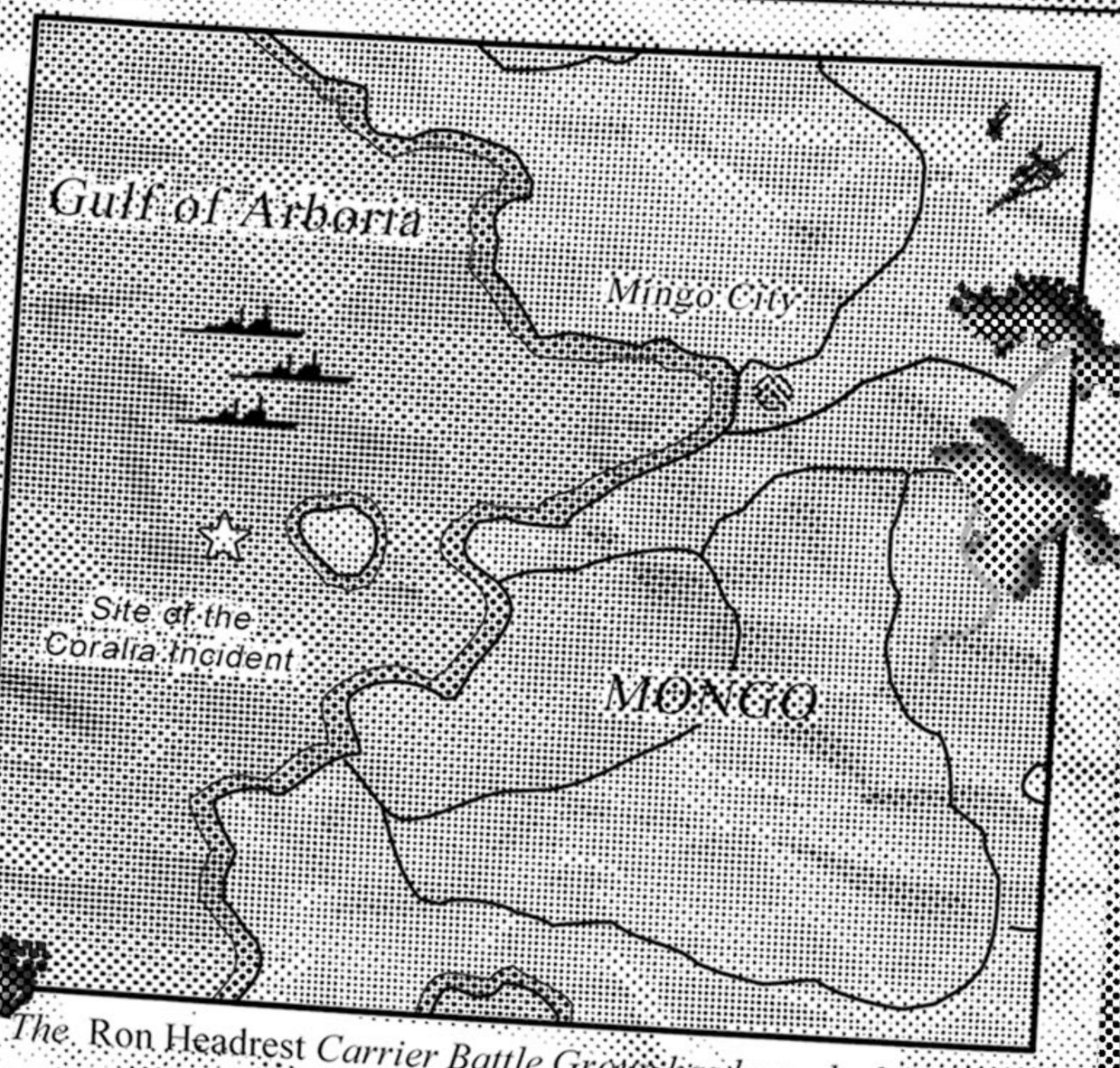
by Milo Bloom

THE CAPITOL - Amidst increasingly bellicose language between Our Homeland and the Mongovian Empire, the Navy today disaptched a task force to the restive Gulf of Arboria, despite threats by Emperor Ming to turn the region into a "death zone" for any foreign forces deployed there.

"My reputation as 'Ming the Consensus Builder' should not confuse anyone bent on violating Mongo's sovereignty" the ruler of the Middle Asian country said in a statement released Thursday.

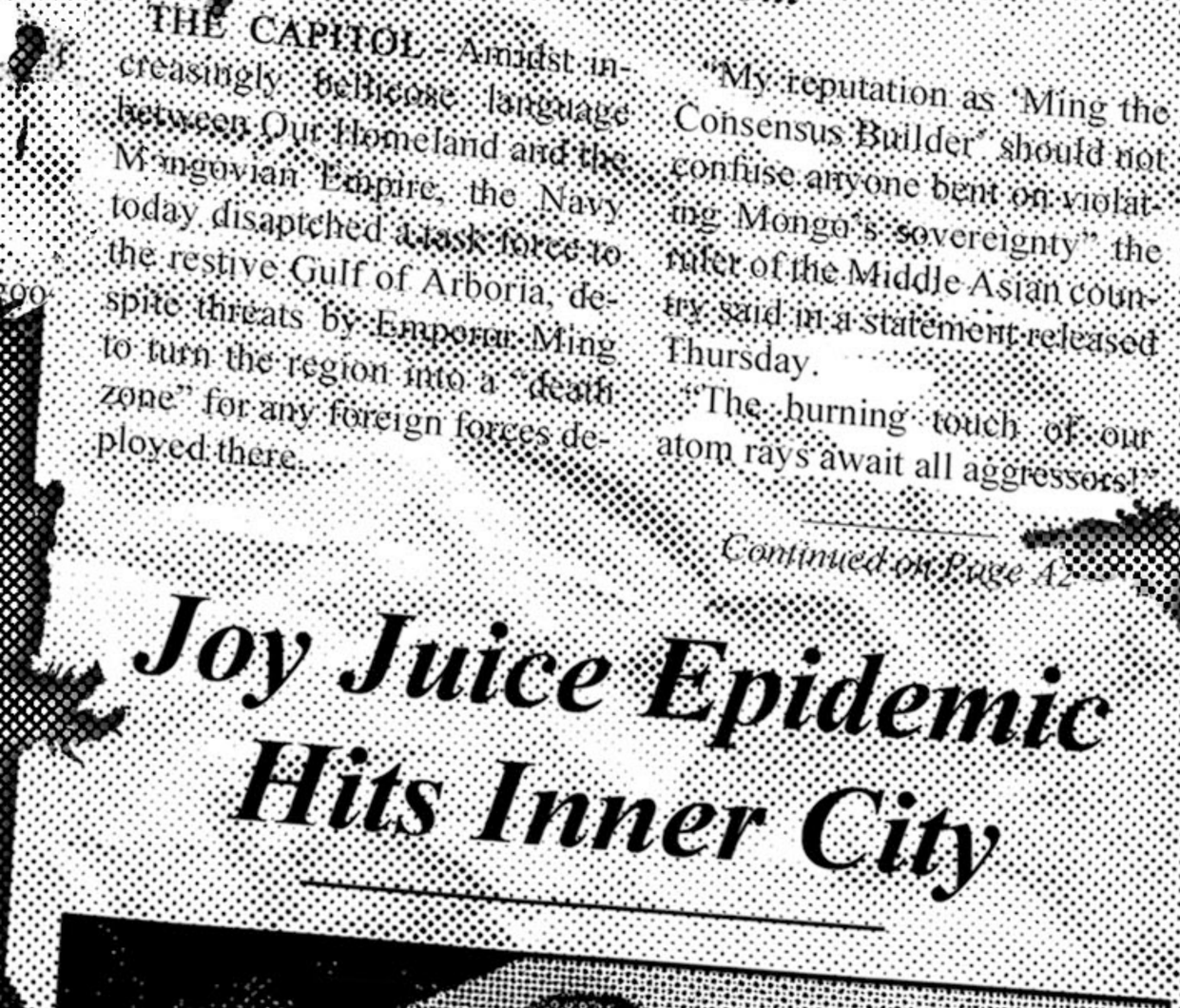
"The burning touch of our atom rays await all aggressors!"

Continued on Page 42



The Ron Headrest Carrier Battle Group has been deployed to protect the sea lanes the atom-rich, freedom -poor region.

Joy Juice Epidemic Hits Inner City



Police Chief Patton displays a "drink box", a piece of paraphenalia seized from a recently busted juice house.

On the street it is called "Kick", "Poo-poo" or most commonly "Joy Juice". But regardless of its name, this highly addictive and illegal beverage has ravaged the poorest neighborhoods of our city in recent months, and led to [illegible] turf wars by gangs that

corn cob pipe dangling from his mouth, one strap of his bib overalls unbuttoned, tells us that Joy Juice is extremely popular amongst fans of jug band music.

"I got my firts (sic) taste o' Kick at a after hours banjo rave, and that quick become a three jug-a-day

Halftraque Out, Bullmoose In At DoD

THE CAPITOL - Facing unrelenting pressure from women's advocacy groups, the administration today announced the resignation of Secretary of Defense Amos Halftraque.

"I don't know why so many broads are uptight about having their asses pinched," Press Secretary Steve Dallas said at this morning's daily briefing. "But fine, the President has bowed to the bimbo lobby and a great man has been broomed out the door. You can all unknot your panties."

During his nine-month tenure at the Defense Department, Halftraque had been investigated nearly a dozen times on allegations of sexual harassment, intimidation and forcing lap dances from his female underlings.

Bobbi Harlow, president of the National Organization of Bitter Sisters (NOBS), who led the charge for Halftraque's dismissal, remained adamant in her

Replacing Halftraque at the helm of the DoD is Bashington T. Bullmoose, a longtime friend of the President and bundler for the President's election campaign.

"I vow to make our nation's war machine run like clockwork. A big, roaring clock that will announce the time to our enemies: *time to die*." If you cross us, of course."

Questions immediately arose regarding possible conflicts of interest between Bullmoose's role as CEO of General Bullmoose, the nation's largest defense contractor, and his new position as Secretary of Defense. Bullmoose has said that he does not recognize the issue and will not be resigning as head of GB.

"What's good for General Bullmoose is good for Our Homeland," he stated flatly this afternoon, and then announced the approval of seventeen no-bid contracts between the government and his corporation.

General Bull[illegible]ce is [illegible] Nan[illegible]

[illegible]ued [illegible]

[illegible]reception [illegible]

[illegible]in its [illegible]

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[illegible]of the vehicles has [illegible]

[illegible]ble [illegible]

PART 2


GRADE
FEDERAL
FAMINE
RATION

They called it the Last War. Not because it was the last war that was fought, but because it was the last one that would **ever** be fought.

It began over the usual shit, but this time the men in the fancy hats didn't know when to put their toys away. When it was finished, it was finished for **good.** The lakes were sand, the fields were ash and the cities were all cemeteries.

Humanity was a cloud of dust blowing over everything it had built. Senators and their speeches, priests and their bibles... all they were now was **soot** that floated in the air and clotted in your nostrils.

Cockroach inherited the earth, and mankind's survivors learned their ways. No law, faith or creed would ever unite men again. There was nothing left to come together over, nothing left worth having.

Of course, there was still plenty left to **fight** about.

WEAPON BROWN

BLOCKHEAD'S WAR

CHAPTER 18:

PAYCHECK

I've got a lot of names, depending on who you ask. I'll let you call me Chuck.

I kill for a living. There's a lot of guys in my line of work, and they're all cheaper than me. If all you want is to put a hole in somebody, you hire one of them.

HOW'S MY DRIVING?

But if you want to take out a tank crew of battle-hardened scum and fall asleep knowing they died screaming --

You call good ol' **Weapon Brown.**

HE'S STILL COMING! FLAPP, GIVE HIM ANOTHER GRENADE!

I'M ALL OUT! WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? PICK HIM OFF ALREADY!

TRYIN'! THIS SUMBITCH IS AS SLICK AS A SIDEWINDER!

BRATATATAT!

A round zips past my ear. The gunner's hating me now.

Four seconds and he'll be signing "Fuck You" across my chest.

One option: my plaz gun can't damage the tank at this range --

POW

-- But it can still put a hurt on.

ZERO!!

EELILIARRGHH!

SARGE! THE BASTARD ZEROED ZERO! SWING THE GUN AROUND!

The turret. I wondered when they'd remember that.

HANG ON, SNOOP!

KLEK

BOOM

PFT

FWM

WE GOT HIM!
THE HELL WE GOT HIM!

HOW'S MY DRIVING?

NO! HE'S HOOKED ONTO US AND REELING HIMSELF IN! SWING HIM OFF THE DAM!

SUNSABITCHES SURE ARE MAKING ME EARN MY PAY! YOU READY TO EARN *YOURS*?

ROOF!

THEN GET *FLYIN'*, ACE!

WHUUAUGH!

BOOM!

GOD DAMN!

TRYIN' TO BLOW MY *NUTS* OFF NOW? THIS JUST GOT PERSONAL!

SOMEONE DOWN THERE MUST HAVE A NEW STYLE OF *BEGGING FOR MERCY* HE'S BEEN WANTING TO TRY OUT!

I THINK YOU FUCKERS ARE GONNA FIND–

– I'M A BIT *DEAF* IN THAT EAR!

BUT IF YOU STOP THIS TANK AND GIVE ME WHAT I *WANT*, I MIGHT LEAVE YOU EACH A *LEG* TO HOP HOME ON!

CLUB

ONLY THIN' *YOR* GETTIN' IS YOR *SKULL* CAVED IN!

BEETLE! GETCHER LAZY ASS UP HAR!

IS THAT "BEETLE" DOWN THERE, IN MY DOG'S MOUTH? I DON'T THINK HE'LL BE CHARGING TO ANY *RESCUES*.

BEETLE'S THE GUY WHO'S GONNA MAKE YOU WISH YOU WEREN'T NEVER BORN, SON. HE SHOR AS SHIT WISHES *HE* HADN'T BEEN!

BUT YOU HOLD NICE AN' STILL–

–AN' I'LL BASH YOUR *BRAINS* OUT AFORE HE GETS AT 'EM!

THANKS ANYWAY, PIG TITS!!

IF ANYONE IN THERE IS KEEPING SCORE, YOUR TEAM IS DOWN *THREE-NIL.*

AND AT THIS RANGE IT WILL BE EASY ENOUGH TO TURN WHOEVER YOU'VE GOT LEFT INTO *TOMATO SAUCE.* NOW STOP THE DAMN...

GOD IS A SWEATY MIDGET WITH A HARD-ON.

HRAXXXX

HXXXXXX...

Beetle, I presume.

Its breath is like a hot wind over wet garbage, and I can hear teeth grinding all the way down its throat. How the hell a thing like this doesn't get crushed beneath a cinder block the moment it crawls out of its mother...

Then again, babies born after the Last War have learned to get in the first shot.

HGGG! S-SNUHK--

ROWF ROWF ROWF!

SSNOOP!

KKGLUNGG...!

HRXX! HRAXXXX!

GLUHHNNN...

?

!

BRAAATATATAT!

My dog.

Not for sale.

PANG TATTATTATTATTAT

HREEE! RREEXXX!

KAFF KAFF! DON'T LIKE THE *LIGHT*, HANDSOME? I CAN SOLVE THAT FOR YOU...

LIGHTS--

XX*

--OUT!

SWAP

KREK

CRUK

SMACK

THAT WAS SOME FANCY SHOOTIN', POOCH. HANG TIGHT WHILE I WRAP THIS UP.

WUFF.

LAST MAN STANDING, HUH? I'M GONNA COUNT TO ZERO...

PLEASE! NO KILL! I STOP TANK! *I GIVE UP MYSELF!*

KRRRANK

NO SWEAT OFF MY SACK, PAL.

YOU AREN'T WHO I'M HERE FOR.

YOU ARE.

IZ GIRL SAFE THEN? IZ GOOD THEN? IZ NO KILL?

YEAH, FIGURE I GOT NO MORE BEEF WITH YOU.

TELL YOU WHAT, THOUGH--

--LET'S LET MISTER *GRAVITY* MAKE THAT CALL!

AIIEEEE!

CHUNK!

VROOOOM

CRASH

NO
NO!

NO!

YOU ALRIGHT? ALL YOUR PIECES STILL ATTACHED?

ALRIGHT?? HOW COULD I BE *ALRIGHT*?!

THOSE BASTARDS TOOK TURNS ON ME FOR THREE NIGHTS! THEY ALL HAD ME! THEY LET THAT--THAT *THING* HAVE ME!!

ZOOO

NOT EATING?

I DON'T BLAME YOU. THESE *F-RATIONS* TASTE LIKE CRAP'S CAVEMAN ANCESTOR.

ALL THE SAME, YOU BETTER *SUCK DOWN* A TUBE. WE'VE GOT A FOUR DAY WALK AHEAD OF US, AND ITS ALL YOU'LL GET TO EAT UNTIL I *DELIVER* YOU.

Toonerville

PLEASE... IF YOU WOULD ONLY *LISTEN* TO...

SMAK

I WARNED YOU ONCE: BEGGING'S JUST A WASTE OF BREATH.

BUT *WHY?* WHY TAKE ME BACK TO THE GENERAL WHEN-- WHEN *YOU* COULD HAVE ME?

MAYBE I DON'T WANT THAT *BUG'S* SLOPPY SECONDS.

ANYWAY, YOU HAVEN'T GOT WHAT I *NEED.* THE GENERAL DOES.

YOU'RE *BOUGHT.* BEST GET USED TO IT.

IF I HAVE TO WARN YOU AGAIN YOU GET THE *METAL* HAND.

YOU *DID* SAVE MY LIFE.

THIS ISN'T GOING TO CHANGE MY MIND.

DON'T YOU AT LEAST WANT TO SEE--

--WHAT ALL THE *FUSS* IS ABOUT?

THE GENERAL LIKES TO PROTECT HIS ASSETS, HUH?

THEY *ARE* INCREDIBLE... IF YOU CAN GET AT THEM. THOSE ASSHOLES TRIED FOR DAYS TO CRACK THE LOCK.

A man who likes to wrap his favorite pair of blips in titanium?

Hardly the strangest thing I've seen.

MMMM

MMM?

WHAT GIVES? YOU PREGNANT OR SOMETHING?

DOES IT MATTER? WHEN'S THE NEXT TIME YOU THINK YOU'LL TASTE ANYTHING THIS GOOD?

She's right.

Everything she's got is the best thing I've ever tasted.

WELCOME BACK, PRETTY ONE. DID YOU MISS MY CARESS?

NOT AS MUCH AS I MISSED *GIVING IT*, I ASSURE YOU.

YOU ARE AS GOOD AS YOUR WORD, WEAPON BROWN. *TRUSTWORTHY.* NOT LIKE *MY* MUTINOUS MEN. *kaff kaff*

YOUR DELAY MADE ME FEAR THAT THOSE SWINE HAD BESTED YOU--

--BUT CLEARLY THEY WERE UNPREPARED TO MEET A *REAL* SOLDIER.

I'M RECRUITING, YOU KNOW...

JUST GIVE ME MY *PAYCHECK* SO I CAN PUT A FEW HUNDRED KLICKS BETWEEN US, YOU GODDAMN *REPTILE.*

YES, YES. AS PROMISED: 100,000 CALORIES AND 4,000 WATTS.

SPARKY
12V500A

FEDERAL FAMINE RESPONSE
CONTENTS: 500 RATIONS TYPE 2

HAVE SOMEONE LOAD IT INTO THE *RIDE* YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE ME.

YES, FINE. TAKE WHAT YOU WANT FROM THE MOTOR POOL.

NO SHORTAGE OF VEHICLES. ONLY *DRIVERS.* kaff KAFF!

SO, IF OUR BUSINESS IS CONCLUDED...

SAY GOODBYE TO YOUR *HERO,* MISS BUCKSLEY.

GOODBYE?

LOOKS LIKE.

Those eyes might have bought her freedom once. Here, now-- they aren't worth half a volt and a can of dog food.

I don't feel bad. She had no right to hope. There was one girl on this planet worth losing my reputation over.

You weren't her.

Story ends.

CHUPCHUPCHUPCHUPCHUPCHUP

LAP LAP

OHHH, SUCH *TORMENT!*

I COULD GOBBLE YOUR *GASH* UNTIL MY GUMS WERE SORE, AND WHO WOULD CARE? BUT ohhh... FOR JUST ONE *GLIMPSE* OF THOSE TREASURES...

GENERAL...!

"HE'S HERE!"





C-COMMANDER CROKK!

"GENERAL".

YOU'RE...EARLY! WE WEREN'T EXPECTING YOU FOR ANOTHER TWO DAYS.

WERE YOU PLANNING ME A...*PARTY?*

I...NO, I... DID YOU *WANT* ONE? WE COULD

WHERE ARE ZEE TITS?

H-HERE! RIGHT THROUGH HERE.

JUST AS YOU REQUES... JUST AS YOU *ORDERED.* UNTOUCHED AND UNHARMED.

SHE WILL BE *NEITHER* FOR MUCH LONGER.

I HOPE YOU AVE ENJOYED YOUR VACATION, MISS BUCKSLEY. YOUR NEW ACCOMODA-TIONS WILL NOT BE NEARLY SO... *CHARMING.*

zeep zeep zee

WHAT? WHAT IS ZIS *SOUND??*

Riiip!

SHE HAS BEEN OPENED!

zeep zeep zeep

EMPTY!!

SCOTCH!

EEUURGHH!!!

WHAT?? SHE CAN'T... I-I DIDN'T...

KO

WHERE IS IT? ?

CRAK!

SPEAK, YOU DRIED UP PIG'S ANUS! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH IT?!

"WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH THE *FUTURE*?!"

I'll reach the Boonies tomorrow and trade my haul for fuel, rotgut... maybe another hump.

Maybe her hole will even be in the right place.

SUX DICK

She had no right to hope. Survival is the only virtue left after the Last War, and I'm its patron saint.

Can't be a saint and a hero at the same time.

HERE'S TO BITTER REALITY.

Then again--

--maybe I haven't had my last taste of the **sweet life** after all.

CHAPTER 28

TROGLODYTES





WHAT ARE YOU DOING? LEMME GET IN ON THAT!

NO WAY! I'M SAVING THIS NOSE OYSTER FOR DINNER.

IT'LL BE NICE TO HAVE SOMETHING TO LOOK *FORWARD TO.*

WHICH LEAVES OUR MAN WITH ONLY ONE WAY TO SNEAK OUT OF THE BASIN: ***BONE CITY.*** 'COURSE, HE'D HAVE TO BE FUKKIN' ***CRAZY...***

CRAZY IS *US* SITTING HERE AS THE ***WELCOME WAGON.***

I MEAN, HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THIS "WEAPON BROWN"? THE ***SYNDICATE*** BUILT HIM. I HEAR HE'S RACKED UP MORE KILLS THAN THE LAST WAR!

GODDAMMIT, WE'VE BEEN STAKED OUT HERE ***THREE DAYS!*** WHAT THE HELL MAKES CROKK THINK THIS FLESH-PICKER IS GONNA COME THROUGH HERE?

PROCESS OF ELIMINATION. YA GOT OPEN DESERT TO THE WEST--PLENTY EASY TO SPOT HIM FROM THE AIR. THERE'S SHRAPNEL STORMS BLOWING THROUGH GASOLINE VALLEY, AND NO WAY HE BRAVES *THAT.*

I DON'T CARE IF HE'S THE SECOND COMING OF THE ***ANTICHRIST.*** THERE'S ONE APPROACH TO B.C. AND WE'VE GOT IT COVERED FROM THE ***HIGH GROUND.***

HE TURNS UP, HE GETS TURNED ***OFF.***

PROCESS OF ELIMINATION.

HEY...

THE HELL??

POM! POM! POM!

KRUKUUM!

OH GOD! OH NO!!

AHHHHH

GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO GET HERE *FIRST*, THEN.

AAAAAHHHH

After dodging Legionnaire patrols for a week, I was ten minutes from crossing through B.C. when a gunship arrived and shat out those two turds. Three days of waiting for them to say something useful and all I learned was that one of them liked having a finger up his ass while his balls were being licked.

What does the Syndicate want with me?

Can't be the arm. It's not that rare.

Revenge? That can get expensive if your heart isn't in it. And one thing the Syndicate doesn't own is a **heart.**

HRUFF!

GROWWWR...

SORRY MUTT. COULDN'T HELP KILLING THEM BOTH.

NEXT TIME, I PROMISE--

--ALL THE DEATH YOU CAN EAT.

KreeeUNK!

So the Syndicate has a hard on for me again. I'm not gonna lose sleep trying to get inside their heads.

If I never find out why they're after me...

...I guess that means I never got caught.

ALL THOSE IN FAVOR OF *MY* ASSUMING THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF OUR VENERABLE BOARD?

hgggk! HHHWUKKK

AYE.

AYE.

OH, I SHOULD THINK SO.

FUGGIN' DO IT ALREADY!

THEN IT IS WITH THE GREATEST *HUMILITY*--

--THAT I *ACCEPT.*

NOW...WITH OUR DOWNSIZING OVER WITH, WE CAN RETURN TO THE URGENT MATTER AT HAND.

MY PREDECESSOR'S TENURE WAS DISTINGUISHED BY THE SUBCONTRACTING OF OUR OUTLAND SECURITY NEEDS TO *GENERAL HALFTRAQUE*--

--A RATHER *SHORT-SIGHTED* DECISION WHICH HAS PUT US IN OUR CURRENT PREDICAMENT. OUR OPTIONS, HOWEVER, HAVE NOT CHANGED.

IF OUR FORMER ASSET DOES INDEED POSSESS THE *SAMPLE*, THIS WILL NECESSITATE ALLOCATING *ALL OF* OUR RESOURCES TOWARDS ITS REACQUISITION.

CAN THE BULLSHIT, HORNS! WHAT YOU MEAN IS, YOU WANNA THROW ALL WE'VE GOT AT WEAPON BROWN, EVEN IF DOIN' IT COSTS US CONTROL OF EVERY SECTOR WE ALREADY HAVE UNDER OUR THUMB!

DAMMIT, EVEN IF HE *DOES* HAVE THE SHIT IT'S GOTTA BE CONTAMINATED BY NOW...

EVEN CORRUPTED, THE SUBSTANCE MAY HAVE *WORTH.*

MY ADVICE IS THAT WE FOLLOW CHAIRMAN HORNS' SUGGESTION.

YOU HEARING THIS, CROKK? WHAT ELSE HAVE YOU GOTTEN FROM THE WOMAN?

MISS BUCKSLEY IZ... NO LONGER AVAILABLE FOR QUESTIONS. IT APPEARS SHE 'AD A *SUICIDE CAPSULE* HIDDEN FOR ZEE MOMENT SHE KNEW ZEE SAMPLE WAS SAFELY OUT OF OUR 'ANDS.

WHAT IS CLEAR IS ZAT SHE WAS UNABLE TO PERSUADE *ARME BRUN* TO RETURN 'ER TO 'ER PEOPLE, BUT ZAT DOES NUT MEAN SHE DID NUT TELL 'IM WHERE ZEY *ARE.* 'EE MAY EVEN BE TRYING TO RETURN ZEE SUBSTANCE TO ZEM FOR A *REWARD.*

I'M WITH OL' RAISIN PUSS ON THIS ONE. WE'VE GOT TROUBLE RIGHT HERE IN RIVER CITY!

I MEAN, FOR CRISSAKES--WHEN ARE WE GOING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THESE *BATS*?!

GENTLEMEN, LET ME REMIND YOU OF THE ***OBVIOUS.***

OUR POSITION OF PRE-EMINENCE IS NOT MAINTAINED WITH LEAD OR VOLTS, BUT BY OUR ***IRON GRIP*** ON THE REMNANTS OF THE *STRATEGIC CALORIC RESERVE*--A DWINDLING RESOURCE.

YOU'VE ALL SEEN THE PROJECTIONS. WITHIN ***EIGHT*** FISCAL QUARTERS WE MAY BE FORCED TO GAIN SUSTENANCE IN WAYS THAT ARE... SLIGHTLY OBJECTIONABLE. AND NO LESS *TEMPORARY.*

THE FOOD CHAIN IS ***SUNDERED.*** BUT SOMEWHERE IN THE WASTES LIES THE KEY TO OUR ***SURVIVAL***--

--NOT TO MENTION SOME UNWELCOME COMPETITION THAT MUST BE ***DEALT WITH.***

AND HOW ARE WE GONNA DO THAT WITHOUT THAT PIECE O' TAIL TO LEAD US TO THEM? THE OUTLANDS ARE TOO ***BIG!*** AND IF WEAPON BROWN GIVES CROKK THE SLIP--AS HAS BEEN HIS ***HABIT***--

BOCHE, YOU WORTHLESS BAG OF ***DEAD SKIN...!***

--THEN HE'LL DISAPPEAR INTO THE WILDERNESS WHILE EVERYTHING WE'VE BUILT HERE FALLS APART!

I DON'T NEED MY MEN CHASING AROUND HELL'S HALF ACRE ON SOME SNIPE HUNT! I NEED 'EM ***HERE,*** KEEPING MY CHATTLE ***SCARED!***

DEPLOYING ALL OUR ENFORCERS PRECIPITOUSLY MAY NOT BE OUR *ONLY* OPTION.

AFTER ALL, FINDING A NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK ISN'T SO DIFFICULT--

--WHEN THERE IS A ***THREAD*** ATTACHED.

Men, women and children explode into splinters, the last scraps of their identity reduced to anonymous dust, by me. I laugh at the madness of it all.

The last laugh. The one I always wanted.

Whatever name the place had before, it's **Bone City** now. Hit by a quake ray in the early years of the war, written off and amputated from the nation along with its survivors--

THIMBLE

N W PLAYING

POPPING PRISCILLA

BOOTS AND HER BUTTHOLE

BUCKIES 100% FATTY SNAX

CHICKWEED LN

BEATTIE BLVD

THE ROSE & CROWN

SIX CHIX with DIX

ROOT BEER

--then given **new purpose**, as the Mecca for an endless convoy of tractor trailers delivering corpses when the country's **dead** finally began to outnumber the **living**.

I plow forward, the debris of a thousand dead citizens crunching and snapping like sticks of chalk under the wheels of my **street eater.** My tongue stings from the taste of atomized flesh so poisonous even the flies couldn't touch it.

So it ain't Six Flags. But just on the other side is the Highway Styx, the asphalt river that brought the dead here, unbroken and marauder free. From there it's a straight shot to the mountains and a thousand hiding places from the Syndicate.

Snoop slobbers and whines at the sight of more bones then he'll ever see again in his life. The city reciprocates: bone drifts, skull dunes, whole skeleton sierras close in around us, ready to take in new residents.

Out of the corner of my eye I think I glimpse a withered claw clutching at us as we pass. I know then that I've listened to too many stories.

Stories, about how a lot of the bodies dumped here weren't **dead** yet.

And how some of the ones that **were** dead--

--didn't **stay** that way.

Spook stories. Guess no one's immune.

HOTEL LOLLY

grr snrrl grrarrll

SNOOP! SHOW SOME RESPECT! THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE MAYOR.

AND DON'T BOTHER DAY-DREAMING ABOUT THE ***REST*** OF THESE CHEW TOYS. WE'RE HERE JUST LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO RECYCLE SOME SLUDGE AND THEN WE ARE **GONE.**

Antonio's
1-800-TAKE OUT

*Finally, a lucky break here in the Devil's ass crack. Playing hide-and-seek with the Syndicate for the last week just about left me with **dust** to drink.*

*Dust, and that...**milk** she gave me.*

*'Cept I don't ever remember milk tasting **that** good. Just like she promised, it's the best thing I've had on my tongue since before the war.*

*I'd count my blessings but for the fact that it's still **fresh** in my canteen after a week in the heat. Whatever it is, it ain't normal.*

*And if I weren't about to trust a glorified coffee filter to sift fallout and seventeen kinds of lab-engineered **super-germs** from this water, I might even be a bit worried.*

One thing I ain't taking my chances on is being in B.C. after dark. I've never passed through any dead burg that didn't have **something** ugly nesting in the shadows, waiting for the sun to go down.

I've dealt with enough **vampire geeches** and needle-toothed **nermals** to know better than to...

UH?

SSSSSSSS

WHADDAYAKNOW.

CLAMS GOT LEGS.

NICE TO SEE THAT THE END OF THE WORLD IS PAYING OFF FOR *SOMEONE.*

Skee

Tok

NO.

COME ON.

SKREEE

LIBERALS, BEWARE! BARNEY BAXTER IS ON THE AIR! NEWS RADIO 1370 WFUL

MOVE MUTT MOVE!

SKRUNK SKRUNK

WWWW

SSSkKKrrrrmmmmmmmmm!!

SHIT!

MEAT!!

MEAT!!

AHHHGHHHHA!

MMEEEATT!

FUCKING WONDERFUL!

GOD FORBID JUST *ONE* RUMOR ABOUT NECROTIC, PUS-DRIPPING CANNIBALS SHOULDN'T *PAN OUT!*

AH CRAP! *HEAD DOWN!*

REEP!

SKRAAAK!

ROOF! ROOF! ROOF!

GUESS I *WAS* OVERDUE FOR A *HAIRCUT*...

WE BETTER SHOW THESE BONE EATERS MORE THAN OUR *ASSES* BEFORE WE RUN OUT OF CAR!

ONLY THREE OF THEM, AND IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THEY BROUGHT ANY FIREPOWER...

HANG ON TO YOUR FLEAS, MUTT! I'LL TAKE THIS NEXT TURN, WHIP THE RIDE ONE-EIGHTY, AND THEN WE'LL SEE--

--WHO'S SCARED OF WHO?



MEAT!

MEAT!

MEEYYYAHRRGUHH!

MEAT?? I'LL FEED YOU YOUR FUCKING *TEETH* YOU OOZING SACKS OF--

GAHHH!!

Weenie U[illegible]orld

ADULT NOV[illegible]TIES

SKREEEEEEEKRUNK!

CURIOUS AV[illegible]

GOOD

GRRRIEFF

MEAT!

NNNG! GET YOUR... SCABBY FLIPPERS OFF ME...

MEAT!

MEAT!

MEAT!

MEAT.

FUKKIN' TROG...! IF I GO DOWN--

--I'M NOT GOING DOWN RAW.

POW

SSS

KAWA!

JEEZUSS!!

JEEEZUUUSSSS!!!

LOOKS LIKE THEIR VOCABULARY'S *EXPANDED.*

NOW...

MEEEEEAT!

YOU'RE ON THE WRONG PAGE, BUDDY!

WE'RE PRAISING *JESUS* NOW!

ZOT!

Snoop's down for the count and more half-deads are pouring out of every window and manhole. Back to plan "A": haul ass.

KEEP BREATHING, MUTT! WE'VE STILL GOT *CHUCK LUCK* WORKING FOR US!

WHAT DID WE NEED ALL THAT GEAR FOR? AND AT LEAST THE ***SURVIVAL KIT*** DIDN'T GO UP IN SMOKE.

ONCE I'VE PUNCHED THE TICKET OF A FEW MORE OF THE LOCALS WE'LL BE MOUNTAIN BOUND--

POM POM

--AND THEN THIS CITY CAN ***KISS OUR TAILLIGHTS!***

NOW WHO'S ***THIS*** DRINK OF WATER?

MUST BE SELLING SOUVENIRS.

EAT HEAT, FUCKER.

Pzz

My plaz gun loses its charge right on schedule.

Or did I forget how "Chuck Luck" usually operates?

WHUD!

MEEYYGGO

HRRUHH

HROOOo

IT'S "MEAT", YOU... WALKING ABSCESS...

My head-- crushed by a cinder block.

Fate's been laughing at me my whole life.

HRRARREERRGGH!

CRATCH!

My melon's still **intact.**

Either my karma's got the hiccups--

--Or Snoop just woke up **hungry.**

RRRAR RRRR

GRAAGH! GRRAHHHH!

HWAKK!

WHAM!

Chest feels like a box of toothpicks... have to muster everything I've got before I black out..!

And I whiff it.

HORG G'

GLOMP

BONK! BONK! BONK!

MUFFA RUFFA!!

KRICKLE

KLUD

LIES

GLUTTT...

UrroOoGH!

UH-UH, GRUESOME! NO SECONDS FOR YOU!

ALLEY OOP!

SKOSH!

COME ON UP, YOU STINKIN' APE. I AIN'T FALLIN' FOR...

UUAARRGGHHH!!!

Holy Hell!

Clams got TEETH!

MUTT! YOU ALIVE??

WHINE WHINE WHINE

UGGGH...SNOOP! YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW WHERE THIS FACE HAS BEEN...

wheeez

I take my inventory:

Definitely a rib scratching my lung, my torch is out of fire and I don't see the scooter... must have skidded into the fissure. Night's falling--

--And if that ain't enough, here comes the second act of the **freak show.**

MEAT! MEAT! MEAT!

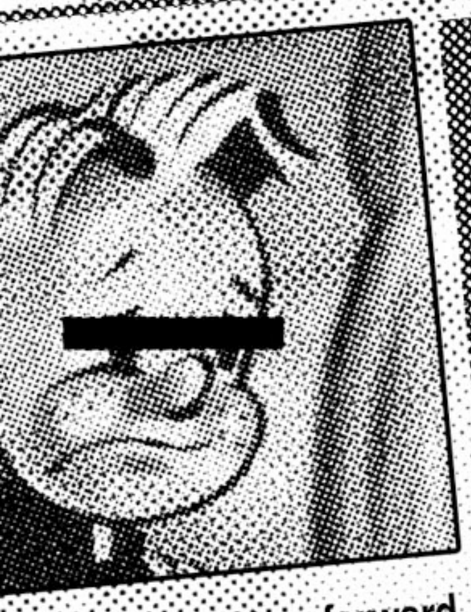
Shit odds for surviving the next 24 hours. But I've got Snoop...

And I've got **hate.**

Hate will keep me moving. **Hate** will pump these legs.

There's a reckoning yet to come. I don't know where or when, or who I'll meet there, but it's the day I am surviving for. And when it arrives--

--that **will** be the **Last War.**



y is latest to come forward
t abuse scandal F1

THE FLASH

A LIVING NEWSPAPER



Black orchid serum:
At last, the cure for
male impotence? D1

"What First Strike?"

On talk show, President denies knowledge of Mingo City airburst

News Nugs

ildren's entertainer **Binky e Clown** in hospital from lium overdose 3A

UMPS vaccine still nowhere sight 1B

roo's Palace to host **Bolt-alooka** title bout 2C

"Naughty" Pete Pulaski sen-tenced to death for cannibal killing spree 2A

Wendell-Jones apologizes for exploding Banana Pods, announces recall 1C



by B. Starr

The nation is scratching its head this morning over comments the President made during an appearance last night on WFNK's *Late Talk with John Darling* program, in which the President claimed ignorance of the widely reported nuclear detonation that took place yesterday over Mingo City, capital of the country of Mongo.

"This is news to me, John," the President said when asked by host Darling about the incident. "I really think you should check your facts."

Pressed by Darling, the President appeared bemused. "I'm sure that if what you claim had actually happened, I would have been told. This is the kind of thing I would be notified of immediately."

The President then seemed to wish to change the subject. "I was talking to Miss Piggy in the green room. She's a real hoot! Doesn't ask a lot of pesky questions, either."

Subsequent attempts by Darling to get the President to return to the topic were rebuffed, with the President suggesting several times that Darling may have confused a television movie for news coverage.

"They've got crazy special effects these days, I think maybe you were watching Planet of the Gorillas and got mixed up, Jim," the President said.

Then, during the interview's first commercial break, the President apparently walked off the show.

John Darling used the remainder of his show to talk about the incident with guests Miss Piggy and rapper Li'l Mo-Z. In an additional twist to this bizarre story, John Darling has not been seen since leaving the WFNK studios after the show's taping yesterday afternoon.

See WTF? *on the next page*

War Could B Shot-in-the-A For Our Economy

by P. Miller

The entire country is on tenterhooks today, wondering where events unfolding in Middle Asia will take us. But residents of the slum of Hogan's Alley are hopeful that a war with Mongo could help the economic doldrums the nation has been enduring since the bursting of the newsprint bubble.

"Iff only I kin haff zum sordta jop fur to vork at, eeffun fur two days a veek," Golda Katzenjammer told us. "I kin gibbing oop der proshtitushun!"

Unemployed recent college grad Dustin Kudlick also hopes [illegible] country's industrial sectors [illegible] hiring if war breaks out.

"It could lead to growth in steel manufacturing, electronics... all places where my English lit degree could be put to good use."

J.C. McGenius, resident scholar at the ultra-conservative Dogpatch Institute thinks that a war with Mongo would be "all upside".

"War kicks in the doors of closed markets. When the peasants of the nation we defeat see the good life they've been missing, they'll gladly add fifteen hours to their work weeks just to buy a bottle of our fizzing sarsaparilla!"

And as for the casualties that are bound to accompany a prolonged conflict?

"What are you, a faggot? War puts hair on your balls! We'll lose one guy to the fifty... and who doesn't love a spiffy war memorial in their hometown?"



Slümberland, Elbonia Sign Security Pact

PART 3

by H. O'Hair

Cloud City– Though they have been enemies for nearly a century, the Beddy-Bye Republic of Slümberland and the People's Capitalist Paradise of Elbonia yesterday signed a concordat putting their two nations into military alliance.

Chairman Nemo, leader of Slümberland's all-powerful Pajama Party, declared that this new alliance [illegible]'s former adversary will

The CEO of Elbonia likewise had strong words for potential adversaries-- words clearly directed [illegible] Our Homeland.

"You smegma-suc[illegible] scraped from a goat [illegible] *leted)*! We will aveng[illegible] northern aggression [illegible] fury!"

At press time the administration [illegible] not yet issued a comment on this pact, but Slumberland and Elbonia are both



I THOUGHT MAN HAD *ALREADY* CREATED HELL ON EARTH, MISTER KING, BUT HERE YOU'VE GONE AND *PERFECTED IT.*

IDYLLWOOD
ULTRA-MAXIMUM SECURITY
FEDERAL PENITENTIARY
SECURITY CHECKPOINT 6

CHAPTER 3:

mojo rising

THANK YOU, CHAIRMAN HORNS. I CALL IT "CAGEOLOGY". A NEW ORDER BASED ON ***CLAUSTROPHILIA,*** THE LOVE OF CONSTRAINT, THE HATRED OF SPACES WIDER THAN AN ARM'S REACH.

THIS ENTIRE FACILITY IS POWERED BY MY INMATES' PHYSICAL LABOR. EVERY CALORIE THEY ARE FED IS ACCOUNTED FOR IN VOLTS.

AT NIGHT THEY SIFT EACH OTHER'S FECES FOR UNDIGESTED MORSELS. THOSE WITH UNDISCIPLINED ***STOMACHS*** ARE PUNISHED WITH TIME IN THE PRISON YARD.

THEY GRIND THEIR FINGERS TO ***BLOODY STUMPS*** TRYING TO DIG HOLES IN THE CONCRETE IN WHICH TO CRAWL.

I COULD LEARN A LOT FROM YOU. THE PRISON CELL IS, AFTER ALL, THE ANTECEDENT TO THE ***OFFICE CUBICLE.***

BACK WHEN I WAS MERELY THE *WARDEN* OF "ID" MY WILL TO ***POWER*** WAS STILL NUMBED BY THE NOVOCAINE OF CIVILIZATION.

ONE OF THE FORMER *INMATES*, YOU SAID.

IT WAS THE MAN WE ARE GOING TO SEE WHO FIRST UNLOCKED MY SKULL AND EXPOSED MY MIND *DIRECTLY* TO THE ARTS OF HORROR.

A GENIUS, AND IMPRISONED FOR IT. HIS VICTIMS WOULD *VISIT* HIM HERE, LOST WITHOUT HIS TORTURE TO FULFILL THEM.

HE IS NOTHING LESS THAN A ***WIZARD.***

ALL IS IN READINESS, MY LIEGE. THE HOUR IS RIPE, THE BROTH BOILS...

YOU'VE BROUGHT THAT PIECE OF THE ***QUARRY,*** HIS NAME WRIT IN FLESH?

HERE.

THE BLOOD OF OUR LOST ***LAMB.***

AUHHH... "WEAPON BROWN". NOT HIS TRUE NAME, OF COURSE, HIS *SECRET* NAME. *THAT* ONE IS WRITTEN IN THE ***RED ALPHABET.***

YOU NEED A ***TRANSLATOR,*** ONE WHO CAN TASTE THIS NAME ON THE WIND--

--AND READ IT TO ITS LAST CHARACTER: "I", THE NAME'S KEEPER.

THE ***DEAD*** ARE GOOD FOR THIS TASK, PROVIDING YOU CAN CONVINCE THEM IT IS ***THEIR*** NAME THEY ARE READING. THEY THINK A NEW LIFE WILL BE WAITING FOR THEM AT THE END OF IT.

I FIND THE *FRESHLY* DEAD TO BE THE MOST EAGER.

AH, SPOOK.

I SEE THE ***RATS*** HAVEN'T EATEN TOO MUCH OF YOU.

WELCOME TO YOUR ***PAROLE HEARING.*** WHAT HAS IT BEEN... FIFTEEN? TWENTY YEARS IN YOUR OUBLIETTE?

I THINK YOU'VE EARNED SOME *TIME OFF* FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR.

yuh fug... fffuggin...

FINK!!

WHAT IS THIS DAMN ***RITUAL?*** DO I LOOK LIKE I HAVE TIME TO WASTE ON ***MAGIC?***

NOT MAGIC, MY GOOD CHAIRMAN. ***SCIENCE.***

BLACK SCIENCE.

frammin at the jim jam... frippin in the krotz...

FRIPPIN IN THE KROTZ!

FRIPPIN IN THE KROTZ!

ZAK!

taggaccactgagatagccgtaatgcg

GO. FOLLOW THE SETTING SUN. FIND THE ONE WHO HAS STOLEN YOUR NAME.

gccgagattactccgcgtgttattgcgaccactgagatagccgta

gctactgatatcgatagatcgcggatatttagccatatggttcgtaagtccgtaggaccactgagatagccgtaatatcgtatc

NOW THEN...

WHO FEELS LIKE A NICE CUP OF TEA?

scuff scuff scuff scuff

pat pat pat pat pat pat pat pat pat pat pat pat

We did it. Snoop and I hid and fought and **slaughtered** our way through the blackest night on earth.

But then the noon heat turned the poisoned air to **dragon's breath,** the trogs vanished into their warrens--

--and the **claws** came out.

We're exhausted, dehydrated... these animals could have closed the deal by now.

Are they just playing with their food?

No time to wonder. Motion is the only strategy left. Point ourselves away from **death,** and keep putting one foot--

--in front of the other.

KRIKAKK

CRAP

CRAP

KRAK

KRULK

CRAP

SNAP

KRAKK

CRAP!!

WHY AREN'T THEY FINISHING IT?

YOU HOPING I'LL START SWEATING *GRAVY* OR SOMETHING?!

THBBT

No exit out of this pit. Still playing with their food...?

*No. Playing with someone **else's** food!*

GRRRUMBLE

SCRAAA

GARF!!

Two-story grub.

I might be punching outside my weight class here.

ROWF ROOF ROWF!

SHUT IT AND *RUN*, SNOOP! TRY TO GET BEHIND IT AND UP...

YEAH. OF COURSE SOMETHING DISGUSTING WOULD COME OUT OF ITS MOUTH...

GARRRRR

THAM!

AIN'T WORRIED.

FIRE!

BRAAKKKKK BRAAAAKKKKKK

GAROOOO?

ROOOARRRGG!!

SSSCRUHHHMM

KRRRAARRRRRR!!!

YOU DOWN THERE! CLIMB! HURRY!

WHOEVER ...wheez... YOU ARE, THE *BEERS* ARE ON ME!

I AM ONLY *TOO PLEASED* TO 'AVE 'ELPED--

--ARME BRUN.

Where's a fat damn **worm** *to eat you when you want one?*

CROKK. LONG TIME, NO SEE.

OF COURSE, I DON'T LOOK *DOWN* TOO OFTEN. MAYBE YOU WERE THERE THE WHOLE TIME.

RRRRR

YES. WHAT GREAT FORTUNE WE CHOSE TO STOP 'ERE FOR OUR *PICNIC.*

YOUR WEAPON.

GRRRRRR

STAND DOWN, SNOOP.

HE'S BARELY TWO BITES. NOT WORTH THE EFFORT.

DISARM.

KLEK

KANG

YOU GOT SLOPPY, DISPATCHING MY LEGIONNAIRES OUTSIDE ZEE CITY. DID YOU THINK I WOULD NUT RECOGNIZE YOUR 'ANDIWORK?

AH! BUT ZEN, YOU WERE NUT SUPPOSED TO *BE 'ERE,* WERE YOU? YOU THOUGHT A JAUNT THROUGH B.C. WOULD BE *DIMARCHE AU PARQUE* FOR ZEE *UNSTOPPABLE* WEAPON BROWN, *NON?*

BUT 'ERE WE ARE, REUNITED AT LAST.

WHOM!

AH, HOW I HAVE MISSED *ZAT.*

HOOOOOOOOO

IS ZIS IT, ZEN? ZEE PRIZE ZAT STUPID WOMAN THOUGHT YOU WERE *COMPETANT* ENOUGH TO PROTECT FROM US?

LET US NOW ZEE IF YOU WERE WORTH ALL OUR TROUBLES.

YESSS...

AH! FROMAGE PLIANT!

'THE HELL...??

CE QUI?

YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE ZAT YOU WERE UNAWARE OF ZIS SECRET?

MAYBE A RODENT LIKE YOU WOULD RISK HIS ASS FOR A HUNK OF ***CHEESE***, BUT NOT ***ME***.

BUT MISS BUCKSLEY VOUCHSAFED MORE ZAN ZIS TO YOU, *NON*? OR ARE YOU ALSO GOING TO PRETEND NUT TO KNOW ITS ***ORIGIN***?

WHERE DID ZEE SUBSTANCE COME FROM, *ARME BRUN*? TO WHOM WERE YOU DELIVERING IT?

GO FISH.

I COULD POP YOUR TESTICLES LIKE GRAPES TO GET ZIS INFORMATION... AND I ***WILL*** DO ZIS LATER.

FOR NOW, I 'AVE MORE ***EFFECTIVE*** MEANS OF PERSUASION AT MY DISPOSAL.

WOULDN'T YOU AGREE--

--YOU FILTHY ***BLOCK-HEAD***?

HWAHHH..!

DOES IT 'URT? DID YOU FORGET YOUR *CONDITIONING?*

NNNG!!

DID YOU FORGET ZAT ZEE SYNDICATE OWNS YOU *BODY AND SOUL?!*

OOO OOO OOOO

NOW, IF YOU ARE DONE WITH BEING ZO *WISHY WASHY--*

nng

--TELL ME, *WHERE WERE YOU TAKING ZEE SAMPLE?*

GRRRROWF! RRRROWFROWFROWF!

MERDE! MANGY CUR!!

SOLDIER! DESTROY IT!

WAIT! *NO!*

CROKK, PLEASE...! LET HIM GO. WHAT DIFFERENCE WOULD IT MAKE? I SWEAR... I'LL TELL YOU EVERYTHING!

CROKK... I'M BEGGING YOU...

HM. *YOU* ARE THE DOG I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO *KILLING,* AFTER ALL...

WHY SPOIL MY APPETITE? DISMISS THE BEAST.

SNOOP... YOU GOTTA GO.

whine whine whine

DON'T GIVE ME THOSE EYES, YOU F-FUKKIN' FLEABAG. GO!

GO!

I AM A MAN OF MY WORD, *ARME BRUN.*

SHOOT OFF ONLY THE BEAST'S LEGS.

HWAAA!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?? PUT ME DOWN! *BLOCK-HEAD!*

RESUME SUBMISSION! *BLOCK-HEAD!!*

SORRY, COMMANDER. THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC DOESN'T HAVE ME IN ITS *SPELL* ANYMORE. NOT SINCE AN OLD FRIEND TRIED IT OUT ON ME AND I HAD TO CARVE HER FACE INTO *CONFETTI*.

I'M GOING TO SHOW YOU MY *EVIL* SIDE.

GUILE ISN'T MY STRONG SUIT, BUT I GUESS IT WORKED GETTING SNOOP AWAY FROM YOUR LEGIONNAIRES. NOW HERE'S WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

I'M GONNA KILL YOUR MEN ONE BY ONE UNTIL IT'S JUST *YOU* AND *ME*. AND THEN I GIVE YOU *MY WORD*, FUCKER...

BATTER UP!

HOOF!

BRAAAAATTTT

CRUNCH!

BRAKKK

BRAAAAAAAAAKK

IMBECILE! CEASE!!

BINKLEY'S CLOSET

WE WANT 'IM *ALIVE!* IF EE DIES WITH 'IS SECRET I WILL 'AVE ALL YOUR COCKS FILLETED!

BRING 'IM TO ME BREATHING!

BRING 'IM TO ME *SCREAMING!!*

I squeeze the last drops of octane from my artificial adrenaline gland. It will give me a five minute vacation from my two days of exhaustion. After that, my muscles are going to crush me like a ***beer can.***

Windows of hope don't come much smaller. But that legionnaire transport is my ticket out of this graveyard. And a chance to grease Crokk in the process...?

Suddenly my day is all rainbows.

HEY! TARGET AT NINE!

CAREFUL! YOU HEARD WHAT CROKK SAID!

YEAH. HE WANTS THIS GUY *CHATTY*--

--BUT EVERYTHING BELOW THE *WAIST* IS FAIR GAME!

BRAAAAKK

KLOK!

OH

SHI

BRAKK

CRAAK

SAY YOUR PRAYERS. I COULD USE A *LAUGH.*

PUH-PUH-PUH--

THERE YOU ARE, SNOOP. WHERE'D YOU GET TO? ONE OF THOSE *CATS* INVITE YOU DOWN FOR A HUMP?

SNOOP?

GRRRRR

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, YA DUMB FLEA FARM? WE'VE DONE THE ROPE-A-DOPE BEFORE!

RRRRRR

CUH-CUMMON MAN! EVEN YOUR *DOG* DOESN'T WANT YOU TO KILL ME!

THANKS FOR THE TRANSLATION. I *DID* PROMISE YOU A *MEAL,* DIDN'T I SNOOP?

SORRY PUP. CAN'T LET YOU KILL HIM. I NEED THIS GUY TO *SING.*

TELL YOU WHAT, THOUGH...

EVERYTHING BELOW THE *WAIST* IS FAIR GAME.

PATROL TWO, THIS IS POULETTE. WE HEARD SHOTS... HAVE YOU IMMOBILIZED TARGET?

PATROL TWO?

HYAAARRR! AHHHH! OHGODHELP!! HYEEAHHH! AHHHHHHHHH!!! ELLLARRRRGHHH!!!

CHRONIC MARIJUANA DISPENSARY

POULETTE, THIS IS TARGET.

THEY *MISSED.*

JESUS, NAW! *NAW!* HE'S ALREADY CUT US IN *HALF!*

KEEP YOUR PISS IN YOUR *BLADDER,* FIGOWITZ! WORRY ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF WE *DON'T* FIND HIM!

FUCK YOU! I'LL TAKE MY CHANCES WITH THE DWARF!

FIGOWITZ! GET BACK HERE! THAT IS AN *ORDER!*

CHRONIC MA DI

FIGOWITZ!

HHK

HOPE YOU TWO WEREN'T CLOSE.

DROP YOUR WEAPON! *DO IT NOW!!*

YOU'RE NOT DOING YOURSELF ANY FAVORS.

I SAID *DROP IT!*

YOUR CHOICE. ALL I'M SAYING IS, IT'S GONNA *HURT* MORE.

HALT! THAT'S CLOSE ENOUGH!

YOU'RE RIGHT. CLOSE ENOUGH.

COME ON, CAPTAIN. TRYING TO TAKE ME ALIVE WHEN I'M ON A *KILL SPREE?* MISTAKE'S DON'T COME ANY BIGGER.

YOU WILL GET ON YOUR KNEES

THAT GUN IS JUST THE MEMORY OF A CHANCE YOU *LOST* TEN SECONDS AGO.

SO HERE ARE THE OPTIONS YOU GOT *LEFT.*

I CAN KILL YOU *QUICK,* FOR THE PRICE OF A LITTLE BEGGING.

OR, I CAN TAKE YOUR HANDS AWAY AND LET MY *DOG* PLAY WITH YOU FOR A WHILE.

BUT IF YOU'RE A SPORTING MAN, THEN I'LL JUST BLOW OFF YOUR *KNEES,* AND IF YOU HAVEN'T CRAWLED TO WHERE I CAN'T SEE YOU WHEN I COME BACK FROM MY PARTY WITH CROKK, I GIVE YOU A TOUR OF THE *FUN HOUSE.*

LAST DECISION OF YOUR LIFE, POULETTE.

MAKE IT COUNT.

BR AK

I love it when they **surprise** me.

RUFF! RUFF RUFF!

FINISHED WITH YOUR SUPPER, BOY? I HOPE YOU SAVED ROOM FOR *DESSERT.*

OUR RIDE IS AROUND THAT CORNER, AND BY MY COUNT I LEFT THREE MEN STILL TICKING.

I KNOW YOU'RE RUNNING ON FUMES MUTT, BUT BURN EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT LEFT AND TAKE OUT THE FIRST PIECE OF MEAT YOU SEE.

EVERYONE ELSE GETS HOLES.

READY? ON THREE, YOU'RE A *MISSILE.*

ONE...

CRASH!

CRAP!

RUN!

RUN, YOU SWEATING HEAP OF SWINE SHIT!!

DID YOU ZINK I WOULD SIMPLY LET YOU WALTZ IN AND DESTROY *ME*?!

I *WILL* FIND ZEE SOURCE OF ZEE SUBSTANCE! YOU MEAN *NOTHING*!!

*WHEN WE HAVE TURNED YOU **INSIDE OUT** YOU WILL KNOW ZIS!!*

THE FLASH

MAKE A BREAK FOR IT, MUTT! GET...GET BEHIND...

Didn't plan on Crokk **wising up,** and my countdown is nearly over.

If I can stay far enough ahead, maybe I can still...

...can still..

FUCK THIS.

HT!

HHUHNN!

I'M COMING FOR YOU, CROKK!

CAN YOU HEAR ME?!

YOU CAN THROW AN ARMY AT ME...

YOU CAN WRAP YOURSELF IN STEEL...

BUT IF I SAY YOU'RE A ***DEAD MAN***, THEN YOUR FUTURE IS ***CROSSED OUT***, ASSHOLE!

KNOCK KNOCK!

MAGGOT! BURN THIS ***TICK*** OFF OF US!!

CRANK

OVER HERE, FUCK NUT.

YOU'RE ***CHARCOAL!***

FWOOSH

FROOOSH

KONK

UNGH!

HAW HAW! YOU CAN HIDE BUT YOU CAN'T *RUN*, FAGGIT!

I TELL YA HOSS, I AIN'T HAD BARBECUE IN SO LONG, YOU'VE GOT MY MOUTH WATERING!

ONCE I'VE DONE YOU NICE AN' CRISPY, I THINK I JUST MIGHT TAKE A BITE OUT OF YO' *ASS!*

YOU WON'T HAVE THE *TEETH!*

PUNG!

OORK!

HOOF!

THAT ALL YOU GOT?! YOU'RE GONNA NEED THREE MORE TIRES AND AN **ENGINE BLOCK** TO PUT ME DOWN, SUCKER!

AN' IF YOU THINK I AIN'T FIXED TO CRACK OPEN YOUR DOME, THEN YOU'RE IN FOR A BIG...

...SURPRISE?

WHAGGG!! HRRAGGH!!

SNOOP! GET OFF HIM!

SGGG SGGG

HOT DOG. THERMEX.

OKAY. BACK TO WORK.

BWARRLLLLLGGGGG

ZEEOOOOOOWZ

A leg spasm buckles me and spares me from having my face ground off, but my body is running out of good deeds.

My lungs rasp. My limbs threaten mutiny. I squeeze the firecracker tight in my fist.

Nothing motivates like explosives.

WHERE IS HE?? WHERE DID HE...

À BAS!!

WHUF?

AND THEN THERE WAS *WE.*

YOU DON'T HAVE A *CAMERA* IN THIS RIG, DO YA? IT'S JUST, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT--

--NO ONE'S *EVER* GOING TO BELIEVE ME WITHOUT *PICTURES.*

HRRRAHH!!

SPLASH!!

I WILL KILL YOU!!

KANG!

YOU KEEP PROMISING.

FRANKLY, I'M GETTING *BORED* WAITING...!

RATS!!

UNABLE TO STOOP TO *MY LEVEL,* EH?

ALLOW ME TO *'ELP!*

NNG!

?

URMM...

GET READY TO SEE EENSY WEENSY *STARS!*

AHHHRRRR!!!

RRGHH

EHH? WHAT IS ZIS?

COULD IT BE... YOU 'AVE FINALLY REACHED YOUR *LIMITS?*

NO, I WILL *NUT* ACCEPT ZIS! ON YOUR FEET, SOLDIER!

I SAID "ON YOUR FEET"!

FAP!

TETANY, OUI? YOU HAVE OVERTAXED YOUR ENHANCEMENTS!

BAH! PATHETIC! YOU WERE NEVER *WORTHY* OF ZEM! NEVER FIT TO BUILD OUR *NEW ORDER!*

WHAT IDIOTS WE WERE, TO LET A MACHINE THINK IT WAS A *MAN!* MEN BELONG TO ZEE *PAST.*

ZEE CITIZENS OF *OUR* TOMORROW WILL BE... *THINGS.*

BUT EVEN THINGS MUST *EAT.*

LET US TALK AGAIN ABOUT WHERE YOU WERE TAKING ZEE *SUBSTANCE.*

KRAK

MERCY IS OUT OF ZEE QUESTION OF COURSE, BUT YOU CAN STILL HOPE ZAT I GROW *BORED* OF RIPPING ZEE TRUTH FROM YOU.

ZEN AGAIN, I HAVE NEVER PROPERLY *REPAID* YOU FOR ZIS INSULT TO MY *NECK.*

CODE 88
Auxiliary endocrine syst
0.00%

CODE 151
Medstats
C131-crisis range exceed
BP 157/99 mmHg
SpO2 76%
Hypoxia [illegible] 17:09:42
Bloo[illegible]ed

COD[illegible]
MMic[illegible]ressure
drop
5.35%

Hardware proxy ping at 3[illegible]
SERVO PROSTHETIC DETECTED
coordinates 0.3,2.0,2.1

WELL? IS IT LOCKJAW, OR 'AVE YOU SIMPLY RUN OUT OF WORDS?

JUST GOT...*ONE...* LEFT.

SURPRISE.

WHAM

MERDE!

COULDN'T... *RESIST*, HUH? MAYBE THOUGHT'D BE...FUNNY--

--SEE MY *CHICKEN WING* HANGIN' OFF...SOME OTHER JERK'S SHOULDER?

FORGOT... S'RADIO CONTROLLED...

IT WON'T DO YOU ANY GOOD IN *PIECES!*

RUNCH

UNNH! PIECES ARE ALL ZAT WILL REMAIN OF YOU!!

RRRNNNH!

SKRANK!

BLOODY WADS STUCK TO ZEE WALLS! ZEE PULP OF YOUR FACE GLUED TO MY KNUCKLES!

YOU CANNOT CRAWL FROM ZIS FATE, BLOCK-HEAD!

CLICK

BLOCKHEEEAADDD

CRANG

NN!

HRRrg

SKRUNCH!

HHUHHHAHH!!

YOU...NO! I WILL EMPTY YOUR BLOOD ONTO MY BOOTS...!!

KONK

UHUH!

ONE... hsss... ONE...

NO, YOU--

--'AVE NUT WON...

ONE... DOWN...

THREE TO GO.

The transport is like a wet dream. Food, water, painkillers...

And Crokk.

ium

Crokk is all Summer in a day.

COULDN'T HEAR YOU THAT TIME.

ium

LOUDER. MAKE ME BELIEVE IT.

WHO'S A BLOCK-HEAD?

ium

WHO?

ium

ium

--TELL HIM DADDY WILL BE HOME SOON!

FUKKIN' RIGHT YOU ARE.

ALRIGHT. TIME TO SEND YOU TO THE DEVIL.

AND WHEN YOU SEE HIM--

THE HELL THAT DIDN'T SATISFY.

THUMP

GUESS WE BETTER GET A MOVE ON WHILE THE SUN'S STILL BURNING. GOT NO REAL DESIRE TO THROWN DOWN WITH THOSE TROGS AGAIN.

WILL YOU TAKE OFF THAT STUPID HAT?!

ROORR

WHERE THE HELL DID YOU GET THIS? "SGT LeJAUNE"? SHIT...IS THAT THE BODY STILL IN THE CAB?

ONE MORE GODDAMN TASK.

ALL THOSE DICKHEADS DYING FOR SOME ***MAGIC CHEESE.*** HUH. SHOULDA GOTTEN THE ***FEED*** ON THAT FROM CROKK, BUT I JUST GOT TOO INTO MY ***WORK.***

WHEN THE HEAT'S OFF I MAY HAFTA SNIFF THAT STORY OUT...

POONT

TINK

TINK

FROSSSH

POONT

AW...

GODDAMIT.

POONT

TIK

More of Crokks men? Has to be! But laying in wait until now...?

GETTING DROWSY...THIS AIN'T RIOT GAS. AGENT X-9 MAYBE...

SNOOP?!

KOFF KOFF!

SNOOP! SOUND OFF, MUTT!

I *HEAR* YOU BASTARDS! HURRY IT UP! SEND THE LEAD FLYING!

YOU WILL NOT OWN ME!!

KRATCH

WHUMP

SOK

GUHH

KLOPF

ANNE? X. BIG BOY'S *ALL* TUCKED IN.

CHILL UP THE *HURT LOCKER.* I THINK WE'A HAVE OURSELVES A Q&A.

KELLY SCHOOL NO.22

gatagag gagatagccgt

atctatgatccgatagctcgctcgatagctagatcgctcgctagatctcgatatgcttaatgc

gctcgatagctagatcgctcgctagatctcgatatcgccgtatat

gctaggaatagcgattccgaatgatcatatcgctagctagcctcgacagctgatgcgtagctagatcgatcgatagctagcc

gtaattggcacataggagtccggtcgtagattgcagatcgtaaggtgccaccttagagactgatcgaatcgtatagcgcg

CHAPTER 48

SUB CULTURE

WAKES UP.

SPLASH!

WAKES UP, I SEZ

AWAKES NOW?

GOOD.

POW!

WAKES UP AGAIN!

EASY, POPS. HE CAN'T GIVE US ANY ANSWERS WITH A *BROKEN JAW.*

HE CAN *WRITES* 'EM.

W'HR AM I? WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

I'M *HUGHIE X*, AND YOU'RE IN DEEP SHIT CITY. NOW, TO WHOM AM *I* SPEAKING?

WEAPON BROWN.

AND YOU WANT TO TELL ME WHERE YOU GOT THIS?

IF THAT'S WHAT IT *LOOKS LIKE*, I HAVEN'T SEEN ONE IN YEARS.

RECOGNIZE IT *NOW*?

WE WATCHED YOU FIGHT THOSE SOLDIERS FOR IT. THEY YOUR BUDDIES? YOU *STEAL* IT FROM THEM?

NO.

HE'S HIDING SOMETHING THERE.

WHO'S SHE? SOME SORTA MIND READER?

SHE'S YOUR BEST FRIEND, IF YOU TELL US THE TRUTH. *BULLSHIT* IS LIKE NAILS ON A CHALKBOARD TO HER.

SO, AGAIN--

--WHERE'D YOU GET THE *SHMOO*?

TRADED FOR IT.

LIE.

YAY!

HOOF!

YOUR FACE IS UGLIER THAN A *SEA HAG'S ASSHOLE!* ASK HER IF *THAT'S* A LIE!!

I IS WHAT I *IS*.

THAT HURT? HURT *MORE* IF WE HADN'T TAPED UP THOSE *BROKEN RIBS.*

GETTIN' THE PICTURE YET? STICKS--

--AND *CARROTS.*

NOW... WHERE'D YOU GET IT?

A GIFT. FROM A WOMAN.

A GIFT?

HE'S TELLING THE TRUTH.

A *BLONDE* WOMAN? WHAT DID SHE CALL HERSELF?

BUCKSLEY.

WHERE IS SHE NOW?

GENERAL HALFTRAQUE. HE'S A DELTA SECTOR WARLORD. HE'S GOT HER.

HE DOESN'T *BELIEVE* THAT.

THE *TRUTH,* PAL. THESE *KNUCKLES* DON'TS GETS TIRED!

SYNDICATE.

KRAK!

YOU TRYING TO TELL US THAT YOU GAVE UP THAT GIRL TO THE *SYNDICATE*, AND SHE WAS SO GRATEFUL--

--SHE REWARDED YOU WITH THE THING SHE SWORE HER LIFE TO PROTECT?!

WHAT CAN I SAY, PAL? I GUESS I JUST HAD SOMETHING SHE WANTED *MORE!*

MOTHERFUCKER!

HUGHIE... LEAVE ME ALONE WITH HIM.

DAMMIT ANNE, LET ME TAKE THE ANSWERS *OUT OF HIM...!*

THAT'S AN *ORDER.*

YOU KNOW SHE'S DEAD.

WE'LL SEE.

SLAM

WELL.

ALONE AT LAST.

YOUR *ARM* WAS A REAL PROBLEM FOR US. WE COULDN'T FIND A WAY TO TAKE IT OFF WITHOUT TRIGGERING THE *REACTOR FREAK.*

WE DID SEVER THE COMMAND FIBER TO YOUR *BRAIN* THOUGH, SO YOU WON'T BE DOING MUCH WITH IT EITHER.

DAMN. MY NOSE REALLY *ITCHES*, TOO.

BLIND, HUH? LUCKY YOU.

YES, BUT MY *HEARING* IS PRETTY GOOD. AND FROM WHAT I HEAR, YOU'RE A MAN WHO LOVES HIS *DOG.* AND I KNOW SOME HUNGRY TROGS WHO WOULD LOVE TO *MEET HIM.*

SNOOP'S ALIVE?

UNTIL I HEAR THE FIRST LIE. SHALL WE BEGIN?

YOU SOLD BUCKSLEY TO THE SYNDICATE?

NO.

BUT YOU THINK THEY HAVE HER? WHY?

LOOK, IT WAS A **JOB.** HALFTRAQUE LOST HER, I BROUGHT HER BACK. SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN SHE PUT THAT...*SHMOO*...IN MY CANTEEN. BUT I HAD NO IDEA THAT THE SYNDICATE HAD DIBS ON HER TOO.

WOULD THAT HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

I WOULDN'T HELP THOSE MAGGOTS FOR *ANY* PRICE.

AND WHAT PRICE DID YOU CHARGE THE MAGGOT YOU *DID* HELP?

LADY, I DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM, BUT IT CAN'T BE THE PLANET *I'M* FROM. BECAUSE THERE, A TEAR IN YOUR EYE IS AS GOOD AS A BULLET IN YOUR *GUT.*

YOU WANT ME TO APOLOGIZE FOR KEEPING ALIVE? I'LL CUT MY OWN THROAT FIRST.

SHWTIP

I MIGHT BE ABLE TO *HELP YOU* WITH THAT.

AND I DON'T NEED *ANYONE* TO TELL *ME* THAT IT'S A HARD KNOCK LIFE MISTER... "WEAPON" WAS IT?

I'M SURE THERE'S SOME BLOOD-SOAKED WASTELAND LEGEND BEHIND *THAT* SOBRIQUET.

IT'S "CHUCK"

AND THE ONLY LEGEND *I* KNOW IS THE LEGEND OF THE PRETTY GIRL WHO LEARNED AN *UGLY LESSON* BECAUSE SHE HURT A FELLA'S *DOG*.

ONE FOR THE CAMPFIRE.

I'LL HAVE SOME MORE QUESTIONS FOR YOU LATER. FOR NOW, JUST MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME.

AND AS LONG AS WE'RE EXCHANGING NAMES...

"MARILYN".

THOUGHT I CAUGHT YOUR NAME WAS "ANNE".

MARILYN WAS *HER* NAME.

ENJOY THE MUSIC.

MUSIC?

click

Lauter mit dem Scheiß!

Tötenzunge!

Tötenzunge!

Der Drache steht

Nacht!

Scheiß Satans

WASP!

taccaagattaacttagagac*

TÖTENZUNGEctcgtaaggtgaTOTENZUNGEcattagagact

INTERNAL : EVENU

...SHOULD SOFTEN HIM UP, BUT I THINK WHEN HE'S DONE TALKING HE'S GOING TO CONFIRM WHAT WE *SUSPECTED*.

THE *SWAMPIES* AMBUSHED OUR EXPEDITION. HUGHIE'S SOURCES HAVE ALREADY TOLD US THEY FOUND BURNT VEHICLES AND DEAD BODIES WHERE WE'D HAVE EXPECTED THEM. WE CAN MATH THE *REST* OURSELVES.

THEY FIND THE SHMOO RATIONS, THEY GLIETH WHAT MARILYN HATH BEHIND HER CHEST SHIELD...

AND THEY PHONE THE SYNDICATE.

COCK*SUCKERS!*

WHAT ABOUT OUR GUEST? WHOSE *TEAM* IS HE PLAYING FOR?

NOT ***THEIRS***, THAT'S FOR SURE. YOU CAN'T ***FAKE*** HATE LIKE THAT.

I THINK HE'S WHAT HE CLAIMS. JUST SOME SWINGDICK WHO PICKED UP A BOUNTY AND GOT MORE THAN HE BARGAINED FOR.

SO WHAT'S HE DOING *HERE?*

MARILYN MIGHT HAVE GIVEN UP HER SHMOO--IT WOULD HAVE BEEN WORTHLESS ONCE IT WAS OUTSIDE OF HER. BUT THERE'S ***NO WAY*** SHE GAVE UP OUR CRIB. NOT WITHOUT HURTING HER ***HARD.***

I DON'T THINK IT HAPPENED LIKE THAT. AND UNLESS YOU THINK HE FAKED KILLING THOSE MEN...

ANNE, WE'VE GOT THE THAME PROBLEM EITHER WAY. HE'S ***THEEN*** LITH. HE CAN'T ***LEAVE.***

HUGHIE AN' ME DUMPED THAT ***GRINDER*** OUTSIDE THE CITY. SPLASHED A LITTLE SHMOO AROUND INSIDE SO THE SYNDICATE CAN GIVE UP THE HUNT. BE A LOT MORE ***CONVINCING*** WITH WEAPON SHIT'S ***BODY*** INSIDE.

WE'VE GOT ***ANOTHER*** OPTION.

BRING HIM INTO THE FOLD.

ARE YOU FUKKIN' ***KIDDING ME?*** AFTER WHAT HE DID TO MARILYN?

ANNE...WE WATCHED HIM DOUCHE A MAN'S ASS WITH ***NAPALM.*** THIS GUY DOES ***NOT*** PLAY WELL WITH OTHERS.

WE'VE ***TURNED*** SCUM BEFORE. NO ONE'S SAYING WE HAVE TO LET HIM FEATHER A ***NEST*** HERE.

IF BUCKSLEY GAVE HIM HER PAYLOAD. ***SHE*** MUSTA THOUGHT HE WAS WORTH IT.

OR SHE WANTED TO SEND HIM RUNNING FOR HIS LIFE. BITCH HAD A SENSE OF HUMOR.

BOTTOM LINE: IF WE'RE GOING TO TRY AGAIN, OUR SIDE NEEDS KILLERS.

LET'S BRING HIM HIS DOG, SHOW HIM WHAT ***SPORTS*** WE ARE. HE SEES HUGHIE STANDING BEHIND IT WITH A ***CHAINSAW...*** WE'LL GET THE WHOLE STORY SOON ENOUGH.

I LIKE WHAT I HEAR, HE GETS A CONTRACT.

HE TURNTH IT DOWN, HE'S THTILL GOT A ***MOUTH.***

"HE SAYS 'NO', HE CAN PICK UP HIS LIFE EXACTLY WHERE IT LEFT OFF."

"NO FOOD, NO WATER--"

"---AND SURROUNDED BY THE SCREAMING DEAD."

love is...

taggaattcagattacgtagctagctcctagctagctagtatcgatcgtcattgctaataccaaacatgctcgctcgtaagg

ctgcttaagtgatcg

ctgcttaagtgatcgctagtattcgatcgtatcgctatacca

NNF NNF

HEHH?

HERE POOCHY POOCHY POOCH. YOU *WANT* THIS? YOU WANT MY LITTLE *SAUSAGE?*

ZIP!

PORFF! PORFF! PORFF!

CHING!

SORRY NEW MEAT. YOU'VE GOT TO *EARN* YOUR TREATS ON *MY* ROW. MAYBE...IF YOU'RE GOOD...

ROFF RORFF ROFF!

HEH. YOU'D HAVE TO BE PRETTY GOOD TO EARN A TREAT LIKE *THIS* THOUGH...hehn.

HEY DOGWOOD! GETTIN' ANY?

SKLOOTCH

I T-TOLD YOU NOT TO *CALL ME THAT* YOU B-B-BLONDE *HIPPO!*

WHY SO TETCHY? IT'S NOT LIKE YOU *REALLY* GET HARD FOR THE POOCHES, IS IT? A LADY KILLER LIKE YOU?

YOU'VE GOT *THAT* RIGHT, BOTTLE JOB!

I'VE GOT LEGS SPREADING FOR ME ON *EVERY* LEVEL OF THIS DUMP!

GRAB

HWEEK!

YOU AIN'T GOT *SHIT*, BECAUSE EVERY BROAD HERE KNOWS THAT IF THEY SO MUCH AS BAT AN *EYELASH* AT YOU I'LL GIVE THEM A PAIR OF REVERSIBLE ELBOWS!

haa! hauuuhh!

SKRUUUNCH

YOU'RE *MINE*, BITCH MEAT. BUT IF YOU ARE EXTRA *EXTRA* GOOD--

--SOMEDAY I *MAY* LET YOU DO SOME-THING WITH THAT *LITTLE SAUSAGE* OF YOURS.

NAUURR YOU FUKKIN' *CUNT*

GODDAMN... hehnh... GODDAMN *CUNNNNT*

KRONCH!!

OH, AND HER NIBS WANTS THE NEW MUTT BROUGHT UP TO *THE LOCKER*, CHOP CHOP.

AIEEEEEEE!!!

MUAHHH!! MY F-FINGERS!! YOU GOD DAMN GOD FUCKING DAMN FUCK FUCKING... I'LL KILL YOU!!

KRONCH CRUNCH CRRRUNCH

NO--I WON'T KILL YOU! I CAN'T KILL YOU GOOD ENOUGH!

BUT I KNOW WHO CAN!

ROWF! ROWF ROWF!

ROWF! ROWF!

FUCK YOU!! YOU THINK YOU'RE SCARY? WE GET SNORKLEWACKERS DOWN HERE THAT WOULD M-MAKE YOU PISS ICE CUBES!

THAT'S WHAT WE HAVE THIS GUY FOR!

AND IT IS DOGGONE FUNNY.

DUKE WILL EAT YOU IN ONE BITE AND SHIT YOUR SKELETON WHOLE! I'VE SEEN IT!

KA KUNK

NNF

NF
NFF
NFF

SMEHHYAH RAHHEE SUMMUHHR...

HWWAGGGH!!!

attctcctagctagctagtatcgatcgtcattgctaataccaaac

Clearasil Messias vom Regal!

Er schiesst Pickeln von hier zur Hölle!

My skin is frozen, my muscles are on **fire**, and one thousand hammer blows after another are beating on my skull...

I'm wasting the best **rage** of my **life** hanging here!

I want it to take me. I want to let the hate **eat me alive!**

But I follow the survivor's drill. Wrestle it. **Focus** it...

CCTC! AAGA! CGCC!

Never waste it, not even an atom--

--Not if there's still one chance in a million of **making someone pay!!!**

NNN! COME ON! COME! ON!!

KROONK

RRRAH! RRRRRAHHHH

WHAT IN HELL...??

ATCT! TATA!

GCTA! CATA! GCT!

AGCT! GCCA! GCTG! AAGA! GCTA! ATAA!

GGTG! GCTG! AAGA!

AATC! GCTC! GTCA! GGTG! GCTG!

CT! AGCT! TATA! CCCG!

...!!

YOU'RE AWFULLY QUIET.

JUST THINKING THINGS OVER. THINGS MAYBE YOU *HAVEN'T.*

SO NOW I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M GETTING US INTO?

I THINK YOUR *I's* ARE MISSING A COUPLE *DOTS.*

ANNE, YOU KNOW I WAS DOWN WITH THE *PLAN.* BUT WE STUCK OUR NECKS OUT AN *INCH* AND THE SYNDICATE WAS RIGHT THERE WITH AN *AXE!*

I *HATE* HIDING, BUT WE CAN WAIT THEM OUT...!

SURE. SAFE AND SNUGGLY IN OUR WARREN, WHERE WE'LL BE ONE PREDATOR AWAY FROM *EXTINCTION.*

FINISHING WHAT THE LAST WAR STARTED MAY BE OUR DREAM, X, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE CAN *SLEEP* THROUGH IT.

WE CAN END *EVERYTHING* UP THERE, FOR GOOD. AND WE *WILL,* IF WE HAVE THE SPINE TO...

THUZZAROTH!!

OHHH NO! NOT NOW HILDY...

UH ROTH! SAWGIG! SAWGIG FLYIG ROWN!

WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR YOUR *CRAZY* TODAY!

HUGHIE, WAIT...

SOMETHING'S *HERE.*

FIRE EXTINGUISHER

DASH!

WHOA NOW!

HEY DOG-WOOD, WHERE'S THE FIRE? heh heh

F-F-FF-F--

YOU ALMOST RAN INTO ME! COULDA BUSTED MY COLOSTOMY SACK IF YOU'D DONE THAT!

WOTTA *MESS* THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN! THREE WEEKS WORTH OF *WARM SHIT* ALL OVER THE PLACE! *HOO-EEE!*

DON'T KNOW WHAT MAKES THE LAB GUYS THINK THEY CAN RECYCLE SHMOO FROM *TURDS*-- BUT HEY, I VOLUNTEERED.

F-F-F--

URR... D'YOU KNOW YOUR *HAND'S* BLEEDING?

F-FUCKING RUN!!

CRASH

FFFFFUUUCKKK

RROOF

ROOF

ROOF!!

RRARRRGGRLL

NYEH NYEH NYEH

NYAHHH!!

GALLOPGALLOPGALLOP

KA-KLUNK!

ROWF

ROF

RROOF

ROOF

ROOF

RROWF

OH GOD PLEASE! PLEASE LET ME LI-HI-HIIIVE! I SWEAR I'LL NEVER RUB A DOG'S LIPSTICK EVER AGAIN!!

SNUFF SNUFF

RROO?

AAAOOOOOO!

OH THANK YOU GOD THANK YOU THANKYYEEEAHHHH HOT HOT HOT!!

DONEER! UH SMEZZUM!

HEY, WHERE'S THE FIRE, skubbadubbah?

HILDY'S BUGGIN'. SAYS THERE'S AN INTRUDER.

WAIT, AREN'T WE...?

INNEER! EER!

THE LOCKER?

YOU CALLED IT, ANNE. SOMEONE'S COME TO COLLECT OUR BOY.

HOW THE HELL COULD ANYONE...

IF MY AIM IS OFF YOU'LL BE ABLE TO ASK THEM. POPS, PULL THE DOOR!

HUG SOME FLOOR YOU MOTHER...

OH HELL.

I'M NOT EVEN SEEING THIS MESS.

I!

I!

I!

BLOW ME DOWN!

THE HELL IS THAT...

GEDDOWDAWAY!

JAMMIN AT DA FRIM FRAM!

SHWAAZAAK!

AAUUUU

ZZZAPK

KRIPPIN IN DA...

NYAHHH!

NNAAUUUUOOO

ANNE-- WATCH OUT!

FOR WHUUAHH!

SSSS

TOO BAD. I'LL MISS THE 4-STAR HOSPITALITY.

YOU WON'T BE MISSED THOUGH, WILL YOU? BY *ANYONE.*

COCKROACHES LIKE YOU ARE ALL THAT'S LEFT UP THERE. NO PEOPLE, NO *LOYALTY*... BELONGING TO NOTHING.

JUST LIVING OFF OF WHATEVER OR *WHOEVER* YOU CAN SCAVENGE. JUST A CANNIBAL, LIKE THOSE TROGS. LIKE THE *SYNDICATE.*

HEY, I'VE GOT PEOPLE. I'VE GOT *SNOOP.* HE'D MISS ME.

fuh.

I'D SURE MISS *HIM,* I CAN TELL YOU.

THAT DOG HAS SAVED MY HASH MORE TIMES THAN I CAN COUNT. HE'S TOUGH, SMART LIKE YOU WOULDN'T *BELIEVE...*

AND *QUIET.*

ARE'NCHA BOY?

RRRRR

NO NO, JUST... HOLD STILL.

HUGHIE X. I'VE *HEARD* OF YOU. HELD OFF THE SYNDICATE WHEN THEY MADE A PLAY FOR THE BOONIES, RIGHT? I RESPECT THAT.

BEAR THAT IN MIND WHEN I TELL YOU THAT YOU'VE GOT *THESE* CHOICES:

--OR DROP THAT GUN, AND I'LL GIVE YOU A CRASH COURSE IN HOW TO SPLICE A *COMMAND FIBER.*

EITHER TRY AND LIVE OUT THAT FANTASY YOU'RE HAVING OF PLUGGING SNOOP BEFORE HE TEARS OUT YOUR ASSHOLE--

PONGPONGPONGPONGPONGPONGPONGPONG

SECURITY TO SCIENCE A!
SECURITY TO SCIENCE A!

MUST BE OUR... ANNE, WHAT THE HELLS *IS* WE CHASIN'??

HILDY SAYS IT'S A ***WRAITH.*** SHE CAN *BANISH IT* IF WE CATCH THE DAMN THING!

FOX! WHUD YA SEES?

S-SOME SORT OF... ***SOMETHING!*** IT FLEW INTO THE MONITOR ROOM!

GEBBACK 'ERE YA... ***UHNO!***

HILDY! WHERE'D IT GO!

DALAB! ***BRAKKA GLAZZ!***

BRAKIT FFURRITSEEZ ENNAMORE!

OUTS THE WAY!

SMASH!

JAMMIN AT DA FRIM FRAM...

gawooo?

KRIPPIN IN--

--DA FROTZ!!

SHWEEZAAARK!

ATTATCATATCCACAXXX!!!

ZOP!

FFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

IT'S GETTIN' AWAYS *AGAIN!* HILLY, YA CRAZY WITCH! I THOUGHT YA COULD *KILLS IT!*

OR STATION A

CAH KIH WUZ *DEDD.* ONEE SENIT *HOME.*

"THA THIG GON GOBAK TUHOO CONJUHIT UP..."

love is...

"ANNIT GON TELLIM WHUDDIT SEEN."

"AFFA THAT... AHTHIG WE GON HAV MUH TRUBBA ONNA HANZ THEN JESSA SPOOK."

"LADY, I WISH YE'D STARTS SPEAKSIN' THE KING'S ENGLISH, skubbaduhbah."

SNAP

COME ALONG, *HOSTAGE* X.

COZY LITTLE BUNKER YOU'VE GOT HERE. WE'RE UNDER *B.C.*, AREN'T WE?

WAY UNDER. HOPE YOUR TEETH ARE SHARP, 'CUZ CHEWING YOUR WAY TOPSIDE IS THE ONLY WAY YOU'RE LEAVING UNLESS WE *SAY SO.*

OH, YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW FAST I CAN WEAR OUT A WELCOME WHEN MY *HEART'S* IN IT.

LET'S GO SEE PRINCIPAL *BRIGHT EYES* ABOUT MY PERMISSION SLIP.

YOU AIN'T GOIN' ANYWHERE *NEAR HER.*

IF I DON'T GET WHAT I *WANT* I'LL BE AS NEAR AS HER LAST FUCKING *BREATH.*

HOLD ON...

MOVE IT! MOVE IT!

HUGHIE! HEY, DIDJA HEAR THAT ALARM? WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE SCIENCE...

WHO THE HELL'S *THAT*?

HEY!

LOVE OF MIKE...!

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM

KRUSH!

BLAM

GRRAAAARRRR!!!

OOWAH! POOR POOCH!

OH HELL... BEAT YOUR FEET!

SWUFF

DEEPDEEPDEEPDEEPDEEPDEEPDEEPDEEPDEEP

GET DOWN!

NIX!!

POOM

SKRAM!

BAP BAP BAP BAP BAP BAP BAP BAP

RUN, X! WARN YOUR FRIENDS!

YOU'RE ALL GOING TO BE "EX" REAL GODDAMN SOON!

SNOOP!!

NO... DON'T BE *DEAD.* DON'T BE...

WHEE WHEE

STAY WITH ME, PUP. THIS AIN'T ANYTHING. WHO'S JOE COOL. HUH? *WHO'S JOE COOL??*

YOU KEEP HIDDEN UNDER HERE. DON'T MAKE A *SOUND.* I'M COMING BACK REAL SOON, DON'T YOU WORRY.

I KNOW HOW WE CAN FIX YOU. I KNOW WHAT WILL FIX *ALL OF THIS.*

I JUST HAVEN'T BEEN *NICE* ENOUGH.

WE'S JUST SWEPT LEVEL FIVE AND AINTS SEEN HIDE NUR HAIR OF THE BASTARD!

BRAK BRAAAK

THEN CLOSE OFF THE AIR SEALS AND GET YOUR MEN TO SCIENCE! WE CAN'T RISK...

SHOTS! WE GOT SHOTS!

WHAT'S THE PLAN, ANNE? YOU STILL GOT HOPES OF HIM AND US WINDING UP AS *ONE BIG HAPPY?*

"STOP HIM."

"DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO."

WHO DO WE HAVE UP HERE? WHO'S *FIRING?*

NO GAB ON THE RADIO.

BRAKK BRAAK

LOCALS! SOUND OFF!

NOTHIN'.

STUNNER.

BANG!

PUT HIM DOWN!

'THE FUCK IS...

BRAAK BRAAK BRAAK

BACK TO THE OFFICE!!

OHHH

BRADFORD!

SOME SORTA... BRICK SHIT-HOUSE...

WELCOME BACK, X. THIS *NEAR ENOUGH* FOR YOU?

MOTHERFUCKER, IF YOU DON'T LET HER GO *RIGHT NOW*

HE'S *CUTE* WHEN HE'S ANGRY, ISN'T HE?

YOU KNOW, I WAS ALL SET TO END THIS POLITE-LIKE, BUT THEN *YAHOO YIPPEE* THERE HAD TO GO AND SHOOT MY *DOG.*

I BELIEVE WE DISCUSSED HOW THAT MIGHT *NETTLE ME.*

SO HERE'S HOPING YOU'VE GOT A *DOCTOR* THAT CAN PUT SNOOP BACK ON HIS FEET, OR ELSE I'M GOING TO HAVE TO POP YOUR *HEAD* OFF LIKE A DANDELION.

AND SINCE HE WON'T BELIEVE IT COMING FROM ME, WOULD YOU LET *X* KNOW THAT THERE AREN'T ENOUGH BULLETS ON THE *PLANET* TO KEEP ME FROM REACHING HIM BEFORE I *DROP?*

KA-KLAK KLAK CLIKIK

SOUNDS LIKE THEY'LL NEED *CONVINCING.*

I *KNOW* YOU'LL DO IT.

TWIST MY HEAD OFF, PAINT THE WALLS WITH BLOOD... EVERYTHING THE *SYNDICATE* MADE YOU FOR.

BUT YOU'LL *REGRET IT,* WON'T YOU? BECAUSE THAT'S HOW YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE-- FROM ONE REGRET TO THE NEXT.

I'VE NEVER REGRETTED THE *LIVING* PART.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT *LIVING?*

IS THAT WHAT YOU CALL PICKING OVER THE *CARCASS* OF THE WORLD? FIGHTING EVERY DAY FOR YOUR SHARE OF *NOTHING?*

TOK

VMMMMMMMMMMMM

IF YOU WANT TO GET BACK TO *THAT* PARTY WE'LL SHOW YOU THE DOOR.

BUT THIS IS WHAT *LIVING* LOOKS LIKE.

YOU'RE A *BAD MAN,* WEAPON BROWN--

--BUT THERE ARE *WORSE* MEN ON THE WAY. SO HERE'S *MY* OFFER:

WE'LL HEAL YOUR ANIMAL, IF THERE'S STILL TIME. AND IN RETURN...

IN RETURN... WHAT? I JOIN YOUR LITTLE ***SECRET CIRCLE?*** CHASE OFF THE BANDITOS AND EARN A FLUFFY PAIR OF ***WINGS?***

I WAS GOING TO SAY "DELETE A BUNCH OF ASSHOLES IN EXCHANGE FOR THE BIGGEST ***PAYCHECK*** OF YOUR LIFE"--

"--BUT WHATEVER GETS YOU ***HARD.***"

WHAT YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED HERE IS ***AMAZING,*** MISTER KING! I CALCULATE YOU SUFFER LESS THAN 3.1 DEFECTS PER MILLION OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN YOUR PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX.

BUT JUST IMAGINE WHAT ***MY*** METHODS OF ***SIX SIX SIGMA*** COULD BRING TO YOUR OPERATION!

THIS AGAIN.

RAAWWWRRRGHH!

THINK OF YOUR INMATES TURNED TO *RATS*, RUNNING THROUGH A SPIRALING MAZE OF QUEUES, PAPERWORK... PHONE TREES!

YOUR PRISON CAN ONLY CAGE THEIR BODIES! A *BUREAUCRACY* IS A CAGE FOR THE *SOUL!*

MY VASSALS *HAVE NO SOULS*, CHAIRMAN HORNS. THEY ARE MERELY COLLECTIONS OF AUTONOMIC RESPONSES.

LISTEN TO THEM HOOT AND GRUNT AT THE SPECTACLE BELOW. DO YOU THINK MY PRISONERS ARE CHEERING FOR *EITHER* OF THOSE THOSE WELL-FED MAMMOTHS?

THEY HATE THEM *BOTH.* THEY WISH ONLY TO SEE THEM *DESTROY* ONE ANOTHER FOR THE SIN OF THEIR FREEDOM, FOR THEIR AMBITION TO FIGHT AT ALL.

HUMANITY *SICKENS* THEM.

SCIENTIFIC, WARDEN KING, BUT HARDLY *ARTFUL.*

IF YOU TAKE AWAY *ALL* THAT A MAN IS, WHAT IS THERE LEFT TO *PLAY WITH?*

GUHWOORGH!!

THE NAME IS FOUND!

A LAND OF BONES! THE DEAD WALK THE STREETS! THE LIVING LINE THE **GRAVE!**

HIDDEN IN THE SHADOWS... HIDDEN FROM THE BURNING EYE... **TREASURE!**

TREASURE IN THE DEEP! FOOD SECRET!

HOPE SECRET!!

IT'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR, ISN'T IT?? THAT CREATURE HAS ***FOUND*** WEAPON BROWN!

YES. AND ***MORE,*** APPARENTLY. SOMEONE OUT THERE IS LIVING IN ***HOPE.***

YOU SEE, MISTER CHAIRMAN? TRY AS ONE MIGHT--

--THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING ***ELSE*** THAT NEEDS TO BE ***TAKEN AWAY.***

CHAPTER 5:
PRESTIGE

snoop

snoooop

come home

come home

COME

HOME

HRROOOORRRR

KROOM!

BEEP

BEEP

BEEP

BEEP

BEEP

BEEP

HOW'S HE DOING?

HE'S ONE TOUGH ANIMAL.

TELL ME WHAT I *DON'T* KNOW.

HIS BLOOD PRESSURE ***CRATERED*** ON THE OPERATING TABLE, BUT SOMEHOW HE PULLED OUT OF HIS NOSE-DIVE. I WAS ABLE TO REPAIR THE ARTERY, BUT HIS ***TRICEPS*** IS A DIFFERENT MATTER. THE SHOT TORE UP A LOT OF MUSCLE.

BOTTOM LINE IT. IS HE GOING TO WORK AGAIN?

I HAVE A PRE-WAR ***STEM CELL THERAPY*** THAT I'M GOING TO TRY AND ADAPT FOR HIM , TO DEAL WITH THE TISSUE DAMAGE.

NO PROMISES, BUT IT HELPS THAT HE'S SO HEALTHY, ESPECIALLY FOR A TOPSIDER. WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN ***FEEDING*** HIM?

BALLS.

YES, WELL... AT LEAST HE'S BEEN GETTING HIS ***IRON.***

YOUR DOG NEEDS A LOT OF REST. YOU CAN SEE HIM AGAIN THIS EVENING, IF YOU LIKE.

I LIKE.

I GUESS SNOOP'S GONNA LIVE--

--WHICH MEANS ***YOU*** AREN'T GONNA ***DIE. YET.***

SUCKA, IF YOU'D PUT SO MUCH AS A ***BRUISE*** ON ANNE'S ***THROAT*** I'D HAVE ***DONE YOU ALREADY!***

GOODNESS! SO MANY ***GIANT DICKS*** ON DISPLAY! WHERE ***SHOULD*** A GIRL BEGIN?

BEGIN BY EXPLAINING WHY I SHOULDN'T BE WAITING FOR A ***KNIFE IN MY BACK,*** GIVEN ALL THAT I'VE DONE TO GET MYSELF CROSSED OFF YOUR ***CHRISTMAS LIST.***

BECAUSE ***WE*** NEED THE SAME THING AS YOUR DOG: ***MUSCLE.***

YOU PUT TWO OF MY ***MEN*** IN THE MORGUE. THAT'S TWO MORE YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO BE ***WORTH.***

I HAVEN'T SIGNED ON ANY DOTTED LINES *YET*, SISTER.

REALLY? ARE YOU TELLING ME ALL THE *FRESH WATER* AND *CLIMATE CONTROL* HASN'T BOUGHT YOU OFF A *LITTLE*?

I AIN'T FOR SALE. AND FRANKLY, ALL THE MUTANTS IN THIS JOINT ARE MAKING MY *GENES* CRAWL.

WE RECRUIT FOR USEFULNESS, NOT BEAUTY. WE COLLECT ANYONE ABLE AND *WILLING* TO BUILD A NEW WORLD.

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU WERE AROUND PEOPLE WHO HAVEN'T *GIVEN UP*?

I DON'T USUALLY GIVE THEM THE CHANCE.

ALL THIS HOPE-AND-DREAM SHIT IS WHITE NOISE TO *ME*, GIRL. LET'S TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE *REALLY* OFFERING. IT'S THAT "SHMOO" RIGHT?

WE'LL GET TO THAT. LET'S TAKE A WALK FIRST.

WITH ALL THESE *SCARY* PEOPLE AROUND, YOU MUST WANT YOUR *BANG-BANG* BACK.

THE SYNDICATE LOVES YOU!

THE SYNDICATE LOVES YOU!

F CLASS RATIONS

D-CL RATION

OUR COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM IS YIELDING MIXED RESULTS.

WELL WHAT'D YOU EXPECT, DOUBLING THE RATIONS OF THOSE UNGRATEFUL PIRANHAS?

WE'D JUST GOTTEN 'EM USED TO 900 CALORIES A DAY AND HERE YOU GO HANDING OUT GODDAMN THANKSGIVING TURKEYS!

I FELT THAT THE ILLUSION OF PLENTY WOULD PROVIDE SOME NEEDED STIMULUS TO OUR ANEMIC FORAGING AND GAS-SIPHONING INDUSTRIES.

IT WILL ALL BE FOR THE BEST ONCE WE'VE SECURED THIS FACILITY THAT MR. KING'S CONJURER DESCRIBED.

YOU'RE PUTTING ALL OUR CHIPS ON ONE THROW OF THE DICE, HORNY. THEY COME UP SNAKE-EYES...

UM...FORGOT WHERE I WUZ GOIN' WITH THAT. ARE WE AT A CASINO...?

FOCUS. WE HAVE AN ADVANTAGE OUR OPPONENTS CANNOT HAVE GUESSED! IF MY SEARCH OF THE GOVERNMENT DATABASES IS CORRECT, I KNOW WHAT THEIR INSTALLATION IS.

WE CAN PENETRATE IT AT A POINT THEY WILL NOT ANTICIPATE. THE ONLY SIGNIFICANT VARIABLE IS THEIR DEFENSES.

WELL, WE KNOW THEY'RE PACKIN' ***WEAPON BROWN,*** AND I'D WAGER HE'S WHY WE HAVEN'T GOTTEN ANY LOVE LETTERS FROM ***CROKK*** LATELY.

BUT EVEN IF WE SWARM THEIR HIDEOUT, WHAT'S TO KEEP THOSE DIPS FROM ***SABOTAGING*** THE SHIT WE'RE TRYING TO COLLECT?

NEUTRALIZING ***THAT*** CONTINGENCY IS THE ***PURPOSE*** OF OUR VISIT TO THIS DEFUNCT ***R&D FACILITY.***

HEY! NICE O' YOU TO ***JOIN US,*** HORNS! YOU HAVE TROUBLE FINDING A ***PARKING SPOT?***

CLEVER, BOCHE. GIVEN YOUR ***OWN*** REPUTATION FOR INEFFICIENCY I'M SURPRISED YOU MANAGED TO GET ***POWER*** TO THIS BUILDING.

ACTUALLY SIR, WHAT POWER WE HAVE HAS ALL BEEN DIVERTED TO THE ***CONTAINMENT CHAMBER.***

POK

WE HAD TO RIG SOME-THING UP TO RUN THE ***LIFT.***

TINK

SQUEEK SQUEEK SQUEEK

SQUOOSH

ZIP!

tik tik tik tik tik tik tik tik tik tik tik tik tik tik

yank

LEAP!

BOUNCE

PING

BOOM!

swish

DOONK!

OWWWW...

CREEK CREEK CREEK

RRRK

NNNH

GROAN

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, MY FELLOW SECTOR BARONS, I AM GLAD YOU COULD JOIN ME TODAY FOR THIS ***EXCITING ROLLOUT.***

YEARS AGO, AS HEAD OF OUR WEAPONS RESEARCH DIVISION, I CREATED ***PROJECT PEANUTS*** WITH THE GOAL OF COST- EFFECTIVE URBAN DOMINANCE.

YOU ARE ALL ***AWARE*** THAT THE RESULTING AMPLIFIED SOLDIERS PERFORMED ***BELOW EXPECTATIONS,*** WITH ONE EXCEPTION:

WEAPON BROWN. THE LESS SAID ABOUT ***THAT*** TRIUMPH THE BETTER.

JESUS! WHO PICKED THESE ***NAMES?***

STILL, I WAS DETERMINED TO RESCUE US FROM A BURDENSOME MILITIA CORPS. AND SO I LAUNCHED A *PRIVATE* VENTURE: ***PROJECT NOODLES,*** THE FRUIT OF WHICH YOU ARE ABOUT TO BE INTRODUCED TO.

THEY WERE CHOSEN BY A BLUE-RIBBON BRANDING COMMITTEE. ***MAY I CONTINUE?***

SURE SURE. GO ON WIT' THE ***FRUIT NOODLES.***

MY FRIENDS, WE HAVE ALL SPECULATED ON HOW TO SECURE THE ***MIRACLE SUBSTANCE*** BEFORE THE OPPORTUNITY SLIPS AWAY FROM US. BELIEVE ME WHEN I TELL YOU THAT MY ***OUTSIDE-THE-BOX*** THINKING HAS GIVEN US THE EXACT ***TOOL*** FOR THE JOB.

THEN WHY HAS IT TAKEN YOU THIS LONG TO ***REVEAL IT*** TO US, DEAR?

AH, WELL...

NOT EVERY TOOL IS SUITED FOR A LIFE ***OUTSIDE THE BOX.***

STEP LIVELY! DON'T STIFLE THAT *URGE* TO PUSH TO THE *FRONT!*

ONLY A *FOOL* WOULD NOT FIGHT TO BEHOLD *THIS, THE GREATEST SHOW BENEATH THE EARTH!*

QUITE THE **ZOO** YOU'VE GOT HERE.

WE CALL THIS AREA *THE STRIP.* IT'S THE SOCIAL CENTER OF OUR ENTIRE COMMUNITY.

YOU AREN'T GONNA TELL ME YOU *MADE* THIS PLACE...?

WE MADE IT A *HOME.* THIS COMPLEX WAS A SECRET FEDERAL *SCIENCE CITY*-- AN UNDERGROUND WORLD WITH IT'S OWN LAWS AND ECONOMY.

GOVERNMENT MONEY WAS PIPED DOWN HERE WITHOUT RESTRICTIONS, AND UP CAME ALL THE LAST GENERATION *WEAPONS* USED IN THE WAR.

THAT'S PROBABLY WHY THE ENEMY *QUAKED* BONE CITY. BUT IT DIDN'T MATTER. THIS FACILITY *SURVIVED* VIRTUALLY UNHARMED.

MY FATHER WAS HIGH UP IN THE MILITARY-- HE *KNEW* ABOUT THIS PLACE. AND WHEN THE WORLD FINALLY *GAVE OUT,* HE LED A PILGRIMAGE HERE, HOPING TO *REBUILD SOCIETY* IN SAFETY.

LOOKS LIKE THINGS ARE WORKING OUT. SHIT, YOU'VE EVEN GOT *PLANTS.*

WELL... AFTER A FASHION.

THE *ZINGER TOXINS* FOUND THEIR WAY DOWN HERE, TOO. SO THE SCIENTISTS SET TO WORK ENGINEERING PLANTS THAT DIDN'T NEED *CHLOROPHYLL.*

IT *WORKED.* THEY DEVELOPED A SINGLE BREED THAT WAS AGGRESSIVE ENOUGH TO *ADAPT* TO THE NEW ORDER OF THINGS:

CARNIVOROUS KUDZU.

NOW THEY HAD A WHOLE NEW PROBLEM: *WHAT TO FEED IT.* THAT'S WHEN THEY GOT *REALLY* CREATIVE.

THEY FOUND A SOLUTION-- JUST IN THE NICK OF *TOO LATE.*

BY THE TIME WE'D ARRIVED, THE KUDZU HAD *BROKEN FREE* AND STRIPPED EVERY LIVING THING TO THE BONE.

RUSTLE RUSTLE

JESUS *FUCK!*

I WOULDN'T *PET IT* IF I WERE YOU, BUT IT'S ONLY DANGEROUS WHEN IT HASN'T *EATEN.*

AFTER WE GET YOUR GUN BACK I'LL SHOW YOU HOW WE KEEP NATURE IN *BALANCE* DOWN HERE.

HEY GRAMPS! TIME TO MEET THE GUY WHO CAME WITH THAT *GUN* WE HANDED YOU.

*SHEEE*IT! I WONDERED HOW *BIG* A GUY WOULD HAVE TO BE TO HANDLE THE KICK FROM A *SCHULZ 777!*

AND WHAT'S THAT YOU'RE *SWINGING?* LOOKS LIKE A MODIFIED OH-FITTY *COMBAT SERVO.*

YOU KNOW YOUR GEAR.

OUGHTA. I WAS AN *ARMORER* IN THE WAR.

MAN, LISTEN TO THAT *GRINDING!* WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU HAD THIS THING SERVICED?

NOT TOO MANY MONKEY WRENCHES IN THE WASTELAND.

SO HOW ABOUT YOU DISENGAGE THIS WRECK AND LET ME GIVE IT THE *NIGHT OF ITS LIFE?*

I CAME TO *PICK UP,* NOT *DROP OFF.*

YOUR CALL, BUT YOU'VE GOT A LEAKY *VALVE* THAT'S HISSING LIKE A COBRA.

YOU WANT TO GIVE *OL' SPARKY* A TUNE-UP? FINE.

JUST KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF THE *REACTOR.* ANYONE TOUCHES IT BUT *ME* IS IN FOR A *SUNTAN.*

I'M TAN *ENOUGH.* I'LL SEE IF I GOT A LOANER FOR YOU IN THE BACK.

WHAT'S *WITH THAT,* ANYWAY? I'VE SEEN MAYBE ONE OF YOU *DARK-SKINNED* GUYS IN MY LIFE. I COME DOWN HERE AND YOU'RE HAVING A *CONVENTION.*

YOU CAN THANK THOSE CRACKER-ASS *ELBONIANS* FOR THAT. THEIR *GENE BLEACHERS* JUST ABOUT WIPED THE *BLACK* FROM THE *BLACK MAN.*

MY FAMILY'S GOT SOME *JAP BLOOD* WHICH IMMUNIZED US, 'CEPT FOR *REILLY* HERE.

WHAT? AIN'T NOTHIN' *WRONG* WITH ME, FOO'!

I JUST *LOVE WHITE PEOPLE!*

"LOVE"? YOU A *RACE TRAITOR* TO THE BONE, BOY!

JUST BECAUSE I FIND THEIR *ASHEN SKIN* AND PENCIL THIN *LIPS* TO BE THE ZENITH OF PHYSICAL PERFECTION...

SON, YOU GOT A SOUL FULL OF *MAYONNAISE!*

I HEARD THAT BEFORE THE WAR THERE WAS A BROTHER WHO *DID IT*, WENT ALL THE WAY *WHITE*. "JACK" SOMETHING...

MAN, TO BE LIVING BACK THEN!

YOU *HEARIN'* THIS MESS, ANNE? AND YOU WONDER WHY I DON'T TRUST THE *WHITE MAN.*

WELL, YOU GUYS ALL LOOK THE *SAME* TO ME.

ALRIGHT THEN, HERE'S YOUR PIECE--

--AND HERE'S A *PROSTHETIC* THAT MIGHT DO THE TRICK.

HMMM... YEP, STANDARD COUPLING. LEMME ADJUST THE TORQUE...

SNAP

THERE. HOW'S THAT *FEEL?*

LIKE I JUST LOST EIGHT INCHES OF *MANHOOD.*

GOOD. YOUR EGO COULD *USE* SOME DEFLATING.

I THINK YOU'RE READY TO MEET THE REST OF MY *CREW.* YOU PASS THEIR *AUDITION*--

--AND WE'LL SHOW YOU THAT BRINGING DOWN THE SYNDICATE MAY BE *MORE* THAN JUST A SWINGDICK'S *STROKE FANTASY.*

THERE ARE ONLY TWO DOORTH DOWN HERE, WEAPON BROWN. ONE LEADTH *OUT*--

ALL THE WAY OUT. BACK TO THE THURFACE WORLD AND ALL ITH SMILING FACETH, AND BYE-BYE TO UTH FOREVER.

THE DOOR BEHIND ME LEADTH *IN*, TO THE WORLD WE'RE GOING TO MAKE WITH OR *WITHOUT* YOU.

YOU WANT THROUGH *THAT* DOOR, GIVE UTH A REATHON.

THOUGHT YOU ALREADY *HAD ONE.* THAT *THING* THAT ATTACKED ME RETURNED TO THE SYNDICATE AND GAVE YOU UP.

THE *BRUTES* ARE COMING TO *DISNEYLAND* AND YOU NEED EVERY FINGER THAT CAN PULL A TRIGGER.

THATH NOT HOW WE *OPERATE.* WE AREN'T HANDING OUT RATIONS AND BATTERIES FOR A FEW DAYTH OF BLOOD WORK.

IF YOU CAN BE BOUGHT OFF YOU CAN *SELL OUT*, TOO. AND YOU'VE BEEN FUCKING US OVER SINCE *BEFORE WE MET.*

SO WHY SHOULD WE LIFT OUR SKIRTS FOR YOU NOW?

SO YOU DON'T *HIRE* WARRIORS, HUH? JUST MARRY 'EM INTO THE *FAMILY?* WELL, MORE THE IDIOTS *YOU.*

I AIN'T HERE FOR SOME *KISSY KISSY*, AND I COULD GIVE A STEAMING SHIT FOR YOUR DREAM WORLD. I'M A *HEARSE.* I DELIVER *DEAD BODIES.*

BUT YOU WANT US TO SHARE SOMETHING THAT'S THICKER THAN WATER? DRINK THIS:

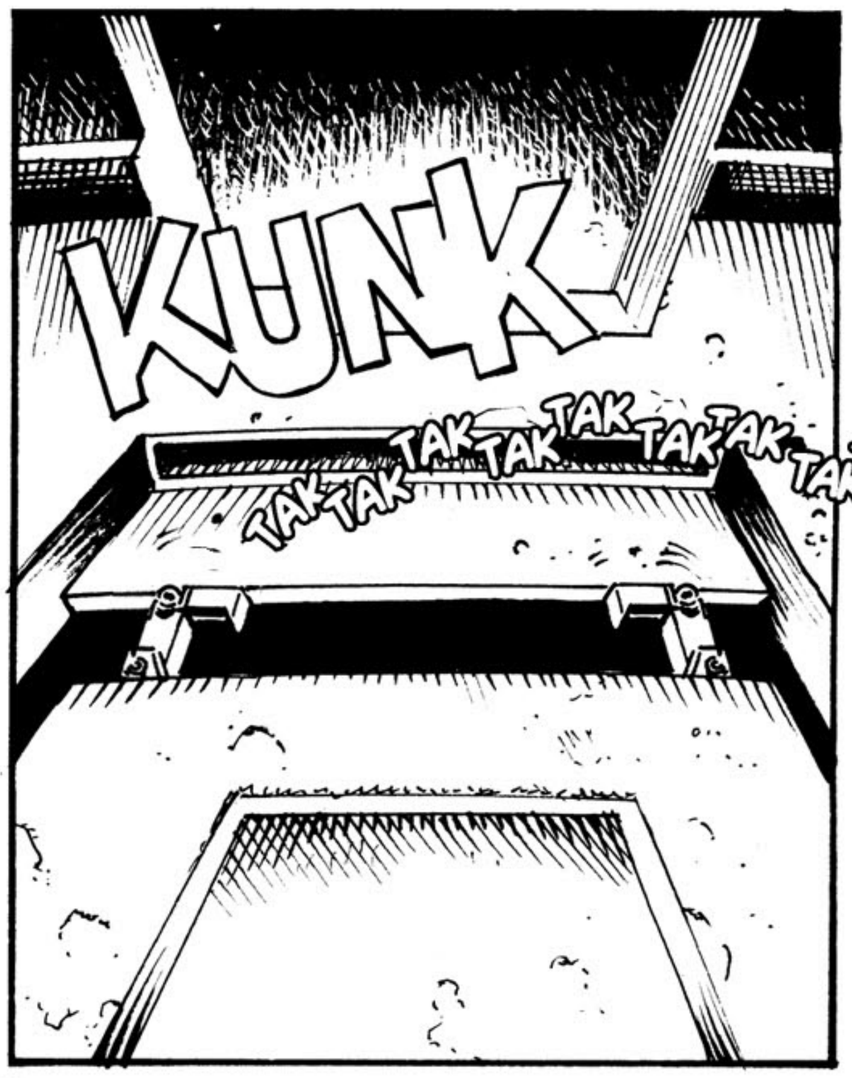
SEEMS THAT WITHOUT KNOWING IT, I'VE BEEN *HELPING THE SYNDICATE.* THAT MAKES ME MAD.

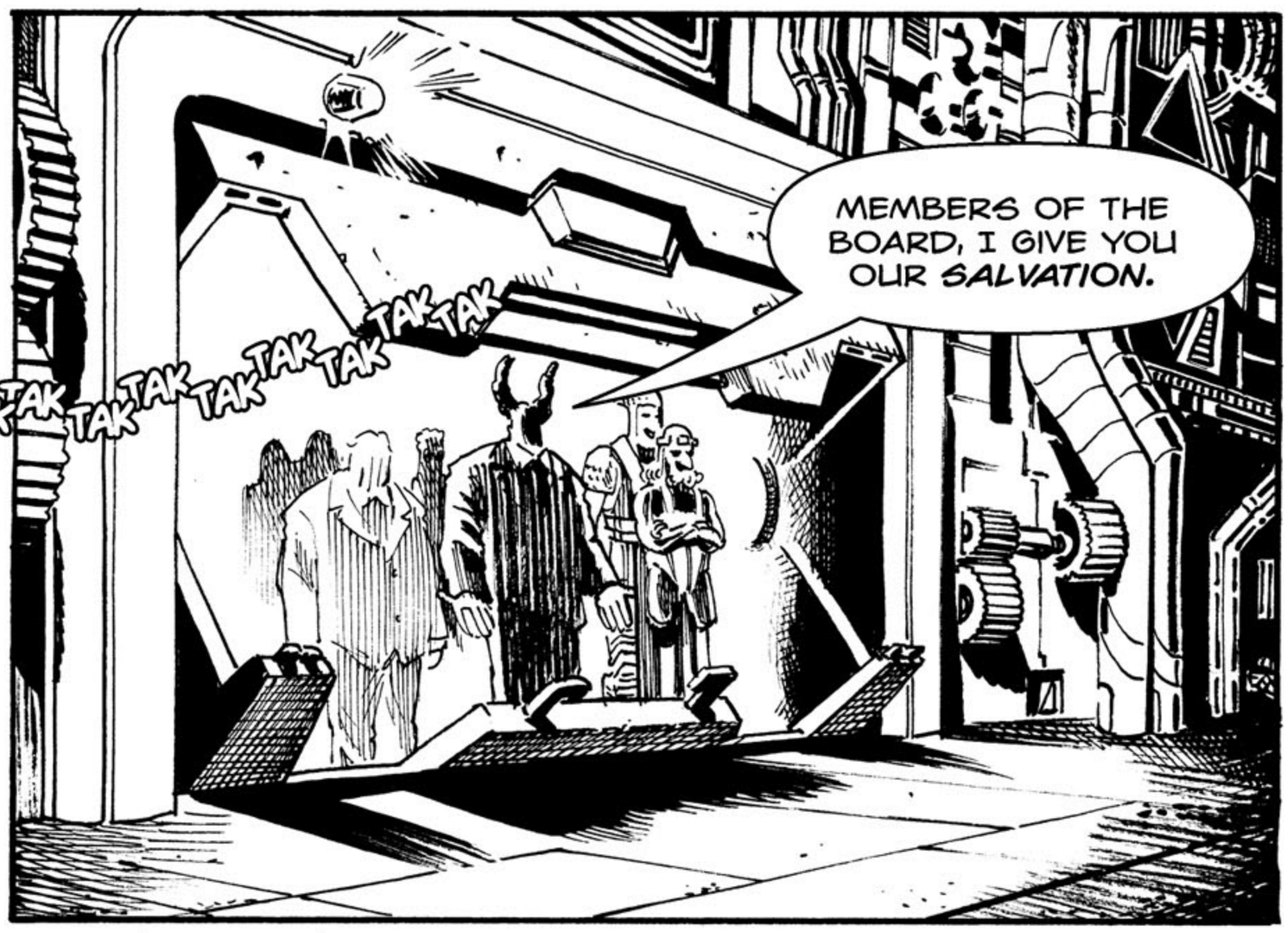
YOU AIN'T SEEN ME *MAD* YET.

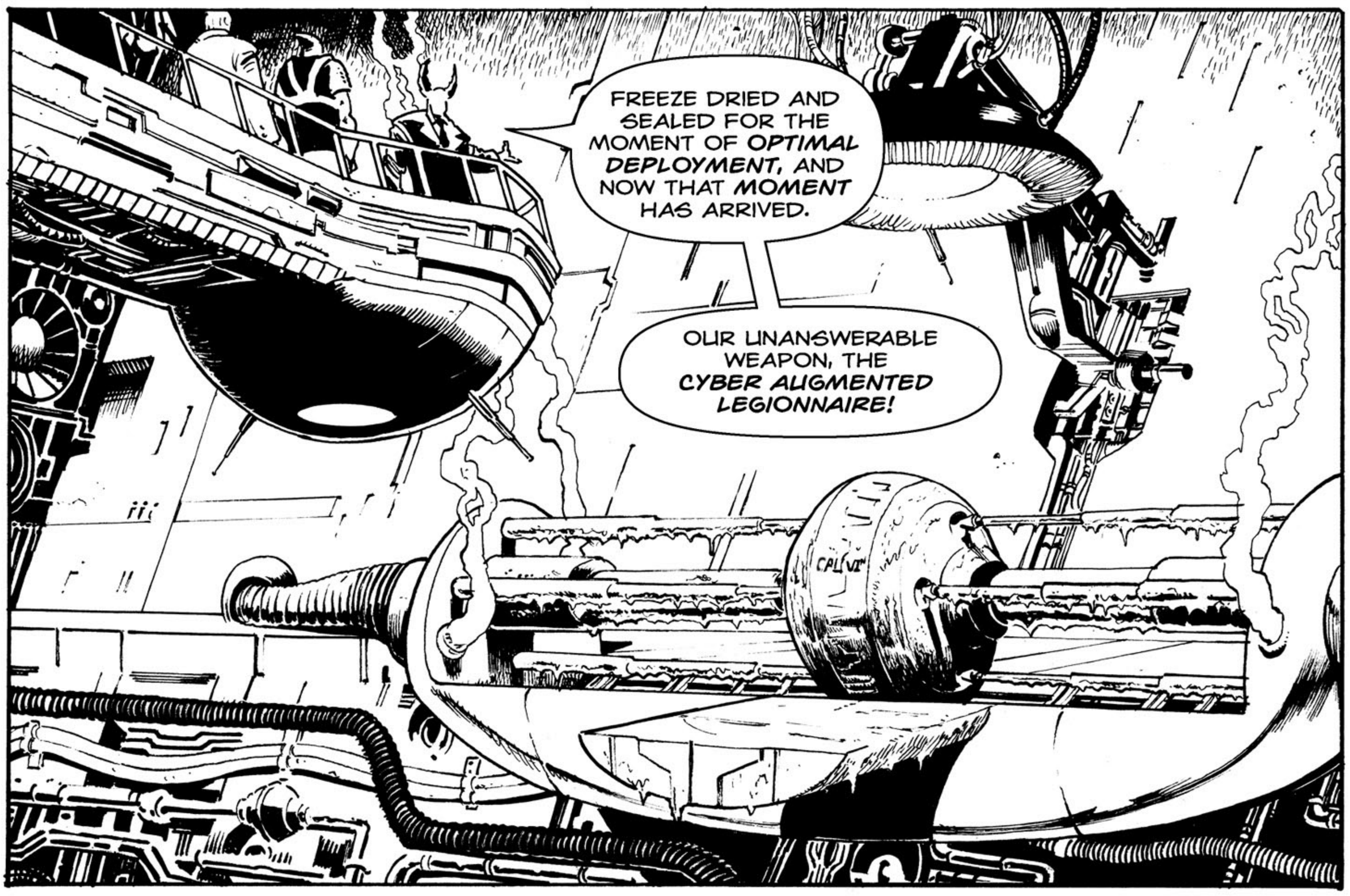

I THINK THAT'S THE BEST OFFER WE'RE GOING TO GET.
WHAT'S THE VERDICT?




LETS HIM *IN.*


KUNK
TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK


MEMBERS OF THE BOARD, I GIVE YOU OUR *SALVATION.*


FREEZE DRIED AND SEALED FOR THE MOMENT OF *OPTIMAL DEPLOYMENT,* AND NOW THAT *MOMENT* HAS ARRIVED.
OUR UNANSWERABLE WEAPON, THE *CYBER AUGMENTED LEGIONNAIRE!*

SIR, I MUST STRESS *AGAIN* THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT FORCED THE C.A.L.'S *INTERNMENT*... THE RISK OF ANOTHER *INCIDENT*.

I... *BELIEVE* WE HAVE THE CONTROLS NECESSARY TO PREVENT A REPEAT OF *THAT*.

DON'T WE?

"INCIDENT"? WHAT *INCIDENT*?

TH-THE *PROJECT NOODLES INCIDENT*.

UM, YOU SEE... THE C.A.L. IS A *NANO GENERATION CYBORG*...

"*INTRA-CELLULAR TRANSMOGRIFICATION IS A BIT OF A* **CRAP SHOOT.** *OF 100 TEST SUBJECTS--*"

"*--ONLY* **23** *SURVIVED ALL THREE ROUNDS OF NANOWARE INSTALLATION.*"

"*THE FORTUNATE WERE* **QUARANTINED** *UNTIL THEIR ENHANCEMENTS* ***PUBESCED.***"

"*THE FIRST FIVE TO COME ONLINE* **SLAUGHTERED** *THE OTHER SUBJECTS IN JUST TWO MINUTES.*"

"*WHEN THEY WERE FINISHED THEY BEGAN* **WEEDING THEMSELVES**--"

"--*STARTING WITH THE* ***RUNT OF THE LITTER.***"

"APPEARANCES, AS WE KNOW, CAN BE **DECEIVING.**"

"IN SHORT ORDER, THAT LOWLY SUBJECT WAS THE **ONLY SURVIVOR** OF PROJECT NOODLES."

AN' **THAT'S** YOUR "INCIDENT"? THIS GUY SOUNDS LIKE JUST THE KINDA **TOUGH FUCKER** WE NEED!

UM... THAT WAS NOT THE **END** OF OUR DIFFICULTIES.

A-AND I SHOULD ALSO POINT OUT THAT THE SURVIVING CANDIDATE, THE C.A.L.--

"--WAS ONLY **SIX YEARS OLD** AT THE TIME."

THE SITUATION THAT CONCERNED US **MORE** OCCURED LATER, DURING INDOCTRINATION. THE DRUGS WE USED TO DAMPEN THE C.A.L.'S MODIFICATIONS HAD **NO EFFECT**, A FACT HE **HID FROM US** UNTIL... UH...

YES YES, NO NEED FOR **GRISLY DETAILS.** SUFFICE TO SAY--

"--THE LAD'S PROBLEMS WITH AUTHORITY ARE **PERNICIOUS.**"

THE POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES OF SO AGGRESSIVE A SOLDIER STILL OUTWEIGHED THE NEGATIVES, AND SO IN ORDER TO REDEEM THE EXPERIMENT--

--I BROUGHT IN OUR *ANGER MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST.*

AND HIS ATTITUDE IMPROVED *GREATLY* AFTER THAT, DID IT NOT?

I'D... HAVE TO AGREE.

YES. NO MATTER WHAT HER SUBJECT'S TEMPERAMENT--

--VAN PELT *ALWAYS* FOUND A WAY TO MAKE THEM *SCREAM.*

B-BUT SIR, DOCTOR VAN PELT *WARNED US* THAT THE C.A.L.'S NEUROLOGY SHOWED SIGNS OF *IMMUNIZING* HIM AGAINST HER *EGO PROGRAMMING*... THAT THE COMMAND CUES MIGHT NOT WORK MORE THAN *ONCE* IN FIELD CONDITIONS...

WHICH IS WHY WE WILL DEPLOY THE C.A.L. *JUST THIS ONCE.*

AND AFTERWARDS... *ONLY* FOR EMERGENCIES.

NO, SIR-- IT IS C-CLUH- *CRITICAL* THAT YOU UNDER-STAND...

HEY POINDEXTER! ENOUGH WITH THE YAK YAK! LET'S CRACK THAT EGG AND *MAKE THIS OMELETTE!*

DEFIANT

20% COOLANT

ENTER CODE !

REBOOT PROC

LOCKDOWN O

ENTER CODE

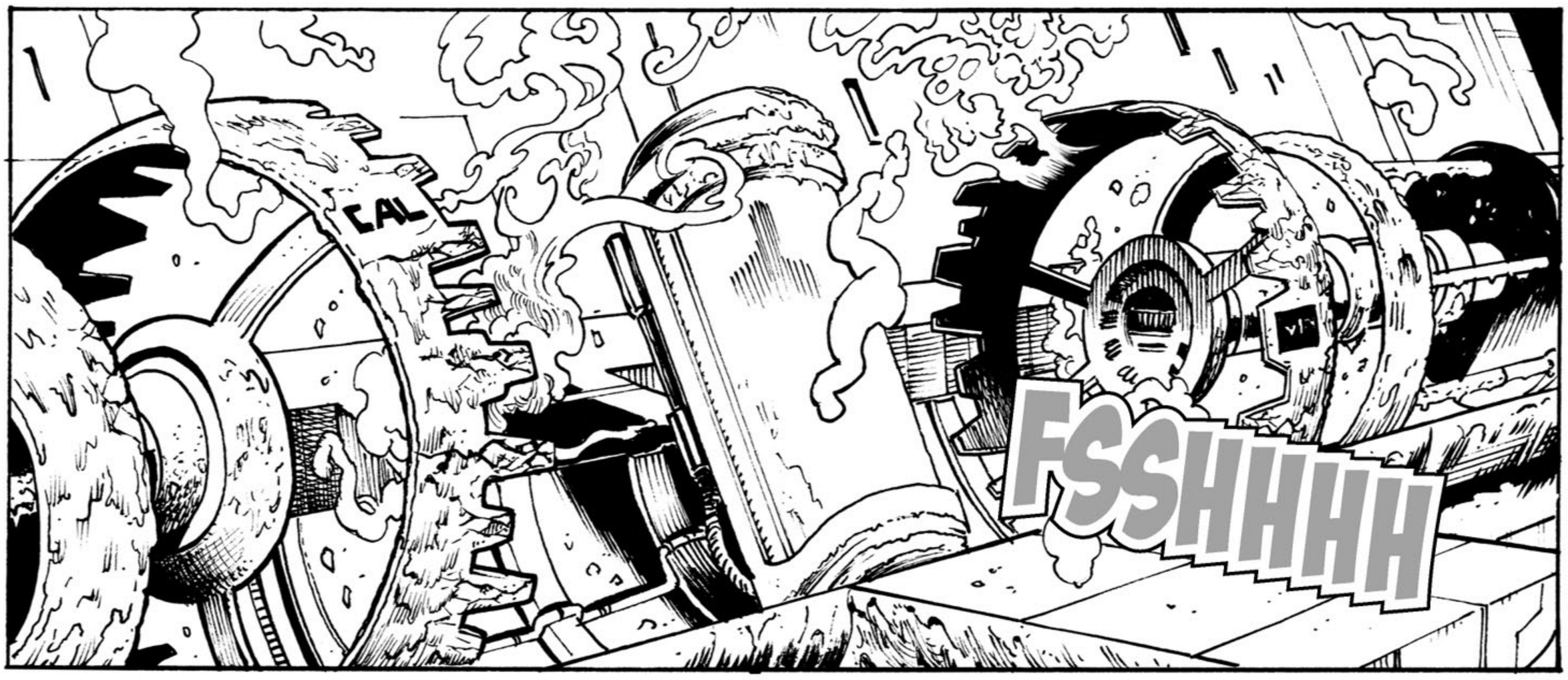
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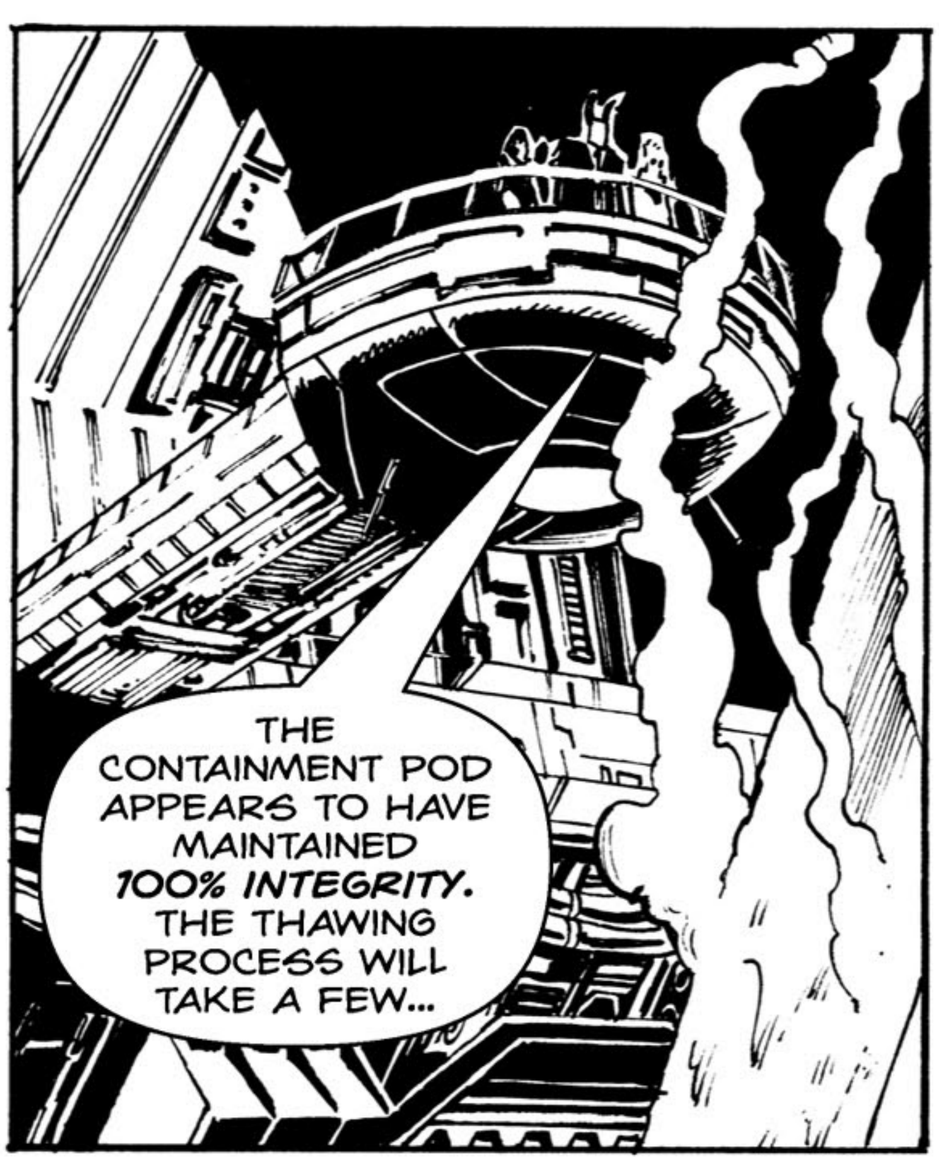
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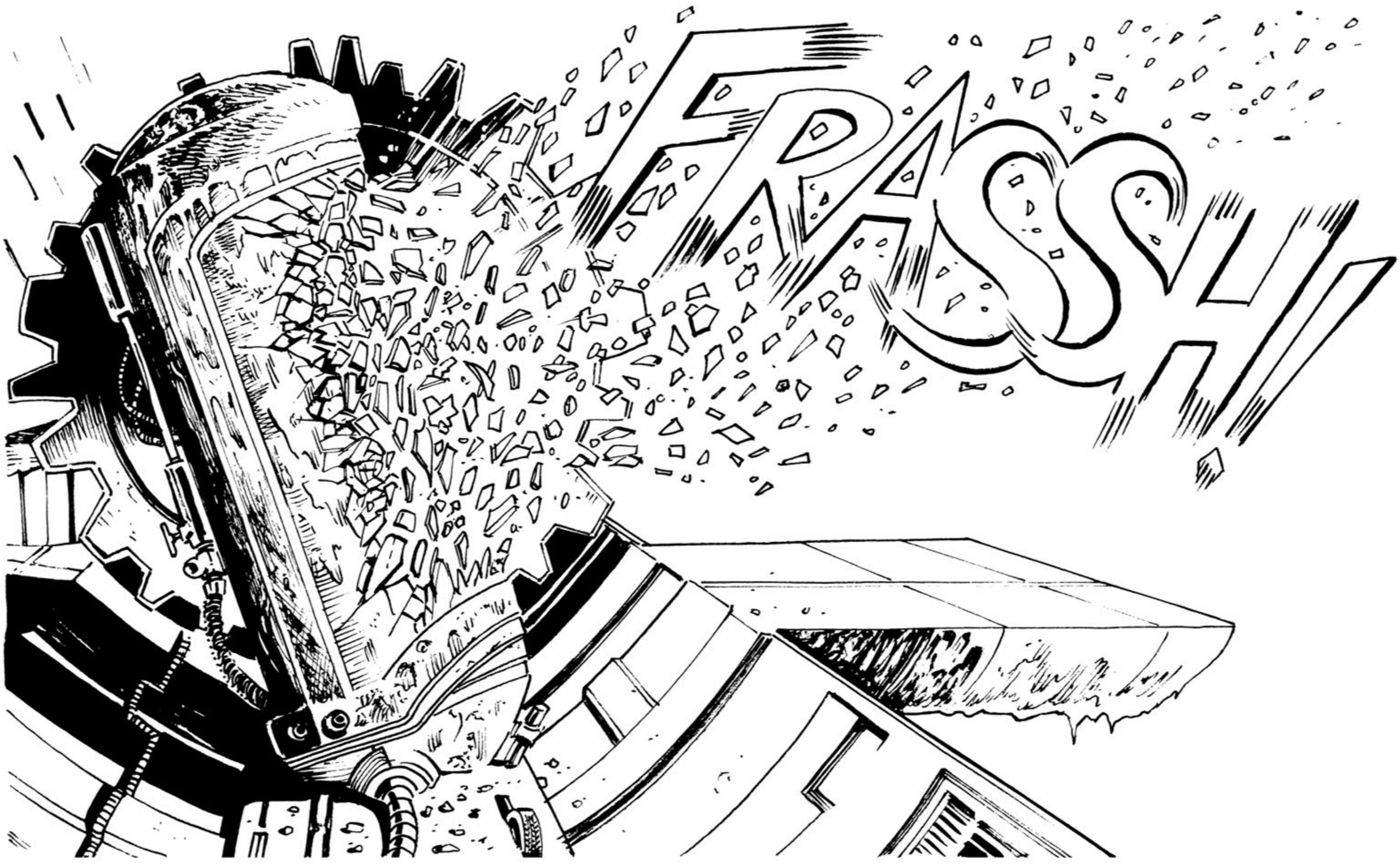
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CAL
FSSHHHH


THE CONTAINMENT POD APPEARS TO HAVE MAINTAINED 100% INTEGRITY. THE THAWING PROCESS WILL TAKE A FEW...


SKRIK


ER... THE GLASS. COULD HE...?
NO SIR. THAT IS MOST LIKELY FROM THE SUDDEN TEMPERATURE DIF...


PASSH

OKAY, THAT WAS *DEFINITELY* HIM.

DON'T YOU THINK?

YES SIR. HIS VITAL SIGNS ARE RETURNING TO BASELINE VERY... *RAPIDLY.*

WHERE...

...IS MY TIGER?

HIS... WHAT?

HIS DOLL, SIR. ACTUALLY, A *HEURISTICALLY OPTIMIZED BONDING SURROGATE* MADE OF PSYCHO-SENSITIVE MATTER.

(ANOTHER PROJECT WE THOUGHT WE'D... hih... *CROSS-POLLENATE* WITH THIS ONE.)

B-BUT WE HAD TO *SEPARATE* THEM. THE C.A.L.'S EXO-NERVOUS SYSTEM ALLOWED HIM TO *REORGANIZE* THE DOLL INTO...

I'LL ASK *AGAIN*--

--AND PLEASE BEAR IN MIND THAT I HAVE AN *ICICLE* UP MY *COCK HOLE.*

WHERE IS MY TIGER?!

THE DOLL IS... *hrrrm*... ON THE PREMISES?

YES SIR. BUT WE NEED TO ESTABLISH *DOMINANCE.* THERE ARE *WAKE UP PROTOCOLS* THAT WE MUST...

YOUR TIGER WILL BE BROUGHT TO YOU WITHOUT A MOMENT'S DELAY!!

we may skip the other protocols.

GOOD GOD.

DESMODUS OPUS

I THINK GOD WAS KEPT OUT OF THE LOOP DOWN HERE.

THE OFFICIAL NAME OF THIS FACILITY WAS THE "U.S. AGRO-COMMERCE RESEARCH & ENGINEERING STATION".

ZEEBI

HERE, THE WORLD'S BEST SCIENTISTS *HACKED* AND *CRACKED* EVERY KNOWN GENOME TO CREATE THE FOOD AND WEAPONS OF TOMORROW. *KITE EATERS* WERE ENGINEERED RIGHT ALONGSIDE NON-DAIRY *WHIPPED TOPPINGS.*

THIS MENAGERIE IS A RECORD OF EVERY EXPERIMENT THEY THOUGHT COULD BE TURNED INTO A *MARKETABLE PRODUCT.* I THINK THOSE *VAMPIRE PENGUINS* WERE EVENTUALLY USED TO RETAKE THE *FALKLANDS.*

BOVD SAPIEN

I'M GETTING THE PICTURE. YOUR MAGIC *SHMOO...* IT'S SOME KIND OF ANIMAL, RIGHT? THEY *GREW IT.*

SCIE

YOU'RE *PRETTY CLOSE* TO THE TRUTH.

THE TRUTH, OF COURSE, AIN'T NEVER *PRETTY.*

DO YOU RECOGNIZE THE *GARF?*

I WAS TOLD YOU TUSSLED WITH ITS *MOUTH END.*

AH. I THINK I HEAR *LUNCH* ARRIVING.

GOOOOM

SPAT
SPAT
SPAT
SPAT
SPAT
SO... THAT'S WHAT BUCKSLEY HAD IN HER *TITS*. THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO BUILD OUR BRIGHT AND GLORIOUS TOMORROW WITH.
BUG SHIT.
THE VERY BEST.
AND IF YOU HELP US KEEP IT FROM THE SYNDICATE YOU CAN HAVE AS *MUCH OF IT* AS YOU WANT.
BE STILL MY HEART.
It's not the most disgusting gunk I've ever been fed. I once drank something called a "Shamrock Shake."

Just the same, between getting my face **fucked** by a **ghost,** nearly losing **Snoop** and discovering that the Horn of Plenty is actually a **worm's anus--**

--I'm about fed up with **surprises.**

GOOD LUCK, SOLDIER! BRING OUR ENEMIES TO THEIR *KNEES!*

BRING GLORY TO YOUR SYNDICATE!

THE C.A.L. WILL RENDEZVOUS WITH THE REMAINDER OF CROKK'S PLATOON, AND THE SUBSTANCE SHOULD BE OURS IN MERE DAYS. IMMORTALITY IS WITHIN OUR *GRASP!*

AND AFTERWARDS, THAT LITTLE BASTARD WILL BE IMMEDIATELY *SANCTIONED,* CORRECT?

YES, HORNS... YOU'RE *ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN* CAPTAIN PREPÉ KNOWS HOW TO USE THE OBEDIENCE CODE? IF THAT PSYCHOTIC RETURNS *HERE...!*

MY CYBEROLOGIST HAS GIVEN ME EVERY CONFIDENCE IN OUR PLAN'S *CERTAIN SUCCESS.*

UMM...

OF COURSE, THERE IS THE *POSSIBILITY...*

PERHAPS ALLTHE LAD NEEDS IS THE *FIRM HAND* OF A NURTURING *FATHER FIGURE?*

SIR... I CAN ALL BUT *GUARANTEE* THAT YOU WOULD WIND UP LIKE... LIKE...

AH. *HRRRM.* ABOUT *THAT...*

MY APOLOGIES MR. DUKE. YOUR *PET* PROBABLY SHOULD HAVE AVOIDED MAKING *EYE CONTACT.* WE'LL...

GLOOP!!

...WE'LL GET YOU A *NEW ONE.*

$15.25 **The Daily Guardian**

Defense Satellites Attack Themselves As Mongovian Rockets Batter Our Homeland



A photograph taken from Space Station 1 shows the APDI satellites completely ignoring the incoming Mongovian rockets that decimated large swaths of our nation Thursday.

Blame Falling on Zarkov for Failure of Missile Shield

By Jeff Cobb

The nation awoke to an unusual sight this morning: massive craters where many of her major cities once stood.

Prickly City, AZ, Pinhook, IN and Hootin' Holler, AL are among nearly a dozen metropolitan casualties in yesterday's atomic rocket attack by the Mongovian Empire, an attack our government said could never happen.

"The complete failure of the All-Purpose Defense Initiative must be laid at the feet of its designer, Hans Zarkov," declared SPACECOM Commander General Anthony Rogers. "The buck stops there!"

see OOPSIE, page A3

Ookle Deposes Monarch, Recalls Ambassador

By Spirou Fantasio

The Kingdom of Little is under martial law following a weekend putsch led by Colonel Ookle, chief of the kingdom's armed forces.

"A new order has begun. Our former, jelly-spined ruler will be tried and hung for his feckless cowardice!" Ookle, now the kingdom's self-described "dictator", declared in a speech delivered before his nation's parliament.

Ookle has also recalled the kingdom's ambassador to its neighbor Boomerania, seen by many as a sign that tensions between the two countries may soon spill over into armed conflict.

Little, which has been our nation's ally in the conflict raging across the globe, sits at the mouth of a strategic water-



Ookle, the Dictator

animosities that may have led to this revolt.

The royal family is apparently being held in their palace, which is surrounded day and night by screaming mobs of Ookle supporters calling for the king's head.

"Death to the people's tyrant!" shouts one man before hurling a

Zinger Clouds "No Threat" to Farm Belt, Ag Dept. Reports

By Roland Hedley

The herbicidal toxins released by the so-called "zinger bombs" being used by our enemies in the Southern theater of the war pose no danger to our nation's farmlands, this according to a highly redacted report issued by the Department of Agriculture.

"Although the defoliating effects of the weapons are nearly 100%, wind dispersal appears to mitigate the harm that may be caused collaterally to vegetation outside the conflict zone," the report states.

However, this verdict has not assuaged farmers concerned that

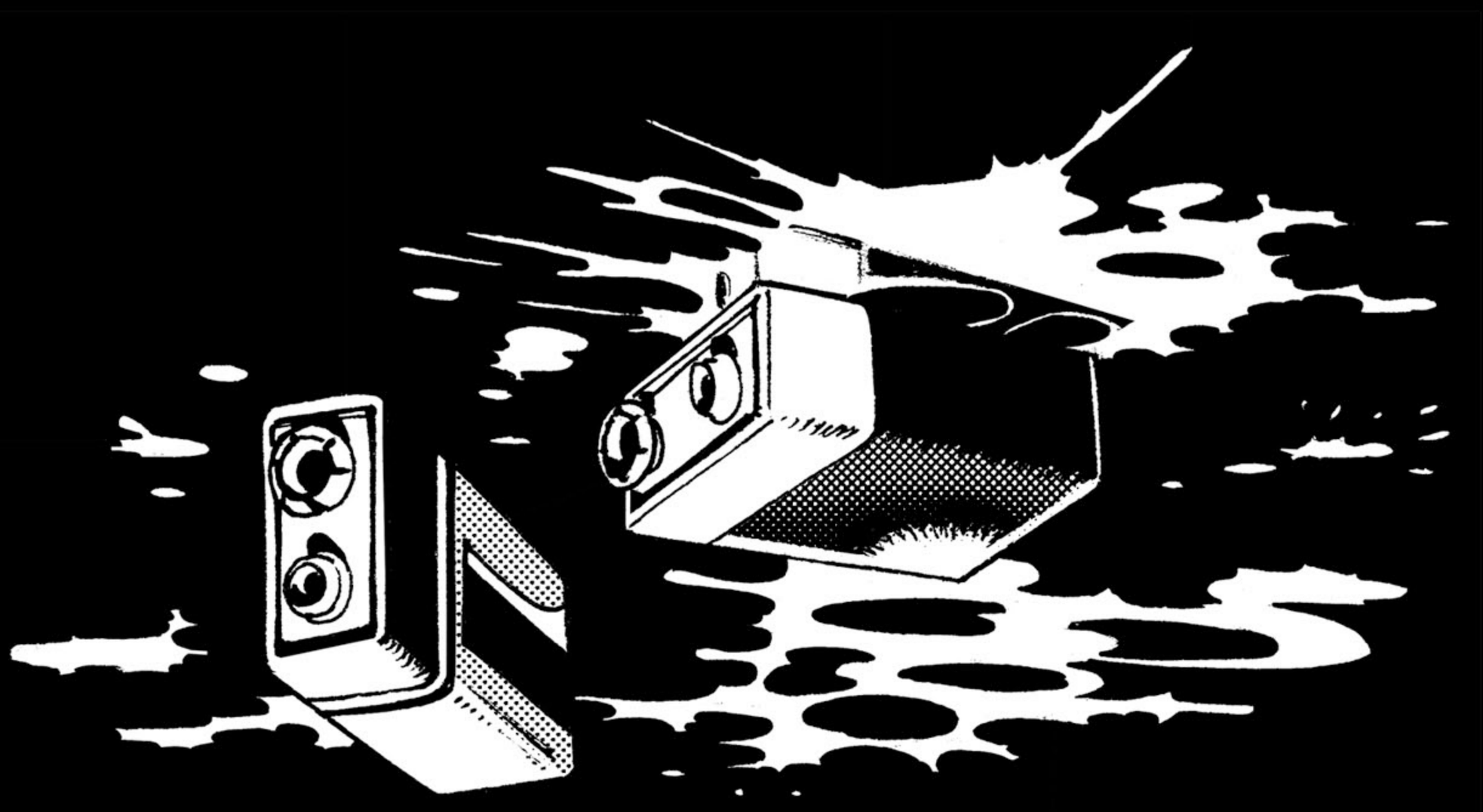
like a goddamn green fog, rolling across my crops," cabbage farmer Sim Poole told us. "Afterwards, muh cabbages turned just about as brown as a nigrah's turd."

The government denies that the toxins could be accumulating in the way Poole and other farmers described to us. Secretary of Agriculture Everett True, responding to this reporter's inquiries, stated flatly: "Those farmers are as stupid as the ugly mules their fathers raped to sire them!! I should beat you with an umbrella for even sug

ears of yours

worthless jackanimal

PART 4



CHAPTER 61

FOOD FIGHT


Rosie's
GOOD EATS
ROSIE DINE
WHAT THE...
SONOFA... ALRIGHT! THAT TEARS IT!!
NOW YOU STAY THE HELL OUT UNTIL YOU PUT SOME PANTS ON!
FUKKIN' STAY OUT THEN TOO!

THAT'S, UH... SOME *MACHINE* YOU'VE GOT THERE.

YOU LOOKIN' FOR FOOD OR *TROUBLE?*

OH, I DOUBT I'D BE MUCH TROUBLE FOR *YOU,* BIG GUY.

YOU JUST WATCH YOURSELF, PAL. AIN'T NOBODY TAKEN US OFF YET.

ALL I WANT IS A MEAL THAT'S NOT A TUBE OF CAT TURD.

YOU'VE COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE. WE SERVE EVERY GRADE OF RATION, PLUS SOME OF THE LOCAL VARMINTS.

ANY SPECIALS?

MENU

RIGHT HERE.

HOW'S THE RATTLESNAKE CHILI?

SHITTY. LESS SHITTY HOT. THAT'S AN EXTRA NINE-VOLT.

SIGN OUTSIDE SAYS GOOD EATS.

WE GOT *EATS.* THAT AIN'T *GOOD ENOUGH,* TAKE YOUR ASS TO ANOTHER SECTOR!

GIMME THE HOT CHILI THEN.

HOW ABOUT YOUR FRIEND?

HE'LL HELP HIMSELF.

WHAT YOU SAID.

JIMBO! BOWL OF SHIT ON FIRE!

SHNAKEY! *LOOK!* DOLL DOLL!

MY BRUDDER LIKES YOUR TOY.

...

OH?

YEAH. HE'S A LITTLE SOFT IN THE HEAD. LIKES TO FIND CRITTERS TO PET AN' PLAY WITH. SHOW THE MAN YOUR *DOLL DOLL,* SHNOOKS.

hyuh hyuh

SHEEEE?

SHNAKEY! HE NOT SHEEING!

YEAH, IT AIN'T MUCH TO LOOK AT. SAY, NOW HERE'S AN IDEER...

BOOOO!

KUH-LICK

HOW ABOUT YOU AN' MY BRUDDER *TRADE?* AFTER ALL, WHAT'S A GROWN MAN NEED A DOLL FOR--

--LESS'N HE'S SOFT IN THE HEAD?

YOU WANT TO PLAY WITH MY TIGER? HE'S ALL YOURS. I'LL TELL YOU, THOUGH...HE PLAYS *ROUGH.*

WHERE'S THE HEAD?

'ROUND BACK.

THANKS FER THE *WARNING,* PECKERHOLE.

HUH HUH HUH!

RREEOOWWW! *ACK ACK ACK!* DOLL DOLL *KILLED* YOU, SHNAKEY! DEATH FROM ABOVE! *hur hur*

YEP. HE GOT ME, BABY BRUDDER.

HIM SHOFT.

QUEEK

HEY! DOLL DOLL MOVE!

COME BACK HERE AN' SIDDOWN, SHNOOKS...

UHHH? OWW! DOLL DOLL STOPPIT!

WHAT IN THE GODDAMN

ALIGHH DOLLY NNNHOOOO!!

RRHRRR

SHRAAK!

JESUS CHRIST!!

GRRHOOOORR!!

SMASH!

AXEL asshole!

HAPPINESS IS A M MP

OH NO OH GOD ROSIIEEE!!

HYUGHK HYUH HELLP MEEEEEE

NYAHHHH!!

KILL YOU

BANG

YOU

NO NO NOT ME NO

SLASH

BANG

SON

BANG

OF

BANG

BANG

A

BANG

JESUS SHIT JESUS SHIT

RUN RUN RUN!!

JUDGE PARKER= FUDGE PACKER

GET OFF ME! AHHH!! WAHHHHHH!!!

NIIIPERRR!!!

AIEEEEEEE!!!

BWALIGGGHH!

plip
plip
plip
plip
plip
plip

YESSIR. MANDIBLES OF DEATH.

I TRY TO *WARN THEM*--

-- BUT THEY NEEEEVER LISTEN.

WORTH EVERY SPARK.

...REPEAT, THIS IS LEGION UNIT 18. AGENT C.A.L., YOU ARE OVERDUE. *STATUS REPORT!*

LEGION, THIS IS **CAL.** STATUS: KISS MY ASS.

I'M ABOUT 200 KLIKS FROM YOUR POSITION. E.T.A... 26 MINUTES.

HAVE A BOWL OF ***SUGAR BOMBS*** WAITING FOR ME WHEN I ARRIVE. YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON THIS.

RRRRRRR

YEP. YOU LOOK GODDAMN STUPID.

NOT AS STUPID AS ANYONE WHO'D FUCK WITH YOU, THOUGH.

YOUR DOG IS ON THE MEND?

THEN PERHAPS WE CAN FINISH THE TOUR WE STARTED YESTERDAY. I REALLY SHOULD HAVE MADE THE DISTILLERY OUR *LAST* STOP...

THE DOC SAYS SNOOP TOOK TO THE TREATMENT BETTER THAN HE HOPED. HE'LL BE HUMPING LEGS AGAIN IN NO TIME.

NO COMPLAINTS HERE. IT'S BEEN FOREVER SINCE I'VE HAD A HANGOVER. IT'S *REFRESHING.*

I GOT A LITTLE *PUNCHY* AS I RECALL. HOW'S POPS?

JUST AS BEAUTIFUL. LEFT HOOKS ARE LIKE *HANDSHAKES* TO HIM.

WHERE'S X?

JUST YOU AND ME, IF YOU DON'T MIND.

RADIOLOGY

PATHOLOGY

YOU STARTING TO *TRUST ME,* CURLS?

THERE MUST BE TIMES WHEN YOU *AREN'T* DANGEROUS.

SURE THERE ARE.

INFANCY IS A TIME, RIGHT?

SSP

GO AHEAD.

MM...

NEH.

IF THINGS HAD GONE WRONG WHEN I FOUGHT THAT ***WORM*** YOU'D BE SLURPING DOWN A WARM HANDFUL OF ***ME.***

I'M NOT IMMUNE TO THE HORROR OF IT ALL. SOMETIMES WE HAVE TO PICK OUT FINGER BONES AND ***TEETH.***

WE DIDN'T GET TO SET THE TERMS OF ***SURVIVAL,*** WEAPON BROWN. WE PLAY THE CARDS WE'VE BEEN DEALT, THE SAME AS YOU.

SO THIS IS WHAT IT COMES TO? HUMANITY IS JUST A SWARM OF FLIES AT A TURD BUFFET?

IT'S ***NOT*** SHIT. IT'S THE ONLY GODDAMN ***MIRACLE*** YOU'LL EVER SEE.

THE BRAINS IN THIS PLACE KNEW HOW TO TURN NATURE INTO WEAPONS. NECESSITY FORCED THEM TO ***REVERSE*** THE PROCESS. THEY NEEDED SOMETHING TO FEED THE KUDZU BEFORE IT FINISHED THEM OFF.

THEY DISCOVERED THAT ***SOME*** ANIMALS COULD ***PROCESS*** THE POISON COCKTAIL IN THE AIR AND SOIL-- MAKE ***AMINO ACIDS*** FROM IT.

THERE WERE DNA SAMPLES FROM EVERY CREATURE ON EARTH DOWN HERE. THEY STUMBLED ONTO CROSSING A ***CAT*** WITH A ***TAPEWORM,*** THEN INCUBATED THE MAGGOT IN AN EXPOSED RATION ENTREE FROM THE WAR. RAVIOLI... OR MAYBE ***MANICOTTI.***

IT *WORKED.* THE GARF GAINED WEIGHT UNTIL IT WAS BIGGER THAN LIFE. NOW THEY HAD TO KEEP IT FED BEFORE *IT* WAS AT LARGE TOO.

THE FOOD IT WAS BRED TO EAT WAS ON THE SURFACE, SO THE BRAINS SHACKLED ITS HIND SECTION AND LET IT CHEW ITS WAY TO THE TOP.

THEY WERE HOPING TO PICK PROTEINS FROM THE FECES THAT THE *PLANT* WOULD EAT. DECONTAMINATED CORPSE.

INSTEAD, THE GARF'S DIGESTIVE TRACT CONVERTED THE POISONS *COMPLETELY,* TRANSFORMING THEM INTO IMPOSSIBLE NEW PROTO-TISSUES; PURE *LIFE'S BLOOD.*

SYMPATHETIC FOOD.

CRONCH

SPOOOTZZ!

IT TASTES LIKE SHIT!

BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT YOU *EXPECTED!*

THE SHMOO *READS* YOUR TASTE BUDS. EVERY BITE WILL BE THE FOOD YOU DESIRE... IF YOU KNOW WHAT IT TASTES LIKE.

WE KEEP THE OLD FOLKS BUSY MAKING *SHMOODS*-- DUPLICATES BASED ON THEIR MEMORIES OF WHAT FOOD *USED* TO BE.

I THINK WE HAVE ENOUGH *PICKLES.*

splatch

MIGHTY WHITE OF YOU. UPSTAIRS, THE CODGERS GET PUT OUT TO PASTURE WHEN THEY CAN'T SCAVENGE FOR THEMSELVES.

NO ONE ISN'T VALUABLE. TAKE ***HILDY***. WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT SOMEONE LIKE HER COULD MAKE IT AS ONE OF ***US***?

WHY ***NOT*** HER? I MEAN, SHE SURE ***SMELLS***, BUT WHAT....

CAN'T YOU TELL?

HILDY'S A ***TROG***.

LADY, YOU ARE OUT OF YOUR ***FUCKING MIND!***

WELL, ***HALF*** TROG. THE GERMS DIDN'T KILL HER, BUT SHE'S DEFINITELY PART OF THE DEAD'S WORLD NOW.

MEEEEAT

THE WHOLE WORLD ***BELONGS*** TO THE DEAD AS FAR AS I CAN SEE.

BUCKSLEY AND HER CREW WERE GOING TO CHANGE THAT BY FOUNDING A NEW COLONY. THE SHMOO IS ***PHOTOSYNTHETIC;*** IT CAN REGENERATE ITSELF AS LONG AS IT IS KEPT UNCONTAMINATED. ANOTHER BONUS.

HOT FRIES

TOFU BURGERS

WE WANTED TO ***SHARE*** PARADISE. NOW ***WE'RE*** THE ONES BEING CAST INTO THE WILDERNESS.

DAMN SHAME TO ABANDON THIS PLACE. DO YOU REALLY THINK THE *SYNDICATE* COULD GET IN?

THAT *WRAITH* DID. AND ONCE THE SYNDIES SWARM B.C., THERE WILL BE NO *GETTING OUT* FOR *US.*

WE'VE PREPARED FOR THIS DAY. WE HAVE A CAMP IN THE MOUNTAINS TO FALL BACK TO. IT ISN'T MUCH, BUT WE'LL ADAPT.

IN TWENTY-FOUR WE'RE OUT THE DOOR. WE'LL CUT THE GARF LOOSE AND FLUSH WHAT'S LEFT OF THE SHMOO. ALL THE SYNDICATE WILL FIND WHEN THEY GET HERE IS A LOT OF FLESH-EATING *KUDZU*, NICE AND HUNGRY.

ANNE! JESUS, I'VE BEEN LOOKING *EVERYWHERE!*

EVERYONE IS ASSEMBLED ON THE STRIP. TIME FOR THE *PEP RALLY.*

CARE TO JOIN ME ON STAGE, WEAPON BROWN? THERE'S NOTHING LIKE HAVING A BONA FIDE *KILLING MACHINE* AT YOUR SIDE WHEN YOU'RE DELIVERING *BAD NEWS.*

YOU WATCH. SHE'S GONNA CALL ME "CHUCK".

DO YOU SEE THEM DOWN THERE?

YEP.

PCT MODE C

EXACTLY WHERE THE BOSSES SAID THEY'D BE. THE GARAGE IS A FRONT. THERE'S A PASSAGE BELOW IT LEADING TO THEIR COMPLEX, LARGE ENOUGH TO MOVE VEHICLES THROUGH.

SEE? THERE'S A NAVIGABLE PATH LEADING TO THE STYX. IT'S THEIR ESCAPE ROUTE.

SO WE BUM RUSH THE CHUMPS AND GIVE EM' A HORROR SHOW. SOUNDS LIKE A PLAN.

IDIOT! THAT IS NOT THE PLAN!

THERE'S A HIDDEN VENTILATION SHAFT TWO MILES NORTH OF US. ONE SQUAD WILL ATTACK THE GARAGE AND DRAW THE ENEMY'S FIRE WHILE THE REST OF OUR FORCE SLIPS IN THROUGH THE SHAFT AND TAKES THEM UNAWARES.

HEY, FRONT DOOR, BACK DOOR... IT ALL ENDS THE SAME WAY: PLENTY O' BLOOD AND SCREAMING.

JUST KEEP YOUR MEN OUT OF MY WAY WHILE I WORK AND I MIGHT LEAVE SOME MURDERS FOR THEM TO DO.

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, ASSWIPE!

I HAVE BEEN TOLD TO GIVE YOU WIDE LATITUDE, BUT YOU ARE STILL A SPECIALIST. YOU WILL KILL WHO I TELL YOU TO KILL!

THERE ARE PEOPLE DOWN THERE THAT THE BOSSES WANT TAKEN ALIVE. WE ARE TO PUT THE FEWEST POSSIBLE HOLES IN THE POPULATION.

AND ANYWAY, WE'VE GOT SOME USES FOR THEIR EXISTING HOLES.

YOU FUCK WITH ME ON THIS AND I'LL POP YOUR ZITS WITH MY BOOT HEEL, UNDERSTOOD?

GORBLE GORBLE GORF GORF GORF

WHATEVER YOU SAY, HOSS.

NOW, WOULD YOU MIND TELLING ME TO KILL THOSE GUYS ON THE ROOF? I'VE SUDDENLY GOT WOOD.

WHAT DO YOU THINK

THAT'S IT. THE SHIT'S HIT AND SHE'S CALLING IT QUITS.

THAT GUY UP THERE... SWINGIN' THE METAL

THERE'S NO WAY ANYONE COULD GET AT US HERE

RAZZLE FRAKKIN FRIP FLIPPIN

WORRY HONEY I'M SURE IT'S GONNA BE ALL

SHH COME ON SHH

BACK UP TO THE SURFACE? OH GOD PLEASE NO

LUNATIC ASYLUM UP THERE

GONNA BE IN FOR A BOATLOAD OF HURT

THERE'S NO WAY I'M LEAVING HERE NO *WAY*

SAND ROACH ANNE TOOK IN

I'M READY, MAN. BRING THE SHIT *ON*, YOWHATI'MSAYIN?

OWED ME 50 SHMOO AND NOW HE'S DEAD

PUT YOUR EARS ON.

WE GOT ***FOUND.*** MEN WITH GUNS AND KNOW-HOW. ENOUGH TO PUT AN ***END*** TO US.

I'VE DRILLED YOU ALL ON EVAC PROCEDURES SINCE DAY ONE, SO I'M NOT GOING TO REPEAT THEM. WIPE YOUR ***ASSES*** AND COORDINATE WITH YOUR FOREMEN. WE ARE AT ***FRIGHT NIGHT STATUS.*** IN 24 HOURS OUR RUBBER HITS THE ***ROAD.***

RIGHT, ALRIGHT

JUST HAVE TO GRIN AND BEAR IT

WE'RE READY, ANNE!

OUR HOPES, MY FATHER'S ***DREAM,*** WILL NOT END HERE.

THAT DREAM--A NEW WORLD GROWING OUT OF THE ASHES OF THE OLD--HAS ALREADY BEEN BORN. ***WE*** ARE THAT DREAM, AND NOW WE TAKE OUR FLEDGLING STEPS ***TOGETHER.***

WE THOUGHT WE COULD ***HIDE*** FROM THE OLD WORLD. INSTEAD, WE WILL FACE THEM ***HEAD-ON.*** SOME OF US WILL BE STAYING BEHIND TO DRAW THAT ***FIRST BLOOD*** AND TO COVER OUR TRACKS.

THE REST OF US WILL FORTIFY OUR ***NEW HOME*** IN THE MOUNTAINS. THERE WILL BE CHALLENGES. WE WILL ***OVERCOME*** THEM.

AS YOU KNOW, MY FATHER IS VERY ILL, OR ELSE YOU CAN BET YOUR ***BOTTOM DOLLAR*** HE WOULD BE SPEAKING TO US NOW, SO THAT WE COULD DRAW STRENGTH FROM HIS BOUNDLESS ***OPTIMISM.***

INSTEAD, LET US HEAR AN INVOCATION FROM OUR BELOVED ***UNCLE DUST,*** AND A MESSAGE OF HOPE AGAINST A DARK TOMORROW.

MOON MAID 4 EVER

hnh. sure would like to--

--thump those *cantaloupes.*

SO, hrrm--

IN TH' OLD DAYS, BEFORE THEM BOMBS FUCKED IT ALL UP, WE HAD A SAYING...THAT IF'N YOU...

HOLD ON. I...

oh shit.

SKEEZIX!

DEADS.

YOU HEAR THIS LADY SAY THERE WAS TIME FOR TEARS?

MOVE YOUR ASSES.

JUST TELL ME WHERE TO SEND THE FLOWERS.

GOOD RIDDANCE. THAT DIRTY LETCH HAS BEEN PINCHING MY ASS SINCE MY *TITS* CAME IN.

SMOG FRONT COMING IN. KEEP YOUR EYES SHARP.

DON'T WORRY. NOTHIN'S GETTIN' PAST *ME.*

I HEARD THAT. LET EM' COME. JUST COME ON OVER AND RING OUR BELL. JUST *KNOCK ON OUR DOOR.*

KNOCK KNOCK.

WHO'S THERE?

BUNCHA PISS-PANTS *SYNDIES* WISHIN' THEY'D STAYED IN BED THIS MORNING.

FUKKIN' A.

HOW 'BOUT IT, CAPTAIN? YOU READY FOR THE SHOWDOWN?

ROMULAN SHITHEELS! LET 'EM TRY TO GET ACROSS THIS NEUTRAL ZONE! LET 'EM TRY!!

HOW MANY *PIECES* ARE YOU GOING TO BLOW THEM TO, BINK?

"PIECES"? *ATOMS.* YOU'LL NEED EINSTEIN TO DO THE AUTOSPSIES.

SHIT YEAH. THOSE BASTARDS WILL START SHOOTING *EACH OTHER* JUST SO THEY CAN HAVE A *MERCIFUL DEATH.*

THERE WON'T BE A SQUARE CENTIMETER LEFT ON THE *PLANET* WITHOUT SOME OF THEIR BLOOD ON IT.

I'M GOING TO PUFF THEM OUT LIKE CANDLES. AIM, CLICK, *POOF.*

I WILL TURN THE AIR *RED* WITH THEM.

SOUNDS LIKE A HELL OF A FIGHT!

COUNT ME IN!

CLOP

CLOP

KLINGON BASTARD!!

BRAAAAAAA

OOO!

YOW!

WATCH ME!

GOOD GAWD!

HIT THE BRICKS, CRIP!

SHIELDS UP!!

KUNK

PLUMPF

S-SC--

--SCOTTY!

BEAM ME UP!

SCOTTY! SCOTTEEEE

GGRACCH KKRONCHH

SHRIPPP

PREPÉ, HOSTILES ARE *SNUFFED.* SEND IN YOUR BOYS AND RENDEVOUS WITH ME AT *TARGET BRAVO.*

I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU--

--AT THE *SHAFT.*

GODDAMMIT, THIS PLACE IS A MAZE!

HEY... POPS! ARE YOU LOST TOO?

GETTIN' THERE. YOU WANTS A HIT OF DIS *SPINACH?*

MAYBE LATER. ANNE WANTED ME AT SOME POW-WOW THAT STARTED *TEN MINUTES* AGO. DO YOU KNOW WHERE...

3-G. DOWN DIS HALL, LEFTS THEN LEFTS AGAIN.

RIGHT... THANKS.

YOU COMMIN'?

"NAH. I AIN'TS INVITED."

HOPE THIS IS QUICK. HUGHIE'S GRAMPS OUGHTA HAVE MY *ARM* GREASED UP BY NOW. SURE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS *TINKER TOY.*

WHINE WHINE WHIIIINE

OH, ALRIGHT! BUT IF YOU START CHEWING YOUR BANDAGES SO HELP ME *CHRIST...*

YOU'RE LATE.

TRAFFIC. DID YOU START THE PARTY WITHOUT ME?

PARTY JUST GOT HERE.

Captain Crow

RUM COOLER

SNOOP...

GO GET YOURSELF A *ROOT BEER.*

rrr

SO YOUR OLD MAN'S STILL AROUND, HUH? I'D KINDA GOTTEN THE IDEA THAT HE'D *KICKED.*

HE'S IN OUR *ICU.* HE'S VERY OLD, HE WON'T LAST MUCH LONGER.

HE'S MY *ADOPTIVE* FATHER, ACTUALLY. HE RESCUED ME AFTER MY PARENTS WERE... WERE...

YOU DON'T NEED TO SAY IT. WE'VE ALL GOT THAT STORY, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. FUCKIN' *WAR.*

YOU'RE LUCKY YOU EVEN *REMEMBER* YOUR FOLKS. FOR THE LIFE OF ME... I CAN'T EVEN RECALL MY PARENTS *FACES.* SOMETIMES I WONDER IF THEY WERE EVER *THERE* AT ALL.

NO, I *WANT* TO SAY IT.

NO ONE EVER TALKS ABOUT THE PAST. IT'S AS IF THEY'RE ASHAMED TO REMEMBER EVERYTHING WE THREW AWAY, MY FATHER *ESPECIALLY.* ALL HE'S EVER DONE IS TELL ME TO *FORGET* YESTERDAY, TO HANG ON TO *TOMORROW.*

I THINK HE FEELS GUILTY, SOMEHOW, FOR BEING A SOLDIER. LIKE IT WAS ALL *HIS* FAULT.

YOU SAID HE HELD A HIGH RANK.

HE WAS A COMMANDER, PART OF THIS FACILITY'S CHAIN OF COMMAND. HE'D BEEN COMING HERE TO ***SECURE IT*** WHEN HIS ***PLANE*** WAS SHOT DOWN.

ONE PLATOON OF SOLDIER'S WAS ALL HE HAD LEFT. THEY HAD TO TRAVEL BY FOOT THE REST OF THE WAY, A COUPLE HUNDRED MILES. THEY PASSED THROUGH MY HOME TOWN.

WE'D BEEN **ZOO** ***BOMBED*** BY SLOBBOVIA. THEIR GENEGINEERED FREAKS WIPED OUT NEARLY EVERYONE.

...Never Never Land--The Vince Guaraldi Trio

"SOME OF THE ANIMALS--MONSTERS--SLITHERED INTO THE SHELTER WHERE MY FAMILY WAS HIDING."

"THAT WAS WHEN MY EYES... WHEN I STOPPED **SEEING.** AS I WATCHED MY PARENTS BEING TORN TO SHREDS--"

"--BY LEAPING LIZARDS."

AH... JESUS...

DADDY... HE HEARD MY SCREAMS. HE RESCUED ME, AND BROUGHT ME HERE WITH HIM, TO START OVER.

RIGHT. START OVER IN A ***WEAPONS LAB.*** BRING BACK THE WORLD THAT COOKED UP THE THINGS THAT KILLED YOUR FOLKS.

CAN'T WAIT.

WE FALL, WE GET UP AGAIN. THE LAST WAR DIDN'T *CHANGE* THAT.

BUT YOU'VE GOT MORE UP YOUR SLEEVE THAN JUST A *FRESH START,* DON'T YOU?

A NEW WORLD, WITH NEW PRIORITIES. THE FIRST BEING TO *GIVE* SHIT INSTEAD OF *TAKING IT.*

NOTHING NEW ABOUT *THAT.* AND HERE YOU ARE, ABOUT TO GO TO WAR SO THAT YOU CAN CONTROL THE *ONE THING* EVERYONE NEEDS.

YOU'VE BEEN LISTENING TO YOUR OWN *BULLSHIT* TOO LONG.

YOU'VE GOT US ALL WRONG. WE'RE ABOUT *SHARING.*

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT *YOU'RE* THE ONE WHO WANTS TO KEEP WHAT EVERY-ONE *NEEDS--*

--ALL TO *HIMSELF.*

AND WHO TAUGHT *YOU* TO BE THAT WAY? TO BE SUCH A--

--BLOCK-HEAD.

???

I TOLD YOU: I HEAR PRETTY WELL.

KLICK

She pulls my trigger. She gets what she's got coming.

Who did this to me? Who **trained me** to feel love as hate?

Who else?

I teach it to Anne. I give her everything I would have given to Van Pelt, everything I would have **done to her--**

--If I hadn't needed to **kill her** just that little bit **more.**

But when my bomb goes off it's not for that **bitch,** and not for this girl who knows my rage and wants it in her.

It's for **you,** Red.

gee whiskers!

Always and forever.

WHAT IS *KEEPING* THAT FOOL?

HEY! YOU POLISHING YOUR PECKER BACK THERE?!

ALL DONE!

MAN, *NOTHING* BEATS PISSING ON A FORD!

HERE'S THE BRIEF: THE ASSAULT ON THE MAIN ENTRANCE BEGINS IN THIRTY MINUTES. THAT LEAVES JUST THE *TWELVE* OF US TO SLIP IN AND REDUCE THE COMPLEX.

YOU BETTER BE *EVERYTHING* THE BOSSES PROMISED.

OH, BELIEVE ME... I'M MORE THAN *ANYONE* CAN HANDLE.

GOOD. THEN *YOU* CAN LEAD THE DESCENT, IN CASE THE ENEMY HAS ANY *SURPRISES* WAITING FOR US.

FINE AND DANDY.

I *LOVE* SURPRISES.

Everyone is given a couple of minutes a day to pretend that life is good.

PONG PONG PONG PONG PONG PONG PONG

And then you have to open your eyes.

TALK TO ME.

LOOKOUT ONE HAS GONE *SILENT.* THERE'S MOVEMENT IN THE GARAGE.

TOO SOON. TOO *GODDAMN* SOON.

LEGION. GOD *DAMN* IT!

THERE.

HOW COULD THEY HAVE *KNOWN?*

WAIT... WHAT'S THAT THEY'RE...?

EXPLOSIVES.

THAT'S A SUPPORT STRUT.

THEY'RE GOING TO *DROP* THE GARAGE. THE *VEHICLES* WILL BE TRAPPED.

WHAT OTHER EXITS DO YOU HAVE?

TWO LIFT SHAFTS. ACTIVITY?

LOOKOUTS REPORT GREEN.

ARE THERE CAMERAS ON EVERY LEVEL HERE?

JUST ABOUT.

WHERE *AREN'T* THERE ANY?

CAPTAIN PREPE, SITCH-OPS ESTABLISHED. YOU ARE "GO" FOR DESCENT.

CAPTAIN PREPE, REPORT YOUR 20 PLEASE.

I'M AFRAID... HE DIDN'T *MAKE IT,* SON.

WHAT ARE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT? I JUST *LEFT* HIM!

IT'S THIS DAMNED *WAR!* BUT WE CAN'T LET IT BREAK US! HIS *SPIRIT* WILL LIVE ON IN EVERY *CHILD'S SMILE!!*

THOOM!

WHAT IN THE *BLUE HELL..?!* SOMETHING JUST *DROPPED DOWN!*

IT'S ONLY OUR *TEAM MASCOT!*

HEYYY, RELAX GENTS! *RELAX!*

WHAT THE FUCK ARE WE DOING UP *HERE?* THE SYNDICATE IS AT THE GODDAMN *GATES!*

ZIP THE LIP AND PRICK UP YOUR *EYES!* ANNE WANTS A *RAT CHECK,* SO SHE GETS ONE.

BUT HOW THE HELL COULD ANYONE HAVE GOTTEN IN *THIS WAY?*

GOT ME, DOC. I DIDN'T EVEN *KNOW* ABOUT THIS LEVEL.

I TELL YOU THOUGH... IF ANY SCUMFUCK *HAS* GOTTEN IN HERE TO WRECK OUR HEAVEN, I'M SENDING THEM STRAIGHT TO *HELL,* OR MY NAME ISN'T...



CHAPTER 78

BALK!!

WEAPON ♪BROOOOWN!♪ COME OUT COME OUT *WHEREVER YOU ARE!*

I'LL *GET YOU,* MY PRETTY! AND YOUR LITTLE *DOG,* TOO!

I've been in bad spots and I've been in **worse.**

I've been in shit so **deep** *my feet couldn't* **touch bottom...**

But I've never been in over my **head** *before.*

Not like this.

I can't remember the last time escape or death weren't all the options I needed, but now I've gone slack on my cardinal rule: never pick up what you can't **put down.**

...IS A ***RED ALERT!*** ALL RESIDENTS MOVE IMMEDIATELY TO EVAC STATIONS! CLUSTERS ONE THROUGH FOUR ASSEMBLE IN ***BAY ONE...***

...I WANT THOSE TUNNELS BARRICADED AND FIRE TEAMS AT EVERY JUNCTURE! ***NOW MOVE!***

X, SEND YOUR ***BROTHER*** TOPSIDE WITH A SQUAD. THEY HAVE TO KEEP THOSE LEGIONNAIRES PINNED IN THE ***GARAGE*** BEFORE THEY'RE DONE SETTING THEIR DEMOLITIONS OR WE'RE AS GOOD AS ***DEAD!***

GOT ANYTHING FOR ***ME*** TO DO? PEEL ***POTATOES*** MAYBE?

READY FOR SOME ***INVOLVEMENT,*** WEAPON BROWN?

PUT ME IN, COACH.

THEN GET YOUR OLD ***ARM*** SCREWED BACK ON AND GO AND FIND ***POPS*** ON...

chirp chirp chirp

THAT'S ***VAL.***

HE'S GOT COMPANY.

WHERE ARE WE *NOW*, CORPORAL WHO-GIVES-A-SHIT?

THIS IS THE WATER TREATMENT PLANT. WE'RE ABOUT **80** *YARDS* FROM THE AREAS WE NEED TO **CONTROL.**

YES! **CONTROL!** *DOMINATION FOR A BRIGHTER TOMORROW!*

♪ ONWARD CANNON FODDER, MARCHING AS TO WAR! ♪

PLEASE SIR! YOU NEED TO BE MORE... ***DISCREET!***

AND... I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOUR ***ANIMAL.*** HE SEEMS--

--AGITATED!

NOOOO! HE'S JUST A TOFT WIDDLE ***PUDDY!***

I'LL LET YOU RUB HIS ***TUMMY*** LATER! OF COURSE, IF YOU KEEP ***QUESTIONING ME--***

--YOU'LL BE RUBBING IT FROM THE ***INSIDE.***

HMM. DARK, NOISY, LOTS OF HIDING SPOTS...

NICE PLACE FOR AN AMBUSH, I'D SAY!

DROP YOUR WEAPONTH, FAGGOT'TH!!

HEY! *EASY GUYS!* WE'RE JUST HERE TO SELL YOU SOME *AMWAY!*

DROP YOUR GUNTH AND KITH THE FUCKING FLOOR!

OKAY! *YOU WIN!* WE'LL PUT OUR GUNS DOWN AND... AND JUST HOPE THAT YOU'LL GO *EASY* ON US!

OOPS!

BRAK

THAT'S YOUR *CUE*, BOYS!

LET'S MAKE A MESS!

VAL! THORP! SOMEONE ANSWER!

SKK TRYING TO FALL BACK SKKEED REINFORCEMENTS!!

THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE *WINNING.*

GUYS, REALLY! IF YOU AREN'T GOING TO PUT UP A *FIGHT*--

--AT LEAST TRY TO *DIE* INTERESTINGLY!

MOTHER-FUCKER!

MOTHER-FUCKER!

AAARGH!!

AAARGH!!

LLIVVA

pete

R!!!!PPP

KIRBY!!

SHLINK

SHANK

SHING

POK

YOU SHOULDN'T BRING GUNS TO A *FIST FIGHT!*

PANG!

HEY!

PANG!

NICE SHOOTIN', BUCKAROO!

TOO BAD I DON'T AWARD *STYLE POINTS!*

WELL HOW DO YOU LIKE THAT! HE'S STILL *STANDING!*

GUYS, YOU GOTTA *SEE THIS!* CAN YOU BELIEVE...

GUYS! STOP *SHOOTING* FOR JUST...

CHRIST'S SAKE.

BANG!

BANG!

BANG!

SPUTCH

THWAP

KRAK

NOW COME HERE AND *LOOK AT THIS!* NO SHIT-- THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IV'E KILLED ANYONE AND THEY'VE STAYED *STANDING UP!*

I WONDER IF I COULD DO IT AGAIN? HEY PRIVATE, COME OVER HERE...

SIX/ONE THIS IS SWORD/SIX! *SOMEONE RESPOND!*

SWORD/SIX, THIS IS GORDON! IT'S...WE-WE--

FLASH! WHAT IN GOD'S NAME IS *HAPPENING* DOWN THERE?!

DEAD! *EVERYONE!* EVERYONE'S BEEN *SLAUGHTERED!*

EVACUATE! GET EVERYBODY OUT AS FAST AS YOU CAN!! JUST GET...

OH GOD.

FLASH? CAN YOU HEAR ME??

FLASH!

AH-AHHHHH!

'SCUSE ME. THEY'RE PLAYING MY TUNE.

NO TIME.

WHAT? *HOLD ON...!*

I SAID HOLD IT!

WHAT IS UP YOUR ASS, LADY? DID YOU MISS THAT BIT ABOUT A *SLAUGHTER?!*

I HEARD A LOT MORE THAN THAT! DO YOU THINK THOSE WERE ***RUBES*** WHO JUST GOT TORN UP LIKE KLEENEX?

THOSE WERE MY ***BEST MEN!*** WE HAVE TO GET OUT ***NOW!***

SLOWING THOSE BASTARDS DOWN MIGHT BE A GOOD USE OF MY ***SKILL SET.***

I NEED YOU ON THE STRIP TO SUPERVISE THE EVAC!

OUTRUN THEM? ***THAT'S*** YOUR BRAINWAVE?

LEH HIM GO, GIRL.

DEVIL WANSA MEET 'IM.

I don't know why, but what that hag says makes Anne button her lip. I don't give her a chance to change her mind.

That bitch is smart, but her people don't need a song and dance man. They hired a ***killer,*** *and I aim to give them their money's worth.*

Snoop's balls must be extra tasty today, because I haven't seen him since the alarms went off. But I know he'll find me.

He always does.

I track my way here without needing directions. The people are radiating away from this spot by instinct; I just fly to the **source** of their **panic.**

It's a kill zone, alright. I whiff potassium, taste copper. I hear that unmistakable silence of lives ended.

And then... Cold sweat. A feeling like déjà vu. I realize--

--I'm walking in on one of **my** jobs.

CLI

BOOM!

KRAK

--I HEARD YOU'VE GOT SOMEONE HERE WHO MIGHT GIVE ME A SCRAP!

SO QUIT FARTIN' AROUND AND BRING ON *WEAPON BROWN!*

THEY SURE DON'T MIND WASTING THEIR *MEN!*

BREAKER BREAKER! THIS THING ON?

HEY! IF YOU GUYS ARE THROUGH SENDING ME YOUR *BENCH WARMERS--*

He didn't kill me. I **survived.** I tend to.

He wasn't done with me yet, and now I'm on the run. And for the first time in my life, I want to **keep** running.

I'd do anything not to have to turn back; anything not to have to prove one last time...

...That I'm no **hero.**

PLEASE MISTER! **WAKE UP!**

PLEASE WAKE UP!

WAKE UP AND SAVE US!!

PLEASE! HELP US!

HE'S JUGGLING MY BROTHER!!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, HAVE NO FEAR!

I HAVE PERFORMED THIS TRICK *MANY* TIMES AND HAVE NEVER ONCE BEEN *HARMED!*

WAKE UP!!

I'm trying to tell him-- I ***am*** *awake. My goddamn cyber-interface*

IZZZZ FUKFUKFUKFUK 000101001

AND NOW, I MUST ASK THAT YOU HOLD YOUR SCREAMS IN ANTICIPATION OF MY *BIG FINISH!*

IF MY LOVELY ASSISTANT WOULD PLEASE TAKE HIS POSITION?

RRRRRRRR











"You're just mad that a *real* circus has come to town!"

ANNE... H-HE...

I KNOW, BOTTLE JOB.

IS... ARE THERE...?

OUR OPTIONS AIN'T CHANGED IN THE LAST *FIVE.* WE'VE GOT *ONE SQUAD* LEFT TO SPIKE THE SHMOO IF THOSE ASS-HOLES TRY AND LEAVE THE STRIP. *THAT'S IT!*

LETS ME AT HIM, ANNE! I CAN'T STANDS NO MORE! ME GOYLE'S DOWN THERE!!

EVERYONE WE CARE ABOUT IS DOWN THERE, POPS.

REILLY IS STILL KEEPING THEM FROM DROPPING THE GARAGE. IF WE COULD GET *SOME* OF OUR PEOPLE ONTO THE VEHICLES, MAYBE WE... MAYBE--

DAMMIT WITCH, I CAN HEAR YOUR *SLINKING!* WHERE ARE YOU GOING??

ANGEL UH' *DEATH* IZ SPREADIN' HIZ WINGS OVVA US, DOVE. AH'M HEADIN' FURTHA *SHADE.*

WHAT DOES *THAT* MEAN? AND... WHY DID YOU TELL WEAPON BROWN TO GO FIGHT THOSE BASTARDS?!

OUR BEST HOPE FOR A GETAWAY IS NOW LYING FLAT ON HIS *ASS* WAITING FOR THAT *PSYCHOPATH* TO GET BORED!

HIZ WHERIZ *S'POSED* TUHBEE. NAH *YOO* GOTTA FIGGA AHT WHERE YOO S'POSED TUHBEE *TOO.*

CUZ THAT BOY AIN'T GON FIGHT FUHNO *WORM TURDS.*

UP, DOWG.

SED UP!

YERK!!

RARRRR!

DON' POINTDEM TEEF AH*MEE* OR AH *HEX* YOO AGIN!

AH KNOW YOO UNNASTAN' ME. I KIN SEE DEM *BUBBAS* CUMMOWT YO HAID.

BEH DOOWUH AH *SAY* OR ESS DAT BOSSA YUZ GON BE *CAT FOOD.*

WHAT? STILL NOTHING?

CAN YOU REALLY NEED *MORE* CONVINCING??

YOU KNOW WHAT? *I LIKE THAT!* YOU DEMAND THE *MOST* FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT DOLLAR!

ALRIGHT-- FETCH ME THAT *OTHER* LITTLE SHIT. SURE HOPE YOU GUYS IN THE FRONT ROW BROUGHT *TARPS!*

NO... PUH-PUH--

FRZZT

FKZZSH

KONK!

III THINK WE SHOULD LET THE *GROWN-UPS* SETTLE THIS.

WEH-*HELLL!* LOOK WHO'S BACK FROM SLUMBERLAND!

AND YOU'RE *WEAPON BROWN,* HUH? I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT WHEN THE HOMBRES TOLD ME!

I MEAN, YOU'VE GOT THE *BOSSES* SHITTING IN FOUR DIFFERENT COLORS, AND HERE I DROPPED YOU WITH *ONE KICK!*

AND THAT *TWIG* IS THE ARM THAT WON THE WEST?? JESUS, TALK ABOUT *FALSE ADVERTISING!*

YOUR REPUTATION *DIDN'T* PRECEDE YOU. THE SYNDICATE GIVE YOU A NAME?

THE BOYS IN THE LAB CALL ME *CAL*, BUT YOU CAN CALL ME *SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS.*

THE CAT YOU CAN JUST CALL *HUNGRY.*

SO I THINK YOU KNOW WHY I'M HERE DARKENING YOUR DOORWAY. THE FOLKS BACK EAST LIKE WHAT YOU'VE *ACCOMPLISHED* AND WANT TO BUY YOU OUT.

PROBLEM IS, YOUR FRIENDS BEHIND THE *LENS* HAVE OVERESTIMATED THEIR *BARGAINING POSITION.*

CATCH.

THEY THINK THEY CAN HOLD THEIR SECRET *HOSTAGE* IN EXCHANGE FOR THEIR PEOPLE'S FREEDOM. BUT WE CAN'T LET THE WRONG PERSON WALK OUT THE DOOR WITH THE *SECRET RECIPE*, NOW CAN WE?

I THINK THEY'RE STILL COUNTING ON THE *GREAT WHITE HOPE* TO PULL THEIR HASH OUT OF THE FIRE.

BUT IF THEY REALLY *UNDERSTOOD* HOW FAR WE'VE GONE PAST THE POINT OF NO RETURN--

--THEN MAYBE WE COULD *END* THIS NONSENSE BEFORE I HAVE TO START GETTING *CREATIVE.*

SO GO AHEAD. TAKE YOUR SHOT. YOU CAN'T *MISS* AT THIS RANGE.

OF COURSE, IF YOU *DO*...

MWAH!

I ALREADY *KNOW* YOU'RE FAST.

MAYBE WE SHOULD SETTLE THIS WITH *INDIAN WRESTLING.*

SETTLE *WHAT?*

I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO MAKE MY BONES OFF KILLING THE FAMOUS *WEAPON BROWN,* BUT YOU'RE JUST A *CHUMP* LIKE ALL THE REST.

MISTER SHMOO

SO THIS *SNOT* IS WHAT ALL THE FUSS IS ABOUT, HUH?

AND IT WILL TURN INTO ANY KIND OF *FOOD* I WANT??

Y'KNOW-- I'VE ALWAYS WONDERED WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO EAT A *SNOWBALL.*

YOU'LL HAVE TO LET ME KNOW!

POW!

AWWW! TOO MUCH PEPPER?

I SAW YOU TRY TO STEP OUT OF THE WAY--

--SO *TWO* FOR FLINCHING!

HOOF!!

BAP BAP

HEY OUT THERE IN TV LAND! IT'S ABOUT TO GET *WET AND WILD* DOWN HERE!

GOT ANY MORE *RINGERS* OR CAN WE TALK SOME TURKEY?!

FINE. LET'S *TALK.*

I'M ANNE. I'M THE COMMMANDER HERE.

YOU CAN HAVE WHAT YOU CAME FOR. STOP HURTING MY *PEOPLE.*

JEEPERS PEEPERS! WHERE'D YOU GET *THOSE* EYES??

WELL, EVEN IF YOU MISSED MY SHOW--

--I TRUST YOU CAUGHT THE *AUDIO.*

ANNE... DON'T...

HIT THE SHOWERS, BLOCKHEAD.

OOO! COLD! REMINDS ME OF A BITCH *I* USED TO KNOW.

NICE OF YOU TO COME TO YOUR SENSES--THE ONES YOU *HAVE,* AT LEAST. SURRENDER ACCEPTED!

THERE'S A CONDITION.

HA! DO TELL.

THE ENVIRONMENT NEEDED TO MAINTAIN THE SHMOO IS *EXTREME.* ONCE IT'S CONTAMINATED THE SHMOO IS GONE FOREVER. NO ONE HERE CAN RECREATE IT.

IF YOU HARM EVEN *ONE MORE* OF MY PEOPLE, MY MEN WILL POLLUTE THE SHMOO. THEN... IT'S OVER FOR *ALL* OF US. WE'LL DIE, AND SO WILL *YOU.* IT'S JUST A MATTER OF *TIME.*

MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION, HUH?

BEEN *UPSTAIRS* LATELY? YOU SHOULD SEE THAT STRATEGY IN *ACTION.*

NO, I'M AFRAID YOUR OPERATION IS IN FOR SOME *DOWNSIZING.*

YOU *HEARD* MY TERMS!

OH, I WON'T KILL ANYONE WHO DOESN'T *ASK* FOR IT.

I'M ASKING *THEM* TO ASK FOR IT.

COME ON! LOOK AT ALL THIS *DEAD WEIGHT!*

FEEBS! *FOGEYS!* I DON'T CARE HOW MUCH *AMBROSIA* YOU'RE PACKING--IT CAN'T BE ENOUGH TO JUSTIFY KEEPING THESE *ZOMBIES* ON THE TIT!

YOU EXPECT ME TO SHARE MY AIR WITH THE *USED TOILET PAPER* OF A DEAD CIVILIZATION? WHAT EXCUSE COULD THERE BE FOR LETTING THESE LOSERS LIVE FOR EVEN *ONE MORE DAY??*

YOUR TROUPE IS NOTHING LIKE ME AND MY BUDDY HERE. EVERY-THING *WE* DO IS ONE FOR THE *RECORD BOOK!*

SO COME ON, CUPCAKE-- ASK SOME OF THIS *DRIFT-WOOD* TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE *BONFIRE!*

I GUARANTEE THEIR DEATHS WILL BE *MEMORABLE.*

IT'S THE *ONLY* THING ABOUT THEM THAT *WILL* BE.

ALRIGHT. THAT'S ENOUGH OF YOUR *LIP.*

HEY--*SIDDOWN.* HAVEN'T I PROVEN *TWICE* THAT YOU'RE PAST YOUR EXPIRATION DATE?

YEAH, YOU'VE GOT POWER--

--BUT YOU JUST AIN'T *SCARY.* NOT AFTER *MY* LIFETIME.

I EARNED MY REP RACKING UP KILLS *EVERY DAY* OUT THERE IN THE BURNT SECTORS, NOT BY BEING AN OVERAMPED *PISSPOT* WITH A BAD CASE OF THE PETER PANS.

COME ON. *RETIRE ME.* I KEEP WAITING FOR *SOMEONE* TO.

MM. I'D *LIKE TO* RELATE. IT'S JUST HARD TO FEEL BAD ABOUT BEING *INDESTRUCTIBLE.*

LIE.

BUT... YOU WANT ONE LAST THROWDOWN? TALK TO THE *CLAW.*

AND HEY, IT'S A *FAIR FIGHT.* THE CAT AND ME--?

--SOMETIMES EVEN I CAN'T TELL US APART!

THIS SHOULDN'T QUEER OUR *AGREEMENT,* TOOTS.

WEAPON BROWN IS *SYNDICATE PROPERTY.* ALWAYS WAS.

BON VOYAGE, WEAPON BROWN.

AROOO

NOW WHAT THE *FUCK...*

NYAH!

YAHHHHHH!!!

Happiness--

--is a cold, cold puppy.

HA! THIS JUST GETS FUNNIER AND FUNNIER!

THAT'S MY DOG IN THE SADDLE, PEA BALLS. I'D RUN.

THANKS FOR THE HEADS-UP I WAS WONDERING WHICH MUTT I SHOULD MULCH FIRST.

SAY "GOODBYE" TO YOUR LEETLE FRIEND.

KRASH

MOORE

SEND 'EM TO HELL!!

WHAT?? *BULLETS??*

I'M STARTING TO THINK YOU GUYS DON'T LIKE ME!

OUR BOYS IS KEEPIN' EM' BUSY! IT'S NOWS OR *NEVERS!*

YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO THEN, POPS! GET OUR PEOPLE ONTO THE VEHICLES AND DON'T LOOK BACK!

THEN THAT'S *TWO SECONDS* YOU BETTER MAKE THE MOST OF!

ANNE--I CAN'T LETS YOU *DO* THIS! IT WON'T TAKE THAT SUNUVABITCH TWO SECONDS TO *RIP YOU TO PIECES!*

ANNE!

RUN!!

DO IT, POPS!

ALRIGHT! HAUL ASS YA BILGE RATS! *GETS TO THE RIDES!*

HEY! *FUCKSHOTS!* START PERFORATING THE *YOKELS!*

LEAVE THE *SHARP-SHOOTING* TO *ME!*

MY 'FRO!!

WHITE BOY, YOU WILL NEVER BE *DEAD ENOUGH!!*

KEEPS RUNNING! DON'T STOPS FOR NUTHIN'!!

SHIK

THIS COULDA GONE GOOD FOR YOU PEOPLE! A NICE LITTLE *CULLING* WAS ALL I WAS ASKING FO[illegible]!

YOU THINK I WON'T GET WHAT I CAME FOR??

I'LL SQUEEZE YOUR [illegible]RETS OUT OF [illegible]UR BRAINS [illegible]H MY *BARE* [illegible]HANDS!

SPIFF SPIFF SPIFF

BRAAA

BK-A

LEAVE IT! JUST RUN

AIEEEEE! EEEEEE

ADAM! PLEASE! GET UP!!

FUCK 'E[illegible] UUUUP

RAK

FWIK

AAAAAHH!

HOPE THAT *PAPER CUT* WAS WORTH IT!

SPIFF SPIFF SPIFF SPIFF SPIFF SPIFF

ANNE!

FIRST BLOOD GOES TO THE *BLIND GIRL?* I THINK WE NEED TO RENEGOTIATE YOUR CONTRACT!

WAHHH!!

THINK UP SOME MORE STINGERS WHILE YOU'RE FINDING A PLACE TO HIDE!

ARE YOU STILL TRYING TO *WIN?*

MY GOD...! THE HEROICS! THE *TENACITY!*

THIS COULD BE *IT!* THE DAY THE *PROPHECY FORETOLD!* THE DAY I AM FINALLY FORCED--

TO BREAK A SWEAT!!

hnh. GUESS AH SEEN *EV'RUTHIN'* NAH.

WALKER

FIGGUH ONCE YOU SEEN IT *ALL*, MUSBEE TIME TUH GO.

SO WHYMY WAITIN' HERE FO'?

AH! *THERE* YOU ARE!

HUH?? WHO THERE?!

A FAMILIAR OF *DEATH*, THE SAME AS YOU.

YOU ARE THE ONE WHO BANISHED MY SERVANT! HOW CONVENIENT THAT WE HAVE BOTH BEEN DRAWN TO THIS *LOCUS*.

YOO SEN THA' *SPOOK*! AIN' SCAREDA YOO.

OH, BUT YOU *SHOULD BE*, HAG.

EVEN AT THIS DISTANCE MY *SHADE* IS POTENT ENOUGH--

--TO WIPE YOU FROM THIS WORLD!

FRAMMIN'... AT THE *JIM JAM*...

FRIPPIN IN--

--THE KROTZ!!

POW!

COME ON, SHIT FOR BRAWN!

WALLOP!

GIVE ME A *FIGHT!*

THERE'S *NO WAY* YOU EARNED YOUR REP BY BEING THIS MUCH OF A *PUSS!*

OH LOOK! WE'RE *LEARNING!*

AND THE KID GOES FOR BROKE!

CLOSE BUT NO *BUBBLEGUM,* BAZOOKA JOE!

Y'KNOW-- I THINK THIS *TINKER TOY* IS GIVING YOU *DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR!*

TIME TO *TRADE UP!*

ZZKSSZH!

DON'T WORRY! WE'LL FIND A *NEW ARM* IN YOUR STYLE IF YOU HAVE TO TRY ONE ON FROM EVERY ONE OF THE TOWNS-FOLK!

HMM. THAT *SAILOR MAN* HAD A NICE PAIR OF GUNS. WHERE'D *HE* SCUTTLE OFF TO?

BRAT TAT TAT TAT TAT TAT

ACK!!

GETS A MOVE ON! LOADS UP AND HEADS FOR THE SURFACE! DON'T STOPS FOR *ANYTHINKS!*

KEEP *SLAUGHTERING*, BOYS! THE *PSYCHO* MUST HAVE DEALT WITH THEIR GUNNERS BY NOW!

TAT-TUH TUH TAT TAT TAT TAT

LEO'S SQUID INK

SKRAASSH

YUP-- YOU GOT *THAT* RIGHT!

WE'RE DEAD LIKE PRINT!

POOM POOM POOM

SPAT SPAT SPAT SPAT SPAT SPAT SPAT

RETURN FIRE!

END ALL LIFE!!

MOVE IT YA *SLUG-ASSED FUCKERS!* WE'RE BURNING DAYLIGHT!

I SUCKED LISA'S TITS!

FUCK YOU DINKLE

SKREET

VA-ROOM

LA COMETA HALEY

EXITO

FU!

WAITS! SLOWS DOWN!

WHERES IS SHE?? HAS ANY OF YOUSE SEEN...

POPS! POPS!

THERE YAZ IS! GETS YOUR ASS IN GEAR YA *DITZY BROAD* BEFORES...

BRAKKK

BRAKKK

BRAKK

OH...

pops

NO! OH GODS NO!!

OH GODS-- PLEASE DON'T LEAVES ME!!

UHG UHG UHG UHG UHG!

me goyle...

ME GOYLE!!

I've heard that voice before. Then, it was coming out of **my** throat.

It's the howl of the **Void.** Even the freak knows to be scared by it.

YOU LOOK *NERVOUS,* BOY.

YOU'RE WONDERING WHEN THAT'S GOING TO BE *YOU*, AREN'T YOU?

WHEN YOU'LL HAVE RACKED UP ENOUGH DEMERITS, TIPPED THE SCALES FAR ENOUGH--

--THAT THE *UNIVERSE* WILL HAVE TO PAY ATTENTION?

YOU'RE SHITTING ME, RIGHT?

I *ORGASM* EVERY TIME I KILL!

EACH SNUFF WINS ME A KISS FROM GOD, RIGHT *HERE.*

AND BY THE WAY--

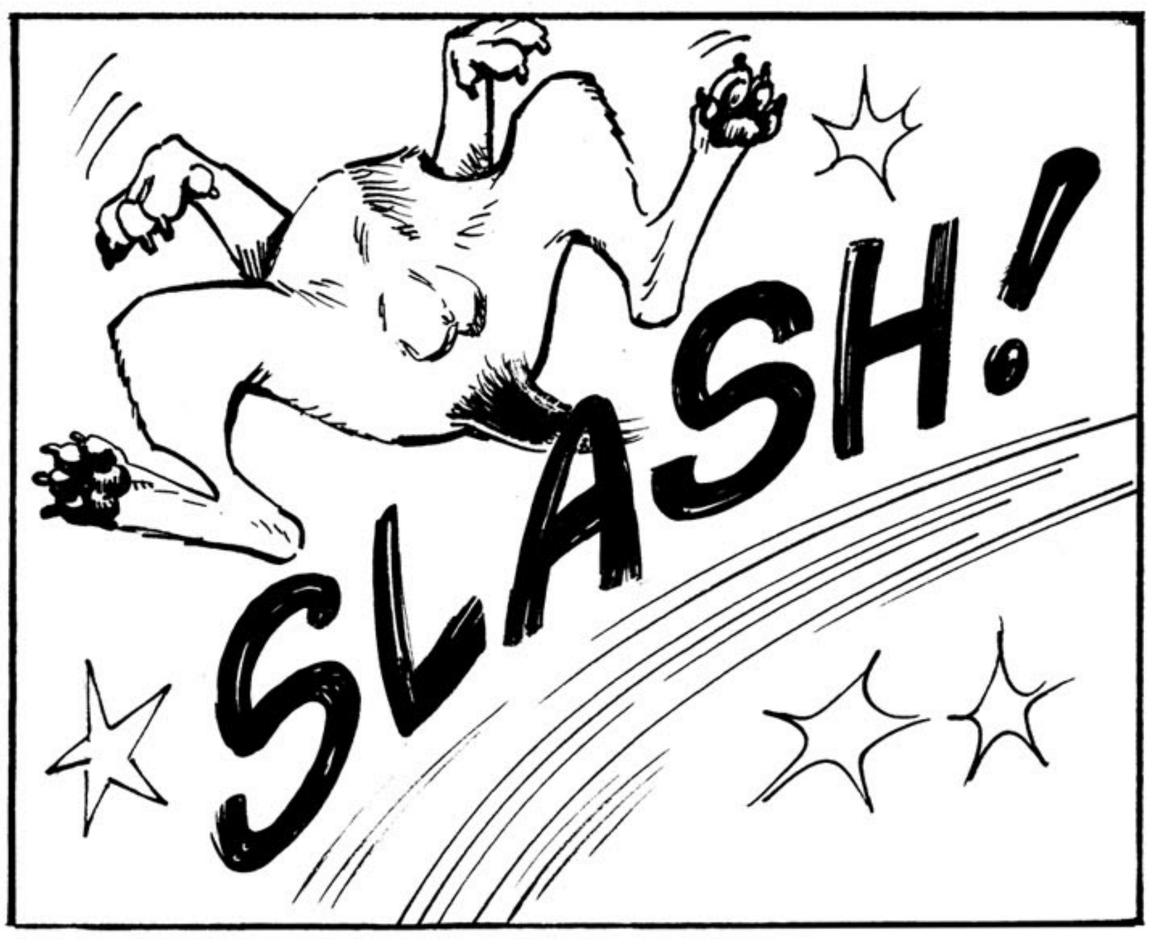
--FOREPLAY'S OVER!

SORRY TO END SO *ABRUPTLY*, BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE MY MEN ARE DYING FASTER THAN I WANT THEM TO.

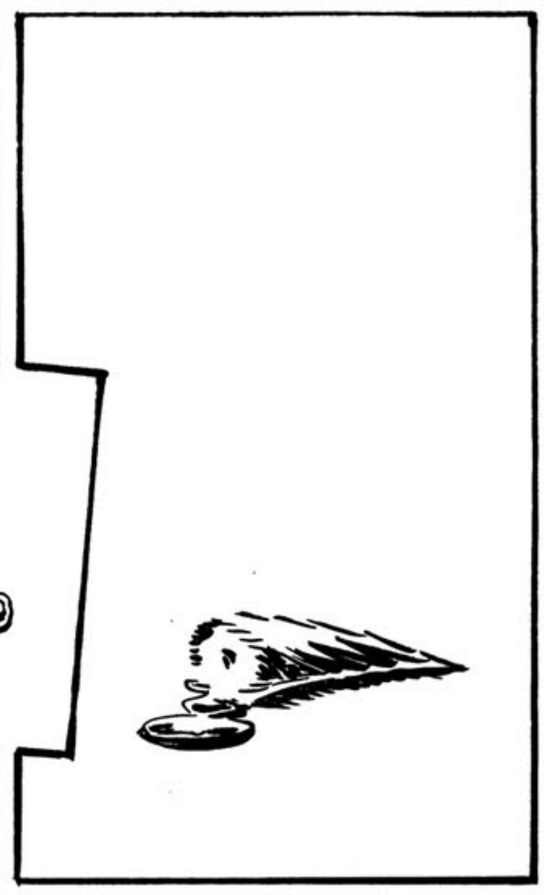
I'LL STILL LET MY CAT CLOSE THE DEAL, IF YOU DON'T MIND. I JUST LOVE THE SOUND A *SKULL* MAKES WHEN HE...

HEY! ARE YOU *STILL* FUCKIN' AROUND WITH THAT MUTT?! *FINISH THE GODDAMN JOB ALREADY!*




SLASH!



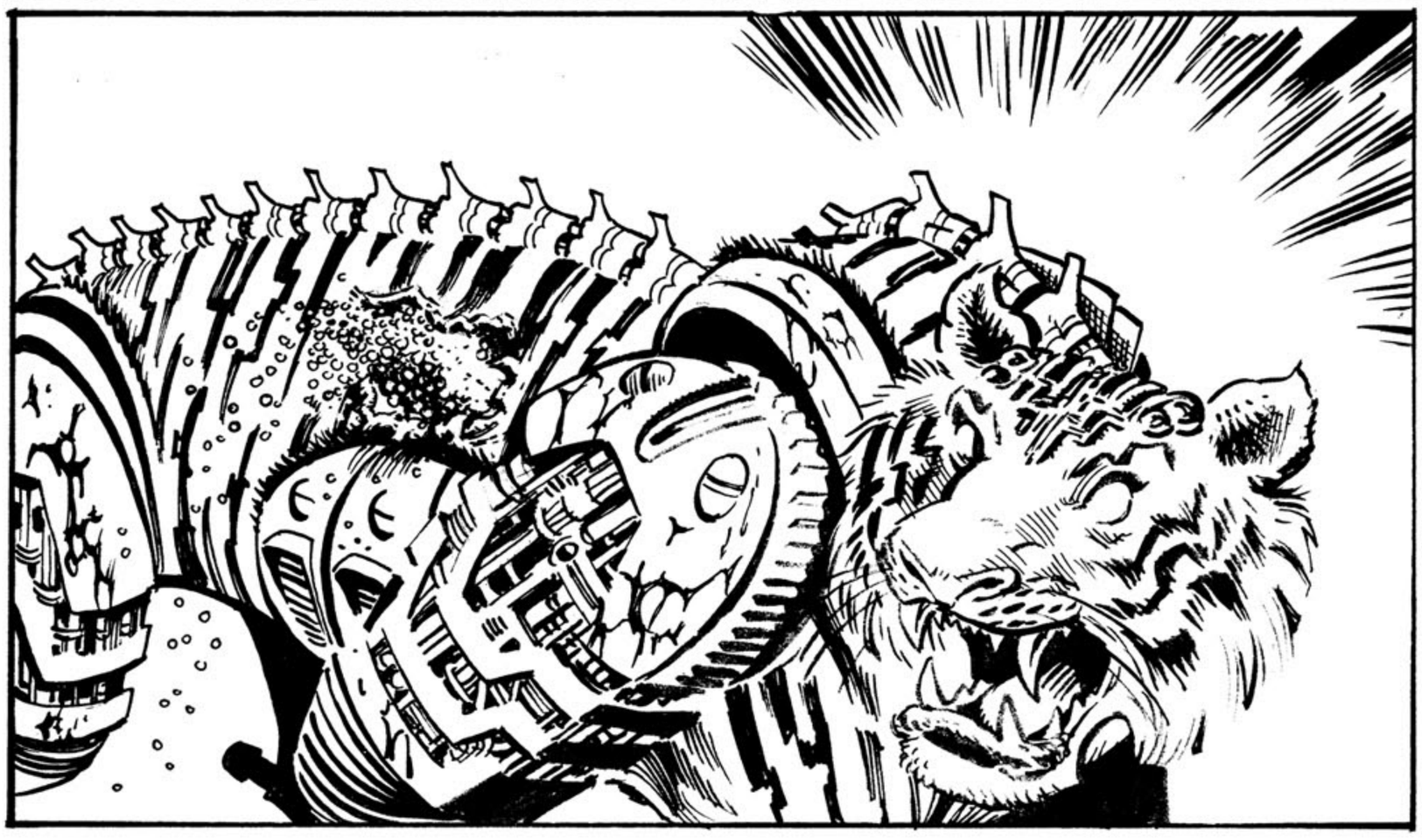







KAFF







ROOOAR

HEY! WHERE ARE YOU GOING, YOU OVERGROWN SOCK PUPPET?!

I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO DO THIS THE OLD FASHIONED WAY!

SEE YOU IN HELL, DICK DOME. THANKS FOR THE BACK SCRATCHER!

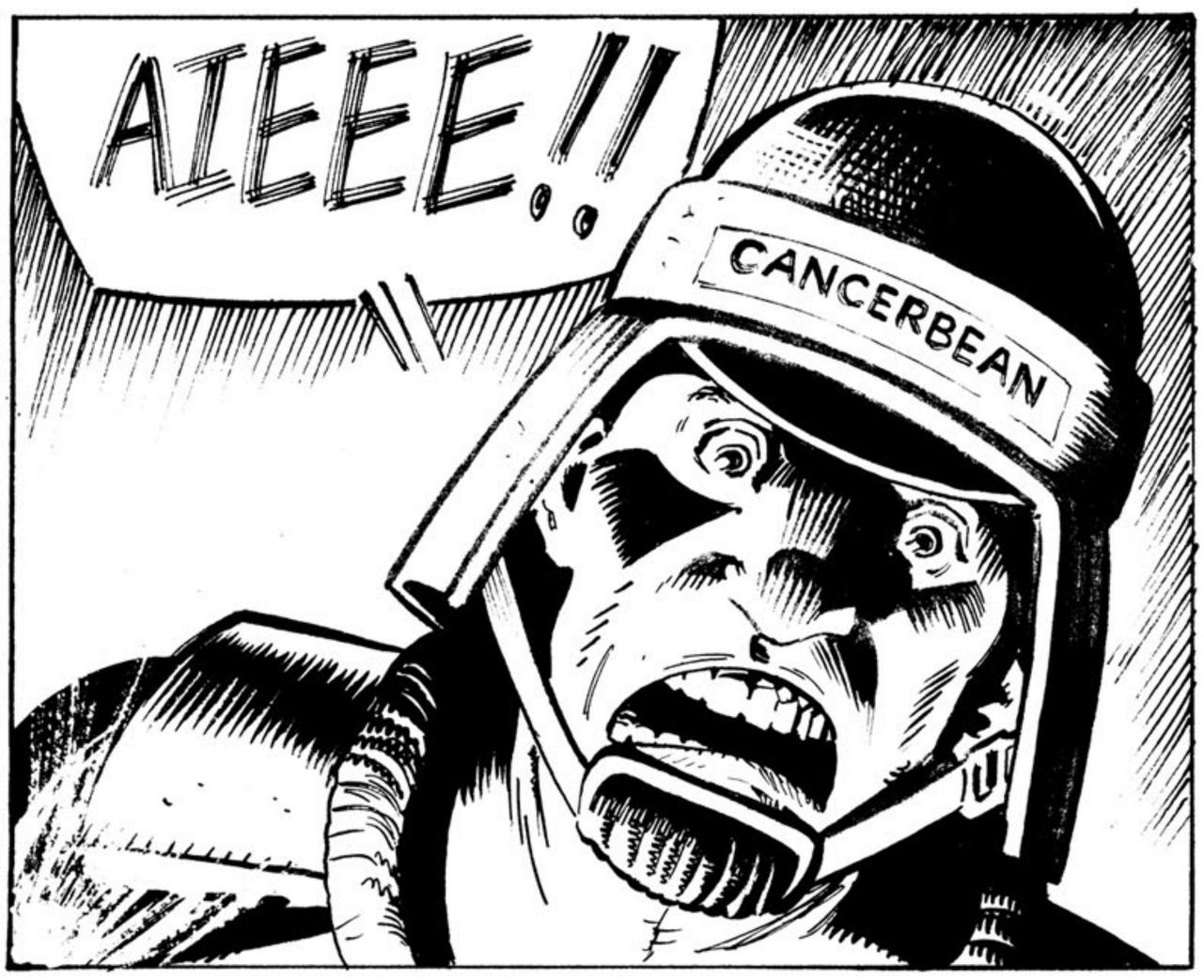
HEY ASSHOLE--

LOOK PRICELESS FOR ME.

POOM T


WHACK!


NO
NO NO


AIEEE!!
CANCERBEAN


KRI-BLAAAAM!


WHOO-WHEE! I REALLY GOT ME SOME DISTANCE ON THAT TORSO!

I THINK I JUST INVENTED "TORSO BALL"!

WHAT DO YOU THINK? CATCHY?

HEY! WHERE YA GOIN'??

SPIFF SPIFF SPIFF SPIFF SPIFF SPIFF SPIFF SPIFF

OH *COME ON!* YOU REALLY EXPECT ME TO GO CHASING YOU THROUGH THE DUCTWORK?

I'M NOT *FALLING* FOR IT, HAS-BEEN! JUST *GIVE UP* AND LET ME PUT A COUPLE DOZEN BEHIND YOUR EAR!

WEAPON ♪ BROOOOWN! ♪ COME OUT COME OUT *WHEREVER YOU ARE!*

I'LL *GET YOU,* MY PRETTY! AND YOUR LITTLE *DOG,* TOO!

BUT FIRST--

--LET'S JUST SEE WHERE THAT *COOZE* WENT.

The BULLETIN

The Official News Organ for SecLev-2 Citizens

"All the news we're allowed to print"

15 Fed Creds

"Nutritional Austerity" Highlights President's 4th Term Agenda

WILL YOUR SECTOR STARVE? CONSULT OUR HANDY GUIDE! C2

APPROVED FOR YOU:

Liberty Meadows to host new concentration camp A2

Ex-champ Palooka dies in cyber-soldier experiment A12

"Rarebit Fiends" immune to nerve agents B8

Genocide Flyspec[illegible]



Patriotic citizens in Revitlization Zone 15 queue-up for a hearty helping of famine relief!

ADMINISTRATION BULLISH ON TURNING TIDE OF WAR

by Jane Arden
Reporters License
621-88-J7

Having correctly read the public's mood in these challenging times, the President of Our Homeland wisely appointed himself to a fourth term of office on Tuesday, sidestepping what would have been a pointless and time-wasting election.

"Our nation has one direction: forward!" the President said in a rousing speech delivered last night before the Diet of Sector Administrators. "We can only so move in said direction when there is a firm hand on the compass!"

The president then laid out the broad strokes of his agenda for the coming year, which includes selling war bonds by a further [illegible] cent, as well as additional "heroism" on the part of [illegible]

"The citizens of Our H[illegible] will have to tighten their b[illegible] other notch... two notches at [illegible] But in doing so, they will ensure our fighting groundboots put on additional muscle that will reverse our war's fortunes!"

continues on A2

GOOPS... AND HOW TO FLEE THEM!

Courtesy of the Department of Mutant Countermeasures

"First, their hair fell out."

Darryl MacPherson rubs the nubs on his left hand where his fingers used to be. "I thought it was from fallout. A lot of people in our neighborhood were losing their hair. But then their heads started swelling. Overnight they grew to the size of beachballs!"

MacPherson is describing the transformation of his small children, Zoe and Hamish, into "goops", the slang for the latest variety of mutation to arise from our enemies' use of genetic weapons.

Goopism appears to only affect children, causing them to grow monstrously large and develop an insatiable craving for human flesh soon follows. And if that weren't bad enough...

"Their manners became positively atrocious," says MacPherson. "When they ate my wife, they were much, much sloppier than they had to be."

Apart from their voracious cannibalism, goops [illegible] not ma[illegible] when [illegible] (altho[illegible] leave [illegible]

In addition, there is one thing you can be sure goops will not eat: their vegetables.

PART 5



CHAPTER 8:

MAN OF LEAD

BRO! SHIT'S GETTIN' REAL 3-D UP HERE!

THE *SYNDIES* HAVE DROPPED *TWO OF US!* WE LOSE ANYONE ELSE AND WE WON'T BE ABLE TO KEEP THE EXITS COVERED--THEY'LL BRING DOWN THE *GARAGE* BEFORE WE'VE GOTTEN HALF OUR PEOPLE OUT! YOU HAVE *GOT* TO SEND UP MORE BOYS!

BELIEVE

RED EYE IZ WATCHING YOU

THEN WE GOT A *PROBLEM*, B'. THE SYNDIES DOWN HERE AIN'T ROLLIN' OVER! THEY GOT US PINNED ON THE STRIP AND WE CAN'T BREAK COVER!

KEEP THE PRESSURE ON, MEN! OUR SPECIALIST WILL BE HERE ANY MINUTE TO TURN THESE MOOKS INTO *DOG FOOD!*

TAT TAT TAT TAT

BRAT TUT TUT TAT TUT

UH... SMEGMAN? HELP ME PUT THIS GUY DOWN.

WHAT?

TAT TUHTUH TUHTUH TUHTUH TUHTUH TUH

HELP...

H-HELP ME PUT THIS GUY *DOWN.*

JESUS CHRIST!!

TAT TIH TIH TIH TIH TAT TIH!

TAT TIH TIH TIH TIH TAT TIH!

TAT TIH TIH TAT TIH TIH——

TAT TIH TIH TAT TIH TIH!

TAT TIH TIH TIH TIH TAT TIH!

TOOT!

TOOT!

SQUILSH

SPLUTCH

EASE DOWN, BIG GUY! YOU'VE *TOTALED* THEM!

I AIN'T FINICHED! I NEEDS MORE!!

THEY KILLT HER! I AIN'T FINICHED! I AIN'T...

AY HUH

ain't

MOVE. CLEAN OUT THE GARAGE. AND IF YOU HAVE TO SQUEEZE YOURSELVES DRY THERE HAD BETTER BE ***BLOOD*** IN THAT MAN WHEN I CATCH UP!

WHERE YOU GOIN', BOSS?

ANNE'S THE BOSS, AND SHE'S COMMIN' WITH.

WATCH OUT FOR THAT *CAT.* AND IF YOU SEE WEAPON BROWN--

"--TELL HIM THANKS FOR FUCK ALL."

BAM BAM

BAM!

My nav gear has been **fluttering** since CAL cracked my head against the wall, but my **nose** still works.

Acetylene, aerosol, notes of grease cutter--I know I'm in the right place.

I **better** be in the right place.

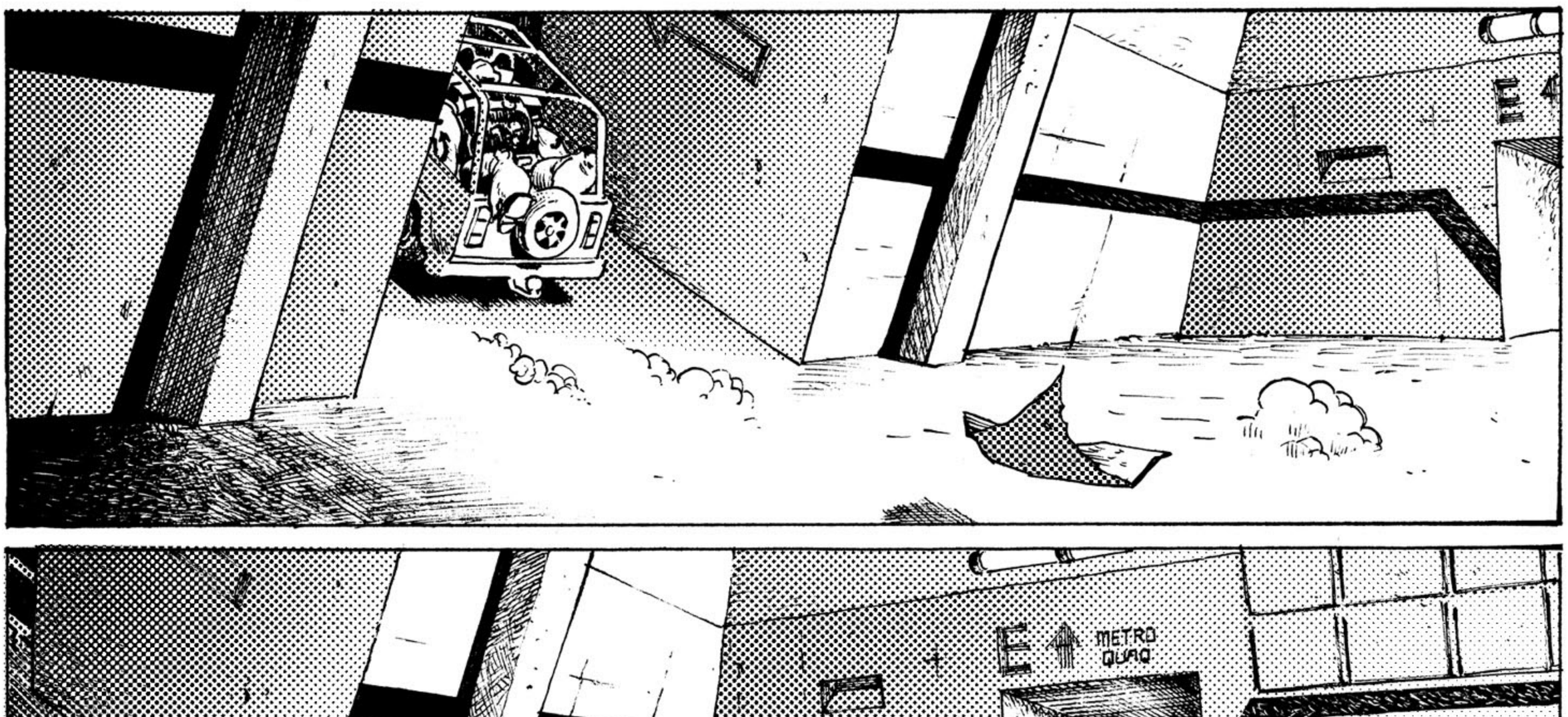
GRAMPS! YOU IN HERE?

RATS.

I hope he got off a shot, but I don't have time for eulogies. If Ol' Sparky is sitting in pieces next to a half-eaten hoagie...

flick

I nearly smile.

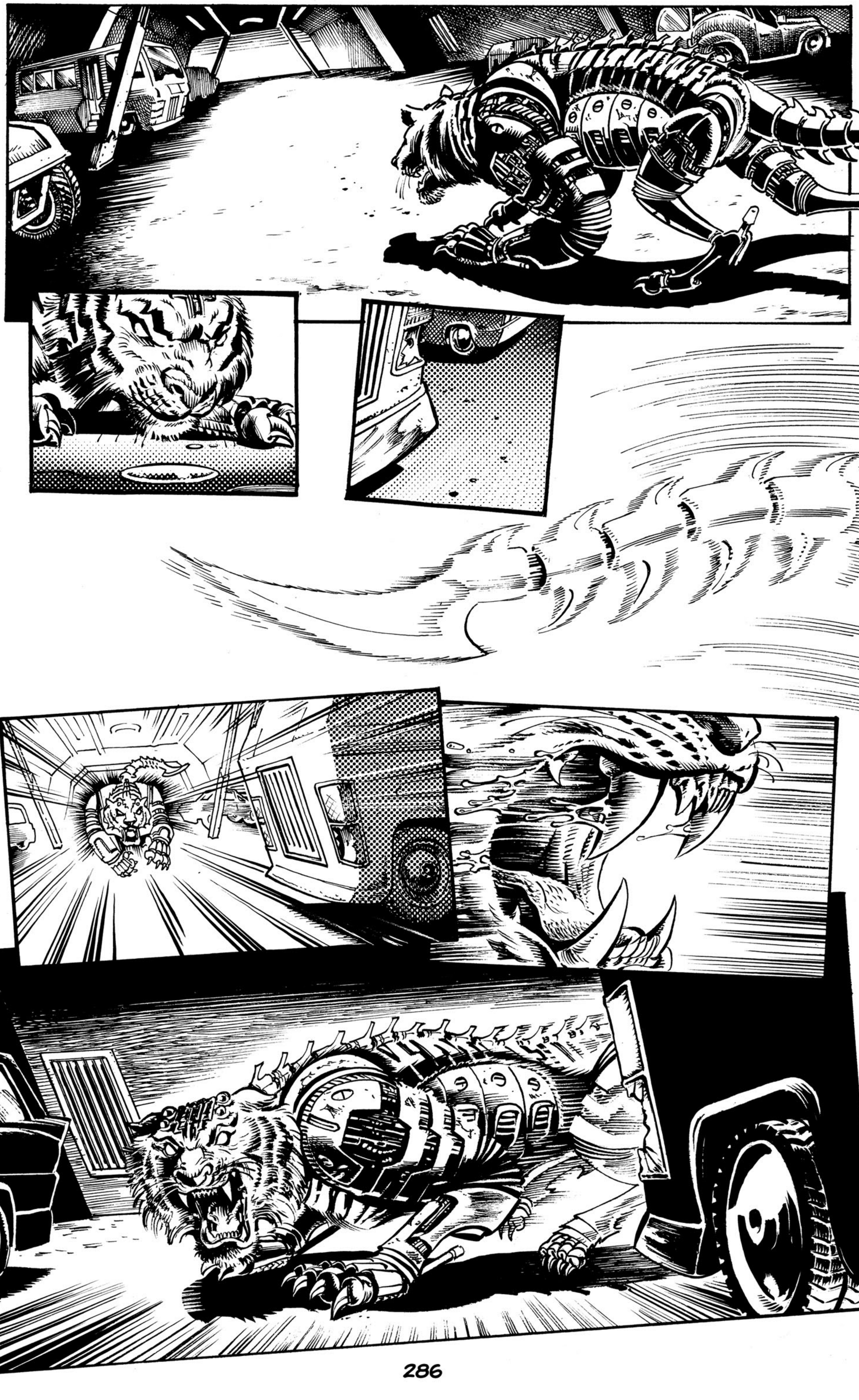



pat
pat
pat
pat
METRO
QUAD


pat
pat
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pat
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pat
pat
pat
pat
pat
METRO
QUAD


KA-SQUEENK
KA-SQUEENK
KA-SQUEENK
KA-SQUEENK
METRO
QUAD

ROAR




YOU'RE
DEAD!





CLICK

NNH!

WHAT...? WHAT JUST...

FUKKIT. JUST MY IMAGINATION.

I KNOW YOU'RE *DOWN HERE,* SPARKLES. COME ON OUT AND QUIT HOGGING MY TIME!

I'VE GOT A LOT OF PEOPLE LEFT TO KILL, BUT I'LL MAKE YOU A DEAL--

--I PROMISE NOT TO SHOOT UNTIL I SEE THE *WHITES OF YOUR EYES!*

X... HUGHIE...

IS ANYONE THERE? IS ANYONE LEFT ON THE STRIP??

ANNE! WHERE ARE YOU, GIRL??

SUB-LEVEL EAST... I THINK... NEAR THE *BLUE* LIFTS. DID WE GET THEM OUT?

THEY'RE AS SAFE AS WE COULD GET THEM. NOW ***STAY PUT.*** I HAVEN'T SEEN THAT KILLER...

HE'S RIGHT ***BEHIND ME.*** YOU HAVE TO GET OUT. I'LL TRY TO...

YOU KNOW I'M NOT TAKING THAT ADVICE.

GET TO THE LIFTS AND TAKE THEM TO THE ***MENAGERIE.*** YOU CAN MAKE IT TO THE SURFACE LIFT FROM THERE.

HUGHIE...!

JUST *DO IT* GIRL! HE'S GONNA HAVE OTHER THINGS ON HIS MIND IN A MOMENT.

CHIRK

DON'T BE A SAP.

WEAPON USELESS. YOU GOT YOUR *ARM* BACK. YOU REMEMBER TO THANK MY *GRAMPS?*

HE DID A GOOD JOB, AND I PLAN ON PUTTING IT TO ***GOOD USE.*** BUT I CAN'T BE TRIPPING OVER ***YOU*** WHILE I'M DOING IT.

NOW AIN'T THE TIME TO TRY STEPPIN' ON MY *PLAY!*

YOU HAVEN'T **GOT** A PLAY. CAL IS ***BULLETPROOF.*** HIS SENSES AND REFLEXES ARE ALL PRIMED FOR IT. THAT REPEATER WON'T EVEN PISS HIM OFF!

BUT HE'S NOT ***UNTOUCHABLE.*** NOT IF I CAN GET IN CLOSE.

HERE.

HE'S FASTER THAN A TRIGGER SQUEEZE, BUT ***NO ONE*** CAN DODGE PLASMA.

THIS GUN COME WITH A ***PLAN?***

THE ***PLAN*** IS I TAKE ONE MORE TURN AT BAT. I FUCK THAT UP, START POPPING HOLES.

WATCH OUT FOR THAT ***KICK--***

--AND TRY AND KEEP UP!

TIK TIK TIKTIK TIK

15

14

14

13

WHOA! *EVERYBODY LIMBO!*

THUD!

NICE EARS, WABBIT! EVEN *I* COULDN'T HAVE HEARD ME SNEAKING UP ON MYSELF.

I HOPE YOU WON'T MIND IF I MAKE THIS QUICK. THERE'S A LOT OF HOPE I NEED TO START ***CRUSHING.***

pat

ALTHOUGH-- IS THERE ANY CHANCE YOU WOULD BEG ME TO ***SPARE THEM?*** PLEADING JUST GETS ME HARD AS A ***DIAMOND.***

YOU'RE GOING TO *KILL ME?*

THEN DO IT, FUCKER!

CHIING!!!

CLANG

CHING

KIINGG

YOU *BASTARD!* WHERE ARE YOU?! I'LL SLICE YOUR COCK OFF!

OH CUPCAKE-- YOU ARE MAKING THIS SO EXTRA WORTH IT.

IT'S TOO BAD YOUR *BOYFRIEND* CAN'T BE HERE FOR THIS, BUT I GUESS HE WAS MORE INTERESTED IN PLAYING *HIDE-AND-SEEK.*

HA HA, HERMAN!

WHUMP!

All that power, but you were too cool for **school**, weren't you?

You went from zero to lightspeed without paying your dues.

Time to teach you what only a **failure face** learns!

THWAM!

SPARE ARM, HUH?

SPARES ARE GOOD.

NITE NITE!

SPIFF SPIFF SPIFF

SPIFF SPIFF SPI

TAK TAK

TIK CHING

TIKKA TIKKA

TAK TIK

TIK CHING

SWAK!

TAK

TAK

SWIFFF

CRATCH

NNAH!!

MOVE IT, SLAG!

YOU'RE NOT POOPIN' *THIS* PARTY!

NOW THEN...!

POM

FWASH

bumpitta bumpitta bumpitta bumpitta bumpitta bumpitta

CALL THAT A KICK??

GET BEHIND ME.

WHEN THAT DOOR OPENS, DON'T STOP TO THROW A *KISS.*

HA HA. ALL RIGHT. FEELIN' GOOD?

REALITY CHECK: YOU'RE A ***WIND-UP TOY*** COMPARED TO ME! THIS HAND WILL BE MINT-IN-THE-BOX IN LESS THAN A MINUTE!

YOU THINK I'M GIVING ***BRILLO PAD*** DOWN THERE ANOTHER ***SHOT??*** AND I'VE STILL GOT A HOMICIDAL PSYCHO ***JUNGLE CAT*** JUST WAITING TO...

RRRRRR

THE FUCK TOOK YA'?

M-MUH...

MY... MY...

...MY TIGER.

GUESS HE GOT *DECLAWED.*

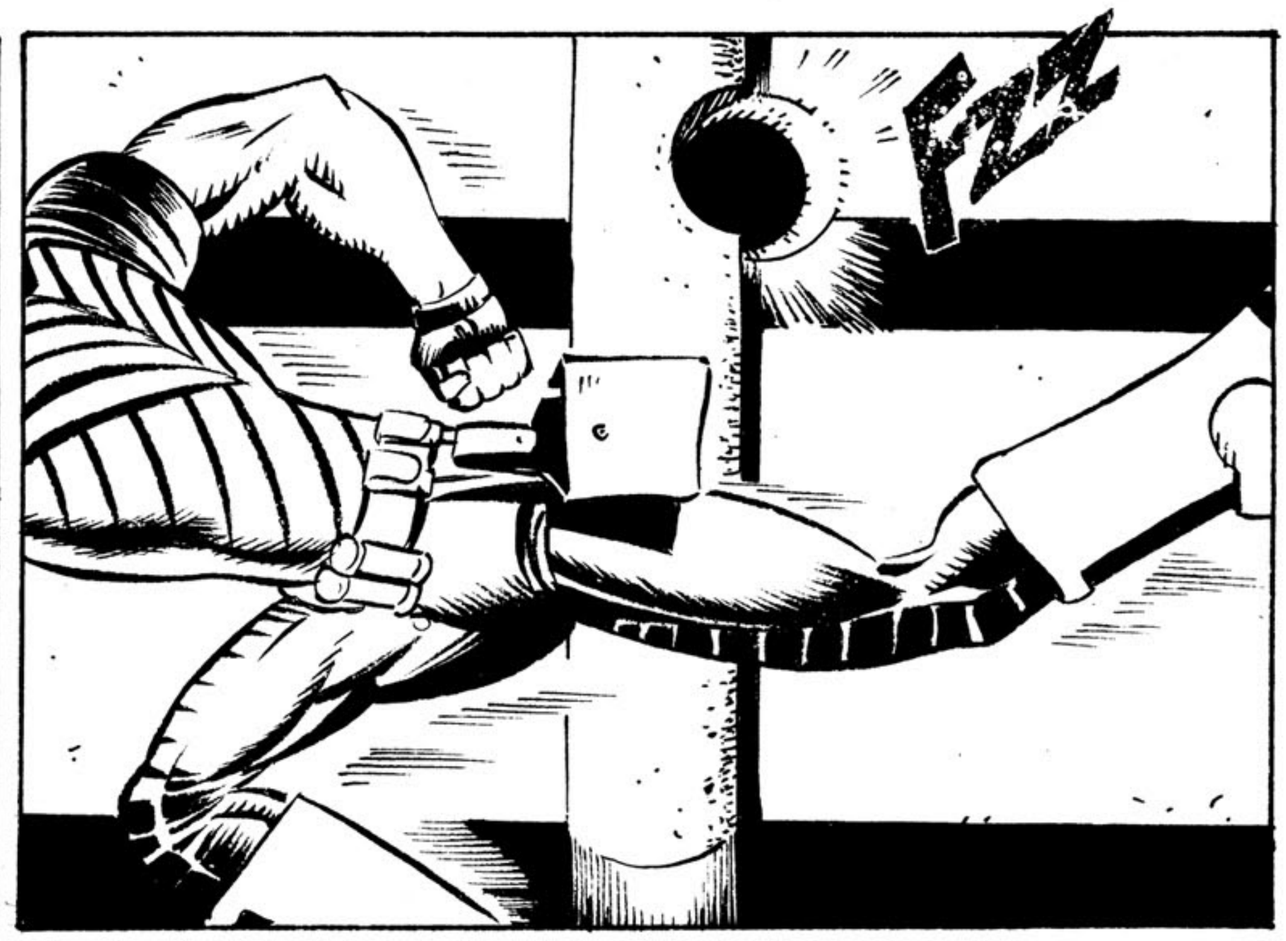
SO BOY... ARE YOU READY TO PLAY FOR KEEPS--

--OR DID YOU FORGET TO BRING YOUR *MARBLES?*

BOONG

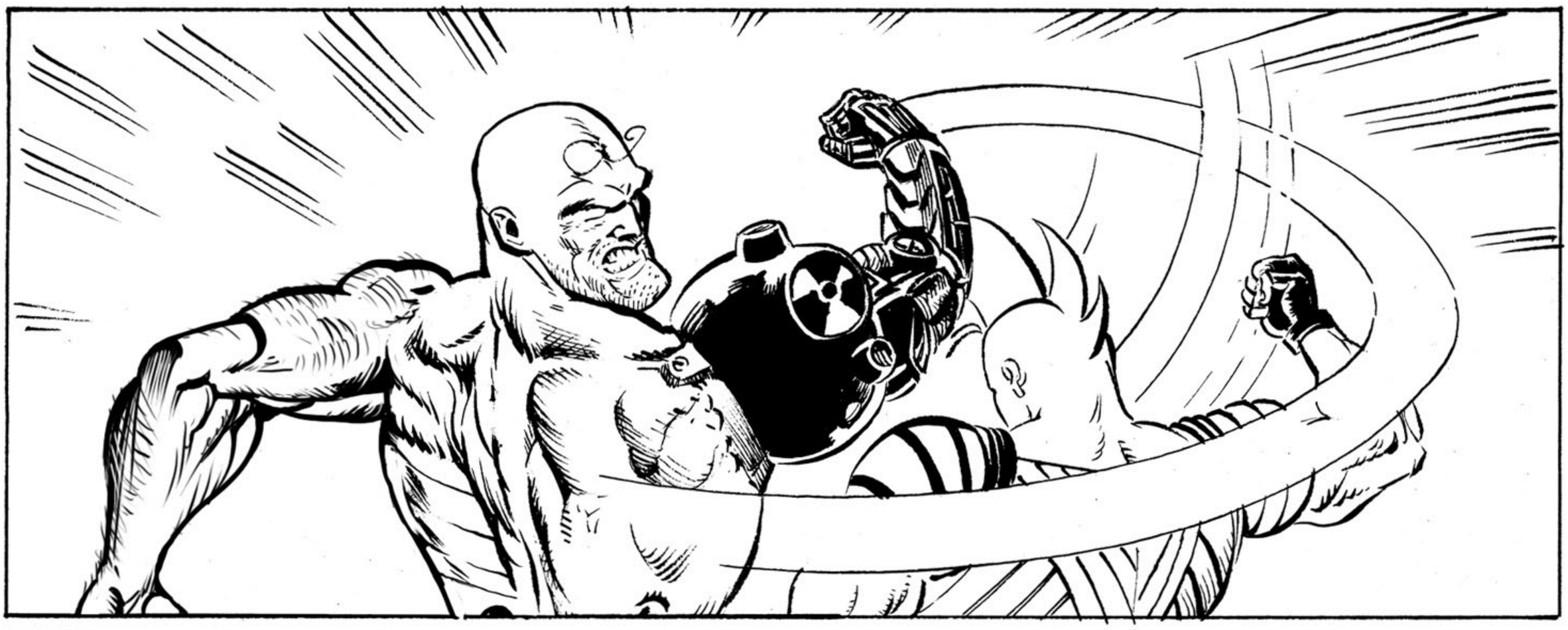
RRRR


POW
AA


FZZ








STRIKE THREE!

GUESS WHO'S *OUT?*

SEEING *RED?*

WHEN THIS CAR COMES BACK DOWN YOU'LL SEE A *LOT MORE.*

CHUCK...

TUM

READY FOR YOUR SEVEN MINUTES IN HEAVEN?

SWAK

SEE, COOKIE? THE OL' *SLAPPER* IS BACK IN FIGHTING TRIM.

YOU DIDN'T THINK YOU'D *WIN*, DID YOU?

DID *YOU* THINK THAT AFTER THREE ROUNDS WITH WEAPON BROWN HE'D STILL BE *TICKING*?

KRUNK

SIGH. I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT GUYS *SEE* IN YOU SLITS.

GUESS I'LL HAVE A *PEEK*.

A MOMENT EARLIER...

TUM

SHRIEK!

BROWN!

NO!!

KAK

No...

Gramps--

--I'm crushing this guy's nuts just for **you.**

CAN'T YOU AT LEAST WAIT FOR THE FUNERAL??

HEY-- WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!

YOU MOTHER FUCKER...!

KANG!

YAHHH!

BOONG

SWOOF

FUKKIN'... THIS IS ONLY MAKIN' ME HARDER...!

SLITCH!

AAARGH!

NNYAAAGHHH!!

SKREEK SKREEK

WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?! YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO *DRAG ME TO HELL??*

SKRUUNK

HELL IS UP HERE!

SLAM!

KRAK

NOT MAKING WITH THE *MOUTH* ANYMORE? CAT GOT YOUR TONGUE, "CHUCK"?

I'LL FEED YOU YOUR *DOG'S TONGUE* FOR WHAT *HE* DID!

KRISSH

OVUM VULGARIS

KAFF KAFF KAFF!! YOOFLIGGIN HURRRLGGGH!!

HWOOK!

WOK!

CRASH!!

MOOMINTHROPE

CHUCK...!

GET MISSING!

GRAGGH!!

FWIP!

AHH--

ARE YOU--

--HOLDING BACK OR SOME-THING??

BECAUSE YOU ARE **NOT** TRYING TO SAVE THAT SKIRT!

WELL, GO ON THEN--

--START SAVING HER!

CRASSSH!

nnhg

CHUCK

RED... HE WON'T... 'R YOU...

CHUCK!

MOVE FAST!!

NNGHHH!!

YOU JUST KEEP GOING, DON'CHA?

GET AWAY FROM HER!!

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO HURT HER!

YEAH. YEAH I AM.

RRRUHH!!

THAT WAS YOUR LAST SHOT. HOPE IT WAS WORTH IT!

KUNZ!

FFFSHHHHHH

SMASH!

KRUSH!

C'MERE BITCH!

NNUHH! NOOOO!!

just need

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

kick the football

SAY IT

do it this time

SAY GOODBYE TO YOUR HERO

BLOCKHEAD

no more

BASTARD I'LL KILL

WHACK!

BLOCKHEAD!

DON'T BE BASHFUL. COME AND GET HER--

--"BLOCKHEAD."

THAAAT'S IT. CHARGE TO THE RESCUE.

FLORA HOSTILICUS

WHAT'S THE MATTER? DON'T STOP NOW! JUST ***ONE MORE INCH.***

GO ON. PICK THE MOMENT I KILL HER.

OH? YOU WANT ***ME*** TO CHOOSE? I UNDERSTAND. I ***REALLY*** DO.

*I'm **broken.** Bio-alarms in my head... I can barely hear what he's saying.*

*Neuro stims are down to fumes... no syndorphin to mask the pain... All I've got left is **rage** that could melt lead.*

She's going to die.

*He's cocky, but not **stupid.** He knows my **range.** Anyone else in the world and I could still put myself between her and the blow. But him...*

Two feet.

I NEED TWO GODDAMN FEET!!

IS THE SUSPENSE ***KILLING YOU*** YET? WHEN DO YOU THINK THE ***AXE WILL FALL??***

WILL IT BE... ***NOW??***

heh heh HOW ABOUT ***NOW??***

NOPE. IT'S N

SCUFF SCUFF

SCUFF

SCUFF

SCUFF

YOU'RE JUST *FUCKING* WITH ME NOW, RIGHT?

BACK IN A JIFF.

SWISH

WHAT THE BUTTERED F*


TRRRR
TRRRR
TRRRR


BOOM!!

KRAK

SQUEEEK

PLOOP

SHOULDA DONE A TOUR IN THE *WASTES*, PUNK.

AFTER YOU'VE WATCHED A MAN AND WOMAN COME TO BLOWS OVER WHICH OF THEM WILL GET TO *EAT THEIR BABY*--

--NOTHING MUCH *SURPRISES* YOU.

SLUMP

BLOP

ROOF ROOF ROOF ROOF!

WHY DIDN'T WE FIX THOSE OTHER LIFTS??

RUFF RUFF RUFF!

ATTABOY. I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T FORGET ME.

YOU'RE WAGGING LESS *TAIL* THAN BEFORE! DID YOU LET THAT *CAT* DO THAT TO YOU?

BOVO SAPIEN

PUSSY.

BROWN! WHAT HAPPENED TO ANNE?? IS SHE...

TOOK A KNOCK TO THE HEAD. I THINK SHE'LL BE ALL RIGHT.

YOU WANNA TAKE HER? I FEEL LIKE I... MIGHT NEED TO SIT DOWN.

WHAT ABOUT THAT ASSHOLE? WHERE'S *HE?*

IN *DEEP SHIT.*

THAT A HEADLESS DUDE??

'THE HELL KINDA PARTY DID YOU *HAVE* UP HERE?

...AND OUR TRANSPORTS? WE LOSE ANY?

NOT A ONE. ONCE YOUR CREW ARRIVED THE SYNDIES BIT IT QUICK.

WHAT ABOUT *POPS?*

DON'T KNOW. THOSE BOYS ZIPPED OUT OF HERE FAST TO CATCH UP WITH THE CONVOY.

THEN LET'S NOT KEEP THEM WAITING. WE HAVE TO REACH ***SAFE HAVEN*** BY SUNDOWN.

chuck... no...

HEY... JUST RELAX. WE'RE OK. WE ***WON,*** ANNE.

nno... GARF.

have to ...kill...

ss... syndicate

THAT WAS THE ***PLAN.*** IF THE SYNDICATE GETS HOLD OF THAT ***WORM***--

--THEN ALL OF THIS WAS FOR ***NOTHING.***

ALRIGHT-- TAKE ANNE AND GET ON THE ROAD. AND BRING ME ONE OF THOSE ***DEMOLITION CHARGES*** FROM THE GARAGE--

"--WE'LL ***MINUS*** THE GARF."

YOU SURE ABOUT THIS, X? ANNE SAID IT: ONCE THIS THING IS DEAD, THERE'S NO ***REPLACING IT.***

YOU KNOW... MY FRIENDS CALL ME "HUGHIE".

NOTED.

WE'D CONSIDERED JUST *RELEAS-ING* THE GARF, IN CASE WE EVER NEEDED IT AGAIN--

--BUT AFTER WHAT WE JUST SAW, WITH THE SYNDICATE LETTING THINGS LIKE *CAL* RUN LOOSE IN THE WORLD--

--THERE'S NO WAY WE COULD RISK THEM GETTING THE SECRET AFTER *THAT.*

WE'VE *CACHED* THOUSANDS OF GALLONS OF SHMOO, AND UNSPOILED, IT WILL REPLACE ITSELF INDEFINITELY. IF WE CAN STAY ALIVE, *TIME* WILL TAKE CARE OF THE SYNDICATE.

I HOPE YOU REMEMBERED TO BURP YOUR *TUPPERWARE,* THEN.

YOU SURE THAT BUG IS HOME?

THE GARF HAS HALF A DOZEN OF THESE PITS AROUND THE CITY. WE'LL NEED SOME *BAIT.*

OR MAYBE NOT...

RUUUMBLE

SCREEE

WELL... *THAT'S* CONVENIENT.

SOMETHING'S ***WRONG.*** THAT THING DOESN'T POKE ITS HEAD OUT FOR NO REASON!

GROOOAN

GAR GAR GARG GARG

COCK-A-DOODLE DOO!!

SCREECH!

THANKS FOR SHOWING ME THE *EXIT,* CRITTER! THE *COLONIC* IS ON THE HOUSE!

WHA...?! WELL LOOK WHO IT IS! MY *BUDLIEST BUDS!*

GUYS, LET ME TELL YOU--

--I CANNOT BELIEVE THE DAY I'M HAVING!!

RINGSIDE FOR RAGNAROK! CAN YOU BELIEVE YOUR LUCK??

I'm getting used to it.

CHAPTER 9:

WHO'S YOUR DADDY?

NO MAN... THIS AIN'T FUKKIN' HAPPENING!

IT'S HAPPENING! KILL HIM!!

WHIPP KK KK

FZZT

CRAPDAMMIT!

BAP BAP BAP BAP BAP

HOCUS POCUS!

PUP PUP PUP PUP

LAWDY, THIS SHIT HAS A *MILLION* TRICKS! PULL IT, STRETCH IT--

--EVEN LIFT UP YOUR FAVORITE COMIC STRIP CHARACTERS!

CHOOM!

YELP!

SNOOP!!

ANY FOOD I WANT?

SPAGHETTI AND CHUNKY PEANUT BUTTER!

I HOPE THEY'RE *HUNGRY.* BUT YOU KNOW, YOU SHOULDN'T GET TOO ATTACHED TO *PETS.*

I WOULDN'T HAVE GIVEN A RAT'S PUCKER FOR THAT WALKING *JIZZ RAG* OF MINE IF I'D KNOWN *ALL THIS* WAS IN MY FUTURE!

SPOOKY, HUH? THE DOODADS IN MY BLOOD? THEY *LOVE* THIS GOOEY SHIT! IT LET THEM HEAL ME FASTER THAN *EVER*--

--AND NOW *I'M* TEACHING IT ALL *SORTS* OF NEW TRICKS!

SPLOOK!

SNOOP-- RUN!!

"RUN"? WHERE DO YOU THINK THERE IS TO RUN TO *NOW*??

THIS IS MY WORLD--

--YOU'RE JUST DYING IN IT!

DO YOU SEE WHAT YOU'VE DONE, ASSHOLE? WHAT *YOU'VE* MADE POSSIBLE?!

MY MIND HAS BEEN TURNED INSIDE OUT!

YOU THINK PEOPLE KNOW WHAT NIGHTMARES *ARE??*

I'M GONNA TAKE WHAT'S LEFT OF HUMANITY AND *NUT IN ITS EYE!*

Van Pelt!

CAL's nightmares are leaking out, all right! Van Pelt! ***Of course!*** *Who* ***else*** *could have controlled this lunatic?*

He has to have a ***whip word!*** *But what??*

YOU'RE... TALKIN' SOME CRAP *NOW--*

--BUT I WONDER WHAT *DOCTOR VAN PELT* WOULD HAVE TO SAY ABOUT IT??

VAN... *PELT??*

WHAT THE FUCK DO *YOU* KNOW ABOUT *HER?*

I KNOW SHE BROKE YOU INTO LITTLE *PIECES* THEN GLUED YOU BACK TOGETHER-- BUT SHE ALWAYS KNEW HOW TO BREAK YOU *AGAIN,* DIDN'T SHE??

HOW DID SHE DO IT? *SAY IT!!* *WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF??*

GIRLS.

*

AH!!

AHHHH!!!

CAL...

CAL...

KISS KISS

HYUUARRGH!

GET AWAY!! DON'T TOUCH ME!!

HAVE TO... GET RID OF--

--SLIMY--

GLHROOOLGGG

GGUHGGGGG!!

ROWF ROWF ROWF!

SNOOP...

LIK LIK LIK LIK LIK LIK

ALRIGHT BOY. I'M OKAY.

WE'RE BOTH GONNA BE OK NOW.

GUESS THAT SQUARES US.

GLIB

THIS...

RRCH

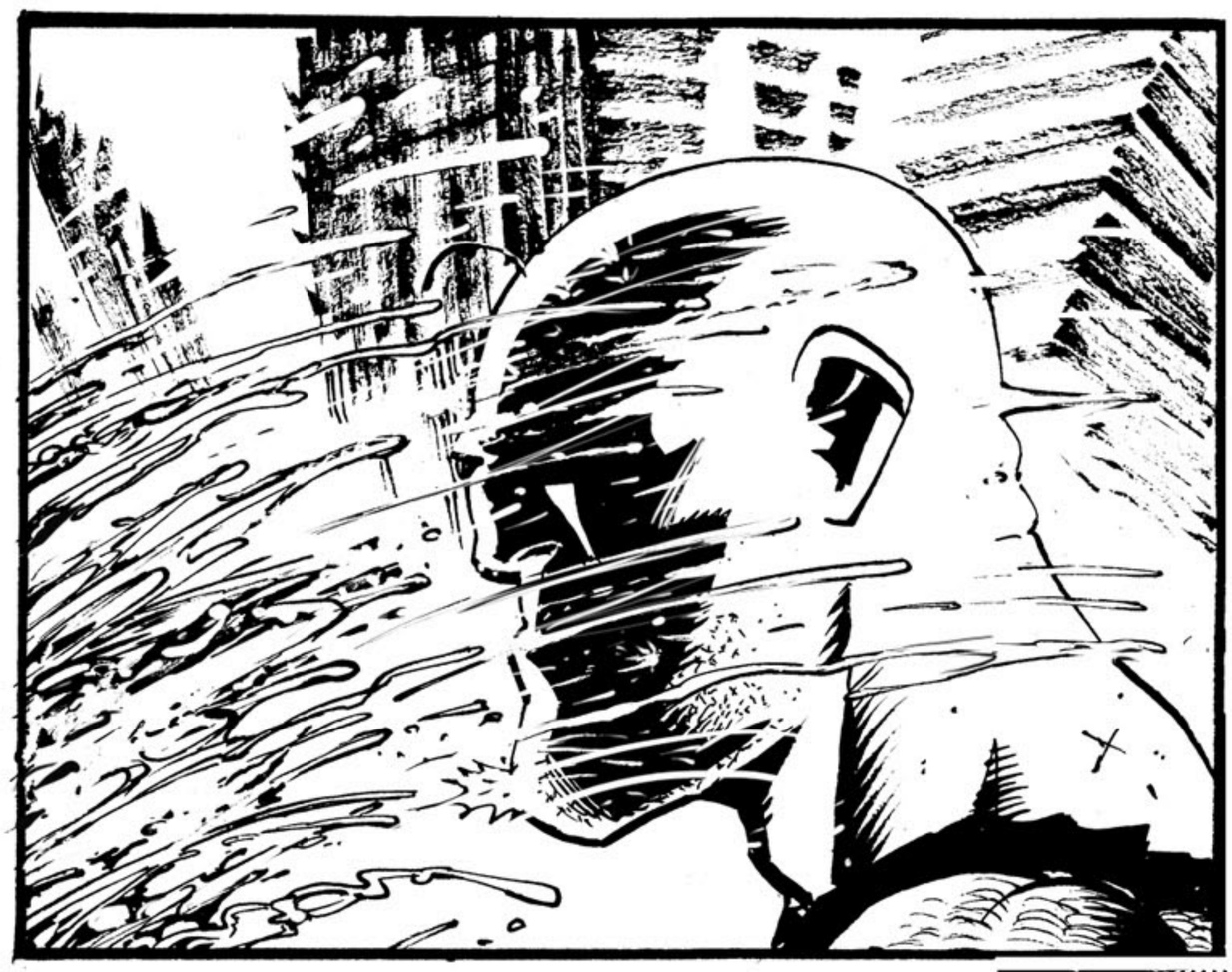
...IS FOR GRAMPS.

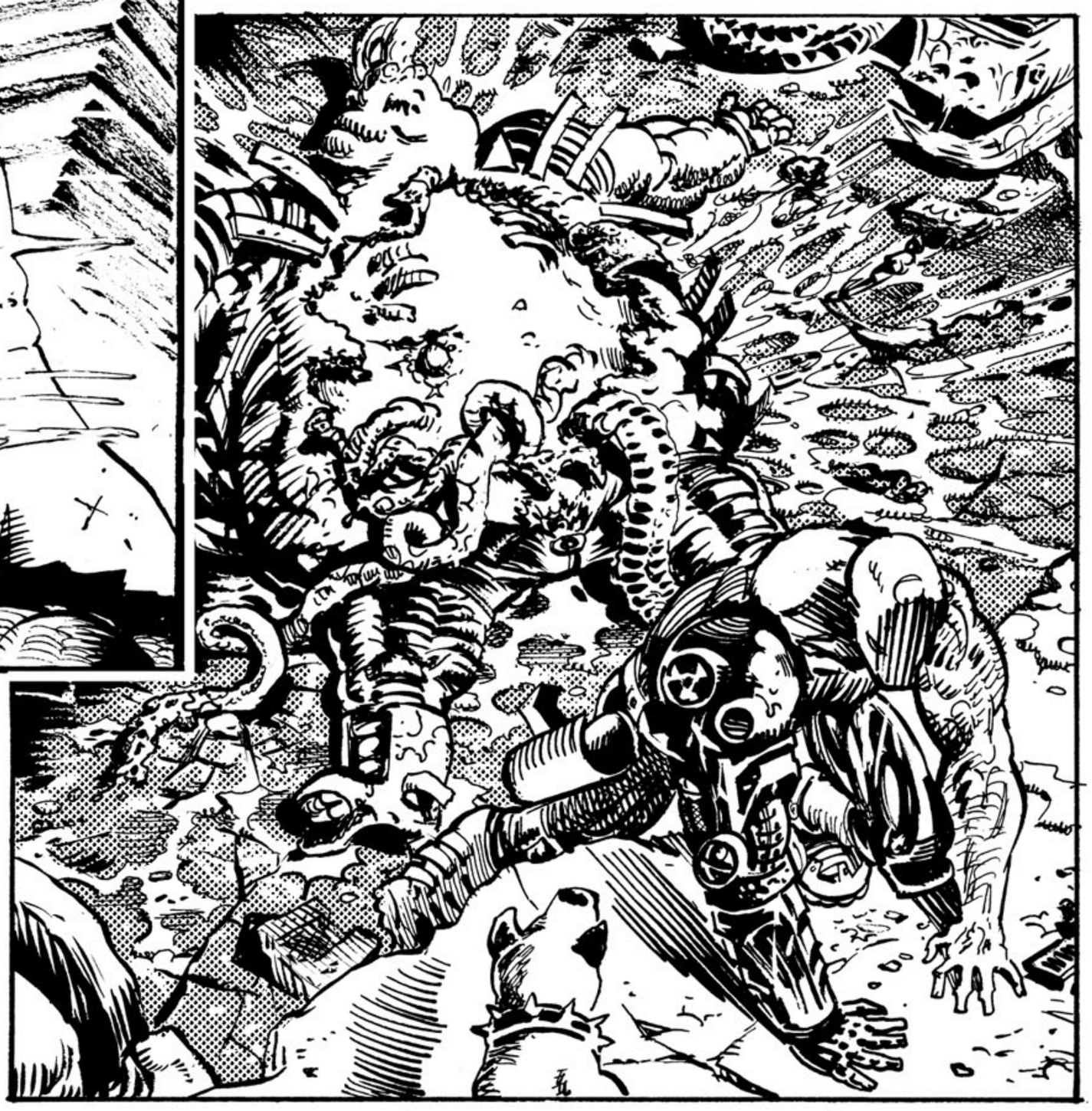
SMUSH

KKLKKLLL

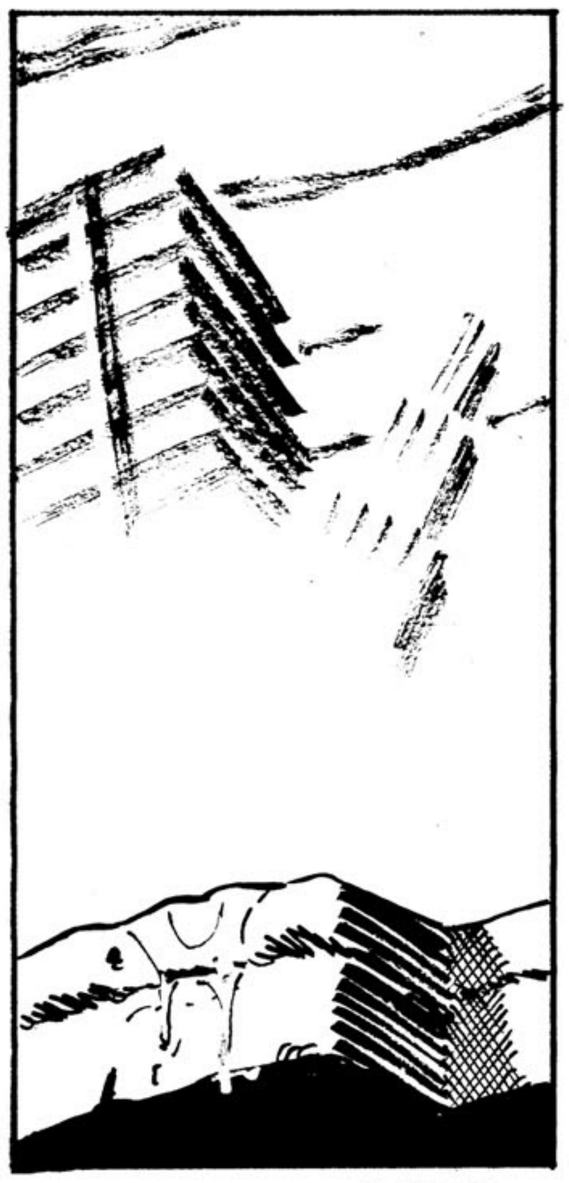
AND THIS IS FOR *HUGHIE.*

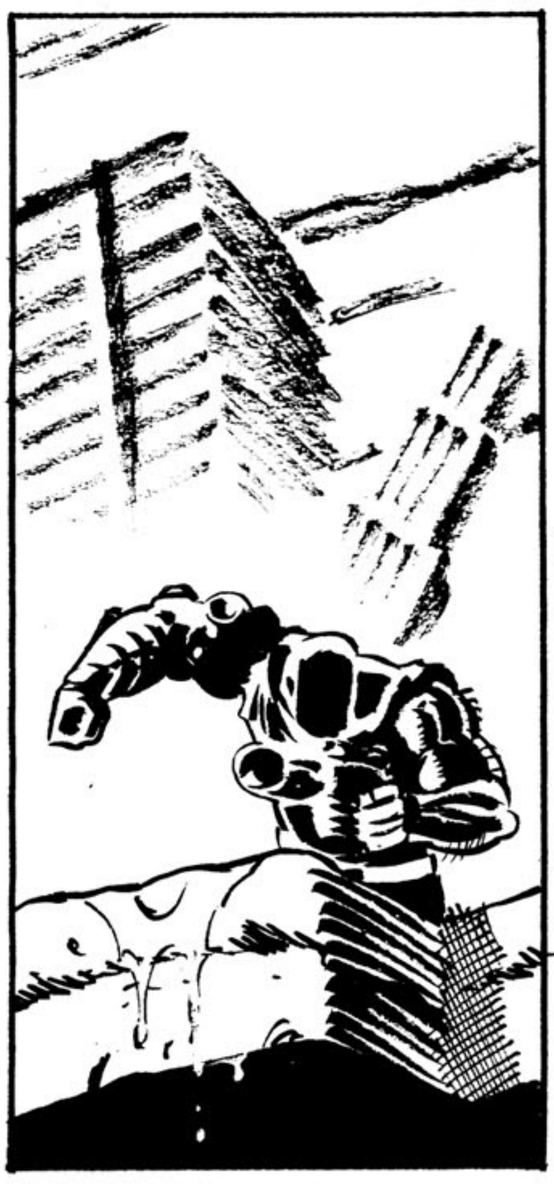
AAAA



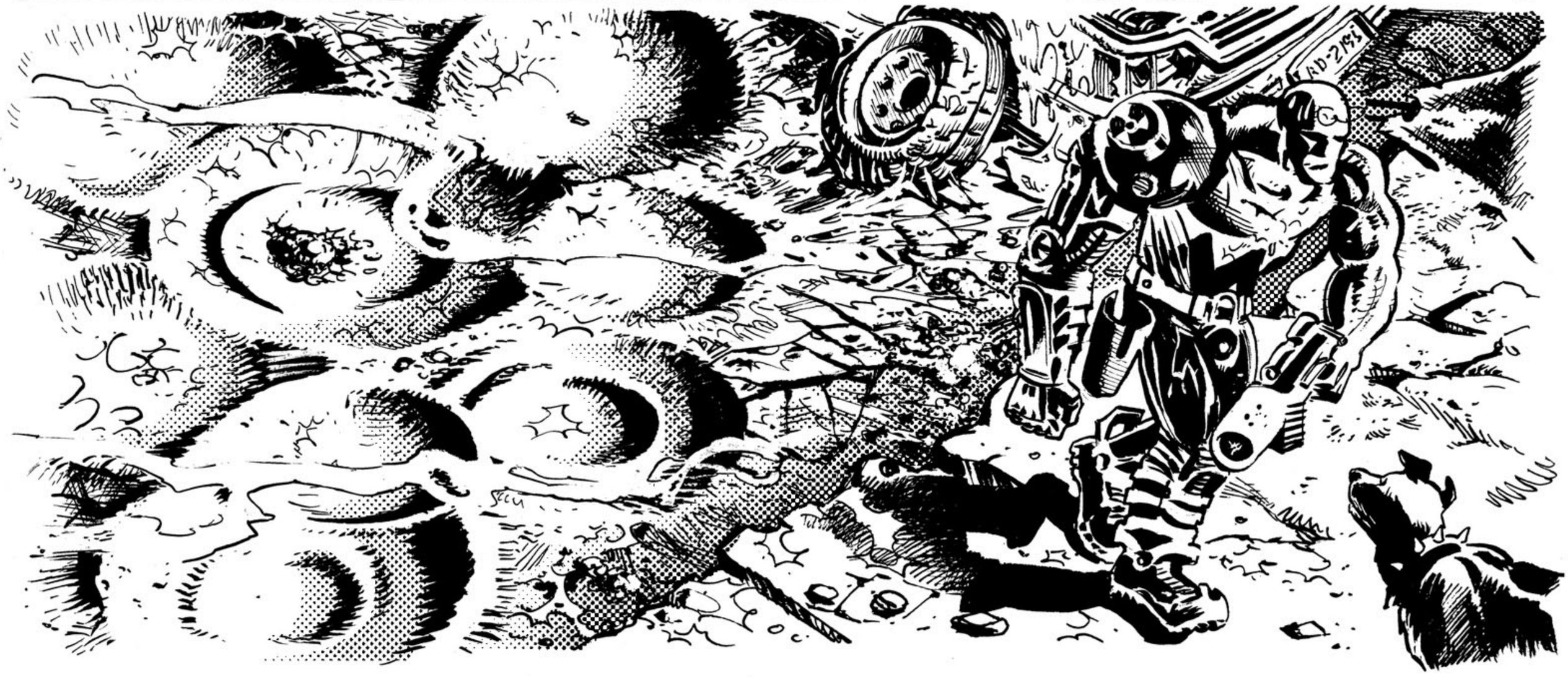









POM
POM
POM
POM



I TELLS YA, IT'S GONNA BE RUFFS.


COMPARED TO HOW WE HADS IT--
--I FEELS LIKE I'M LIVIN' IN A GARBAGE CAN.
FALLOUT SHELTER
WHOOPEE HOUSE
'LEAST YOU GOT *PEOPLE.*
THAT AIN'T ALWAYS BAD.
GUESS I'M LUCKY... MOST OF THAT *LEAD* COULDN'T GET THROUGH ME *ELLYFINK HIDE.* STILL--
--I DON'TS KNOW WHO IT IS WALKIN' 'ROUNDS IN THIS BAG O' LUMPS. AIN'TS ME ANYMORE. NOT WITHOUTS *HER.*
'IGHT. ALL DONE.
"DONE"??
I'M REASONABLY CONFIDENT THAT *THESE* PIECES GO SOMEWHERE!

YEH. AND THE PARTS THAT GO *WITH THEM* ARE PROLLY SOMEWHERE UNDERNEATH BONE CITY.

I *KNOW* MY SHIT, FOO. YOU WON'T NEED 'EM.

SNAP!

HUH. TIP TOP.

MUCH OBLIGED.

POPS-- I WISH I COULD TELL YOU THAT FEELING GOES *AWAY.* US SURVIVORS... THE ONLY THING WE CAN'T TAKE REVENGE ON IS OUR OWN *HIDES.*

SPEAKSIN' O' THAT--

--WHAT AIN'T KILLT ME SURE AIN'T MADE THE REST OF US NO *STRONGER.* YOU GIVEN ANY THOUGHT TO RENEWSIN' YOUR CONTRACT?

THAT JUST ISN'T IN THE CARDS.

BUT WITHOUT ME AROUND... MAYBE THINGS WILL BE A BIT *QUIETER.*

SPING!

YOU DON'T NEED THAT PART.

SNOOP?

SNOOP?

WHERE ARE YOU, BOY?

COME ON BOY...

...DOESN'T MATTER. THOSE ARE ALL THE WEAPONS WE CAN SPARE.

YOU MAY HAVE TO PERSUADE SOME FOLKS YOU MEET ON THE ROAD TO *GIVE THEIRS UP.*

ANNE...

WE'LL FINISH LATER.

I'M GLAD YOU SHOWED UP CHUCK.

MAYBE YOU WERE LISTENING? WE'RE A LITTLE LOW ON *ARTILLERY.* WHAT CAN I OFFER YOU FOR THIS *SIDE IRON* OF YOURS?

SORRY. I SUDDENLY FIND MYSELF *WELL STOCKED* IN EVERY-THING A MAN COULD WANT.

TOO BAD YOU'RE SUCH A CHEAP LAY.

WELL, YOU CERTAINLY DESERVE *EVERYTHING* YOU'VE EARNED.

SMACK!

SO CHUCK... YOU'RE REALLY *LEAVING.* ARE YOU THAT EAGER TO GET BACK TO *POUNDING ASH?*

YOU COULD DO WORSE THAN TO HAVE ME KEEPING THE *SYNDICATE* OFF YOUR BACK FOR A WHILE. SOUNDS LIKE SOME OF *YOUR* PEOPLE ARE HITTING THE ROAD TOO.

GO VIKINGS!

YES. WE'RE THROUGH BIDING OUR *TIME.* WE'RE SCATTERING AND TAKING THE SHMOO TO THE WILDER SETTLEMENTS.

BY THE TIME THE SYNDICATE CATCHES WIND OF US THE SHMOO WILL BE OUT OF THEIR CONTROL. AND SO WILL THE *WORLD.*

ON BEHALF OF THE WORLD, THANKS A MIL'.

WHO ARE THE *HEAVIES?* I DON'T REMEMBER THEM FROM THE FIGHT.

PUNTANG AND *THE WASP* ARE MY FATHER'S BODY-GUARDS--THE LAST OF THE SOLDIERS THAT BROUGHT US TO BONE CITY. THEY *NEVER* LEAVE HIM.

REX? HOW IS HE?

HE'S COMFORTABLE. THE EPISODE HAS PASSED, BUT... THEY'LL BE MORE ***FREQUENT.*** I'D SAY HE HAS NO MORE THAN ONE WEEK LEFT.

I SEE.

snff

I SEE.

THE ***CHIEF*** HEARD YOU OUT HERE, MR. BROWN. HE'D LIKE TO ***MEET YOU...*** IF THAT'S ALL RIGHT WITH YOU, ANNE.

ME?

CHUCK, WOULD YOU?

I TOLD DADDY ABOUT YOU AND ALL YOU DID FOR US. I ***KNOW*** HE'D LIKE TO THANK YOU.

YEAH. YEAH, OK.

BOYS? WILL YOU LET HIM IN, PLEASE?

THREE-SIX-OH... HAMBURGER HAS KETCHUP.

SIX-OH COPY, ROGER.

ROGER THAT COPY, OVER.

HELLO?

CHIEF...UM... HAMBURGER?

HRRM?

WHO ARE...

ARE YOU... TH-THE AMBASSADOR?

MY NAME'S **CHUCK**, SIR. YOUR DAUGHTER THOUGHT YOU'D... LIKE TO MEET ME.

MY DAUGHTER...?

OH... ***YOU'RE*** THE FELLOW THAT SAVED ***ANNE!*** I... I HAVE A ***MEDAL*** FOR YOU... SOMEWHERE. I...

DO... DO I KNOW YOU?

His voice is a trembling echo. I don't think he realizes that he's speaking. The voice I don't know.

But his face...

Even weathered by age, eroded by hardship, I ***know*** *this face.*

As a boy, I spent hours ***studying*** *it by lamp light. It was embossed on the ration coupons that became the currency when everything finally fell apart.*

The ***warbucks.***

NO. I DON'T THINK WE'VE MET BEFORE--

--MISTER PRESIDENT.

president?

Y-YOU'RE GODDAMN ***RIGHT*** I'M THE PRESIDENT! I DON'T CARE WHAT *JUSTICE PARKER* SAYS! HE CAN SUCK MY WIFE'S ***DEAD TITS!***

AND MY LITTLE GIRL... ***SHE'LL*** BE PRESIDENT TOO SOMEDAY! WE CAN STILL ***WIN*** THIS!

WIN...

THE ***WAR!*** I ***TOLD*** THIS COUNTRY WE WERE IN FOR SOME BOOTSTRAPPING, AND NOW THE PEOPLE HAVE GOT THEIR ***GRIT*** BACK!

OUR FLAG WILL BE FLYING OVER THE MOON AGAIN COME SPRING! MY LITTLE ANNE WILL DO IT! SHE'LL BRING ***PREMIER MING*** BACK TO THE TABLE AND SPIT IN HIS EYE ***JUST LIKE I DID!***

THE COMMON DIRT! THEY'VE ***ALWAYS*** BEEN OUR SECRET WEAPON! ANNE KNOWS THAT-- SHE JUST NEEDS TO START POLLING BETTER IN THE *PAN HANDLE...*

HHWUHHUH??

WHEN I WAS A BOY, I THOUGHT IT WAS *ME.*

I THOUGHT MY *HATE* HAD... *ESCAPED* SOMEHOW, AND BROUGHT THE *BOMBS.*

ISN'T THAT SOMETHING?

BUT THE PEOPLE-- DYING OF RADIATION BURNS AND SUPERPOX-- *THEY* ALWAYS SAID--

--IT WAS *YOU.*

YOU STARTED THE WAR. *YOU* ENDED THE *WORLD.*

YOU TURNED ME INTO THIS.

THANKS.

ANNE! WHERE ARE YOU? WHO IS THIS MAN??

WH-WHERE ARE MY JELLYBEANS? *who said that?*

I'M SORRY IF THAT WAS AWKWARD. WITH HIS DEMENTIA... THE THINGS HE *SAYS* LATELY...

I UNDERSTOOD FINE. HE *LOVES* YOU. HE'S GOT A LOT OF BIG PLANS FOR YOU, TOO.

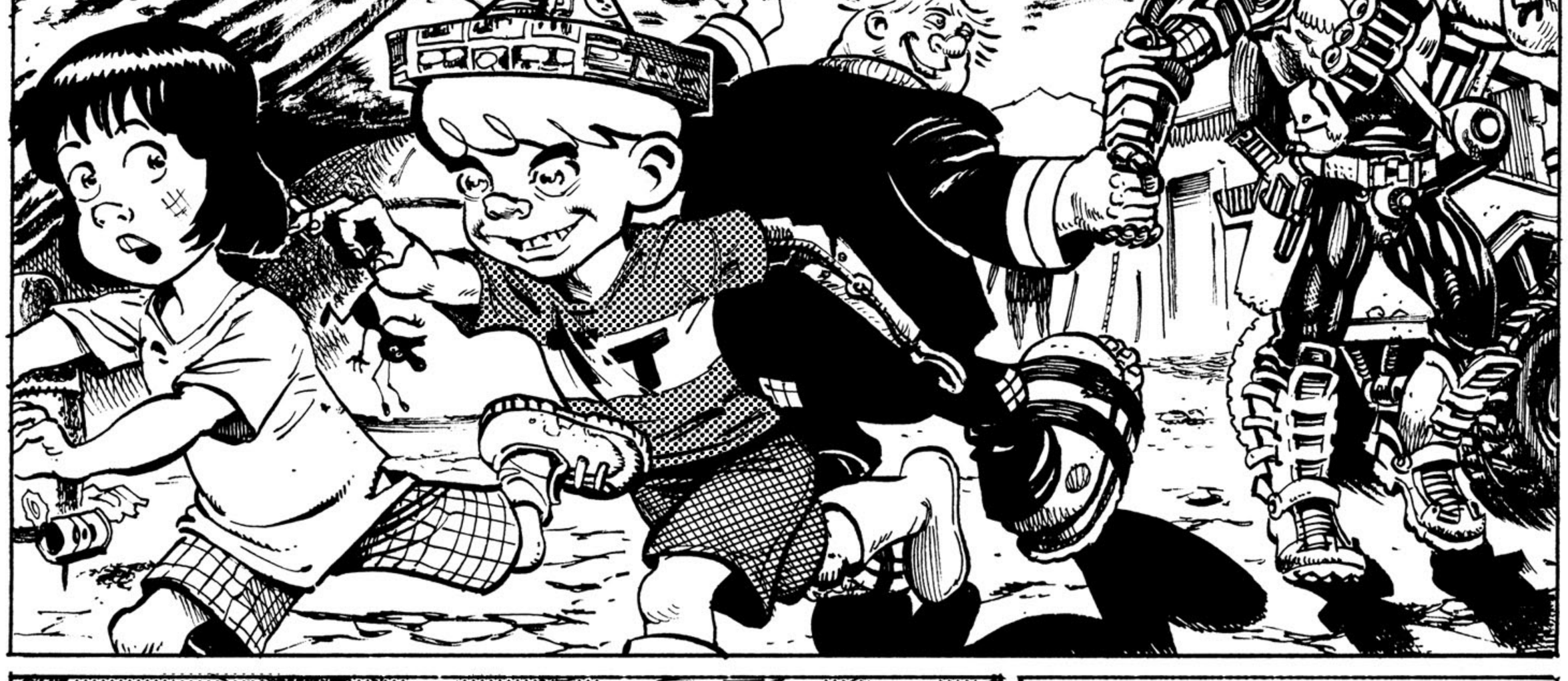
BETTER LET YOU GET TO THEM.

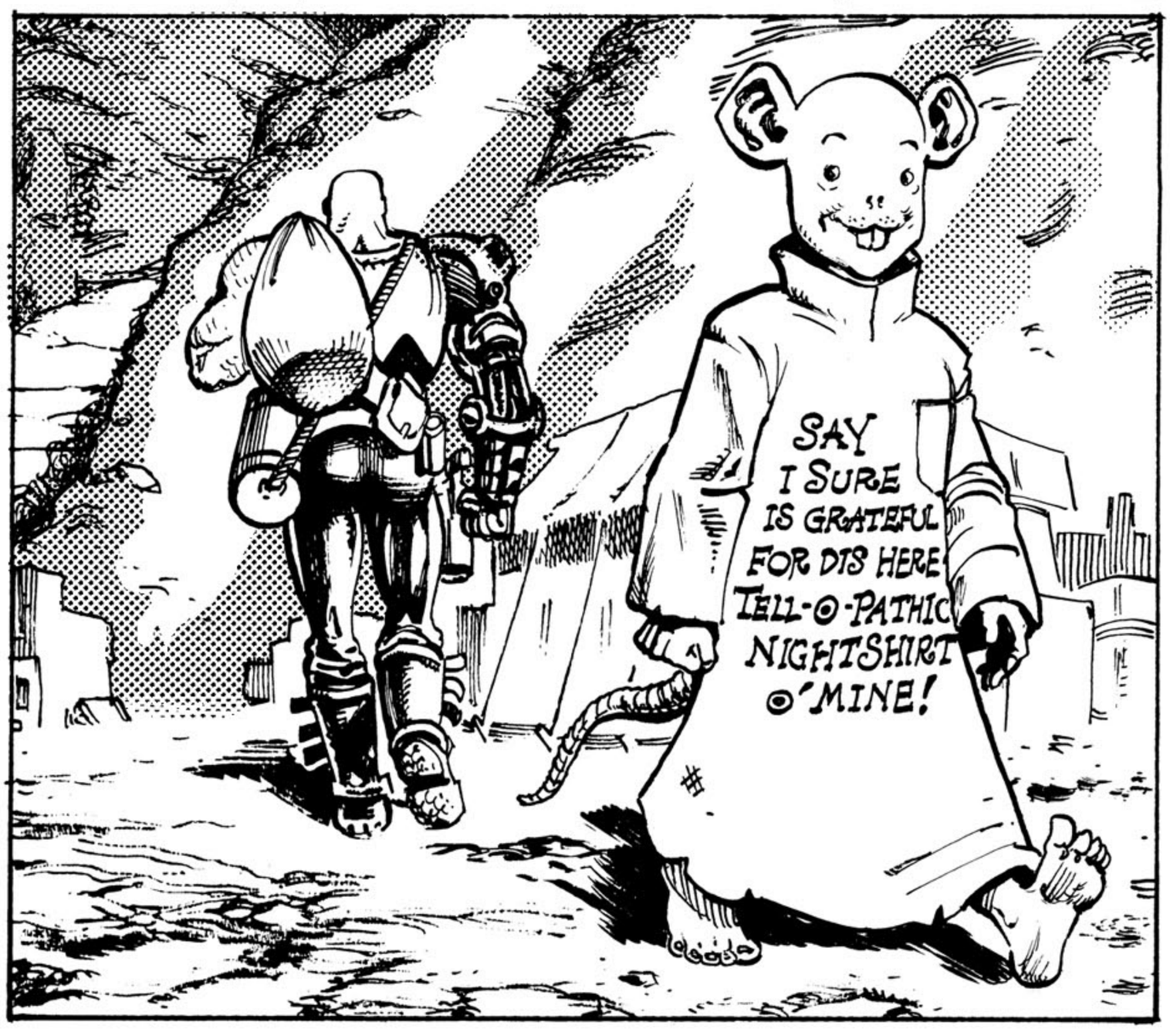
STAY.

SEE YOU IN THE FUNNY PAPERS, KID.


FAIRY!"
SMOKEY
HARDEST
BADDEST
HING FOR
MILE
RUI
NA
CL
BA
ICE
TORE MY
DANG
ITCHES
BLAH BLAH BLAH
BLAH GINGER BLAH
BLAH BLAH GINGER
PEAR
PIMPLES FOR
HAIRY
FISHNUT
AND MEAT
BULBS
MUSTACHE!
DING DING
SCUFF
SCUFF
SCUFF






SAY I SURE IS GRATEFUL FOR DIS HERE TELL-O-PATHIC NIGHTSHIRT O'MINE!


SO THERE YOU ARE.

?

GETTIN' COMFY? YOU FORGET YOU'RE A *WORKING* DOG, MUTT?

THAT'S IT, ISN'T IT? YOU'RE GOING *SOFT* ON ME.

I DON'T BLAME YOU. NO MONSTERS AROUND, A FULL *SUPPER DISH* EVERY NIGHT, WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE?

SNORT

YEAH, WELL... MAYBE YOU BETTER GET USED TO IT.

YOU'RE NOT COMING.

ROO?

AROOOO!!

AHOO! OOO! OOO!

SNOOP, I NEED YOU TO LISTEN TO ME...

WILL YOU... OOO! OOO!!

WILL YOU FUKKIN' LISTEN TO ME??

SNOOP... THAT GIRL, SHE HAD SOMEONE LIKE ***YOU.*** SOMEONE WATCHING HER BACK. BUT HE'S ***GONE.***

SHE'S GOT PEOPLE WITH GUNS TO PROTECT HER, BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT SHE ***NEEDS.*** SHE NEEDS SOMEONE WHOSE ONLY JOB IN LIFE IS CHARGING TO HER RESCUE.

AND IT CAN'T BE ***ME,*** SNOOP. DEATH FOLLOWS ME... IT ALWAYS HAS. IT WANTS TO TAKE EVERYTHING I HAVE.

I CAN'T BE HERE WHEN IT FINDS ME AGAIN.

I ***HAVE*** TO LEAVE. BUT IF YOU'LL STAY BEHND--

--I'LL ALWAYS HAVE ONE EYE ON HER.

GO ON.

DON'T KEEP A LADY WAITING.

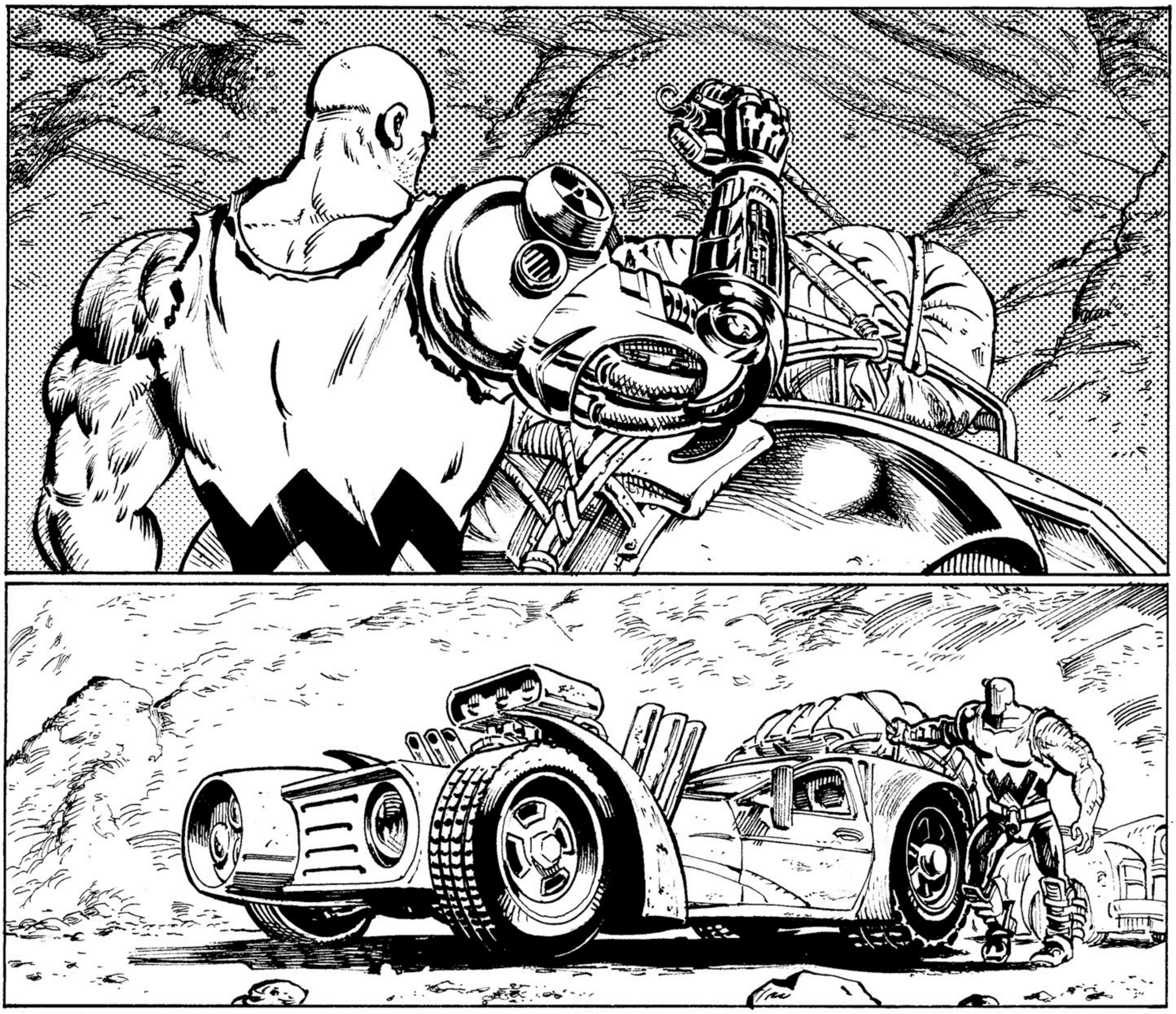
...

I'm surprised I got off that **light.**


AGOOO

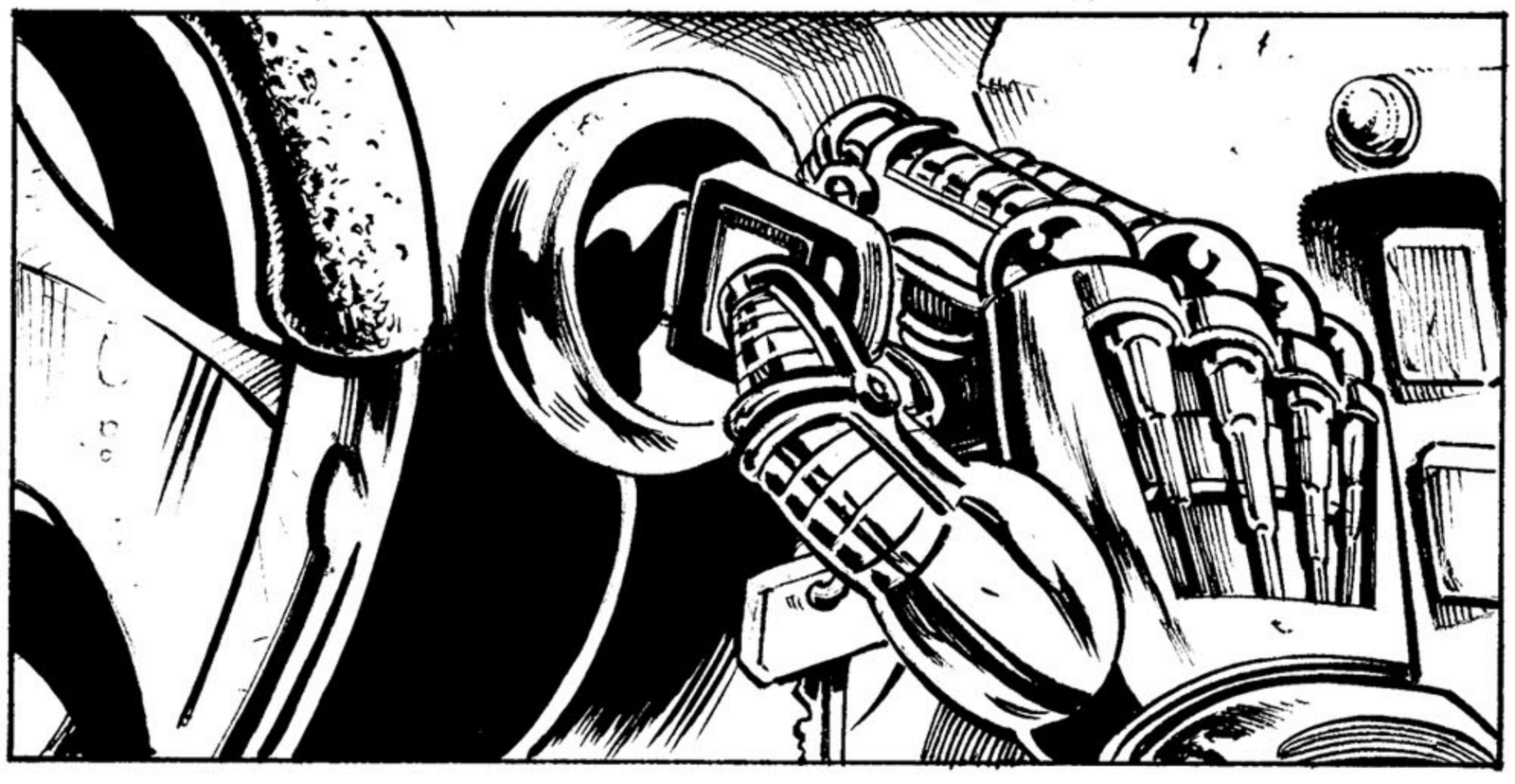
Tad Dorgan

ARF.






ONCE THIS KEY *TURNS*--
--CHANGING YOUR MIND WON'T BE AN OPTION.



THE SYNDICATE KILLED THEM. MY ENTIRE FAMILY.

MAYBE *YOU'D* LET THEM SKATE FOR THAT.

NOT ME.

I'M GOING TO MAKE THEM *DEAD*, ASSHOLE. YOU'RE JUST MY *RIDE*.

VOOM!!

MY LAST PET--

--DIDN'T *TALK*.

Twelve hours later we've looped through open country and are on the highway heading east.

In the distance I watch the sun come up over **Bone City.**

The ruins cast a strange **shadow.** More than ever I'm glad to be done with the place.

The kid came into his hate more honestly than I had. How could I not let him take his shot?

He'll have to prove he's more than **lip** soon enough. And if he **isn't**...

At least he made it to the spelling bee.

That old man back there is the last soldier still fighting the Last War. When he buckets, that fight will finally have ended. No surrender, no victory.

But Anne and her crew-- they're bringing the world back to **life.** Turns out the Last War won't be the **last** after all. There're going to be things worth fighting over again. Things worth **protecting.**

Like a red-haired girl.

The Syndicate tried to **kill her.**

How can I ever forget **them?**

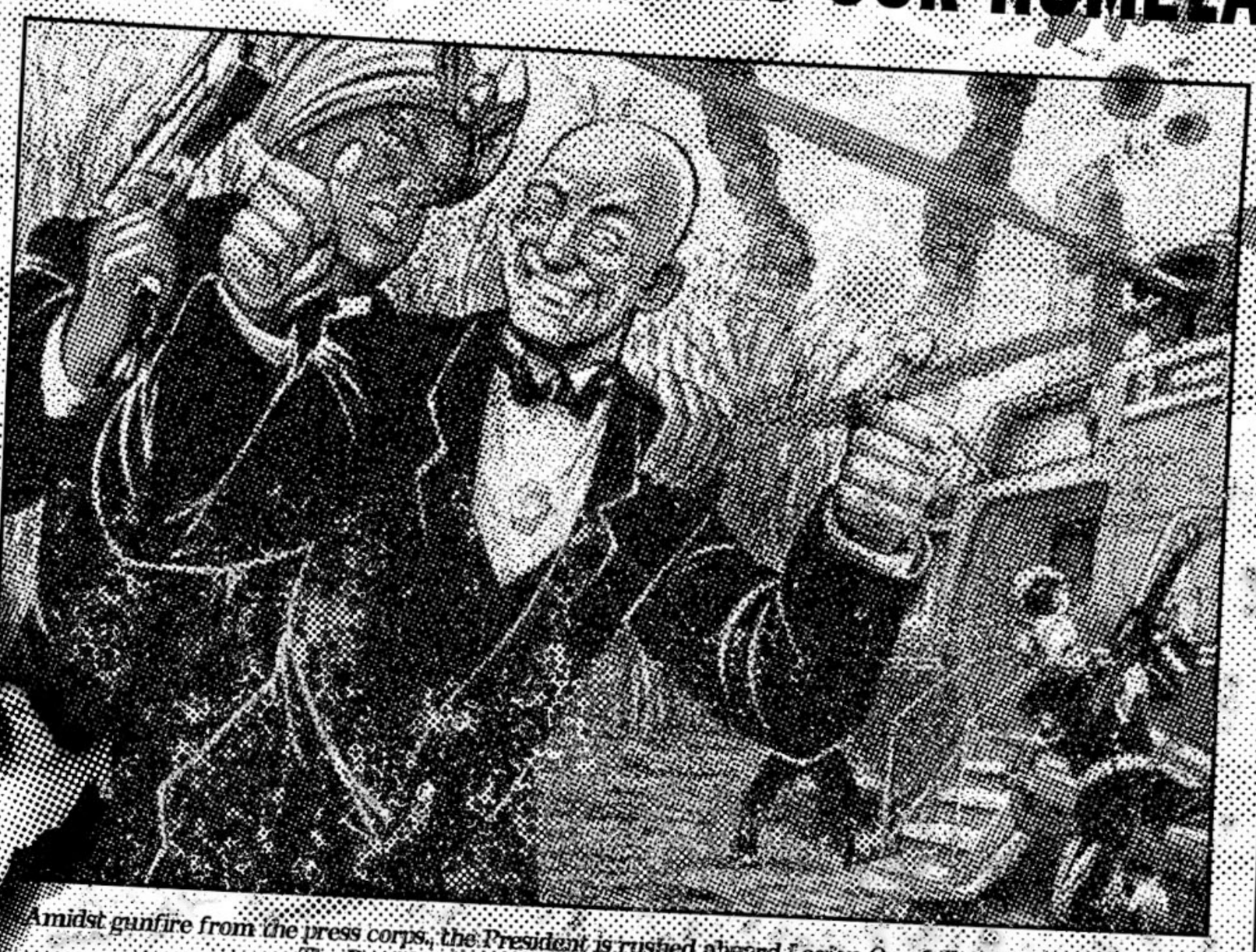
Jason Jungbluth 12/12

The Daily Crateliner

FINAL EDITION

"STICK A FORK IN US!"

PRESIDENT DECLARES OUR HOMELAND "KAPUT"



Amidst gunfire from the press corps, the President is rushed aboard Legion One following his speech. The President's current whereabouts are unknown.

"Farewell to the Nation" Address Short on Applause Lines

by Satchel Pooch

THE CAPITOL – At a press conference held this morning at the Presidential Mansion, the President surprised all in attendance by abruptly resigning from office.

"I was elected to lead a great country, not the assemblage of mooches and malcontents I am now daily confronted with," the President stated.

After declaring all national government functions completely untenable, the President went on to say that in his opinion, Our Homeland no longer existed as a functioning nation-state.

"There is still a bright tomorrow awaiting a future generation, a new nation that will rise from these ashes. But for now, we must bid 'farewell' to *this* nation."

The President's sentiments were met first with shock, then with boos and hisses and finally with gunshots.

see Address 2C

West Coast Goes Dark

by Lily Wong

All communication with the western sectors suddenly halted last night after weeks of fluctuating service from that section of the national power grid main- [illegible] West Sectors Power Authority.

With the government still in chaos following the President's resignation this morning, no one has been made available to explain what may have led to this apparent total power failure.

Speculation by experts based on recent service disruptions and [illegible] and if so, it could be weeks or even months before electrical service resumes in the affected areas.

The result is that more than 20% of Our Homeland's population has now effectively been returned to the Stone Age.

Frantic family members of western sector residents are demanding action but their pleas are likely to go unanswered. Public services are already stretched [illegible] and the breaking point [illegible]

Sector Barons Eye Power Vacuum

by Tinsford Tinsworth

A stunned nation is still reeling from the President's unexpected resignation from office and flight from the Capitol early this morning. At the moment, it is unclear as to whom, if anyone, is in command of the government.

Having eliminated the office of Vice-President during his third term, the President has left Our Homeland with no clear succession and there is no explicit chain [illegible] running the [illegible] Administration.

Julius C. Dithers, Chief Administrator of Sector C and Syndic of Construction and Public Works, has declared that an alliance of eastern sector administrators is prepared to take on all government operations... and crush all opposition.

"The people of our bes[illegible] deserve... ah, I'm not [illegible] with this bullshit. We're [illegible] run the show, and if you don't [illegible] it, here's what's gonna happen."

Dithers then grabbed a photographer from out of the press pool and began kicking him repeatedly in the buttocks until his shoe [illegible]

END

HOLIDAY SPECIALS

These stories were written several years apart, and for different purposes.

A Weapon Brown Christmas was part of the original *Weapon Brown* stand-alone issue, and ***It's The Great Pumpkin, Weapon Brown*** was featured in my comic book *Deep Fried,* volume 2 #4. I'd have liked to have folded them into the main story but they broke the flow and needed to stand on their own.

It's The Easter Mongrel, Weapon Brown! *was created specifically for this collection.*

WHEN I WAS A BOY GROWING UP IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS, KIDS STILL LOOKED FORWARD TO CHRISTMAS.

THE MARAUDER CLANS WOULD FOLLOW A **24** HOUR ARMISTICE, THE SICK AND DYING WERE GAGGED SO WE COULD ENJOY ONE DAY WITHOUT THEIR **SCREAMS**, AND IF YOU WERE GOOD THEN MAYBE, JUST **MAYBE**, SANTA CLAUS WOULD BRING YOU A FULL POUCH OF SURVIVAL RATIONS.

ALL NUDE GIRLS

TIME PASSED. THE EASTERN SYNDICATE TOOK OVER THE CAMPS, TOOK OVER **ME**.

AND ON CHRISTMAS, I WAS THE ONE WHO DELIVERED THEIR PRESENTS.

A WEAPON BROWN CHRISTMAS

©2002 Jason Lutes

UH? WHO'S THERE?!

SYNDICATE.

YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING WE **OWN**.

DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKIN' 'BOUT, STRANGER.

YOU'LL BE DEAD BEFORE YOU TOUCH THE TRIGGER.

NOW. . .NOW HOLD ON, FELLA. I'M JUST A SCAVENGER. I LIVE OFFA **JUNK.** AIN'T GOT NUTHIN' THE SYNDICATE DON'T ALREADY HAVE PLENTY OF AN' IN BETTER SHAPE.

NICE DISPLAY. WHERE'D YOU GET THE VOLTS?

RUNS OFFA CAR BATTERY.

THAT WHAT YA COME ALL THE WAY OUT HERE FOR? STEAL A LITTLE JUICE?

STUPID. WASTE OF POWER. COULD BE RUNNING A THERMAL POD INSTEAD.

TOMORROW. I JUST PUT IT UP ONCE A YEAR. S'KINDA A GIFT TO...TO MYSELF.

LOOK-- WHAT I GOTTA DO TO GET YOU LET ME BE?

EVER HEAR OF THE JIGS?

THE WHAT?

THE **JIGS.** IT'S A NEUROMUSCULAR SYNDROME. NOT THE KIND OF THING YOU FIND IN THE WASTES. JUST THE **OPPOSITE**, IN FACT.

IT COMES FROM OVEREXPOSURE TO CHEMICAL DISINFECTANTS. THE KIND YOU FIND IN A **SUPERSANITIZED** ENVIRONMENT-- LIKE A SYNDICATE SCIENCE STATION.

THE DISEASE CRAMPS YOUR MUSCLES AND OVERRIDES YOUR MOTOR CONTROL. THE VICTIMS' SEIZURES MAKE 'EM LOOK LIKE THEY'RE DANCING.

THEY DANCE UNTIL THEIR **SPINES** SNAP.

DON'T KNOW NUTHIN 'BOUT THAT. WHAT'S IT GOT TO DO WITH *ME?*

BUNCHA SYNDICATE TECHNICIANS HAVE THE JIGS. THEY NEED SOMETHING TO CURE 'EM. SOMETHING YOU GOT.

WHAT? A RUSTY CARBURETOR? A BASKET OF BED SPRINGS??

SOMETHING IMPORTANT. A GUY YOU TRADED WITH A FEW DAYS AGO SAW IT. YOU KNOW WHAT I'M TALKIN' ABOUT. SCRAWNY BUT HEALTHY.

ITS CELLS GOT IN 'EM WHAT'LL FIX THE JIGS. I'M HERE TO **COLLECT** IT.

YOU CAN'T DO THIS. YOU CAN'T TAKE WHAT'S M-MUH-MINE.

IT AIN'T YOURS, REMEMBER?

NO!

THE SYNDICATE OWNS THIS ENTIRE HOTZONE. THEY WANT THE SNOT UP YOUR NOSE? YOU ***SNEEZE.***

SO I'LL JUST TAKE WHAT BELONGS TO *THEM* AND GET OUT OF YOUR HAIR.

POW

CRUNCH

LUMP OF COAL FOR *YOU.*

DAMNED IDIOT. DYING--FOR WHAT? A FUCKING...

...TREE?

WAIT!

TAKE...TAKE ME WITH YOU?

I'VE ALREADY GOT A PET.

BUT... I DON'T HAVE ANYONE ELSE.

THEN YOU'VE GOT *NO ONE*. PERIOD.

STAY OUTSIDE. WATCH THE LIGHT SHOW.

MAYBE SANTA CLAUS WILL SHOW UP.

I TELL MYSELF THAT IT WASN'T MY DECISION. I DIDN'T GET TO MAKE DECISIONS BACK THEN. THE SYNDICATE TOLD ME TO BRING BACK A **TREE**, NOT A KID.

BUT THE TRUTH IS, NO CHOICE I MADE WOULD HAVE BEEN RIGHT. ONE WAY OR ANOTHER--

--EVERYTHING I TOUCH GETS RUINED.

LOO LOO LOO
LOO LOO
LOO
LOO LOO

LOO LOO L-L-LOO
LOO LOO
LOO
LOO

The End

He brings them here, through whispers in **dreams** and symbols that only the **desperate** can decrypt.

Here, to His ground.

To the **Pumpkin Patch.**

IT'S THE GREAT PUMPKIN, WEAPON BROWN

They come, they wander, not knowing **why** they dared the crossing--

--Not understanding why, after days and days, they can't seem to walk **out.**

They wander until they ripen.

And they are **His.**

Seeking a dark and **empty** place.

Their souls are caught and **cocooned,** molecule by molecule, by the ingenious poisons that have eaten them.

The corpse's spend melts into the ground. **Burrowing.**

GREAT IS HE! ***ONE*** IS HE!

KNOWING NO OTHER ***BEFORE*** HIM! NO OTHER ***AFTER!***

ORANGE GOD OF MAN'S FOLLY!!

ON THIS ***ALL HALLOWS EVE*** I WILL WORK THE ***FINAL BLASPHEMY*** AND SELL THIS ***FALLEN WORLD*** TO IT'S RIGHTFUL ***MASTER!***

TO *YOU*, GREAT PUMPKIN.

I *KNOW* YOU ARE REAL.

SLATTERN! COME FORTH!

TELL ME, IS YOUR TASK COMPLETE? HAVE YOU *UNHOLIED* YOURSELF FOR *HIS GREATNESS?*

YES. I HAVE BEFOULED MY WOMB WITH THE *FILTH* OF NINE HUNDRED AND NINETY-NINE *SINNERS* AND *MUTANTS.*

MY VAULT IS A *FETID SEPULCHRE,* WONTING ONLY A DEMON'S *SLITHERING MEMBER.*

THEN THE *DARK HOUR* HAS ARRIVED.

YES, SWEET BABBOO.

I TOLD YOU TO STOP CALLING ME THAT!!

EEP!

NOW, *SPREAD YOURSELF* ON THE COLD STONE OF HIS *ALTAR!*

BLANKET!

FWHIP!

purr
purrr

YESSS...

BIND HER FAST!

ZAP!

ZIP!

SHWIP!

THWAP!

GREAT ONE, I AM *TURGID* WITH ***SINCERITY!*** AS I PLUNGE MYSELF INTO THIS ***RANCID PIT--***

--SO TOO THRUST ***YOUR*** SPIRIT INTO THE FETID POND OF MAN'S OWN EVIL... AND ***EMERGE!***

EMERGE AND SPIT YOUR BLIGHT ACROSS THE ***FACE OF THE EARTH!***

GGHH! NNNUGH!

HUHAH!

HUHH!

NNUAH!

HAHHHAH!

KUK

GUP

GUP

swkk babkk

HUH! HUUNHHH! HRRRA-AHHHH

POW!

WHO...?

YOU ARE... THE PUMPKIN'S HERALDS?

WE ARE THE COLD ONES! THE ISSUE OF OBSCENE COPULATION!

WERE YOU SUMMONING THE GREAT ONE, ONLY TO CONJURE US?

HA!

WHAT PATHETIC, DRIBBLING SORCERY!

I IMPLORE YOU... *INTERCEDE* FOR ME!

I PLEDGE ETERNAL DEVOTION TO *HE* WHO WILL FULFILL MY WISH TO SEE ALL FLESH *PUNISHED!*

BAH! WHAT NEED HAS *PUMPKIN THE GREAT* FOR *YOUR* MEWLING SERVITUDE?

DO YOU *DOUBT* THAT *ALL* WILL SUFFER UNDER HIM IN THE END?!

NO! OF COURSE! I-I *BEG* TO SEE IT MADE *REAL!*

I OFFER FOR HIS HELLISH SUP THIS WOMAN OF *PERFECT NAIVETE!* CANINE IN HER LOYALTY AND *STAINED BEYOND REDEMPTION!*

OMMMMM. MANY *RIDERS* ON THIS MARE! FIENDS, CREATURES, EATERS OF *MEN'S FLESH...*

for my swee-sweet ba-ba-b-b...

FOR... *LOVE??*

KUH-HA HA HA HA!!

OH RICH! *RICH INDEED!*

SHE IS WILLING?!?

IGNORANT CUM CLOT! PUSTULANT SORE ON CHRIST'S DICK!

LOVE IS DAUGHTER TO *HOPE!* WHAT GIFT IS *THIS* FOR THE *KING OF THE WRETCHED?*

THE GREAT ONE SEEKS THE *VIRGIN'S FEAR!* THE DEATH OF *ALL HOPE* BEFORE HIS EYES! IT IS FOR *THIS* THAT HIS *MOUTH WATERS* AND HIS *BEEF SWELLS!*

DELIVER *THAT* AND YOU'LL DRAW FORTH THE HORROR THAT *DWARFS ALL OTHERS.*

BUT SUMMON *US* AGAIN...

...AND WE'LL RIP OUT YOUR *ENTRAILS* AND HAVE YOU DANCE A *WALTZ* WITH THEM!

W-WHAT HAPPENED?

DID THEY... WILL THEY...?

BLANKET.

BUT... THE GREAT PUMPKIN...

HE WILL COME.

HE WILL BRING US HIS PRESENTS, AFTER I HAVE BROUGHT HIM *HIS.*

YES, HE WILL COME.

WELL I SURE DIDN'T!

YOU MEAN I LET ONE THOUSAND OOZING SCUMBAGS SHOOT THEIR *PASTE* IN ME AND I WAS *STILL* REJECTED AS AN UNHOLY SACRIFICE?!

I WAS ROBBED! WHAT A *FOOL* I WAS, WASTING HALLOWEEN IN THE PUMPKIN PATCH WITH *YOU! I'LL SUE!!*

He will rise.

THE END.

When that woody caught me raiding her nest, I should have just dropped the eggs and **scrambled.**

But I'd gone two days without even a piece of **bark** to chew, so the hell I was going to leave **empty-handed.**

IT'S THE EASTER MONGREL, WEAPON BROWN!

©MMXII Jason Jungbluth

I've never crossed paths with a woody this **big** before, but that's what I get for grubbin' around the **Daisy Hills Puppy Mill.**

They raised grizzly-sized **K-99** units here for the war, until the Animal Liberation Guerilla Front **suicide bombed** the place.

Yeah, they took out most of the **dogs** in the process, but their motto was "better **dead** than **bred**".

ICKIE CAFE don't scare

All those drums of mega-steroids didn't just turn to **spring water** when they reached the **soil**, though.

So no surprise that the local fauna have grown up a bit--

--Larger than life?

HSSSSSSs

RRRRRR

Looks like the **good stuff** dried up before the runt got his sip--

--But he's still tough enough to be running this crew of **rarebits!**

SKREEK

hey, uh... I'm only looking for some toast and ***bacon...***


REEARRKK!!
RRRRRRR
GRRAARR!!

GULP

GUK GUK GUK

KRAWK!

FUKKIT--

--HERE'S YOUR KID BACK!

SPLATCH!

PANT PANT

YAHHH..!

CRAAAAP

SKRAAWW

GK-K

KKK! KKKK!

KKKK!

Thanks for the **distraction,** bite-size!

Ah...

Screw this.

SNAP!

I said I wasn't leaving empty-handed!

65

GRIBBLE?

Oh, right.

These guys.

SSSSSS

GRRR

WELL MUTT, THAT'S THE BEST I CAN DO. HANG TOUGH.

WUFF!

YOU THINK THIS PATCH-UP WILL DO HIM ANY GOOD, SHERM'?

I LOOK LIKE A DOCTOR?

MURDER KOMIX

'THE HELL YOU WANT A *DOG* FOR ANYWAY? S'JUST ANOTHER MOUTH TO FEED.

TRUST ME... THAT MOUTH IS GOING TO FEED *ITSELF.*

RUIN FUNNIES

I KNOW A KEEPER WHEN I SEE ONE. THAT WOODY *ATE* HIM AND HE CAME BACK FROM THE *DEAD!* HE'S THE GODDAMN *EASTER MONGREL!*

SO WHAT ARE YOU GONNA CALL HIM? *JESUS?*

DUNNO YET.

IT'LL COME TO ME.

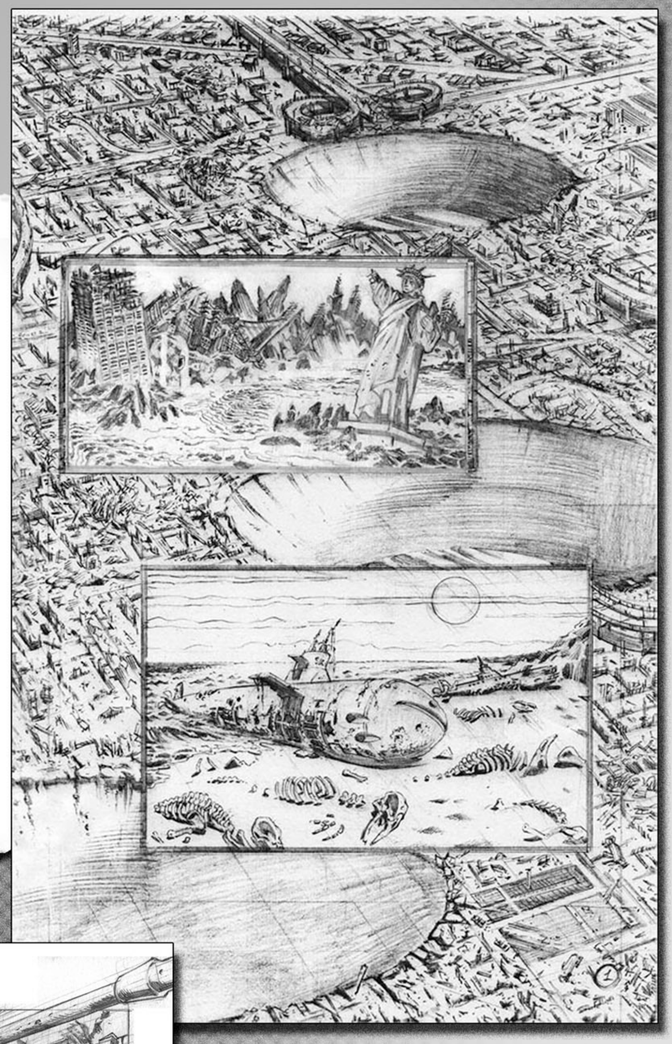
Dog

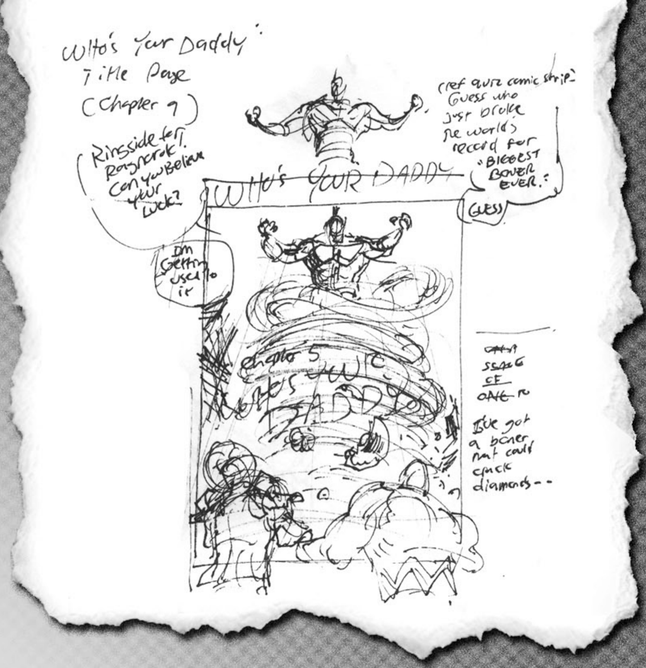
SKETCHBOOK AND GALLERY



A PEEK BEHIND THE CURTAIN AND UNDER THE SKIRT OF MY PROCESS.











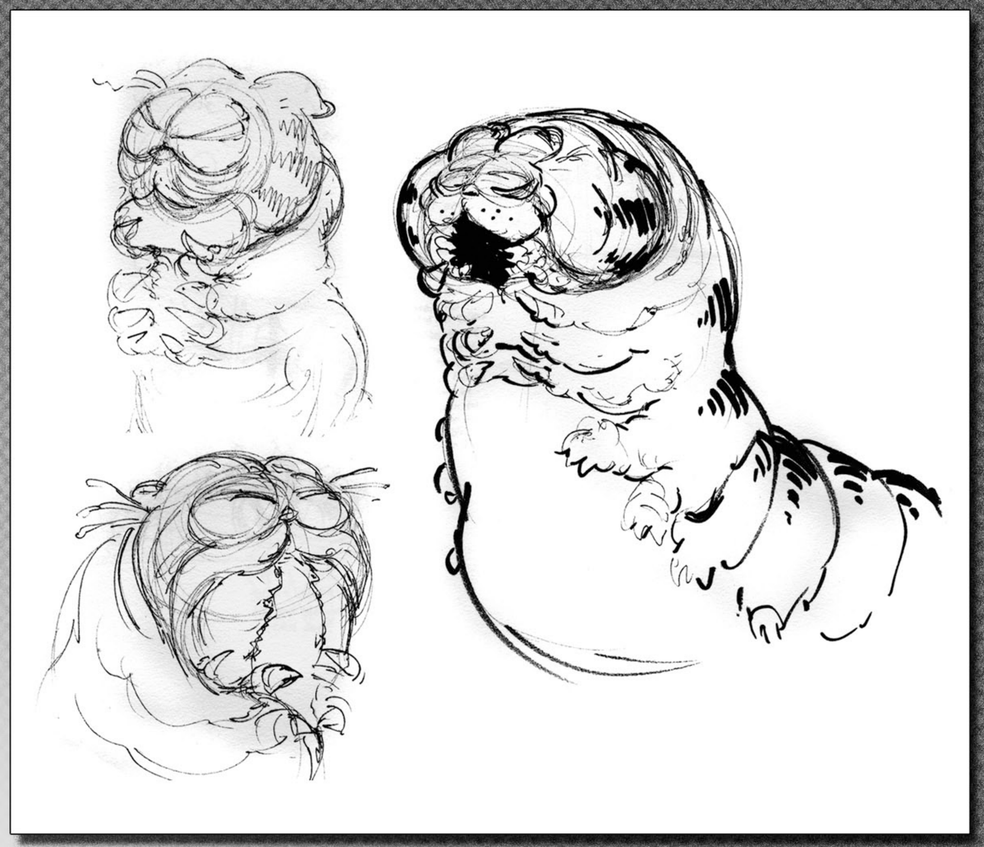


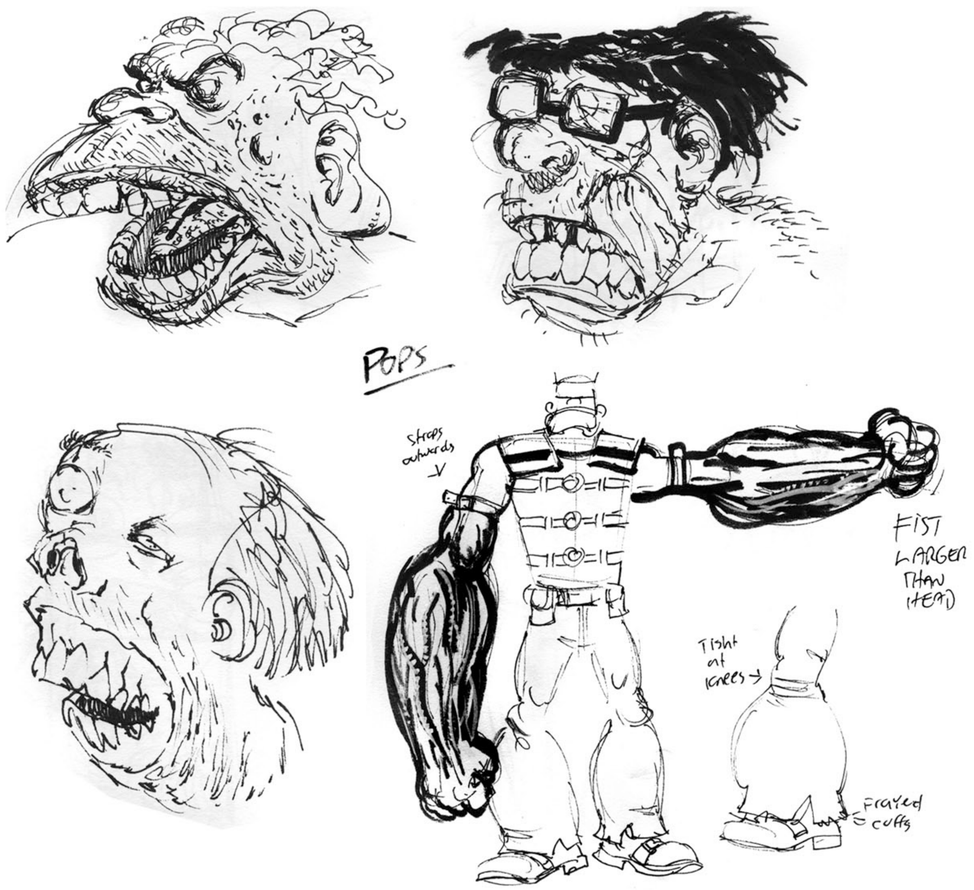


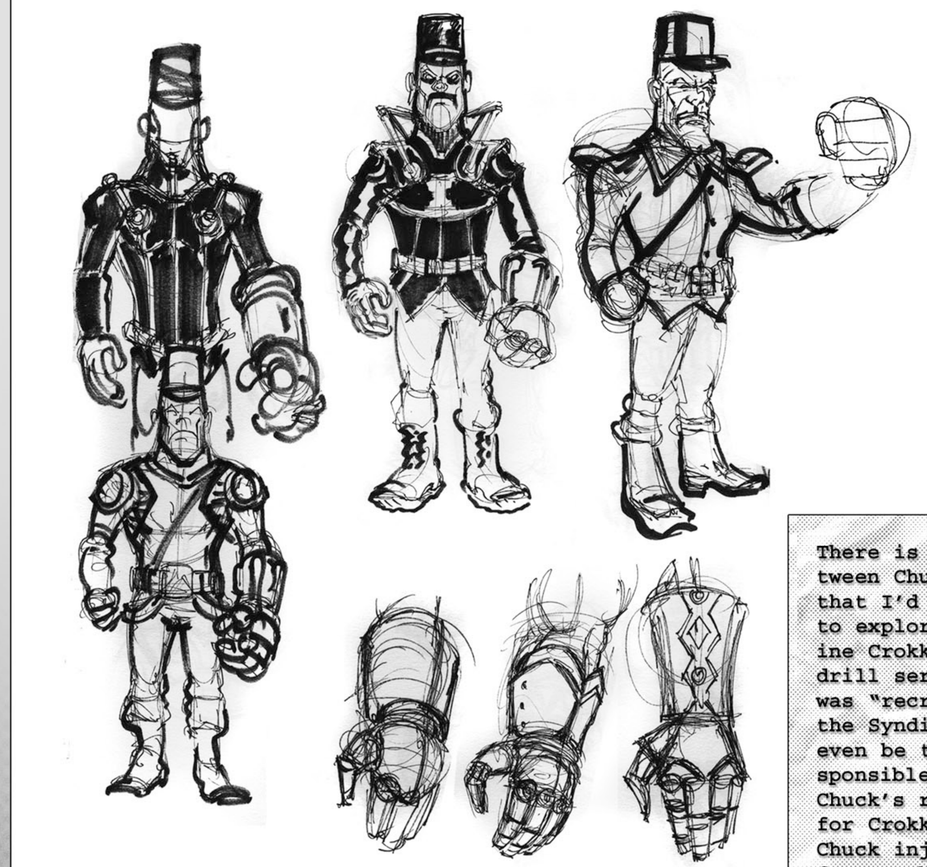




Of all the players in Weapon Brown, I spent the most time designing the Legionnaires. I wanted something different than your typical, anonymous storm trooper. My solutuon was to put so much equipment on their faces that it didn't make sense for them *not* to be wearing helmets. It's all part of the madness of the future!







There is a history between Chuck and Crokk that I'd have loved to explore. I imagine Crokk was Chuck's drill sergeant when he was "recruited" into the Syndicate. He may even be the man responsible for taking Chuck's right arm! As for Crokk's neck, how Chuck injured it will forever be a subject of speculation.

Experiments in my sketchbook often have a freshness that I find hard to reproduce in my completed art. There have been many times when I wished that a finished page excited me as much as the sketch.









The cover to Deep Fried, vol.1 #2

PSYCHIA[illegible]RIC
HELP[illegible]C

THE DOCTOR
IS IN

OUT

Tundra '00

The cover to Deep Fried, vol.2 #3



The cover to the
Weapon Brown one-shot

The cover to Blockhead's War #1

The cover to Blockhead's War #2

The cover to Blockhead's War #3



The cover to
Blockhead's War
#4

The cover to Blockhead's War #5



The cover to Blockhead's War #6

The cover to Blockhead's War #7

Pin-up by Phil Hester



HESTER - ALL APOLOGIES!

Pin-up by Stephen Notley



Pin-up by Stuart Sayger



Pin-up by Matthew Allison



Pin-up by Noor Rahman



Pin-up by Megan Kelly



ANNOTATIONS

p.15 Originally, the bartender was one of just a few characters in *Weapon Brown* who was not drawn from the *Peanuts* universe. Later I discovered a minor character named "555 95472" whose name was a comment on the roboticization of people in modern culture. That number is now branded on the bartender's wrist. Prophecy fulfilled!

p.18 "Mints" happens also to be the name of a Canadian strip club near Buffalo, New York(from whence I hail).

p.19 Frankie is holding my favorite unused weapon of the story: a "liquefier" pistol that fires a corrosive mist. Man, I wish I hadn't needed Chuck to survive this encounter!

p.22 The issue of Franklin being the only black person in *Peanuts* was one of the first idiosyncrasies of that strip I looked forward to tweaking. Of course, I was forced to bring this matter up again when Chuck is baffled by still more "dark-skinned" people living beneath Bone City.

p.30 Chuck's plaz gun is like his lightsaber. It has a short range, but the invisible plasma ball it launches can burn through absolutely anything before it dissipates. I spent a lot of time inventing ways to divest Chuck of this "super power" to make his fights fair.

p.34 The kick is up, and it's good! Lucy's comeuppance is literally the moment *Weapon Brown* was created for. Who wasn't hoping to see this happen in the final *Peanuts* strip?

"No more failure face!" was also the caption to a picture of a butched-out Charlie Brown that I drew around age 13, which later inspired *Weapon Brown*.

Also: Like those claws? You won't be seeing them again! Chuck's robot arm never does a magic trick more than once.

p.35 The Easter Mongrel story in this book, drawn years after this page, reveals the back story of Snoop's hatred for those pesky yellow birds (as well as his love for tongue!)

p.36 I was always charmed by *Peanuts'* association with Dolly Madison. Compared to other licensed cartoon characters like Bugs or Mickey, the *Peanuts* cast was just so warm and personable. Who wouldn't want to eat the coconut crusted logs of food coloring they were pushing?

p.37 A *Mad Magazine* parody of *Peanuts* that I read in my youth had Shermy (who appears in the very first *Peanuts* cartoon) returning to the neighborhood after a long absence to find that fame has gone to everyone's head. I found the idea that Shermy had been put out to pasture to be the more interesting premise. Until then, I hadn't realized there was a pre-history to *Peanuts* as I knew it.

Blink And You'll Miss: Rerun's skeleton, still strapped onto his mom's bicycle.

p.41 The next few pages begin an experiment in aping Mike Mignola's work on *Hellboy*. I even drew these with the same pens Mignola uses. (Boy, was he pissed to find me in his studio stealing his pens...)

I justified this homage because of the Cthulhian nature of the final chapter, but it also gave me an excuse to play with techniques lifted from one of my favorite artists.

p.49 This page features a Lucas-worthy special edition edit! In the original *Weapon Brown* comic book, I have Chuck screaming "Uggghh!!" That spelling reflected what Charlie Brown's howl always sounded like to me on TV. However, for the sake of authenticity I used the classic spelling in this final edition.

p.54 Very few people have grokked that "Weapon Brown" is a play on "Weapon X" (aka Wolverine). Even the style of the logo borrows from Barry Windsor-Smith's seminal *Weapon X* graphic novel.

p.64 Two things I strived to include as often as possible throughout *Weapon Brown* are "reveals" of never-before answered questions and spoofs of classic gags.

In this sequence, for example, the reveal answers the question "what lies beneath Beetle Bailey's helmet?" And if you will notice, Beetle's crushed corpse resembles what Beetle Bailey looks like after a stomping from Sergeant Snorkle. (If you didn't notice... hey, no biggie. It's not like I spent hundreds of hours on these details or anything...)

p.71 In the first chapter of *Weapon Brown*, the use of batteries as money was just a one-off. Then, when I expanded the story for *Blockhead's War*, I had to invent a whole culture for the Apocalypse. My thinking is that perhaps some EMP-style weapon has made it impossible to generate electricity, so the only juice left is that which is stored in batteries. I doubt this makes any scientific sense, so maybe a pillowcase full of Duracells just makes for a handy weapon!

p.75 *Crock* was a staple of my childhood comic strip diet, but it is also a strip I have never seen parodied or referenced anywhere else in popular culture.

If you've never read it, *Crock* is basically *The Wizard of Id* in the desert (in fact, both strips were originally co-created by the same cartoonist, Brant Parker). The strip loosely parodies the movie *Beau Geste,* a film about the French Foreign Legion (which also inspired another comic strip, *Beau Peep,* as well as Snoopy's Foreign Legion persona in *Peanuts*). I think *Crock* probably looms larger in my imagination than almost anyone else's, but it provided great stormtroopers for my story ... and a great minor boss for Chuck to kill!

p.82 ***Did You Get It?*** A B.O. Plenty air freshener!

p.83 Meet the villains! "The Syndicate" was originally a reference to Lucy Van Pelt's statement in *A Charlie Brown Christmas* that Christmas is a racket run by "a big Eastern syndicate." When I extended the story, I imagined that the Syndicate were the remnants of the fallen government, originally tasked with running different sectors of the economy and now just a cabal of gangsters.

Present are avatars of some of the comic page's biggest a-holes: The Pointy-Haired Boss, Julius C. Dithers, Duke Doonesbury, the King of Id, Pruneface ... and Mary Worth.

p.84 Try as I might, I could not make my Pruneface look more disgusting than Chester Gould's.

p.87 That's Pogo in panel three. I still feel like he should have gotten a bigger role.

p.88 ***Blink And You'll Miss:*** Agatha Crumm's corpse in panel two! The *Agatha Crumm* strip was another one of my childhood faves. Agatha was the hard-driving boss of a cookieworks, and probably deserved a seat with the other corporate goons in the Syndicate boardroom. I didn't remember her until those pages were already drawn, though.

p.91 The cavemen from *B.C.*, of course. And what apocalyptic tale would be complete without motorcycle marauders? (***Tragic Missed Opportunity:*** I forgot to add Monroe shock absorbers to the unicycles!)

p.94 I made a special effort to cast only brutish or Neanderthal type characters as the trogs, although I had to expand my criteria to fill out the horde. On this page we have Grog, Nemi, The Mole, Drooly Julie, Lance Lion, Andrew Nutz, Foozy, Attila the cat, a *Far Side* caveman and *Pearls Before Swine* cartoonist Stephan Pastis.

p.95 There are many famous faces on this page--Impy, The Fat Broad, Happy Hooligan, Bucolic Buffalo, Sherlocko the Monk, Hairless Joe, Earthquake McGoon and Charley the Australopithecine--but the real find was "Ug" (panel four, upper right), a little-known caveman character created by *Ziggy*'s Tom Wilson.

p.97 A bit of fun at the expense of bible-thumpin' Johnny Hart.

p.102 Panel four: When I wrote this, I too did not know who Chuck was going to meet at journey's end. Much of the story was still unformed at this stage. For instance, Chuck was originally going to make it out of Bone City and find the rebels elsewhere. It hadn't dawned on me that a city where no one would trespass was the perfect hiding spot for my heroes.

p.106 Just as *The Wizard of Id* plays off The *Wizard of Oz*, the prison-drama TV series *Oz* suggested what "Id" would become in my story.

The Wizard's black language is taken from the CD disc art of Zappa and Beefheart's *Bongo Fury.*

p.109 Pursuing Chuck are Bill the Cat, Heathcliff, Bucky Katt and one of Bernard Kliban's cats. I tried always to limit my references to characters from syndicated newspaper strips, but I occasionally broadened my scope to cartoons from other print media (Kliban's cartoons ran in magazines). In a sequence dedicated to noteworthy cartoon cats, I could hardly exclude such a famous contribution as Kliban's.

p.112 A fan once remarked to me, "You've done Garfield exactly right! He just sits like a slug on the comics page while the rest of the strips work for it!"

p.137 No, I did not rip off the title of the 2008 movie *The Hurt Locker.* Kathryn Bigelow and I **both** ripped off a line of dialogue from the 1993 movie *Demolition Man!*

p.143 Here begins the odyssey of Anne's eyes! Although I tried to stick to the blank ovals made famous by *Little Orphan Annie,* I found it hard to make Anne sexy while maintaining that design. Nonetheless, I struggled to keep faith with my original scheme, and if Anne wasn't blind before, she certainly was after all the mutations her eyes went through! It is not until page 211 that Anne's eyes finally assume a more or less normal shape.

p.146 Chuck is enjoying my German interpretation of Deathtöngue's famous anthem (from *Bloom County*). The original lyrics

are: "Run with the Devil! Shout Satan's might! DeathTöngue! Deathtöngue! The Beast rises tonight!" I altered these for rhyming purposes. Re-translated from my *scheiss* Deutsch, the new lyrics are: "Running with the Devil! Scream Satan's hate! Deadtongue! Deadtongue! The Dragon rises at night!" (I'm sorry, Herr Paskuly. All your high school German instruction was for naught!)

p.147 Panel three: That's Elmont and Alice (from *Doonesbury*) fighting over Flook, the star of an eponymous British comic strip. Flook is some sort of half-pig/half-Teletubby.

p.149 My tributes to Blondie, Prince Valiant and Tank McNamara. Tank gets no lines, because I never read his strip.

p.150 Anyone? Anyone? The masturbating guard is Moose Miller.

p.154 "Clearasil Messiah from the shelf! He shoots pimples from here to Hell!"

p.163 Panel two: Jason Fox (and Quincy) from *Foxtrot,* a great strip that was definitely underserved in *Weapon Brown.*

p.167 Any Mutt and Jeff can get a job in this outfit!

p.175 Hägar the Horrible vs. Dennis the Menace! I can't believe I'm the first person to think this up! (And I'm not going to Google this to confirm it, either!)

p.180 Panel one: Marvin, the adorable right-wing baby (plus Dr. Twitt). Panel two: Liz, Jon Arbuckle's love interest in *Garfield.*

p.181 Willy n' Ethel, meet Willie and Joe! (Then meet your maker!) Also: characters from *Freckles and Friends.*

p.182 Possibly my proudest reference: a Rube Goldberg device!

p.184 I hope you all noticed that Henry is wiping his ass-mouth with toilet paper. As for Mallard Fillmore, *you got off easy, fukker.*

p.185 Gramps is repairing Bottle Job's vibrator.

p.186 "Ol' Sparky" is obviously a reference to "Sparky" Schulz, the android duplicate Charles Schulz would send out in his place for publicity junkets.

p.190 Panel three answers one more burning question from comics history: Whatever happened to Lyman, Odie's original owner in *Garfield?*

p.196 The source of the shmoo is another example of the story writing itself. I originally thought that the shmoo (which, of course, references the extraordinary self-sacrificing animal from *Li'l Abner*) might come from a giant cow's udder, but I knew this was not interesting enough. Bringing back the Garf was suddenly obvious. It not only allowed for a sickening reveal, but also gave *Garfield* a bit more of the stage time that that strip has rightly earned (as well as more of the portrayal it has rightly earned).

p.217 Oh, how I'd love to have done more with "Quatto" Hans and Fritz! In an earlier draft of the story, they played the role that eventually went to Pops.

p.226 Those "leaping lizards" are borrowed from Vaughn Bode.

p.227 I drop little hints here and there that Anne is more Machiavellian than her heroic qualities would suggest. Her Secret Circle may have a few things in common with the Syndicate.

p.232 CAL was a lot of fun to write. Being virtually indestructible, the world truly is his oyster. This justified a lot of funny, over-the-top dialogue that would otherwise have only been forced attempts at sounding cool.

p.242 The Phantom (whom the headless soldier Walker evokes) only ever uses his gun to shoot weapons out of people's hands. I decided to subvert this by having CAL shoot through everyone's hands with Walker's gun.

p.246 ***Did You Get It?*** Dick Tracy's two-way wrist radio!

p.249 Become cartoonists, people! A tiger swallowing babies whole is the kind of fun you can't put a price on!

p.256 Bill Watterson, of course, would never express himself thusly. However, I think the challenge he set--both through the quality of his work, his demand for space within newspapers for the artistry of comics to be expressed and his decision to quit while on top--blazed a trail that few cartoonists or newspapers will dare follow. Who doesn't think that most newspapers would be improved if they ditched every one of their strips that have run for more than twenty years and replaced them with just five or ten new strips given twice the space of the old?

With the transformation of all print media brought on by the Internet, to even argue how newspapers could do better by their comic-hungry audiences seems quaint. Yet, for this reason, now is the perfect time to abandon the vitiated status quo of newspaper comics.

p.264 My favorite page! I really think the high-contrast artwork turned out well. And, of course, it features another long overdue comic strip showdown.

p.266 Cathy is the one losing her nose in the bottom panel. *Cathy* was the beginning of the end of my love affair with newspaper strips. I'd never liked soap opera strips, like *Gil Thorp* or *Brenda Starr,* and so always skipped them. I forced myself to read all the "funny" strips, though, even if I didn't enjoy them. Then, one day, I realized that I could breeze through *Cathy* if I just skipped the middle two panels, which were really just filler. Soon I was ignoring entire strips altogether, and before long I was inhaling my entertainment through a crack pipe. Damn you, Cathy! I hope you *never* fit into that swimsuit!

p.267 Dead or dying in panel one: the cast of *Polly and her Pals*, Doc Boy and der Captain.

p.268 There are plenty of famous faces on the bus, but my favorites are Biddy and Bert, the stars of a short-lived strip drawn by my great-uncle Bob Donovan, who was also Fred Laswell's assistant on *Snuffy Smith* for a lot of years.

p.275 A very rare triple-layer joke! *Funky Winkerbean* cartoonist Tom Batiuk enjoys abusing his characters like some evil Aztec god. Panel one refers to a storyline where Wally Winkerbean (an Afghan vet) nearly dies from a landmine, but a helpful native knocks the "Bouncing Betty" explosive away with a club. Panel four harkens back to a strip where Wally is blown up with an IED, only to have it turn out to be a dream. *It ain't no dream in Weapon Brown, Wally!!*

But at least you went quick. As panel three reminds us, when you star in *Funky Winkerbean,* the "Big C" is always just around the corner.

(*Funky Winkerbean* is still dear to me, actually. It was the first comic strip I imitated when I was cutting my teeth, and an installment of *Funky* in which the pathetic "Scapegoats" football team loses a chance to score their first-ever touchdown because their idiot coach calls a time-out remains one of my favorite single strips of all time.)

p.279 That's Robert Ripley in the propaganda poster. *Ripley's Believe It or Not!* was a comic strip before it was a TV show (believe it or not!)

p.281 ***Did You Get It?*** The gunshots are sounding out the "Popeye" theme.

p.284 My original intent for this moment was a clever subversion. Gramps would break out a new and improved arm with missiles, flamethrower and what have you, then Chuck would curtly tell him to give him back his old clunker. When I decided to kill off Gramps, I still felt that the scene called for the arm to look fancier than before. But underneath she's just the same ol' girl.

p.306 One thing I never reveal in the story is exactly how much of Chuck is mechanical, or what the limit of his strength is. I like to imply that Chuck always has just enough of what he needs to do the job, but not much more.

p.310 You can stop scratching your heads! That's Jim Davis in panel three. The egg was Sheldon, an unhatched chick from Davis' *U.S.Acres.*

p.311 I may have gotten too clever for my own good in panel five. The awkward orientation of Cal and Chuck's bodies is meant to evoke the cover of *The Essential Calvin and Hobbes.*

p.312 That's the Jeep (from *Popeye*) falling out of that tank.

p.318 Here's another moment that turned out differently than I expected. I had planned to do a glory shot of Chuck delivering the coup de grâce with his mighty metal arm, but I could not find another way for him to also stop CAL's blow. And so it is his common flesh-and-blood limb that concludes the fight. (However this *does* fit with a recurring theme in the story that Ol' Sparky is more "tool" than weapon.)

p.336 The giant footprint comes from a *Calvin and Hobbes* cartoon, and that is the wise old Guru from *B.C.* on top of the hoodoo.

p.337 ***Did You Get It?*** Cow tools! Also, that may be *bone* sticking out of Chuck's arm. It occured to me that perhaps Chuck's prosthetic would still need some organic features to make the cyber-interface take.
Blink And You'll Miss: Reddy Kilowatt.

p.355 After several false starts, I finally arrived at what I think is a car worthy of Chuck. What you see is a mash-up of a rat rod and Orbitron, one of the custom cars designed by cartoonist and Rat Fink creator Ed "Big Daddy" Roth.

p.358 What was it Chekhov said? "Don't put a mass of flesh-eating kudzu on the stage unless you intend to use it."

p.360 With a parting homage to the final *Peanuts* strip, Chuck rides into the ages. And that, my friends, is the last you will ever hear from my round-headed son of a bitch.

Jeffy, on the other hand ...

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I also frequently consulted *The Smithsonian Collection of Newspaper Comics,* edited by Bill Blackbeard and Martin Williams (1977, Smithsonian Institution Press), and *The Encyclopedia Of American Comics,* edited by Ron Goulart (1990, Promised Land Productions.)

There are also many people in my life without whom *Weapon Brown* could not have been completed. This project owes much to the love and support of my friends and family, and to hundreds of loyal Blockheads, Goons and Mutants. The lawyers should really focus their energies on all of *them* before sending their process servers to my underground bunker in Idaho.

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*And a special H-bomb-sized "Thank You" goes to contributor **Leonard P. Charlebois "WolfV2.01"**, whose largesse is proof that some people should not be allowed near a credit card.*

With that, I believe I have said all I have to say. There may have been other people who helped pave the way for *Weapon Brown*, but damned if I can think of anyone I left out. I thanked my folks, right? Maybe my chums at the Post Office deserve a shout-out? Hmmm ...

I feel like there's someone I'm forgettin

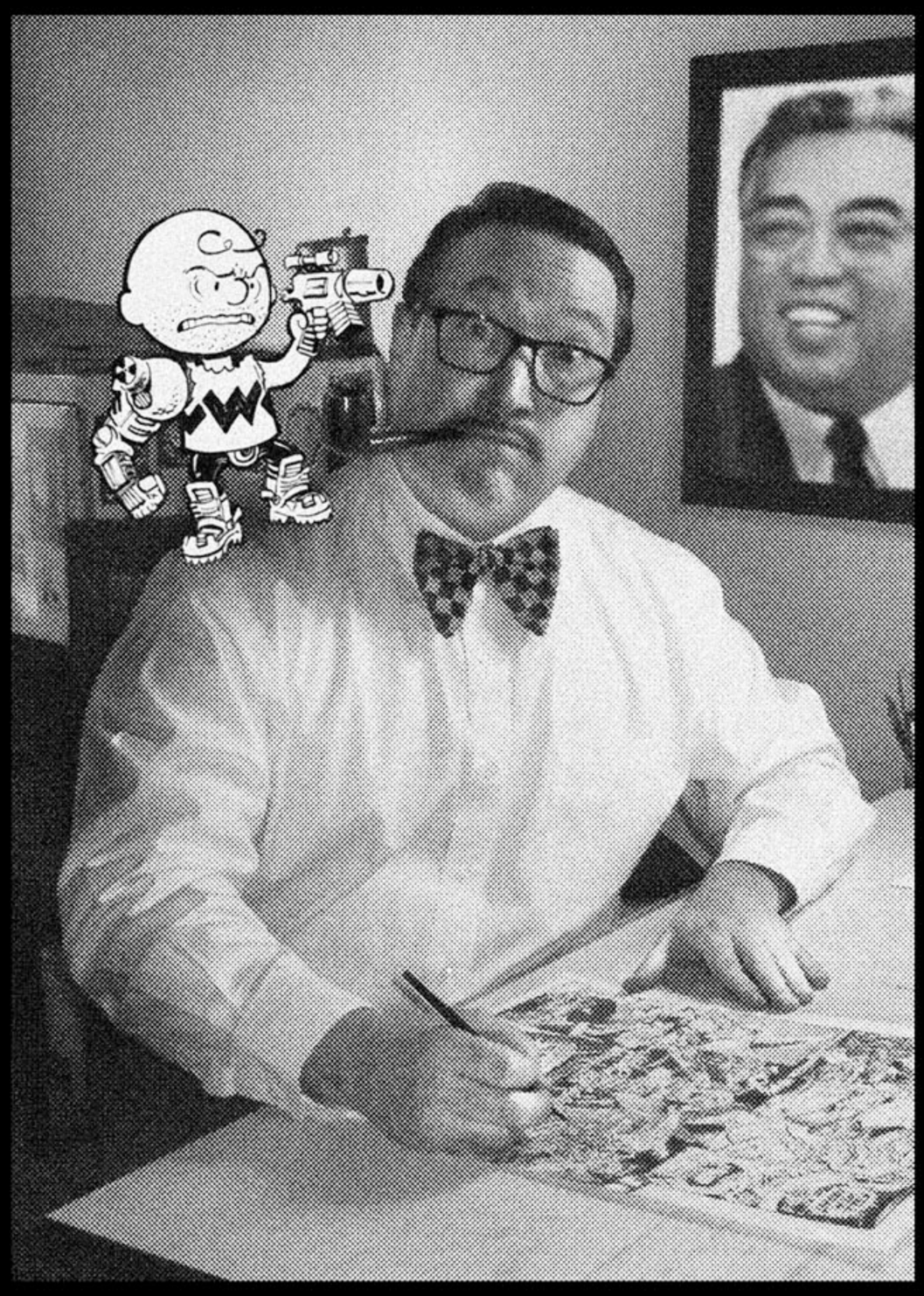
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Jason Yungbluth is a cartoonist whose work has appeared in numerous magazines and newspapers, including *The Buffalo News, Starlog* and *Mad Magazine.* In 2005 his short story "It's Not Easy Being Green" was featured in DC Comics' *Bizarro World.* In addition to *Weapon Brown,* he is the creator of the comic strips *Deep Fried* and *Clarissa.* Jason exists -- neither alive nor dead -- in an unopened box in Rochester, New York.

Learn more about Weapon Brown at Weaponbrown.com. For additional Death Ray Graphics comics and products, visit Whatisdeepfried.com.

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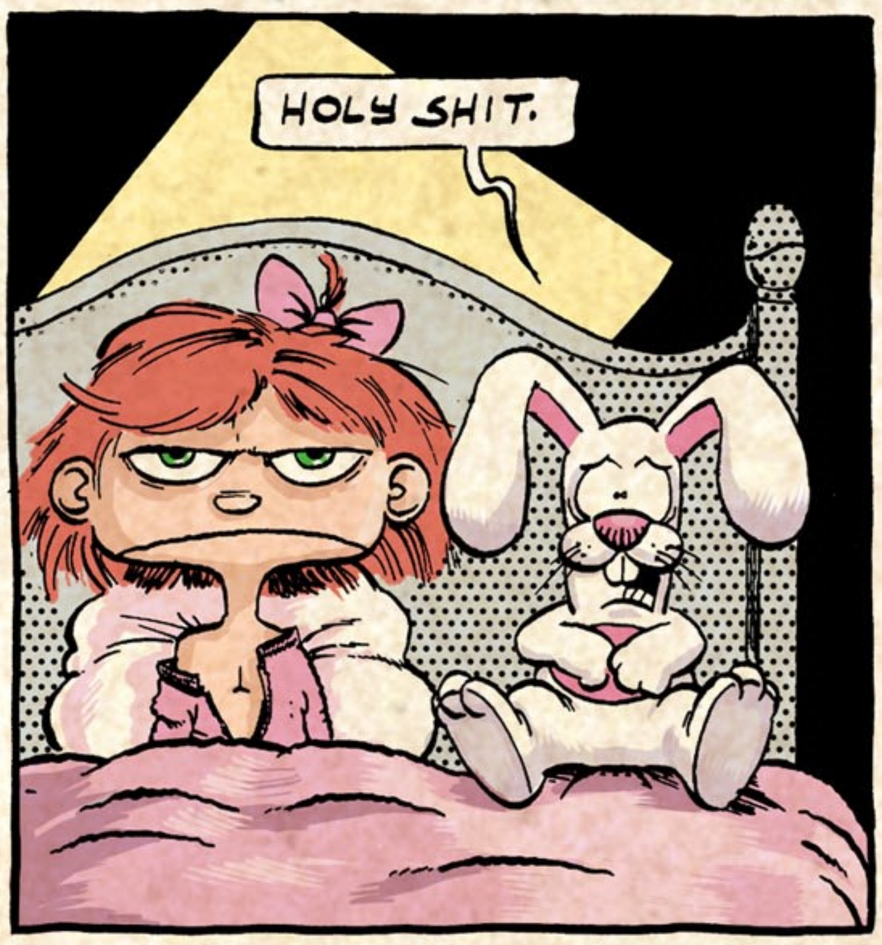
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SO, ONE TIME I WAS AT THE COMIC SHOP, AND I SAW AN AD IN *THE COMICS JOURNAL* FOR THIS SMALL PRESS BOOK THAT LOOKED LIKE IT WAS REALLY **WRONG**, LIKE SO WRONG I'D BE EMBARASSED TO ORDER IT. AND I DIDN'T. BUT THEN I KEPT TRYING TO FIND A COPY OF IT AT SHOWS . . . NO LUCK. AND NO MENTION OF IT ON THE INTERNET, EITHER. SO I WAS LEFT TO WONDER WHAT THIS COMIC WOULD HAVE BEEN LIKE, AND IF IT COULD REALLY HAVE BEEN AS FRIED AS IT LOOKED, CUZ' THE MORE I THOUGHT OF IT, THE MORE CERTAIN I BECAME THAT THAT WAS THE COMIC I'D BEEN LOOKING FOR MY WHOLE LIFE. THE LEVEL BENEATH UNDERGROUND.

FINALLY I JUST SAID *"FUKKIT, I'LL HAVE TO DRAW THE DAMN THING MYSELF."*



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