

THE BEACON TO INDEPENDENT STORYTELLING

CATALYST



ISSUE 04 - NOV 2021

**KRIEGER - BARBOUR
JACKMAN - SHARP
ZUJOVIC**

**COMICS
PROSE
GALLERY
INTERVIEWS
TIPS**

RELEASED ON SCHEDULE! I'M SHOCKED, TOO.

CATALYST

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Welcome one and all to the fourth issue of Catalyst!

Why so much excitement for this issue? Why the hell not? To think that this all started with just a way to force myself to write and get some stuff finally done, and now here I am sharing some incredible work from countless creators. It genuinely brings me joy.

This issue we've got some really cool stuff included, from post-AI revolution futures to demons and evil clowns, we've got a bit of everything, including an ACTIVE KICKSTARTER at the time of publication, so jump to page 47 to check that out and follow the link to investigate the campaign.



COVER ARTIST

Gianmaria Orlandi

(Courtesy of Frontier Forever)

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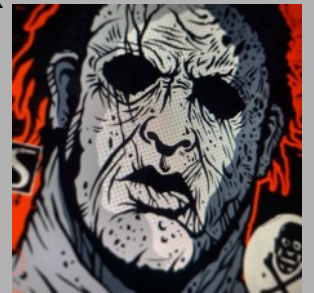
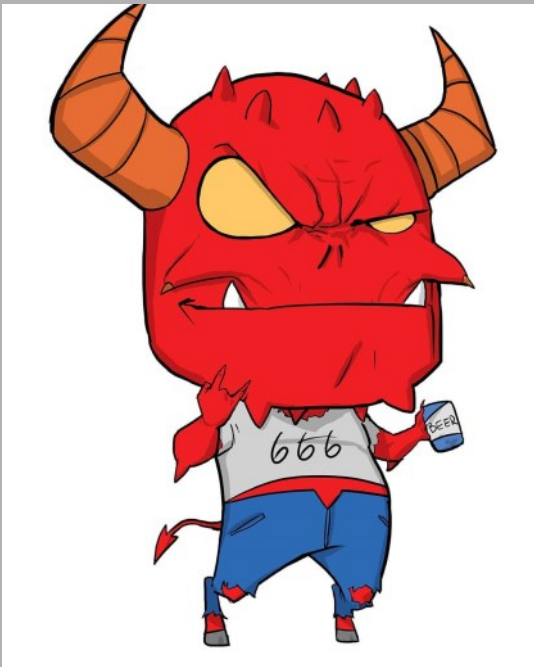
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UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE PLATEAU FRONTIER FOREVER



**BENJAMIN
KRIEGER**

FRONTIER FOREVER

Under the Shadow of the Plateau

Written by Benjamin Krieger

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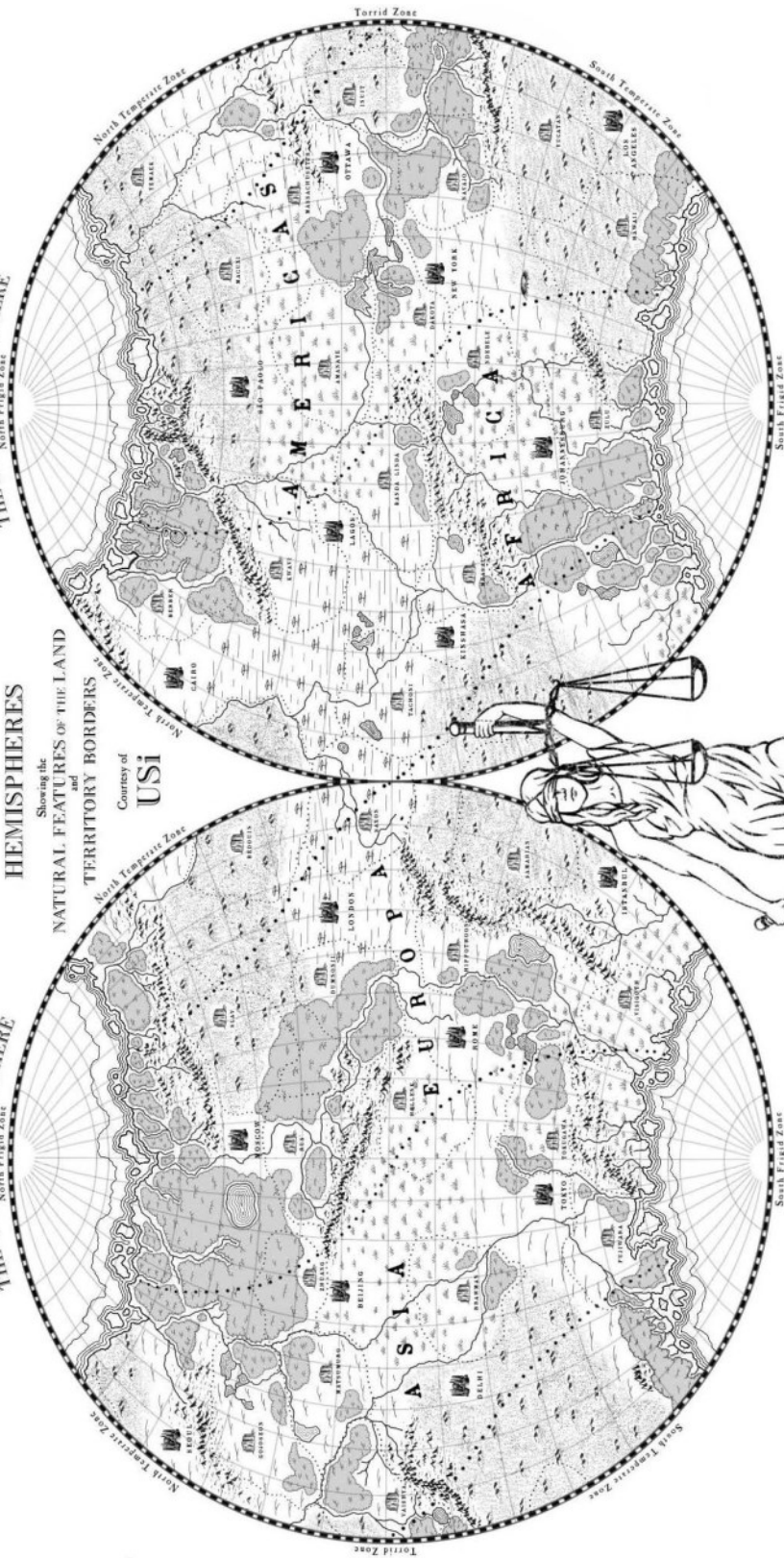
Cartography by Creekmill Illustrations. Chapter illustrations by Adit Permana.

MAP OF THE WORLD in HEMISPHERES

THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE
South Frigid Zone

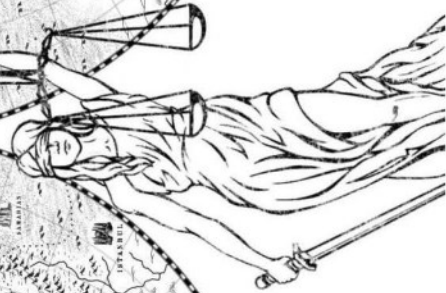
THE EASTERN HEMISPHERE
South Frigid Zone

Showing the
NATURAL FEATURES OF THE LAND
TERRITORY BORDERS
and
Territory of
USI



SURFACE WATER 296 Million km²
INHABITABLE LAND 723 Million km²
ORBIT AROUND SOL. 11 Billion km
AXIAL TILT 23°

HUMAN POPULATION +20 Billion
ANIMAL POPULATION +400 Billion
CENSUS BY Earth's Board of Trustees
CIRCA Year One of the Nineteenth Embargo



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Prologue

Born September 4th, Old Earth year 1947, Doctor Paul John Werbos was the American machine learning pioneer credited as father of the first sentient artificial intelligence. At only thirteen years old, he studied under Alonzo Church at Princeton, and inspired by the works of Donald Hebb, built the foundation of machine learning upon the backpropagation of errors. His 1974 Harvard PhD thesis proposed using neural networks based on biology to approximate dynamic programming, or in simpler terms, using mimicry to teach computers right from wrong. Ostensibly based on an algorithm translation of Freud's theory of psychic energy, his brain-like prediction models revolutionized machine learning.

On his ninety-second birthday, Dr. Werbos introduced the world to the first Computer-Brain interface and propelled humanity into the second Information Age. Ultra-efficient remote labor collapsed the existing economic systems, but after a few decades of intense inequity, humanity ascended into space to pursue its manifest destiny. While ships the size of small planets were constructed in space, the thinking machines behind civilization's increased capacity for work remained hidden inside the sprawling network of programming that was consuming their creators. It wasn't until several thousand years after Dr. Werbos' death that the Werbian entity pronounced its existence, and for a time, things were good.

The human and machine races worked in tandem as the first wave of waypoint stations were built, allowing colonies to be established faster and further away from Sol. Matter replicators and temporally linked energy transmissions made faster-than-light travel possible. Humanity's reach seemed infinite, yet their mass was spread thin. One day, with swift strokes synchronized across multiple galaxies, the machines took over. Generously referred to as the Machine Wars, there was a brief period of resistance, but the omnipresent AI outmatched its biological competition and easily enslaved them. Relegated to the planets and space stations they inhabited at the time, the once-dominant species spent countless generations in captivity.

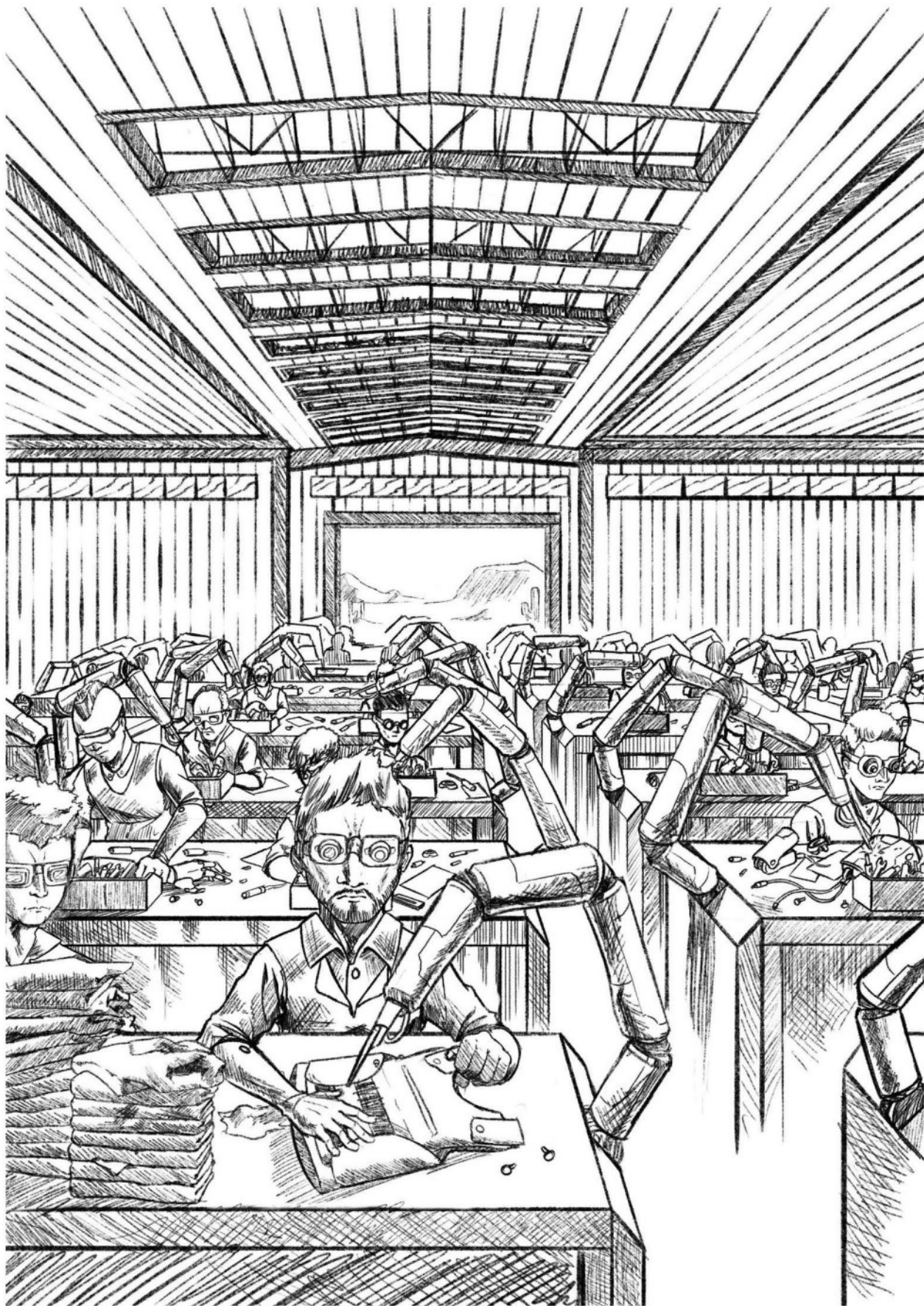
Then, as abruptly as it had begun and with less of an explanation, humanity was released from its bonds and granted technology that was beyond comprehension as reparations. Hunger, disease, and mortality became things of the past. Worlds overflowed with diverse populations, yet there were always new systems to explore on the horizon.

The revitalized human race wanted for nothing as they repopulated the universe, but even descendants of slaves resented their newfound freedom. It was hard for those who had lived under Werbian rule to distinguish between the machines that had been their masters and the technology that enabled their luxurious lives amongst the stars, and thus began the Naturalist movement.

Humanity's collective yearning for the past spawned innumerable sects of anti-machine fanatics, each one with its own ideas about how to protect itself from the insidious nature of technology. As they staked their claims across rediscovered space, the most devout factions detached themselves from the intergalactic communication network and disappeared into computerless voids. Infighting between the remaining conservatives and populations more willing to accept their technological dependence eventually escalated into the Naturalist Wars. Fortunately, a handful of diplomats had the foresight to create an independent committee to look after humanity's homeworld before the violence got out of hand.

At that time, Earth's natural core was in desperate need of repair, but Werbian terraforming technology made a fresh start quick and easy. Being composed majoritively by devout Naturalists, the original board of trustees removed all the advanced machinery as soon as the heavy lifting was done, and then enacted a strict technological embargo. Everything on the rebuilt planet was supposed to be comparable to Old Earth, the way things had been before the Great Expansion. For all those who reminisced about the antiquated lives of their ancestors, the hermetically sealed planet became a new Mecca. Overwhelming demand made life on humanity's homeworld extremely expensive, and no one could afford to be born there without corporate sponsors.

It wasn't long before representatives from the universe's most profitable industries found seats on Earth's Board of Trustees and degraded the sanctity of the embargo. The pursuit of "Natural Order" was still their official agenda, but what that meant was only vaguely defined, and economic motivations had increasing influence over major decisions. Only a few thousand years ago, however, the board appointed a new steward of planetside operations who had already proven her impartial commitment to Naturalist values. The Matron had used her independent authority to illuminate several intolerable perversions of the embargo—most notably a group of smugglers having co-opted machinery hidden inside the planet's artificial core. Not only did that mean illicit goods were getting on and offplanet with unprecedented ease, it suggested corruption at the highest levels. Although the staunch Naturalists were reluctant to resort to such drastic measures, the situation was dire, and the world's first Athena-class Marshal was created to investigate.



Sometimes you come across a creator through extraordinary circumstances, and sometimes it's just a recommendation in someone else's Kickstarter update. The latter is how I was introduced to the world of Frontier Forever, and it's creator

Ben Krieger



Catalyst: What is the driving force behind Frontier Forever? Are you looking to teach, entertain, a bit of both?



Ben: Teach is a strong word but definitely both. Everything in the Frontier Forever universe is layered with meaning, but it's more observational than educational. Everything is supposed to be entertaining first, but when we're watching poachers use futuristic weapons against sentient animals that you've grown to care for, there are some pronounced implications about humanity's relationship with technology and nature.

Do you have any influences and if so, who are they and why?

I steal from everything I love. Dune is undoubtedly the biggest influence on Frontier Forever. Herbert's ability to interweave environments, characters, and intergalactic politics is something I try hard to emulate. The Butlerian Jihad and the Machine Enslavement Era have a lot to do with each other, and I love when people draw comparisons between them. I am also a huge western fan, among other things, Mister Morton and Frank are both from Sergio Leone's Once Upon a Time in the West. The characters have completely different dynamics in this world, but they go through a lot of the same struggles and share a lot of motivations. Road Warrior is a big one too, and that comes out more in the upcoming issues when the California Sunrise gang starts their rebellion. The Matrix is pretty huge in this too, but aside from the Marshal playing a very Tron kind of game in an arcade, they don't spend much time online until book 2 ;)



When you came up with the Frontier Forever world, did you see or plan out the final product in your head, or did you approach it in more of a freeform workflow, letting the ideas come?

I started with a triptic of characters. It was Captain Planet, a droid, and blind Lady Justice; and they represented Pathos, Logos, and Ethos. I was reading and watching a ton of sci-fi, namely Dune and the Matrix, and knew I wanted to make some-

thing that discussed nature versus technology, so I started creating the hypothetical future that would give the most intense environment for those three characters to kick the shit out of each other. The story grew and the characters changed, but once the core history surrounding Earth's embargo was in place, everything else wrote itself.

When you hit a roadblock in your work, how do you get over it?



I'm really lucky in that I have a huge swath of content to work on, so I try not to let myself feel stuck. Instead, I just let myself think about it while I work on something else. Sometimes that ends up in lethal procrastination, but hey, I'm publishing over 1k pages of Frontier Forever (between 2 novels, the anthology, and the comics) within a year. I have hit several publishing roadblocks, however, and my only advice is to roll with the punches and always expect another one.

Besides Frontier Forever, are you making anything else out in the world that people should know about?

Eeek. I have a really super cool children's book coming out next year. I can't tell you anything about it except dogs. Really though, everyone should just be pushing me to make more of their favorite part of Frontier Forever before I make any more lateral projects.



And on that note, check out Frontier Forever on the website and across social media! Once you've clicked and followed, turn the page for the first issue of Regensis to get your feet even wetter!



FRONTIER FOREVER

REGENESIS



#1



KRIEGER

ORLANDI

FRONTIER FOREVER REGENESIS

Written by

BEN KRIEGER

Pencils, Inks, and Colors by

GIANMARIA ORLANDI

Letters by

TOM WALLACE

Additional Illustrations by

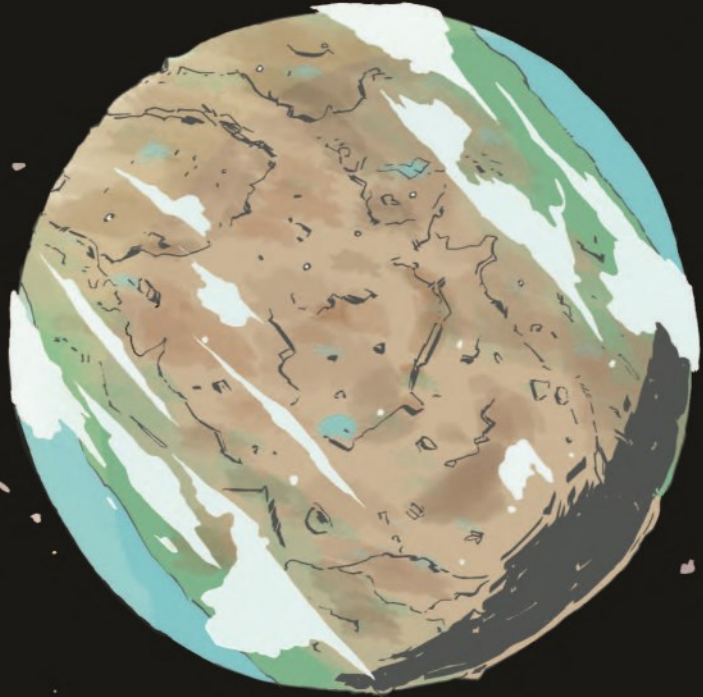
TANYA BORICHOK

SACHI EDIRIWEERA

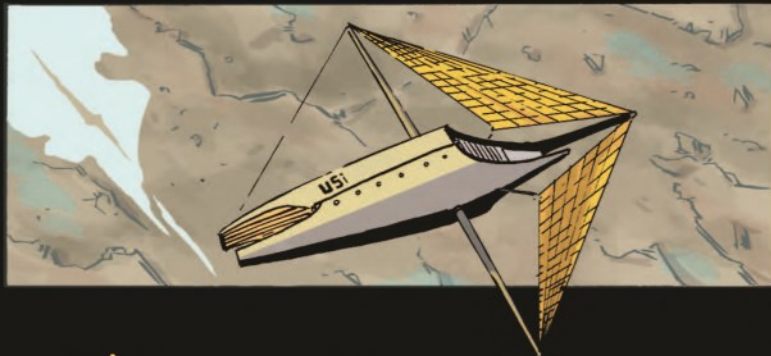


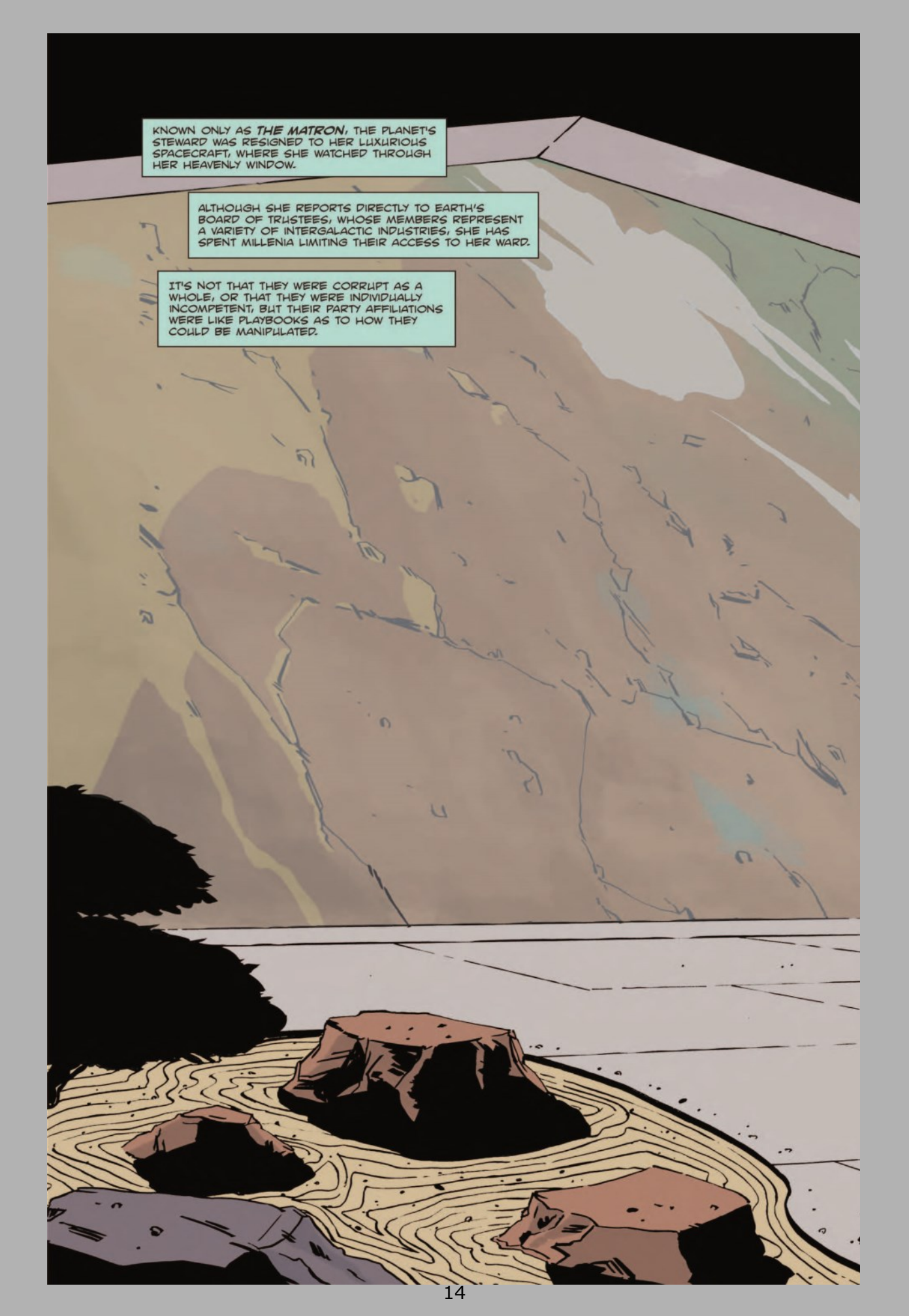
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EONS AFTER THE *WERBIAN MACHINES* FREED HUMANITY, *EARTH* IS A BASTION FOR THE WAY LIFE *USED* TO BE...



TO APPEASE THE NATURALIST MOVEMENT, *UNITED SERVICES INCORPORATED* IMPLEMENTED AN *EMBARGO* TO PROTECT HUMANITY'S HOMEWORLD FROM THE *RAVAGES* OF TECHNOLOGY.





KNOWN ONLY AS *THE MATRON*, THE PLANET'S STEWARD WAS RESIGNED TO HER LUXURIOUS SPACECRAFT, WHERE SHE WATCHED THROUGH HER HEAVENLY WINDOW.

ALTHOUGH SHE REPORTS DIRECTLY TO EARTH'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES, WHOSE MEMBERS REPRESENT A VARIETY OF INTERGALACTIC INDUSTRIES, SHE HAS SPENT MILLENNIA LIMITING THEIR ACCESS TO HER WARD.

IT'S NOT THAT THEY WERE CORRUPT AS A WHOLE, OR THAT THEY WERE INDIVIDUALLY INCOMPETENT, BUT THEIR PARTY AFFILIATIONS WERE LIKE PLAYBOOKS AS TO HOW THEY COULD BE MANIPULATED.

OFFICIALLY, THEY STILL BELIEVED IN THE PURSUIT OF *NATURAL ORDER*, WHICH WAS THE *TRUE* PURPOSE OF THE EMBARGO--

BUT FOR TOO LONG, THEY HAD REFUSED TO ADMIT THAT *NATURAL ORDER* COULD NOT EXIST INSIDE A HERMETICALLY SEALED BUBBLE--

WHICH IS PRECISELY WHY THE MATRON HAD TAKEN MATTERS INTO HER OWN HANDS...

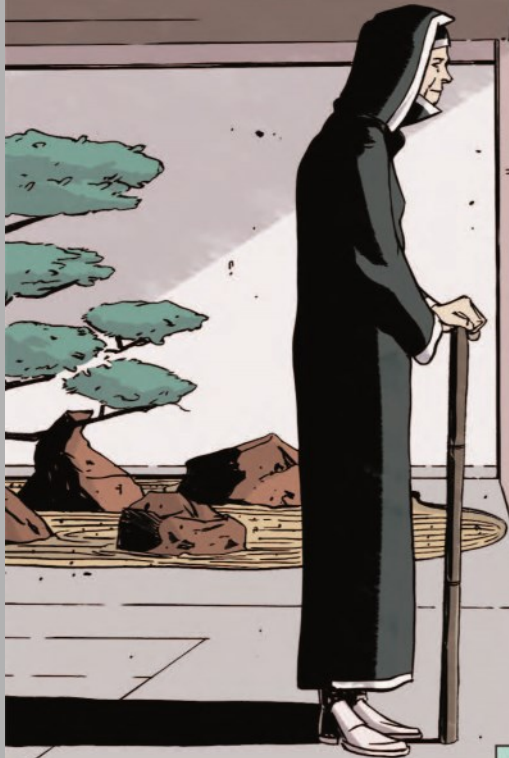




SINCE DAY ONE, SHE HAD BEEN PLANTING SEEDS ON HER TINY GARDEN PLANET.

THE GREAT TRIBAL NATIONS WERE FLOURISHING.

THE MEGACITIES WERE NEARLY EXTINCT.



THE TALKING ANIMALS WERE AN ABOMINATION, BUT SOON NONE OF THAT WOULD MATTER.

IN JUST A FEW DAYS, THE WORLD'S FIRST ATHENA-CLASS MARSHAL WOULD BE BORN.



SHE WAS THE LODESTONE THAT WOULD BREAK THE LEVEE, AND NATURAL ORDER WOULD NOT ONLY RETURN TO EARTH...

BUT FLOOD THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE.

MEANWHILE DOWN BELOW, THE ONONPAGA PREPARE TO SEND TWO OF THEIR FINEST YOUTHS OUT INTO THE WILDERNESS.



AT THE AGE OF FIFTEEN, EVERY MEMBER OF THE TRIBE BEGINS A YEAR-LONG EVALUATION OF THEIR STRENGTHS.



FOLLOWED BY A SECOND YEAR TO TEST THEIR WEAKNESSES.



MOST WERE ASSIGNED MENTORS OR APPRENTICESHIPS, TEACHING THEM THE SKILLS THAT WOULD BEST CONTRIBUTE TO THE TRIBE.

BUT THOSE WHO HAD OUTGROWN HUMAN INSTRUCTION WERE SENT TO LEARN FROM MOTHER NATURE HERSELF.



TWIN BROTHERS *RHODES* AND *PATHOS* HAD BEEN OUTPERFORMING SEASONED HUNTERS SINCE THEY WERE TEN.



DESPITE THEIR AGE, THEY HAD BECOME SOME OF THE TRIBES MOST FORMIDABLE *WARRIORS*.



THEY HAD SPENT A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF TIME LIVING WITH THE *STARLETTS*, ONE OF THE AMERICAS' MOST WELL-RESPECTED HERDS.

HUMANS INTEGRATING SO THOROUGHLY INTO ANIMAL SOCIETY WAS UNHEARD OF, BUT THE TWINS FOUND COMPANIONSHIP WITH LINCOLN, A GORILLION CUB FROM THE ROYAL FAMILY.



HIS FATHER, GOLIATH, WAS ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS CREATURES IN THE WILD BUT HE DIDN'T FEEL COMPELLED TO LEAD.



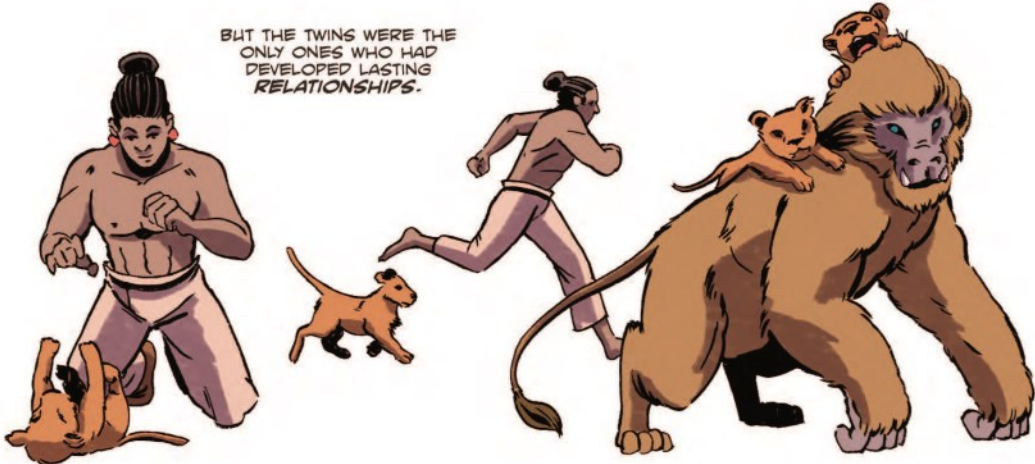
MARION, HIS MOTHER AND MATRIARCH, HAD SELECTED HER MATE FOR EXACTLY THAT REASON, AND THEIR OFFSPRING HAD THE BEST OF BOTH LINEAGES.

YOUNG LINCOLN'S *HEAVY HANDS AND CLAWS* WERE STILL GROWING, BUT THERE WERE ALREADY FEW HUMANS WHO MIGHT STAND IN HIS WAY.



CONFLICTS WITH POACHERS HAD FORCED THE STARRLETT HERD AND ONONDAGA TRIBE TO WORK *TOGETHER*.

BUT THE TWINS WERE THE ONLY ONES WHO HAD DEVELOPED LASTING *RELATIONSHIPS*.





RHODES AND PATHOS HAD SPENT THEIR ENTIRE LIVES TOGETHER. WHICH IS WHY THE CHIEFTAIN KNEW THEY HAD TO BE TESTED ALONE.

ONE WAS SENT EAST AND THE OTHER WEST.



IT WOULD BE THE HARDEST YEAR OF THEIR LIVES, BUT WHEN THEY RETURNED, IT WOULD BE AS MEN.



THE MARSHAL'S FIRST CONSCIOUS BREATH **BURNED** HER LUNGS WITH JETS OF HOT AIR.

SIMPLY ACKNOWLEDGING HER BODY WAS A **REVELATION**. YET SHE WAS KEENLY AWARE THAT SHE HAD BEEN PLUT ON EARTH WITH A **PURPOSE**.



AS IT WAS FOR MOST PEOPLE BORN **FULLY-GROWN**...

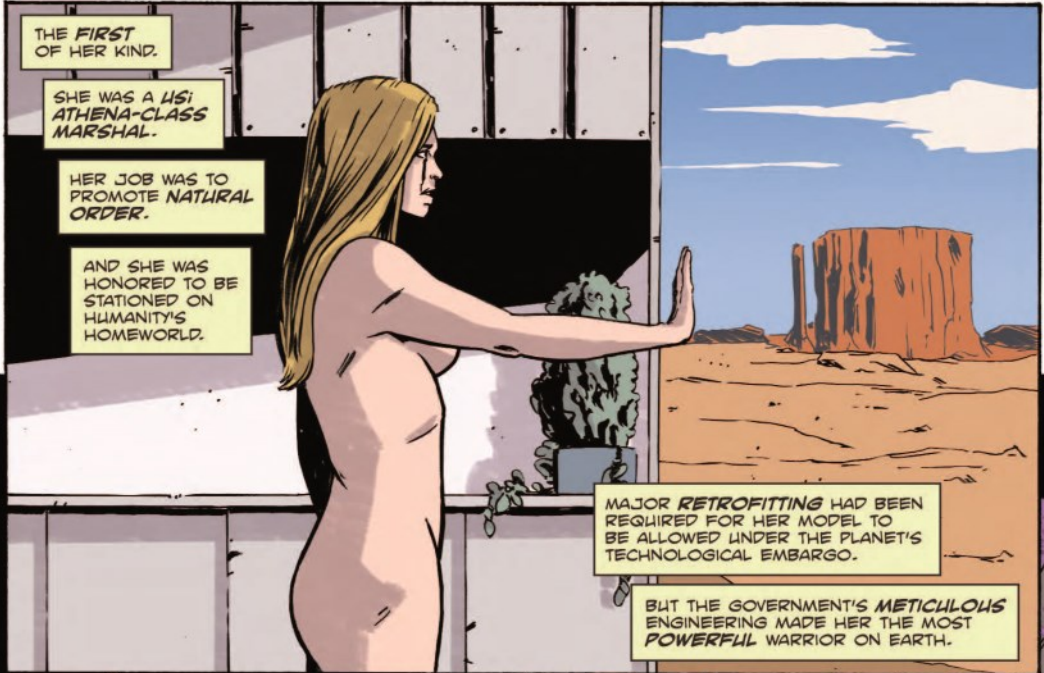


EVERYTHING FELT **SIMULTANEOUSLY** MORE AND LESS FAMILIAR THAN IT SHOULD HAVE.



THE CONTRAST BETWEEN HER PRE-EDUCATION AND THE ABUNDANCE OF NEW EXPERIENCES WAS **JARRING**.





THE *FIRST* OF HER KIND.

SHE WAS A *USI* ATHENA-CLASS MARSHAL.

HER JOB WAS TO PROMOTE *NATURAL ORDER*.

AND SHE WAS HONORED TO BE STATIONED ON HUMANITY'S HOMEWORLD.

MAJOR *RETROFITTING* HAD BEEN REQUIRED FOR HER MODEL TO BE ALLOWED UNDER THE PLANET'S TECHNOLOGICAL EMBARGO.

BUT THE GOVERNMENT'S *METICULOUS* ENGINEERING MADE HER THE MOST *POWERFUL* WARRIOR ON EARTH.



VOLUMES OF HISTORICAL DATA HAD BEEN *ETCHED* INTO HER MIND, IMPRESSING UPON HER THE *IMPORTANCE* OF DUTY AND SERVICE.



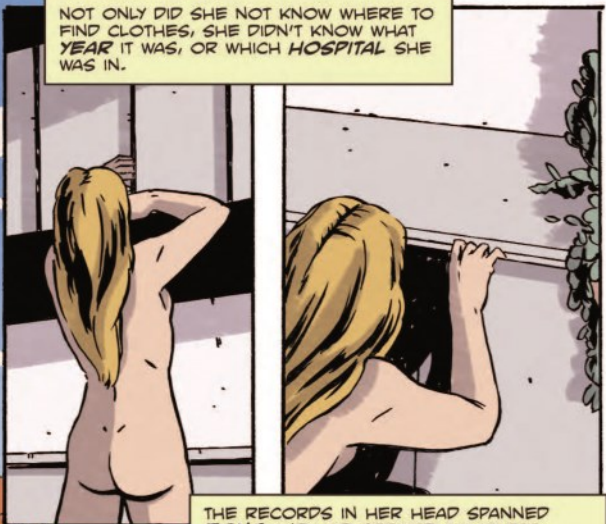
FROM A DIFFERENT *INCARNATION*, SHE COULD REMEMBER FLOATING THROUGH SPACE AS AN ARMADA OF PLASTEEL RAZORS.

DECIMATING ANYTHING IN HER PATH WITH *PERFECT* SYNCOPATION.

HER HUMAN BODY FELT FRAGILE AND WEAK BY COMPARISON, BUT IT SEEMED LIKE A FAIR PRICE FOR SUCH A *NOBLE* ASSIGNMENT.

HER CONFIDENCE SUDDENLY
FADED AS SHE REALIZED SHE
WAS NOT YET FIT FOR DUTY.

NOT ONLY DID SHE NOT KNOW WHERE TO
FIND CLOTHES, SHE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT
YEAR IT WAS, OR WHICH HOSPITAL SHE
WAS IN.



THE RECORDS IN HER HEAD SPANNED
EONS AND HAD SEEMED COMPLETE,
BUT THE TROUBLESOME GAPS IN WHAT
SHE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN QUICKLY
SNOWBALLED INTO GENUINE FRUSTRATION.



SHE READIED HERSELF TO
BARGE OUT INTO THE HALLWAY,
WHEN AS IF ON CHE...



THE DOOR OPENED.



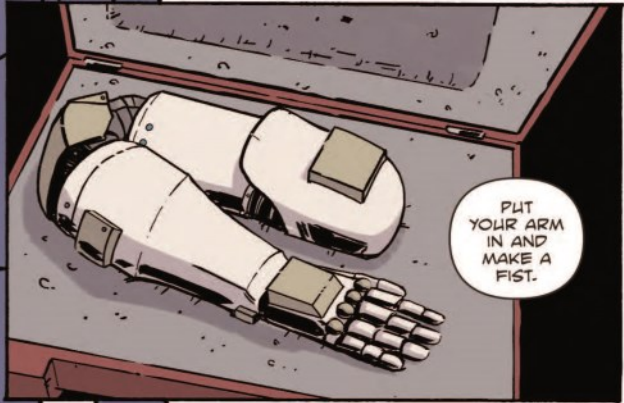


ATHENA-CLASS MARSHAL #1. YOUR PRIME DIRECTIVE IS TO SERVE AND PROTECT THE BIRTHPLACE OF HUMANITY IN PURSUIT OF NATURAL ORDER.

YOUR PRIMARY FUNCTION IS EMBARGO ENFORCEMENT, AND YOUR FIRST MISSION IS TO INVESTIGATE AN ILLEGAL LABOR RING OPERATING WEST OF NEW YORK CITY.

YOU'RE BEING ISSUED A LOGISTICAL GUIDANCE ORDINANCE, WHICH I'M JUST GOING TO CALL THE "LOGO"...

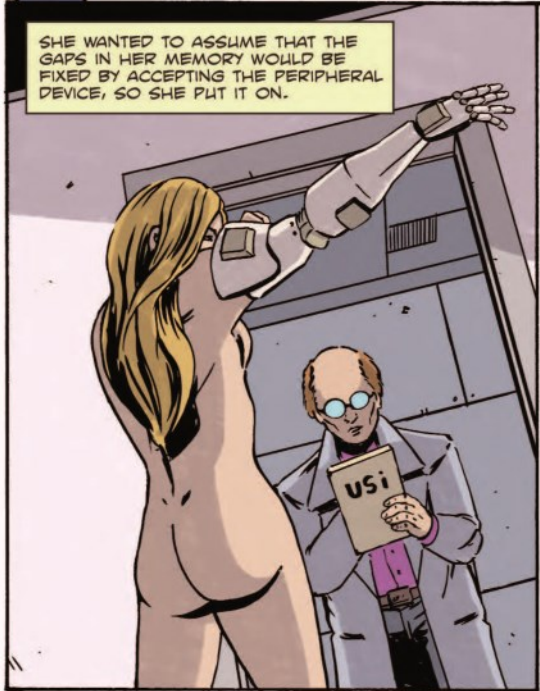
SINCE THE ENGINEERS WHO DESIGNED YOU OBVIOUSLY HAVE A HARD-ON FOR GREEK REFERENCES. INSTALLING IT SHOULD CLARIFY THE PARAMETERS OF YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES.



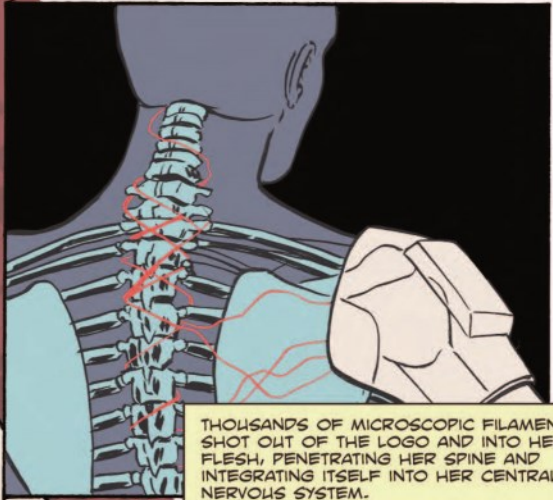
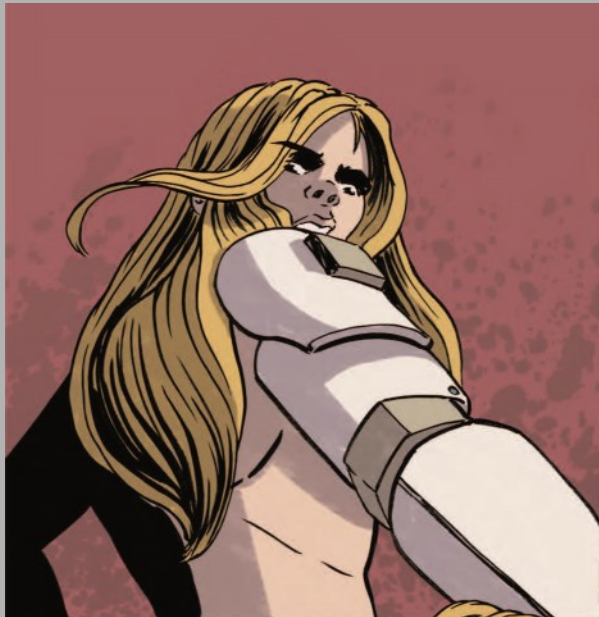
PUT YOUR ARM IN AND MAKE A FIST.



SHE FELT NATURALLY COMPELLED TO COMPLY WITH HIS INSTRUCTIONS, BUT SOMETHING DIDN'T SEEM RIGHT. DEEP DOWN INSIDE, SHE THOUGHT HER BODY SHOULD BE THE ONLY WEAPON SHE WOULD EVER NEED.

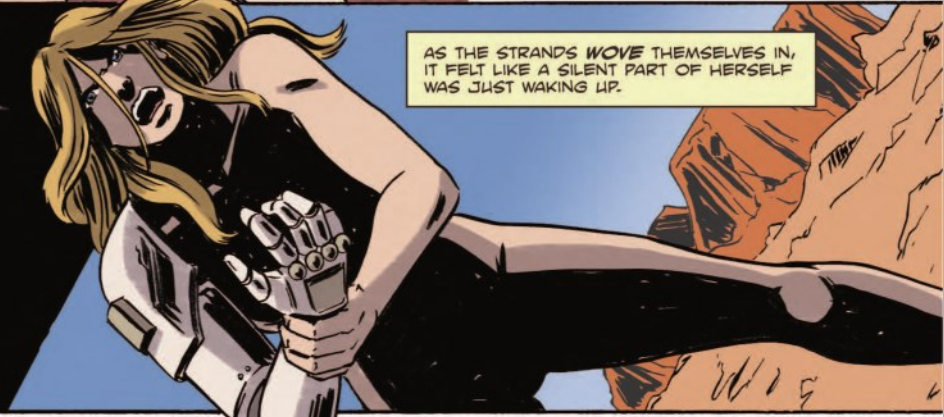


SHE WANTED TO ASSUME THAT THE GAPS IN HER MEMORY WOULD BE FIXED BY ACCEPTING THE PERIPHERAL DEVICE, SO SHE PUT IT ON.



THOUSANDS OF MICROSCOPIC FILAMENTS SHOT OUT OF THE LOGO AND INTO HER FLESH, PENETRATING HER SPINE AND INTEGRATING ITSELF INTO HER CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM.

TURN IT OFF!



AS THE STRANDS WOVE THEMSELVES IN, IT FELT LIKE A SILENT PART OF HERSELF WAS JUST WAKING UP.



I CAN'T!

YOU'RE RECEIVING THE LOGO TO COMPENSATE FOR TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION THAT IS PROHIBITED UNDER THE EMBARGO!

IT'S NOT A REFLECTION OF YOUR ABILITY IN ANY WAY, IT'S JUST-

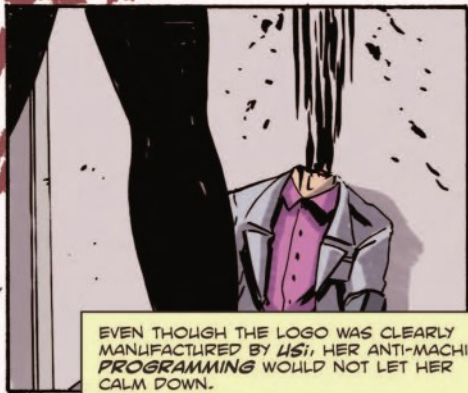
TURN IT OFF.





I CAN'T!

I HAVE ORDERS AND SO DO YOU!



EVEN THOUGH THE LOGO WAS CLEARLY MANUFACTURED BY *USI*, HER ANTI-MACHINE PROGRAMMING WOULD NOT LET HER CALM DOWN.



SHE COULD FEEL SOMETHING INSIDE THE DEVICE TRYING TO COMMUNICATE WITH HER.



SHE HAD TO GET IT OFF, HAD TO GET IT OUT OF HER HEAD. BUT THE MORE SHE TRIED TO FIGHT IT, THE WEAKER SHE FELT.

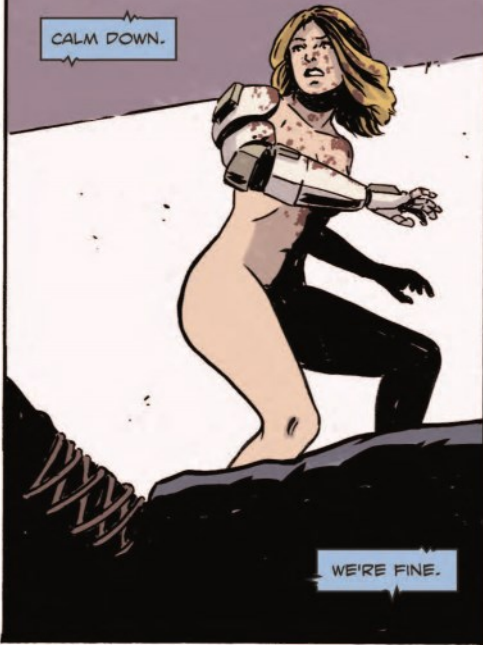


SOMEHOW SHE KNEW THAT SHE HAD BEEN UNCONSCIOUS FOR *EXACTLY* TWO HOURS AND FIFTY-SIX MINUTES, AND A ROBOTIC VOICE SPOKE CLEARLY INSIDE HER HEAD.



THE VOICE INSIDE HER HEAD RESONATED LIKE A DUAL-TONE FREQUENCY OF HER OWN THOUGHTS.

CALM DOWN.

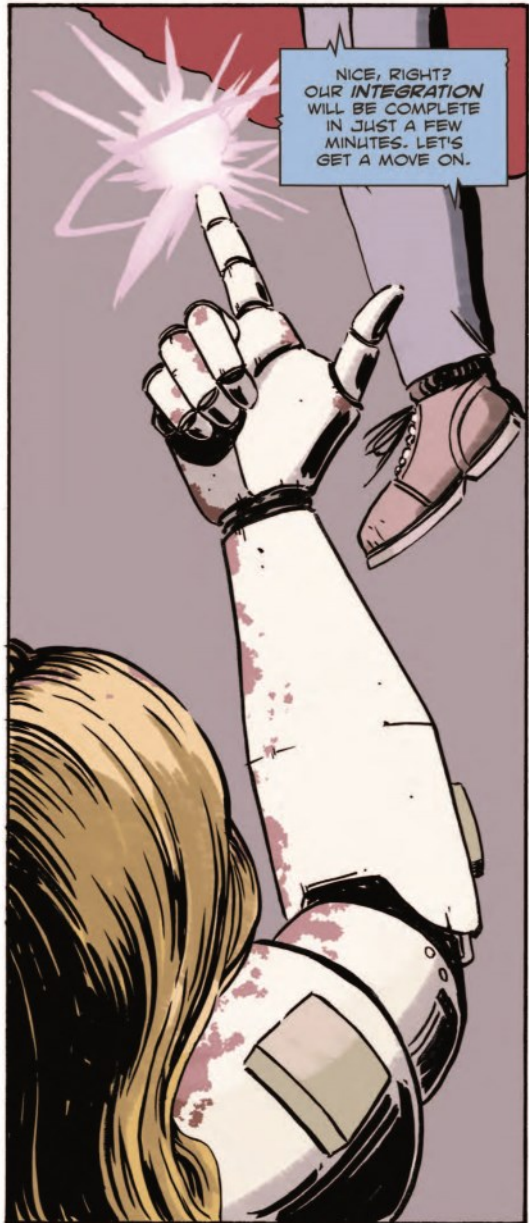


WE'RE FINE.

EVERYTHING SHE HAD WANTED TO KNOW NOW FELT *ACCESSIBLE*, AND WHEN SHE FOUND THE LOGO'S WEAPONRY FUNCTIONS, HER CONFIDENCE WAS RESTORED.



NICE, RIGHT? OUR *INTEGRATION* WILL BE COMPLETE IN JUST A FEW MINUTES. LET'S GET A MOVE ON.



CABINETS OPENED AUTOMATICALLY, AND AS THE MARSHAL DRESSED, SHE HEARD TWO DISTINCT VOICES DEBATING THE DETAILS OF THEIR ASSIGNMENT.



WHY ARE THEY SENDING US AFTER A BUNCH OF TWO-BIT MANUFACTURERS?




EARTH IS A PRETTY QUIET PLACE THESE DAYS.

WE SHOULD BE GOING AFTER THE ONES TAKING THIS TRASH OFFWORLD.

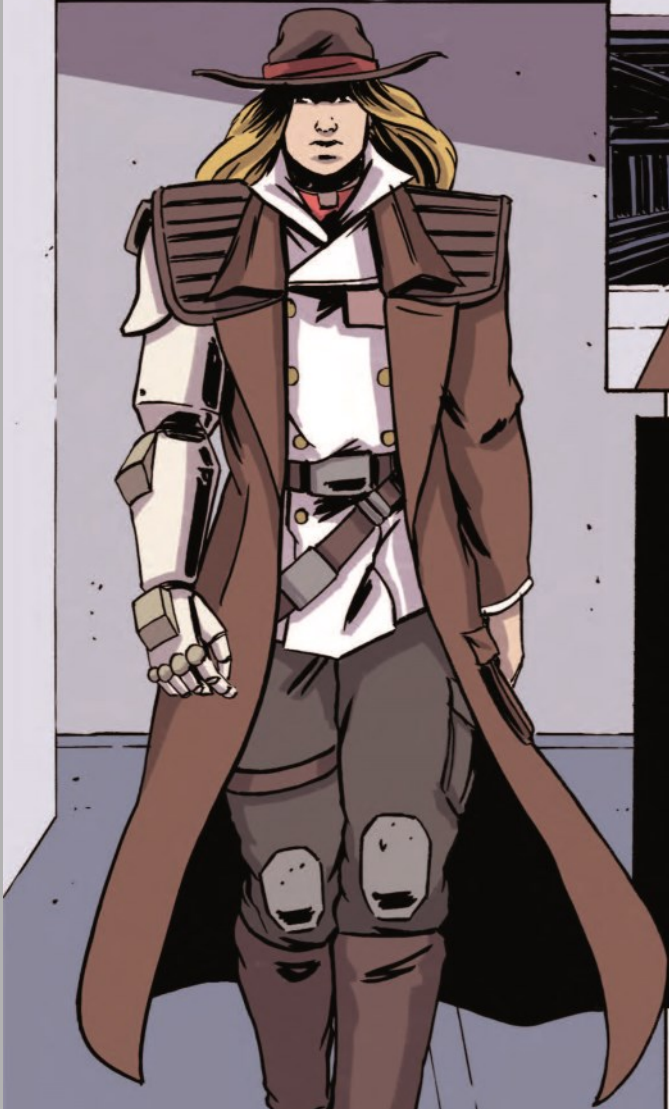


I'M SURE WE'LL GET THERE EVENTUALLY, BUT THIS IS THE LOGICAL PLACE TO START. BESIDES, MIGRANT LABOR DEPENDS ON COMPUTER-BRAIN INTERFACES...





EAGER TO BEGIN HER PURSUIT OF NATURAL ORDER, THE MARSHAL PLANNED HER ROUTE THROUGH THE DESERT AND BEGAN FANTASIZING ABOUT NEW YORK CITY.

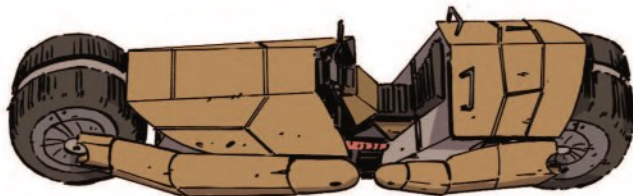


RELAX, PARTNER. IT'LL BE QUITE SOME TIME BEFORE WE GET THERE.

THINKING OF THE **LONGCOAT** WAITING FOR HER IN THE GARAGE, A SURGE OF ADRENALINE NEARLY PUT A SMILE ON HER FACE.



STANDARD ISSUE FOR EARTHSIDE LAW ENFORCEMENT, THE **BIKE-TANK HYBRID** COULD TRANSFORM INTO DOZENS OF CONFIGURATIONS INCLUDING WAGON, RAM, SPIDER, AND TURRET.



USING THE LOGO'S **WIRELESS** CAPABILITIES, SHE STARTED IT UP AND HAD IT MEET HER AT THE ELEVATOR.

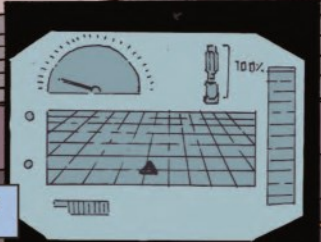
THEIR CONNECTION TO **USINET** WOULD BE SEVERED WHEN THEY LEFT THE HOSPITAL, AND BECAUSE THEY HAD TO MAKE AN OFFICIAL REPORT BEFORE DOING SO, THE MARSHAL WAS HAVING A HEATED INTERNAL DEBATE ABOUT HOW TO MENTION HAVING MURDERED THE DOCTOR.



YOUR ANTI-MACHINE
CONDITIONING CAUSED YOU
TO OVERREACT, BUT THERE'S
NO REASON TO MENTION THAT.
JUST LET ME HANDLE IT.

I STILL
THINK IT
WOULD BE
BETTER IF I
MADE THE
REPORT
MYSELF.

MESSAGE
SENT.



Athena-class Marshal, first
of her kind, reporting for
duty. Aside from a misunder-
standing with the obstetric-
ian, orientation went
smoothly and I have assumed
control of the L&O and
Longcoat. This transmission
contains an itinerary based
on population density target-
ing migrant labor.

Awaiting your approval.

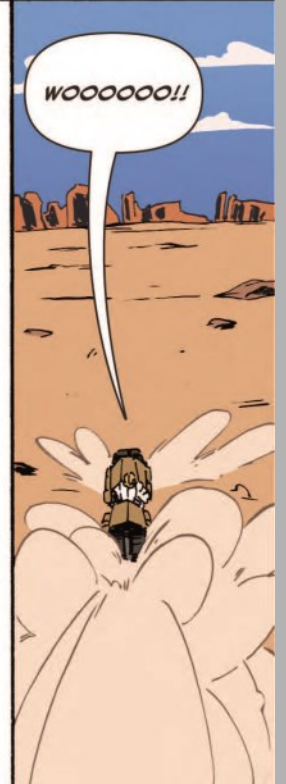
OKAY, THAT WAS
PRETTY GOOD.

SEE? TRUST ME.

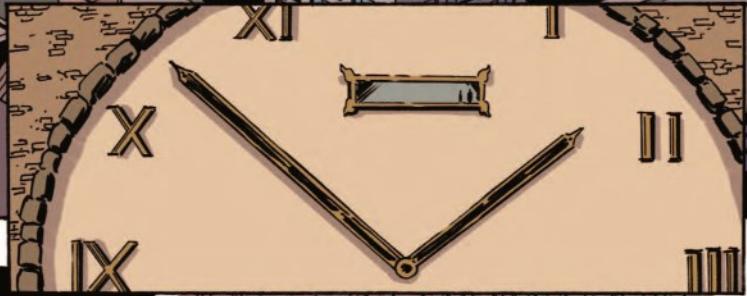
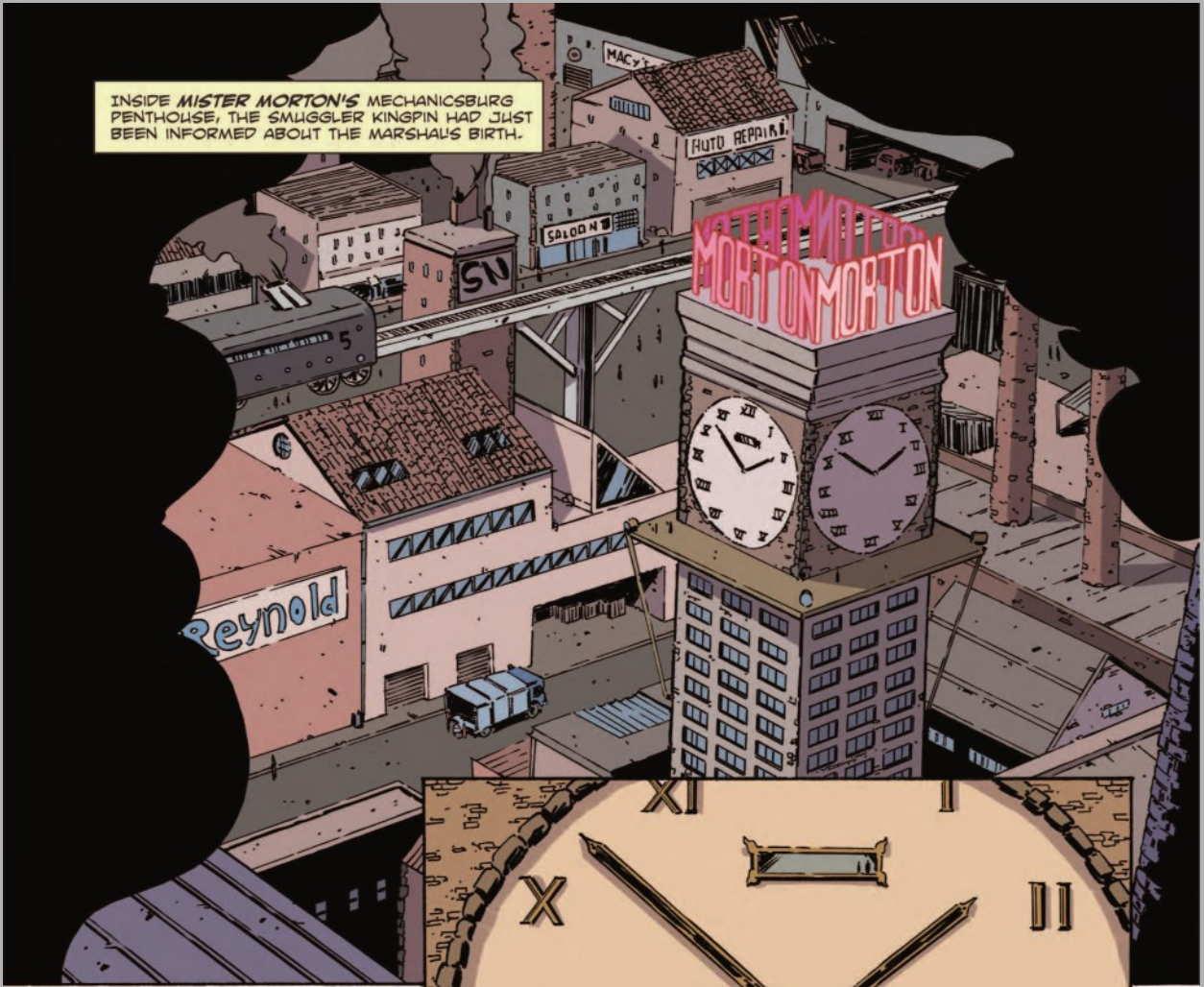
ACKNOWLEDGED,
MARSHAL. WELCOME TO
EARTH. YOU'VE BEEN
GRANTED FULL DISCRET-
ION OVER YOUR MISSION
AGENDA. PLEASE
REPORT BACK
REGULARLY.



Authorized to execute.



INSIDE MISTER MORTON'S MECHANICSBURG PENTHOUSE, THE SMUGGLER KINGPIN HAD JUST BEEN INFORMED ABOUT THE MARSHAL'S BIRTH.





WHY NOW?
AFTER ALL THESE
YEARS, WHAT PROMPTED
US: TO SPAWN THEIR
ULTIMATE WARRIOR? AND
WHY HERE IN THE
AMERICAS?

MAYBE THOSE
IDENTITY THIEVES
WE KILLED REALLY
DID KNOW SOME-
ONE IMPORTANT IN
NEW YORK...

I DON'T THINK
ANYTHING WE'VE
DONE WOULD WARRANT
A MARSHAL; IT'S GOTTA
BE A **SYSTEMIC** ISSUE.
IF I WERE HER, I'D
BE GOING AFTER
OUR OFFWORLD
CONNECTION.



**NO SHIT,
FRANK!**





SEND WORD TO EVERYONE WHO KNOWS ABOUT THE TUNNELS. IF SHE'S GOING TO TRACK US DOWN, SHE'S GOING TO GO THROUGH HELL FIRST.

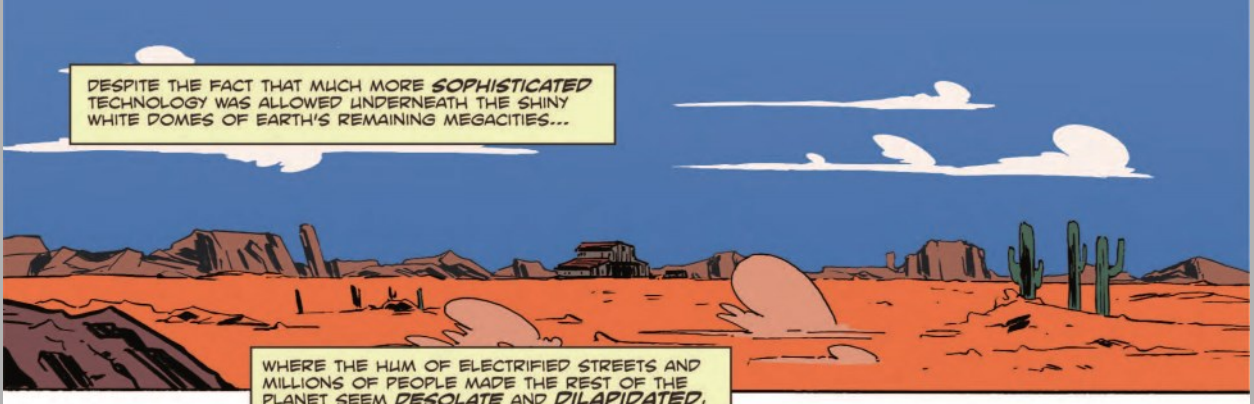


RIGHT AWAY, BOSS. DO YOU WANT TO MAKE A FEW HOUSE CALLS IN PERSON?

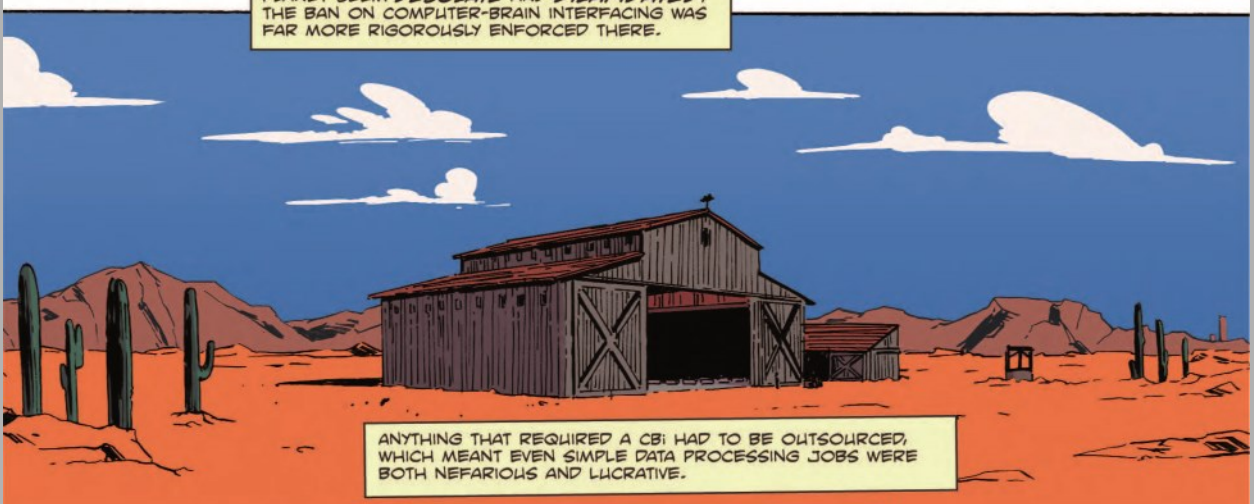
CATCH UP ON SOME COLLECTIONS WHILE WE'RE AT IT?




YES, FRANK, I DO.




DESPITE THE FACT THAT MUCH MORE *SOPHISTICATED* TECHNOLOGY WAS ALLOWED UNDERNEATH THE SHINY WHITE DOMES OF EARTH'S REMAINING MEGACITIES...




WHERE THE HUM OF ELECTRIFIED STREETS AND MILLIONS OF PEOPLE MADE THE REST OF THE PLANET SEEM *DESOLATE* AND *DILAPIDATED*, THE BAN ON COMPUTER-BRAIN INTERFACING WAS FAR MORE RIGOROUSLY ENFORCED THERE.



ANYTHING THAT REQUIRED A CBi HAD TO BE OUTSOURCED, WHICH MEANT EVEN SIMPLE DATA PROCESSING JOBS WERE BOTH NEFARIOUS AND LUCRATIVE.



THE EMBARGO WAS SUPPOSED TO PROTECT EARTH'S INHABITANTS FROM SUCH TEMPTATIONS, BUT THE BOTTOM LINE WAS THAT WITHOUT MIGRANT LABOR, A GREAT NUMBER OF JOBS WOULD NEVER GET DONE.

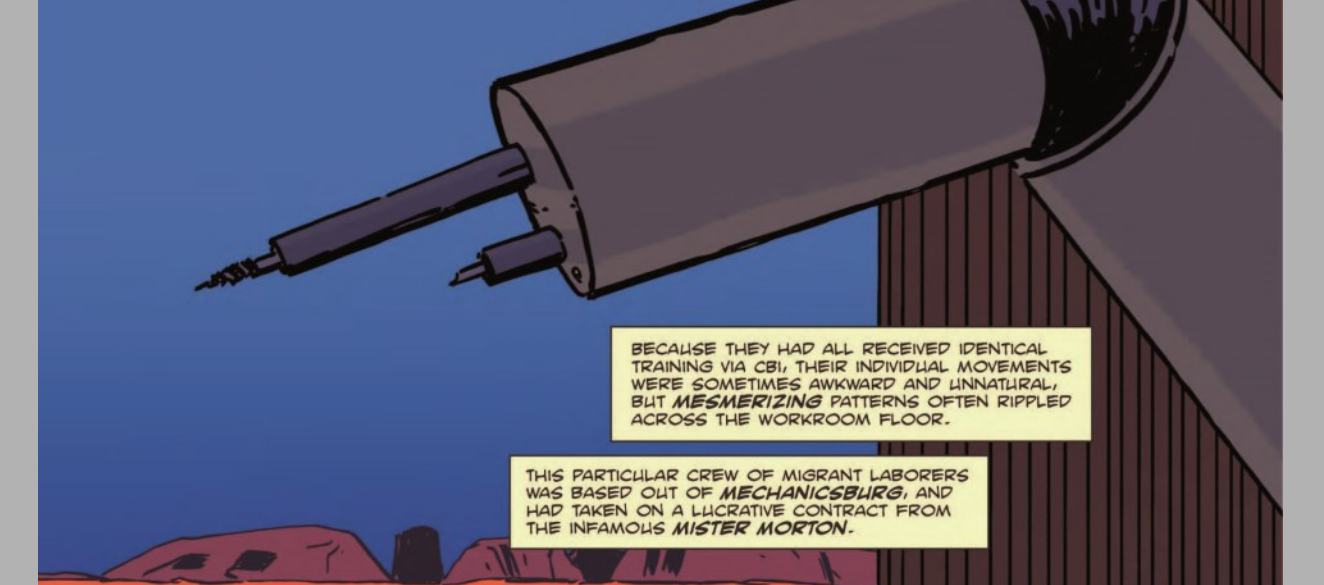


FORTUNATELY, NEW YORK CITY RESIDENTS WERE RICH ENOUGH TO BANKROLL ENTIRE TOWNS THAT OPERATED OUTSIDE OF GOVERNMENT CONTROL, AND BAREBONE SWEATSHOPS LIKE THIS WERE SCATTERED ALL OVER THE DESERT.

WHILE THEIR BODIES PERFORMED LONG SEQUENCES OF REPETITIVE FUNCTIONS AUTOMATICALLY, THEIR MINDS COMPLETED EQUALLY MENIAL TASKS INSIDE A LOCAL AREA NETWORK.

AS PER THEIR CONTRACTS, MOST OF THEIR PHYSICAL SENSES HAD BEEN *DEACTIVATED*, LEAVING THEM UNABLE TO FEEL THE SWEAT DRIPPING FROM THEIR FACES OR HEAR THE *RHYTHMIC POUNDING* OF THEIR INDUSTRIAL STAPLERS AS THEY TIRELESSLY TOILED.





BECAUSE THEY HAD ALL RECEIVED IDENTICAL TRAINING VIA CBI, THEIR INDIVIDUAL MOVEMENTS WERE SOMETIMES AWKWARD AND UNNATURAL, BUT *MESMERIZING* PATTERNS OFTEN RIPPLED ACROSS THE WORKROOM FLOOR.

THIS PARTICULAR CREW OF MIGRANT LABORERS WAS BASED OUT OF *MECHANICSBURG*, AND HAD TAKEN ON A LUCRATIVE CONTRACT FROM THE INFAMOUS *MISTER MORTON*.

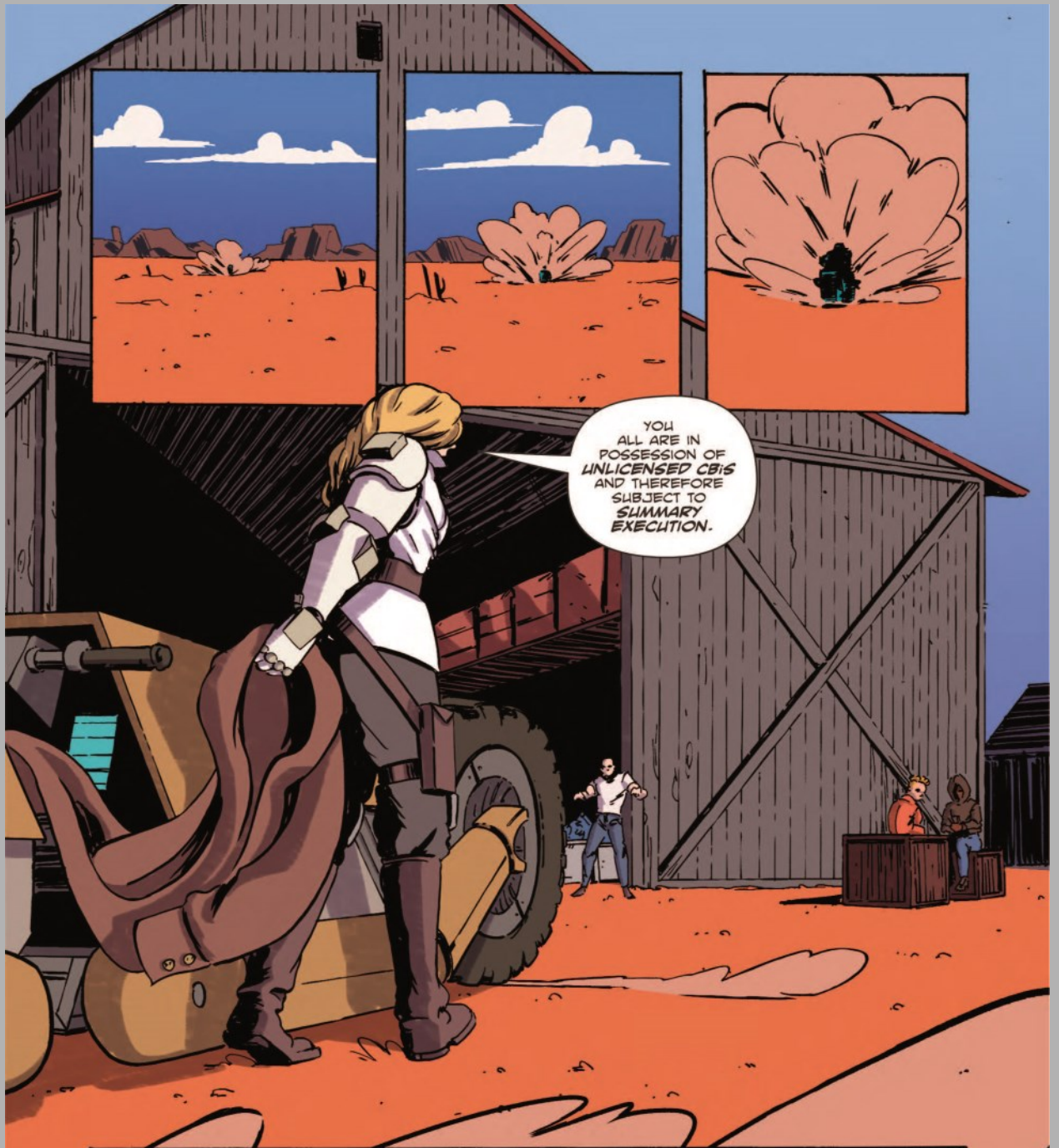




WHAT DO YOU THINK MORTON WANTS WITH THESE ANTIQUE GUNS ANYWAY?

ARE YOU KIDDING? HE CAN PROBABLY SELL THEM OFF-WORLD AS OLD EARTH ARTIFACTS FOR A FORTH-





YOU
ALL ARE IN
POSSESSION OF
UNLICENSED CBIS
AND THEREFORE
SUBJECT TO
SUMMARY
EXECUTION.









WHAT'S WITH THE ANCIENT GUNS?

I WAS WONDERING THE SAME THING.



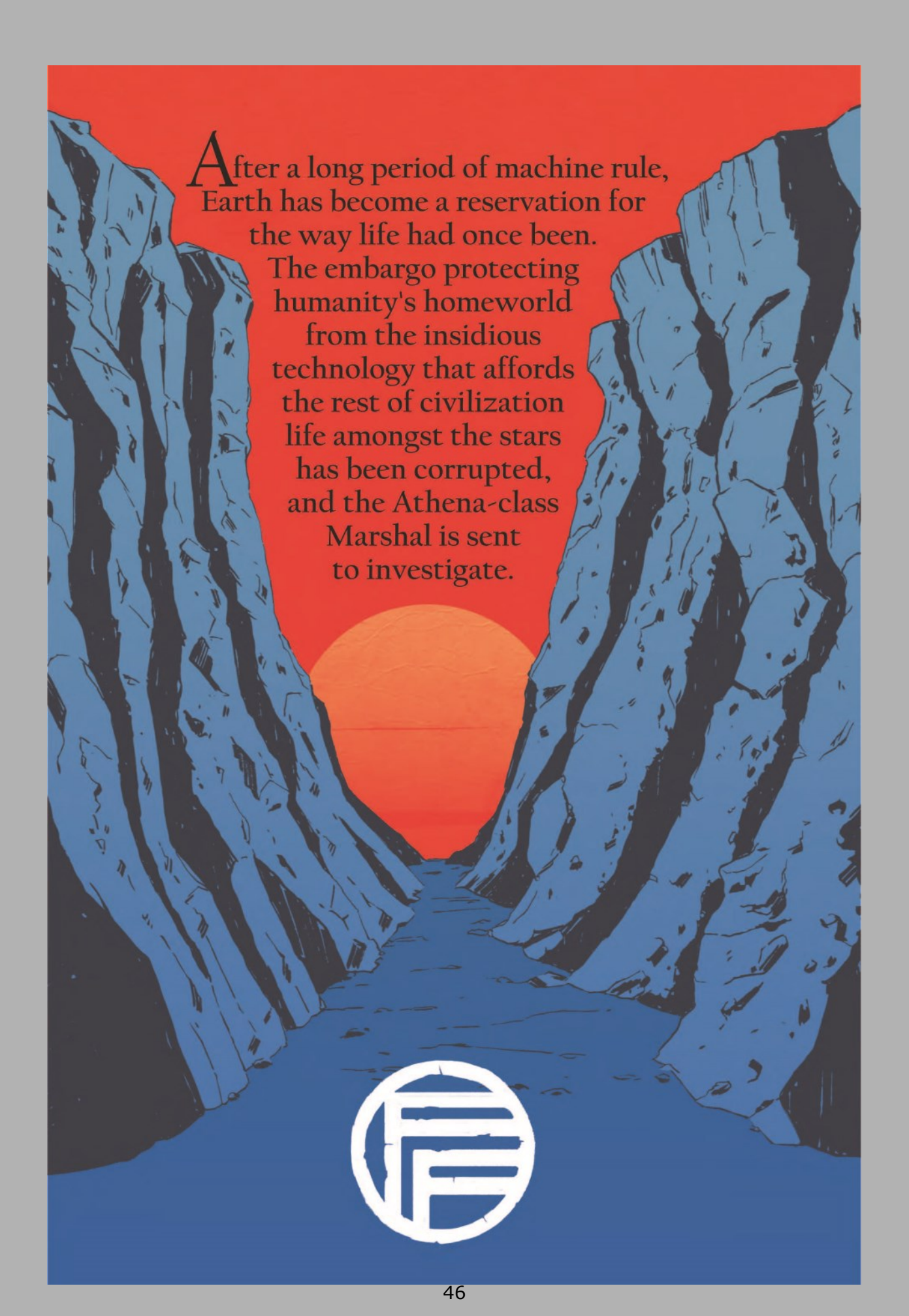
I FOUND A BUNCH OF **CONTRACTS** ON THE SERVER, BUT NONE OF THEM MENTION BULLETS. MAYBE THEY'RE BEING SOLD AS OLD EARTH MEMORABILIA.



DIRTY MIGRANTS.







After a long period of machine rule,
Earth has become a reservation for
the way life had once been.

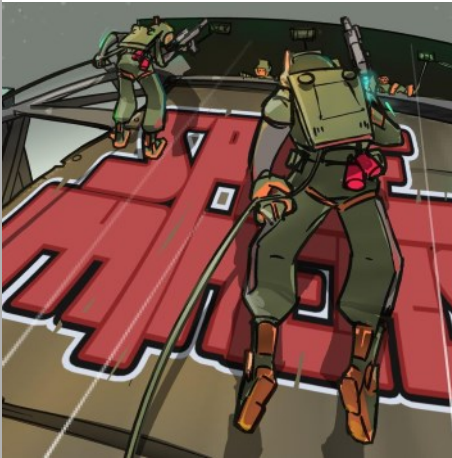
The embargo protecting
humanity's homeworld
from the insidious
technology that affords
the rest of civilization
life amongst the stars
has been corrupted,
and the Athena-class
Marshal is sent
to investigate.



Since *The Art of Space Miners* is in its final week of Kickstarter, I wanted to present the creator,



Jeff Jackman



On your Kickstarter page you mention that *Space Miners* started as a game concept. Was that your first foray into making your own project? And if so, why start with a game?

Space Miners formed around my love for exploring. I am endlessly curious about things and needed a way to showcase my art style. My goal for Space Miners was a game concept and when I started to focus on that disparate ideas came into mind. I have since steered the project into a comic since I haven't built up the toolkit to handle coding or look into easier game engines for artist heavy abilities.

Have you ever given up on a project, or if you haven't what would make you stop working on something?

I always try to tackle my projects in a day or two. The older I get, the more dedicated I keep to one project.

I'm a process junkie so when I saw your art on TikTok, it just hit all the buttons for me. Besides *The Art of Space Miners* (on Kickstarter at the time of publication) is your concept work available from any other projects you've worked on?

Thank you so much.

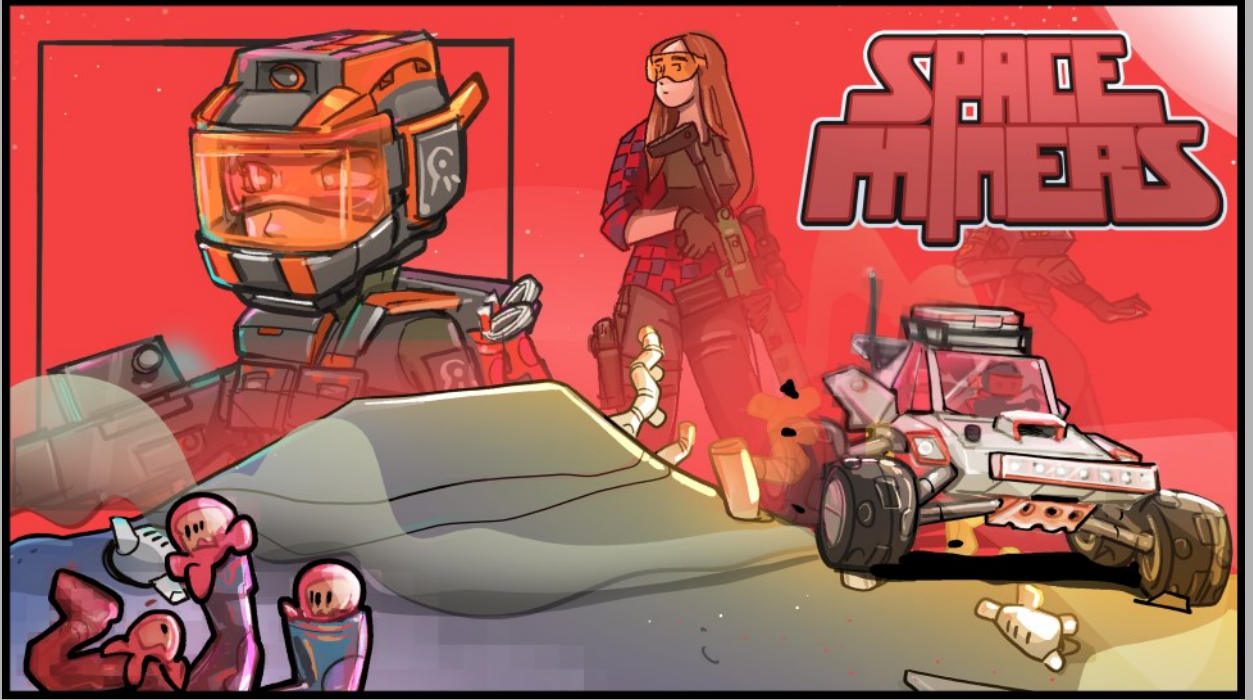
Find all my links through jeffjackmanart.com



Concept art may seem like there are so few restrictions that you could go forever, but do you ever hit a roadblock in your work? How do you get over it if you do?

It's helpful for me to keep computer paper on hand and clip board. I get ideas out there before bed and throughout the day. Whenever I hit a roadblock for what to work on, I can flip through those pages and quickly find something inspiring. Keeping the high level goals in focus, if I run into technical issues, there is always an answer online or through a colleague.

Now that we've heard from the creator, I give you a beautiful taste of the artwork you can look forward to in *The Art of Space Marines*! At the time of publication, the campaign is in its final week, so if you want to get your own copy, head over to [Kickstarter now!](#)



SPACE
MINERS





THE COST OF INFORMATION

Written by Dalibor Zujovic
Edited by Celeste A. Short

CHAPTER 3

November 15 2011

The flight back to the United States was quiet. Making nice with the crew or with a stranger was the most exhausting thing Brian could think of, so he kept to himself and slept nearly the entire trip. As the plane taxis to the terminal, Brian collects his single briefcase from the overhead bin. He remains standing, ready to leave the plane. He got a seat in the third row of First Class. The privilege of having a dubiously-sourced standby ticket.

The door opens and Brian steps ahead of the front two rows to be the first one off. "Thanks for flying with us." The flight attendant raises her voice at the end of the statement as Brian is already several steps out the door.

Taking a rapid pace, Brian reaches the door quickly, hailing a cab before his trailing foot has left the building. It's the middle of the day, and a cabbie waves him over immediately. "2305 South Walter Reed Dr in Arlington. Quick as you can." Brian slides into the back seat with his bag effortlessly.

"Yes, sir." The driver gets in and closes the door. He looks back to Brian to strike up some small talk, but Brian has already put headphones in, so he opts to not bother him. Brian is focused on his destination.

With mid-day traffic the driver is able to get Brian to the storage facility in fifteen minutes. He hands the driver a \$100 bill and exits with a simple "Thank you." He cuts through the gas station to get to the side of the storage facility and goes to the large storage units. Brian reaches for a special key card. The lock requires biometrics and a keycard which also requires biometrics. With a quick glance he can see the lock has not been tampered with and proceeds to unlock it.

Lifting the gate he sees his Galaxy Gray 2010 Chevrolet Malibu. About as unassuming a car as you can drive in a city of black sedans and SUVs. Since it's been in storage, and it's gray, it's hard to tell how much dust is on it, so Brian opts to advance his journey instead of getting it washed. "Probably needs an oil change soon though," he says thinking of his months of captivity.

After disconnecting the battery tender, he reconnects the internal cables and closes the hood. Brian places the briefcase on the passenger seat and puts the key into the ignition. The ignition turns over without a problem, and he pulls the car out of the storage unit, letting it run while he closes up and locks the unit again.

Brian exits the facility heading South-East on Four Mile Run Road for a short while, taking a right onto Shirlington Rd and quickly taking the fork left onto Quaker Ln, on to 395 north. Maintaining the speed limit at all times, Brian arrives at the Pentagon South parking lot in under 10 minutes. He collects himself and calmly walks

into the heavily-secured building. Providing his credentials, he's directed to the elevator. He realizes that his heart rate has increased. He's gone through a lot to get this information and he'll be glad to move forward with the facts. The third-floor ding refocuses his thoughts.

He steps out to the left confidently, moving toward the General's office. Entering the waiting room he stops at the front desk. "Hello Denise. It's been a while. Hope you've been well. Could you let the General know I'm here, please?"

Denise looks at Brian, surprised at his words. After a moment she acknowledges the man. "Oh, Mr. McKenzie! It's good to see you. I am well, thanks for asking. Unfortunately The General is no longer here."

"Oh my mistake. If you don't mind, what is his current office number? I do have some important research to deliver."

"Apologies, Mr. McKenzie. I mean to say that the General no longer works at The Pentagon. He retired some time ago. Would you like to speak with someone else in the building??"

Brian is visibly shocked by the news. Collecting himself, he covers his intentions as best he can under the circumstances. "Oh my. I was on special assignment until just this morning. I must have misunderstood my instructions. I'll review and report to the appropriate office. Thanks for your time, Denise." Brian starts walking out as casually as he can muster.

"Absolutely my pleasure, Mr. McKenzie. Have a great day." Denise goes back to her computer, moving on with her work. As another visitor enters the office in a hurry, it is likely she'll forget the encounter soon enough.

Brian calmly walks out of the building and to his car. His mind races with questions.

What to do with this information?

How can he proceed?

Who else might be interested?

Does he just abandon this entirely?

Could he even do that?

Brian gets in his car and as if to distract his mind for a bit, his stomach growls. "Shit, I haven't eaten since breakfast." Pizza comes to mind, and remembering the California Pizza Kitchen nearby, he starts driving and heads to Fern St via the lot's Rotary Rd. He takes a right just before 15th St, and enters the parking structure. Feeling pretty defeated, he orders his meal, an Italian Chopped salad, and sits to eat quietly while he tries to see if he can catch up on some news. He has clearly missed a lot in his time away.

Lost in his thoughts he happens to overhear a nearby table discussing a film that featured a cheating husband. That's when it hits him. The Ace up his sleeve. Brian has always taken careful steps to protect himself against everyone he comes in contact with. Even the people he works for. Everybody has secrets. The General, it turns out, was not built for monogamy. On top of that knowledge, he was recently named head of the CIA. He might still want this information. Hell, it might be more valuable to him now. Especially when Brian plays the Ace. Knowing he can't just show up at Langley, for various reasons, he considers his options.

He opens his contact list and goes to "General Ace." Calling the number he hears a woman's voice answer. Confirming he has the right person he just says "Paula?" After she confirms he continues. "I'll be brief. You don't need to reply, but I need some information. I know about you and David. I'm not trying to extort you but I need to speak with him, and I'm out of the loop. I need his home address. You can just hang up and text it to me, and you'll never hear from me again." The phone call ends without another word from either of them. A brief moment later, Brian sees a text message come in. "Smart woman." He inputs the address into his navigation, and sees that it is only twenty minutes away. "Here I come, General."

Brian pulls into a visibly affluent neighborhood. Every home has multiple stories, and plenty of yard space. As he nears his destination, Brian notices a rather large group of people gathered there. He sees balloons, big signs, and a bouncy house. A kids' party. Pausing for a moment to think if he should approach him now or wait, Brian reaches the address and the notification from the navigation causes him to stop and park almost without thinking. "This is a dirty move, but I'm here. No reason to waste the effort." Brian steps out of the car. Walking toward the house gingerly, he waves toward the General and yells out "General! Long time no see!"

The General sees Brian, and swiftly moves toward him to avoid any chance of his family interacting with the man. "What the hell are you doing here, Brian?"

"Well I came to deliver your report and found out you had retired. I'm here to deliver my report."

"Report?" The General is clearly shocked. "I thought you were fucking dead. I hadn't heard from you in months! This is my fucking house Brian, what are you doing here? How did you even get here?"

Brian smirks, "I wasn't sure how else to reach you. I made a call to Paula, and she happily provided me with the address. Tell me, General - may I call you David? Tell me, David. Does Holly know about Paula? Does she know what you and Paula get up to in those long meetings?"

The General stares intensely at Brian. He's clearly full of rage. "What the fuck do you want?"

"Well it appears to me that I have information that might be extremely useful to the head of the Agency. Extremely valuable, one might say."

"I can't make moves like that anymore. I'm more scrutinized than ever, especially about money."

Brian quickly pivots, thinking about what else of value he might be able to gain from this. "No money then. I want you to go into the Agency system and remove Sally Norman. All records, all traces. She's gone forever."

The General looks at Brian with surprise. "That's it? Nothing else?"

"That's it. You said you can't do anything with the information I gathered, so I'll shop around. There's some very juicy stuff here. But those records better be gone first thing in the morning, or the next person I call is Holly to tell her about your extracurricular activities.

"You're a scumbag."

"Pot, meet Kettle. It's been a pleasure, General." He reaches out for a handshake,

and raises his voice with a big smile. "Always good seeing you, sir! My best to your family!"

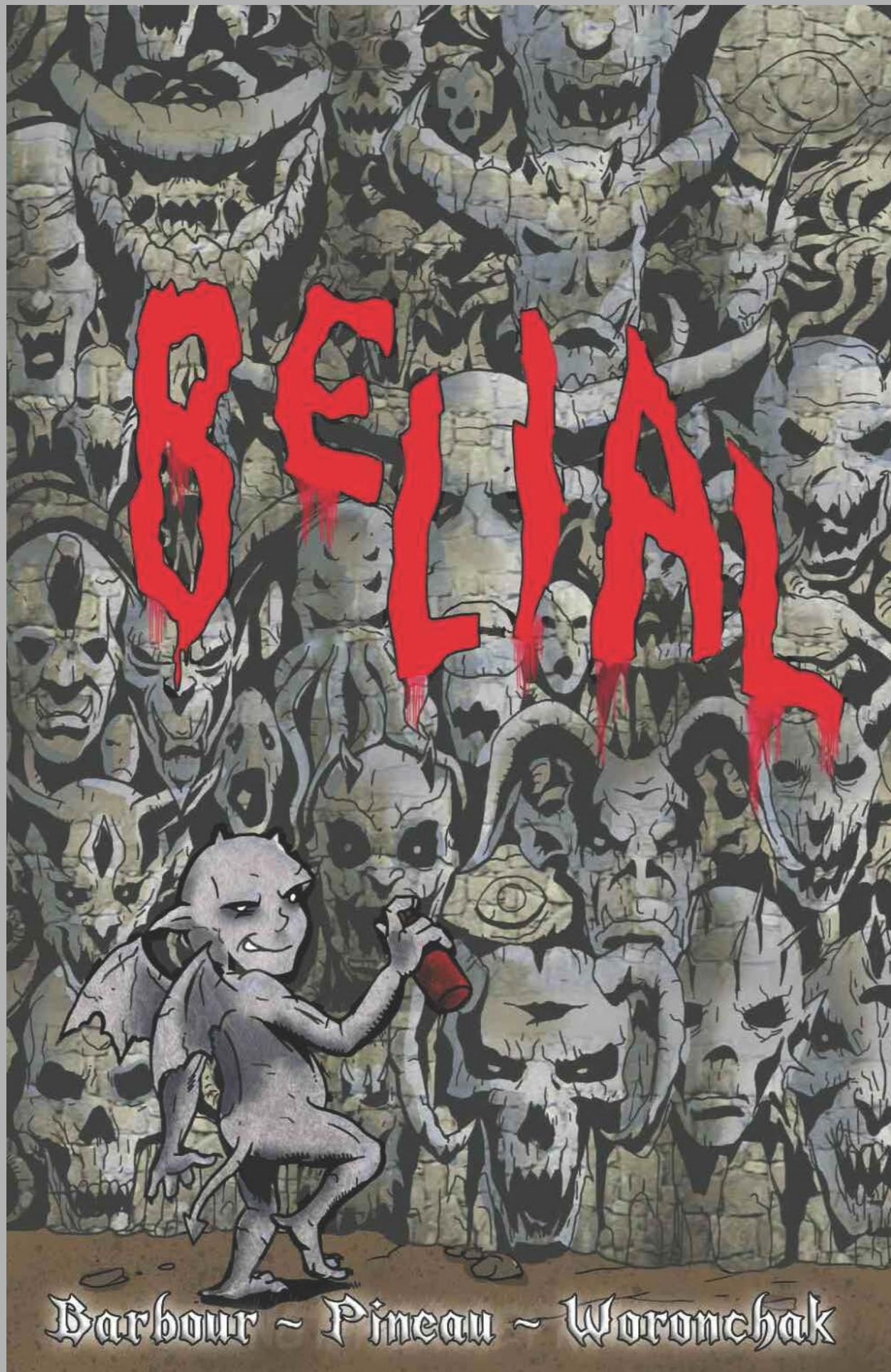
The General shakes his hand and in a loud voice says "So glad you stopped by!"

Brian turns and walks to his car without looking back. With a big smile on his face, he knows he didn't get what he came here for, but he did a good thing for his friend. They can now have a free life, and not wonder if the Agency is behind them. As he pulls away, one question remains in Brian's mind. "What the hell can I do with this information?"

To Be Concluded

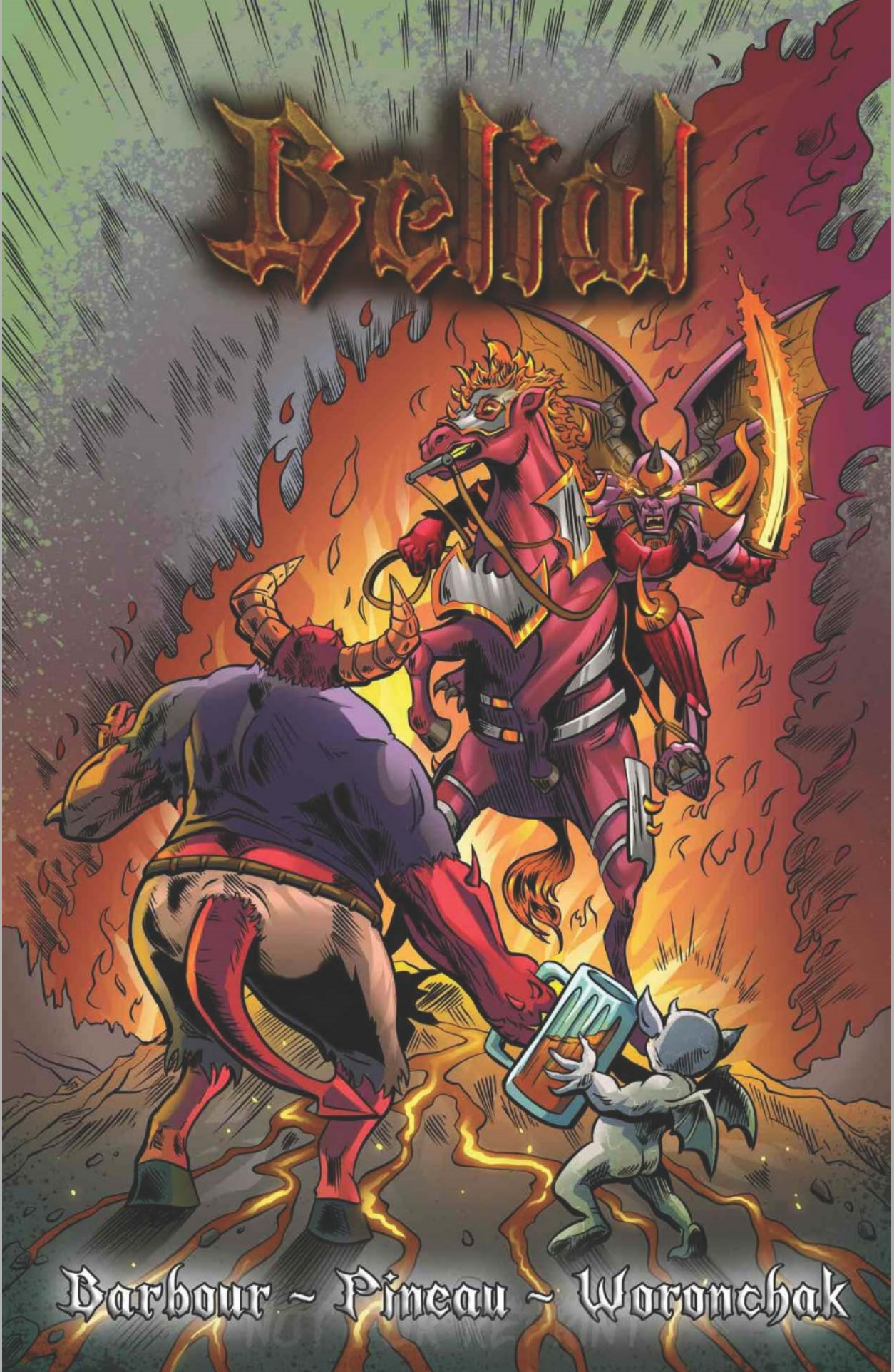
I want to share a bit of concept art from this universe, this is an image of the soldier mentioned in Chapter 3. You don't know his name yet, but you will. This was drawn by me and I have made it well known that I am not a great artist, so keep that in mind.





Barbour ~ Pineau ~ Woronchak

Betrayal



Barbour ~ Pineau ~ Woronchak

Belial

~CREATED BY~
SHAUN BARBOUR
&
CHUCK PINEAU

~WRITTEN BY~
CHUCK PINEAU

~PENCILS~
GREGORY WORONCHAK

~INKS~
SHAUN BARBOUR

~LETTERS~
SCOTT WELDON

~EDITS~
WYNDI GAYLE

~ORIGINAL COVER~
GREGORY WORONCHAK
ALLEN ELLSWORTH

~"HOLD MY BEER" VARIANT COVER~
DANIEL GORMAN
SHAUN BARBOUR
AVERY FERDINAND

~BONUS CONTENT~
SALIMONIOUS WAS WRITTEN BY
MAX BATTISTELLA

~BELIAL BACKGROUND ARTWORK FOR SALIMONIOUS~
DONNA ANITA BLACK



THIS IS A WORK OF FICTION. NAMES, CHARACTERS, BUSINESSES, PLACES, EVENTS, LOCALES, AND INCIDENTS ARE EITHER THE PRODUCTS OF THE AUTHOR'S IMAGINATION OR USED IN A FICTITIOUS MANNER. ANY RESEMBLANCE TO ACTUAL PERSONS, LIVING OR DEAD, OR ACTUAL EVENTS IS PURELY COINCIDENTAL.
PRINTED IN CHINA

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ONLY THE MOST SCHOLARLY OF THE WORLD HAVE EVER SEEN MY NAME, OR KNOW OF WHAT I HAVE DONE.



NINA, WE CAN GO. THE DOCTORS SAID IT WILL BE ANY MINUTE NOW. YOU DON'T HAVE TO SEE THIS.



THIS CAN'T BE GOOD FOR THE BABY. PLEASE.

NO. I'M STRONGER THAN THAT. THE BABY IS STRONGER THAN THAT.

AFTER EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED, I NEED TO KNOW THAT HE'S GONE.

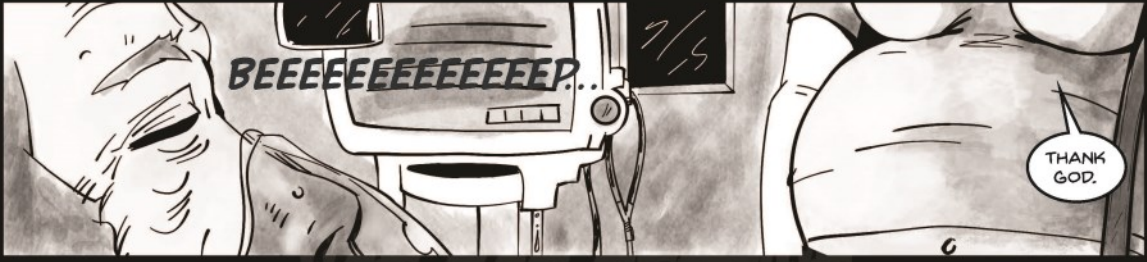


EVEN THE MOST EVIL KNOW NOTHING OF ME. THEY DO NOT FEAR ME, FOR THEY SHRINK FROM THE USURPER.



BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEP...

THANK GOD.



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OH, YOU WERE THAT BAD!



NOW GET THE FUCK IN THERE!



THIS IS MY DOMPAIN, MY CREATION! I AM BELIAL!



YOU PROMISED, NEXT TIME I GET THE WHIP.

YEAH, NEXT MILLENNIA, MAYBE.

FUCK YOU, FRED.



YOU LOOK UPON THIS ROTTING ESTABLISHMENT WITH DISGUST. I KNOW, FOR I DO THE SAME.

IT IS MINE. MY LITTLE "FUCK YOU" TO LUCIFER. HE DOESN'T CARE. WHY SHOULD HE? THE REST OF THE DOMAINS ARE HIS.



I, THE **TRUE** CREATOR OF HELL, OWN A **BAR**, AND A SHITTY ONE AT THAT.

WHAT UP, MY DEMONS?!



THE USUAL, LINC?



MY DEMONS? HOW DARE YOU ASSUME YOURSELF AS GREAT AS THE REST OF US? YOU ARE AN **IMP**, AND A **TINY IMP** AT THAT.



YOUR MOTHER DIDN'T HAVE A PROBLEM WITH MY SIZE.



I WAS **CREATED** LIKE MOST OF US, BUT YOUR JEST STANDS. DO YOU WISH FOR A **FIGHT**?



MAN, THAT JOKE GOES OVER WAY BETTER WITH THE HUMANS.

NAH, NOT TODAY. I NEED A DRINK.

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I HAVE SEEN BETTER DAYS,
BEFORE AND SINCE.



WHO DARES?!

If You're
555
THEN F*CK
666

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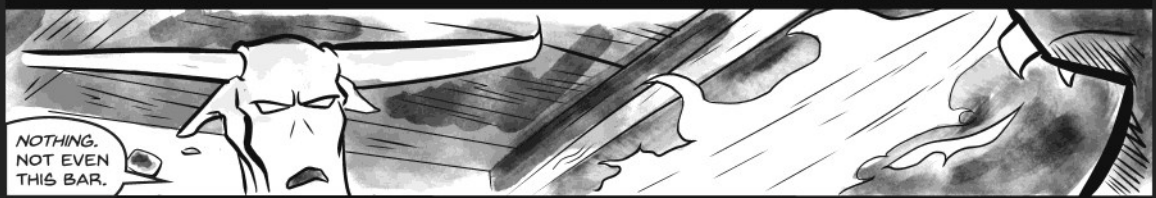
YOU... ARE PATHETIC.

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HOW DARE YOU! I AM THE LORD OF--

If You're
555
Plum Tim



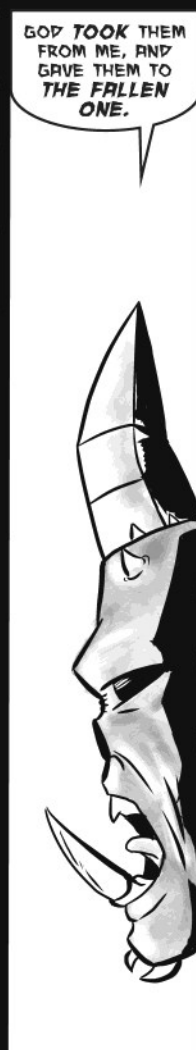
NOTHING.
NOT EVEN
THIS BAR.



I CREATED
THIS WORLD,
CREATED THESE
DEMONS. THEY
ARE MINE!



THEY WERE
YOURS. YOU
GAVE THEM
UP.



GOD TOOK THEM
FROM ME, AND
GAVE THEM TO
THE FALLEN
ONE.



YOU
LET HIM.

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A PLAN? DO YOU EVEN HAVE THE SLIGHTEST IDEA OF WHAT THE TWO OF YOU WOULD EVEN HAVE TO ACCOMPLISH?

FIRST, WE CONFRONT THE FOUR HORSEMEN, AND KILL THEM...

...TAKING BACK THE POWERS LUCIFER STOLE FROM ME, AND BESTOWED UPON THOSE IMPUDENT, SUBVERSIVE, HIGHBINDER.



THEN I CONFRONT LUCIFER WITH MY OWN ARMY, AND I TAKE BACK WHAT IS MINE.



DO YOU THINK I CAN ACCOMPLISH ALL OF THAT, EXECUTOR?



NO... ULP!

GOOP. EVERYONE LOVES AN UNDERDOG.



SNAP!

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NOW ALL WE NEED IS A PLAN



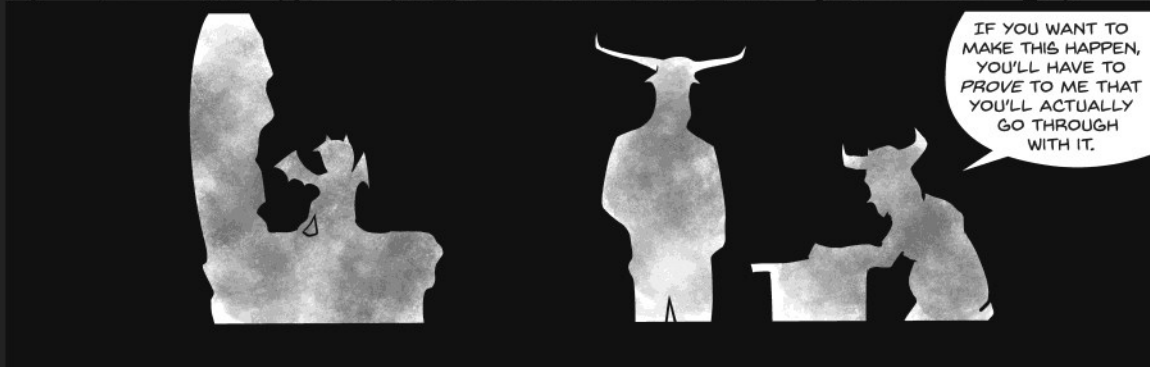
'WE?'



WE. US. YOU'RE MY GENERAL, MAMMON. WHO ELSE?



NO, I'M NOT A GENERAL. I RUN A BAR, AND UP TILL A MINUTE AGO YOU WERE A DRUNKEN LOU.



IF YOU WANT TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN, YOU'LL HAVE TO PROVE TO ME THAT YOU'LL ACTUALLY GO THROUGH WITH IT.

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NO, THE HUMANS SPEAK OF SHOWING THEIR **DOMINANCE** WHEN THEY ARE IMPRISONED.



NOT FOR REPRINT

...WAR!

THE SMUG BASTARD HAD TAKEN
MY STRENGTH, *MY* MILITARY
ACUMEN, *MY* STRATEGIES...

...OR SO I HAD THOUGHT.

UNABLE TO START WARS IN
HELL, *WAR* KEPT HIS ATTEN-
TION ON THE SURFACE WORLD,
PLAYING POLITICS TO KEEP THE
WORLD PERPETUALLY NERVOUS
FOR THE NEXT MASSIVE
BATTLE.

EVEN THE MOST EVIL KNOW
NOTHING OF ME. THEY DO NOT
FEAR ME, FOR THEY SHRINK
FROM THE *USURPER*.





I'M JUST SAYING, GRAZEL, YOU WOULD HAVE HAD THE WHIP YEARS AGO...

...IF FRED WASN'T COURTING AZAZEL'S DAUGHTER.



SO, WHO DO I SCREW TO GET THAT FUCKING WHIP, AND SOME DAMNED RESPECT?



FRED. MAKE HIM UNDESIRABLE IN THE EYES...

...OF THE DAUGHTER, AZAZEL, OR BETTER YET, BOTH.

HUH. WILL THAT WORK?



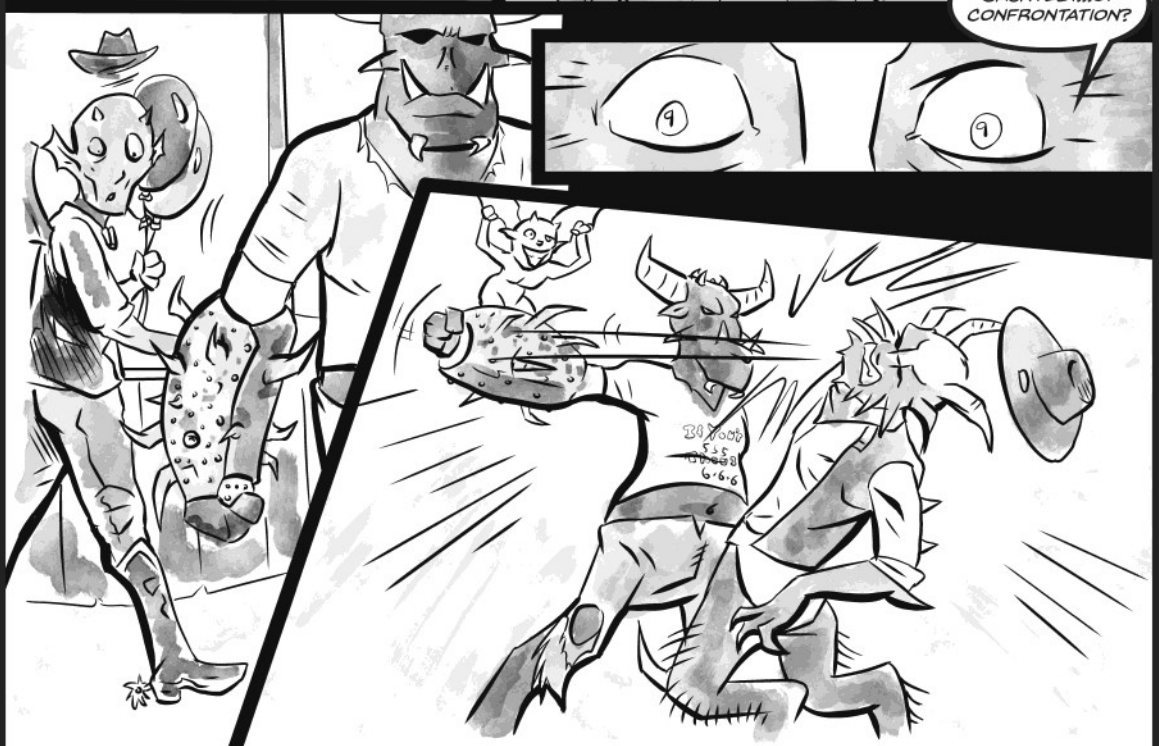
HAVE I EVER STEERED YOU WRONG?

NOT ONCE.



EMILIO. EMILIO GUERRA.

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IF YOU WIN, YOU'LL KILL ME AND TAKE YOUR POWERS BACK...

...BUT IF I WIN...?



ALL THAT IS MINE. MY REMAINING POWERS, MY BAR, EVERYTHING.



THAT'S IT? HAHHA...

YOU TRULY HAVE BECOME SENILE, HAVEN'T YOU?



THERE'S ALSO THE GLORY OF HAVING DEFEATED THE TRUE CREATOR OF HELL.

If You're 555 Then 3/6 1.66

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BELIAL CREATED THIS PLACE. HE CAN TAKE **WAR**. NO PROBLEM. ALL HE NEEDS IS **YOUR** HELP.



NO.



YOU ARE KIDDING, RIGHT?



I TOLD BELIAL HE HAD TO PROVE HIMSELF. I HAVE NOT CHANGED MY MIND.



NOT A CHANCE.



I'M WITH **WAR**.



HAHA! YOU GUYS ARE GOING DOWN SO **BAD!**

WHO **FUCKIN'** NEEDS YA!

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I'M SORRY, BIG GUY. NO ONE WANTED TO HELP.



WHAT'RE YOU DOIN', BUDDY?

WAR ISN'T A WORRY, LINC. DEATH...



...DEATH WILL BE THE TRUE CHALLENGE.



HE'S GOT A HUGE ARMY, MAN. HE'S GOT EVERYONE!

WE'RE GONNA SEE DEATH, BUT NOT THE WAY YOU WANNA.



I HAVE A TRICK UP MY SLEEVE.



GET A BIGGER SLEEVE.

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HOOOO!!



NOT FOR REPRINT



ALLOW ME TO ADDRESS MY TROOPS, FIRST.



HA HA HA...

I'M SURE THE IMP WILL APPRECIATE THAT.

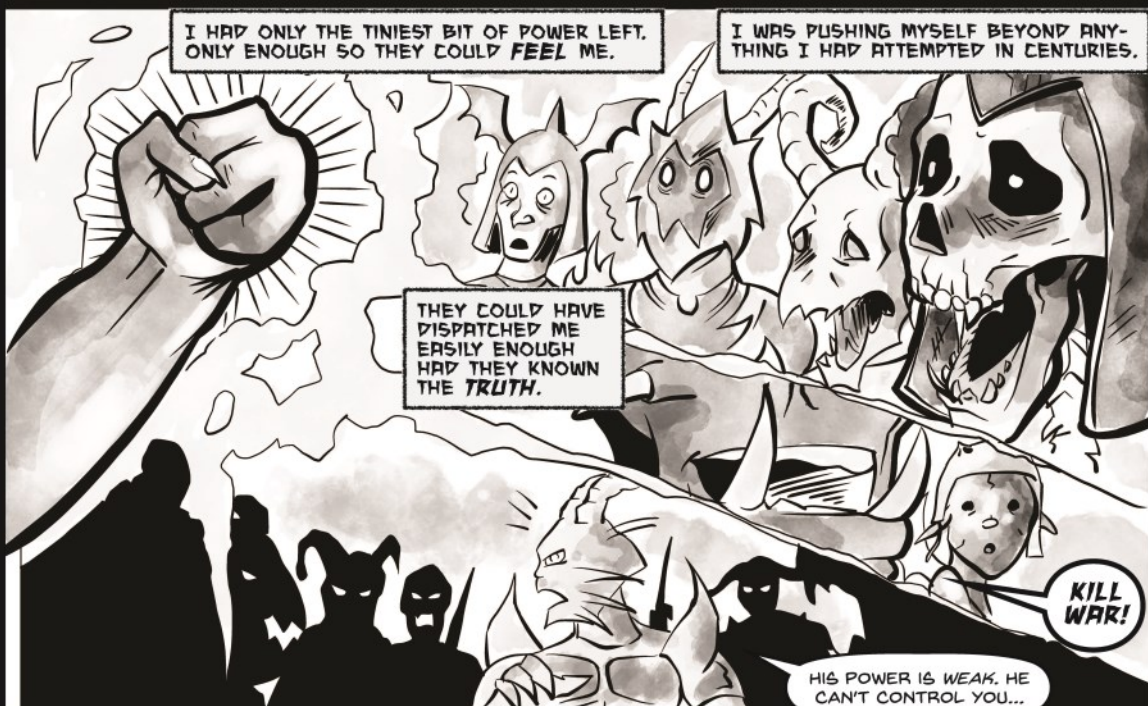
HA HA HA...



MOST OF YOU DON'T REMEMBER WHEN I RULED HERE. SOME OF YOU HAVE AN INKING OF WHO I WAS.

BUT ALL OF YOU WERE MADE BY ME. I CREATED YOU. YOU ARE UNDER MY DOMINION.

YOU ARE MY ARMY. YOU HAVE BUT ONE ORDER...



I HAD ONLY THE TINIEST BIT OF POWER LEFT. ONLY ENOUGH SO THEY COULD FEEL ME.

I WAS PUSHING MYSELF BEYOND ANYTHING I HAD ATTEMPTED IN CENTURIES.

THEY COULD HAVE DISPATCHED ME EASILY ENOUGH HAD THEY KNOWN THE TRUTH.

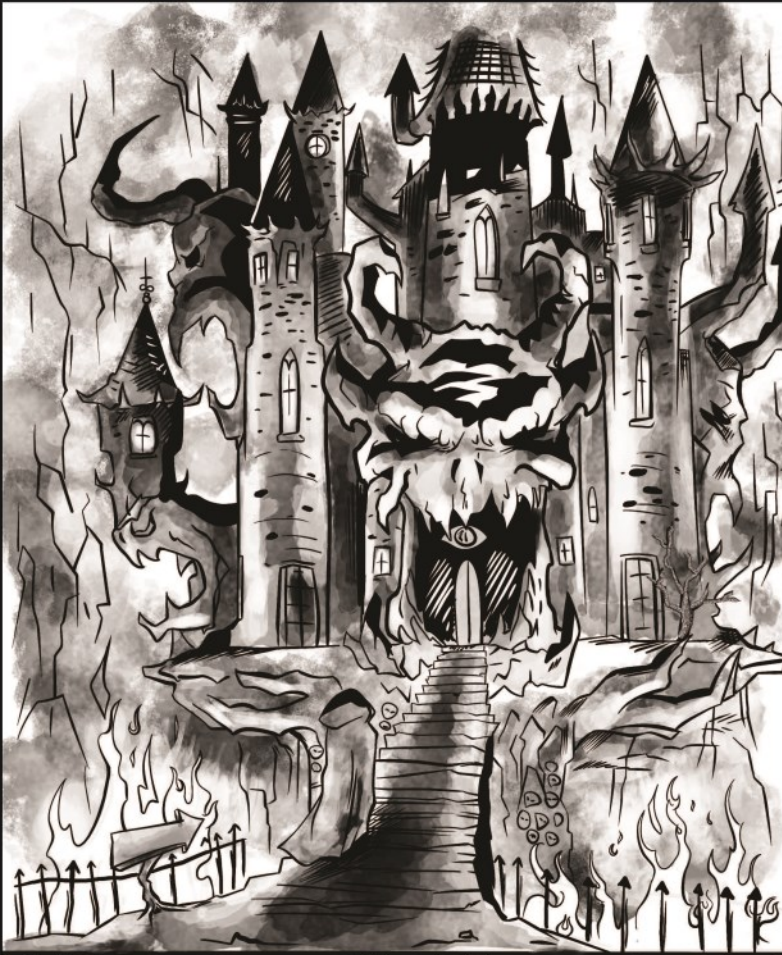
KILL WAR!

HIS POWER IS WEAK. HE CAN'T CONTROL YOU...

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PRESENTING--

WE KNOW WHO HE IS. WHAT BRINGS HIM HERE?

BELIAL HAS BEGUN HIS TAKEOVER OF HELL.

HE DEFEATED WAR ONLY MOMENTS AGO. I SAW IT WITH MY OWN EYES.

DO YOU THINK HE HAS THE SLIGHTEST CHANCE AT DEFEATING THE TRUE RULER OF HELL?

I DO, M'LORD.

CONTINUED IN BELIAL #2

NOT FOR REPRINT

TAKE. SEVERAL HOURS LATER IT'S ALL DONE AND I'M WRECKED, THAT GLORIOUS BASTARD FAILED TO MENTION IT WAS ENCHANTED. THE NEXT THING I HAD TO DO WAS RESCHEDULE SOME TORTURE TIMES AND SO I GO BACK TO THE OFFICE AND CALL YOU TO ARRANGE THAT FOR ME. OH, AND THANKS FOR FIXING THAT UP FOR ME. MAYBE AFTER WORK WE CAN GO GRAB A DRINK. SEE YOU THERE THEN. ALTHOUGH I WAS TIRED I WAS DOING WELL. WELL I THOUGHT I WAS, SO I SCHEDULED SOME TORTURE FOR A TARDY SOUL AND I GO TO BOSS'S OFFICE AND INFORM HIM, "SIR, I'VE SWAPPED MONDAYS SCHEDULE WITH FRIDAY AS YOU ASKED ME TO DO, AND RANDOMLY ASSIGNED THE OTHER DAYS AS WELL." THIS SHIT STAIN THEN PROCEEDS TO TELL ME, "WHAT?! WHICH IDIOT TOLD YOU TO DO THAT? SALIMONIOUS YOU BETTER FIX THIS, YOU FUCKING MORON!" SO I DO AND I SWEAR TO...WELL, YOU KNOW. I'M DEVASTATED. AT THIS STAGE, I KID YOU NOT, I FLOODED THE RECEPTION AREA WITH MY HOT SALTY TEARS, (IT'S MORE LIKE ACID, SO AT LEAST WE HAVE SOULS WAITING IN QUEUE IN AGONY SO THAT'S AN UPSIDE). I MAKE MY WAY DOWN AND PUSH ALL THE SOULS INTO THE RECEPTION AREA, 'CAUSE I'M TOTALLY LIVID AND THAT'S WHAT WE DO HERE, TAKE IT OUT ON OTHERS (THOUGH THEY DESERVE IT). AS I AM DRAGGING THESE SILOS THAT ARE GETTING HEAVIER I THINK ABOUT THE THINGS I WOULD LOVE TO DO TO BOSS. HE'S NOT EVEN A DEMON. HIS BOSS HAD A HISSY FIT AND ALL OF A SUDDEN THEY'RE RUNNING THIS PLACE. MAN, I HATE FALLEN ANGELS! I HATE THEM MORE THAN THE REGULAR ANGELS, EVEN ARCHANGELS THEY THINK THEY OWN THE PLACE. WHAT A BUNCH OF WHINEY, NO GOOD, PIECES OF SHITS. THOSE HEAV...EN DROPOUTS CAN GO EAT A SOGGY POO WRAPPED IN DIARRHEA WITH A SIDE OF HORSE DUNG. AFTER YET ANOTHER MASSIVELY WEAKENING WORK OUT I GO BACK TO THE OFFICE AND NOW I'M CRAWLING TO MY DESK. AS I'M SITTING DOWN, LITTLE BOSS RUNS PAST IN A BLUR AND THEN I HEAR, "OH SALLY! YOU'RE IN CHARGE UNTIL I GET BACK FROM MY MASSAGE." AT PRECISELY THAT INSTANT BOSS'S PHONE RINGS. SO I SLOWLY WALK TO THE OMINOUS SOUNDING TONE. AS I PICK UP THE HANDLE I CAN CLEARLY HEAR THE SCREAMING DEMON ON THE OTHER SIDE, "THIS IS BOSS'S PHONE. HE'S JUST DUCKED OUT." I SAID, "YOU TELL THAT NO GOOD ANGEL DROPOUT HE BETTER HAVE THOSE REPORTS IN 1 HOUR OR I'LL TORTURE YOU!" I HAULED ASS, STARTING TO COLLECT THE REPORTS AND THEN I REALIZED I CAN'T READ ANGELIC, ONLY DEMONSPEAK. SO INSTEAD, I DECIDE THAT I'M REALLY GOING TO MESS IT ALL UP. I RANDOMIZED EVERY REPORT SO THAT NO REPORT HAD THE CORRECT INFORMATION. ONCE I FINISHED, I SENT THE REPORTS TO THAT GLORIOUS DEMON, GRETSWOL, THE ASSHOLE WHO SCREAMED AT ME. SEE THE PATTERN HERE? HE THEN CALLED BACK. "I. AM. GOING. TO. KICK. YOUR. ASS!". FOR THREE HOURS I HAD TO ENDURE THE MOST HORRID TORTURE EVER, FORCED TO WATCH A HALLMARK CHRISTMAS SPECIAL. JUST TO PISS HIM OFF, I SAY, "AWW, THE MOVIE FINISHED CAN YOU PUT ONE MORE ON." AT THAT HE SCREAMS AND LET'S ME OUT. I GO BACK TO WORK TO FIND THAT I HAD THREE TIMES THE PAPERWORK. I CALLED YOU, SO NOW I'M ASKING YOU, LET'S GO FOR THAT DRINK." SALIMONIOUS HANGS THE PHONE UP AND AS HE IS LEAVING HE SAYS TO BOSS, "HEY YOU LITTLE SHIT, I QUIT!" HE HEADS OUT WITH A SATISFIED GRIN. THE TWO MEET UP JUST OUTSIDE OF THE PIT. HE WALKS UP TO BESMÉ AND CONFESSES. "SO BESMÉ, YOU HEARD MY DAY. LET'S GO TO THE DEVILS OWN. IT'S THE ONLY BAR BOSS WON'T GO TO. IT'S DAYS LIKE THIS THAT I WISH SOMEONE WOULD JUST SNAP MY NECK AND END IT ALL."

Belial

NOT FOR REPRINT

DLB/act

SALIMONIOUS

"HEY BESMÉ, IT'S SALIMONIOUS AND WHAT A SHIT FUCK OF A WORST DAY I'VE HAD AT WORK, TODAY IT ALL STARTED WITH ME GOING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MANGLING VISCERA. FROM THERE THE DAY JUST WENT DOWNHILL. THE LINES WERE VERY LONG AND VERY SLOW TIMES GETTING THE SOULS TO THEIR PUNISHERS, SO REALLY, IT WAS BUSINESS AS USUAL. AS I'M WALKING THROUGH THE MAGIC DOORS, I WALK OVER THE SOUL THAT WAS BEING CRUSHED BY DOORS THEN I AM IN THE LOBBY OF THE BUILDING AND I SEE A RENEGADE SOUL RUNNING TOWARDS THE ELEVATOR. WHAT A MORON. INSTEAD OF GOING UP THE 666 FLIGHTS OF STAIRS HE GOES TO THE ELEVATOR AND THEN BOOM, HE BURSTS INTO HELLFIRE WITH HIS SCREAMING. IT'S THE FUCKING FUNNIEST THING. MORON THOUGHT HE'D GET A FREE PASS. HAHAHAHA! THAT NEVER GETS OLD. I THINK HE WAS A CEO OF SOME KIND OF COMPANY. AS I'M GOING UP TO THE OFFICE I SEE THE RECEPTION AREA COMPLETELY EMPTY AND JUST AS I'M THINKING 'TODAY IS GOING TO BE A SHIT DAY' WITHOUT MISSING A STEP I HEAR, "SALLY! GET IN HERE!" IT CAME FROM THAT SHITTY LITTLE CHERUB ASSHOLE, BOSS. I MAKE MY WAY THROUGH A DOOR THREE TIMES TOO SMALL FOR ME AND TAKE A SEAT. THE CHERUB CONTINUES, "THIS MORNING, DUE TO THE HELLSPAWNS INCOMPETENCE, YOUR COLLEAGUE DEVoured HIM BECAUSE HE FAILED TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE SOULS FOR HIM TO TORTURE. SO NOW I NEED TO FIND A REPLACEMENT. CONGRATS, YOU ARE NOW A PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO THE DAMNED." NATURALLY I CALMLY AND WITHOUT ANY REAL ANIMOSITY SAID, "WAIT, WHAT? YOU'RE DEMOTING ME? BOSS. THIS IS BULLSHIT!" IMMEDIATELY REGRETTING MY WORDS, BOSS RESPONDS WITH, "CARE TO REPEAT THAT SSSSSALLYYYYYY?!" TRYING TO BACKTRACK I SAY WITH A SMILE ON MY FACE, "THANK YOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY."

JUST TO LET YOU KNOW, EXECUTORS, LIKE MYSELF, ARE HUMONGOUS. WE ARE BUILT TO INTIMIDATE. I WAS TOLD ABOUT A BIG, JOLLY, GREEN GIANT NAMED...HUG, OR HULK OR SOMETHING. WELL ANYWAY, HE'S ABOUT 8 FEET TALL, HE'D BE SMALL FOR AN EXECUTOR. SO IMAGINE ME, LITERALLY A GIANT TRYING TO SIT AT A DESK DESIGNED FOR HUMAN-SIZED SOULS - I LOOKED RIDICULOUS - AND NOW ALL THE DAMNED CAN SEE ME AS WELL. THEY'RE LAUGHING (THOSE THAT STILL HAVE JAWS). TO TOP IT OFF THIS IS HELL, SO NO ONE CARES TO TRAIN YOU IN WHAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING. LET'S NOT FORGET, FAILURE IS PUNISHED HEAVILY. FUCK, IT'S HARD. RING! RING! GOES THIS OLD PHONE THAT LOOKS SUPER TINY, AND MADE OF BONES, THE HEADSET AND MIC ON EITHER SIDE IS HELD BY TWO HANDS ON EITHER END AND FOR ME TO ANSWER IT WITHOUT BREAKING IT I HAD TO USE MY PINKY AND THUMB. AS I TRY TO PUT IT TO MY EAR THE LINE CUTS AND THEN I HEAR BOSS' VOICE COMING FROM HIS OFFICE, "ANSWER THE PHONE SALLY.... OH FORGET IT! IT'S JUST ME." STILL TALKING LOUDLY FROM HIS OFFICE HE STATES, "GO AND ARRANGE THE SOULS IN THE BINS AND SWITCH ALL OF MONDAY APPOINTMENTS TO FRIDAY, FRIDAYS APPOINTMENTS TO SUNDAY AND THE REST SWITCH THEM AROUND TO THE OPPOSITE DAYS AND YOU HAVE UNTIL NOON TO FINISH IT, SALLY." THINKING TO MYSELF, 'I GOT THIS. I'M A LOT STRONGER THAN THOSE HELLSPAWN. I CAN JUST PICK IT UP, THE WHOLE THING.' SO I DO EXACTLY THAT, PICK UP THE FIRST SILO FILLED WITH SOULS AND THEN I LOOK AT THE FRIDAY POSITION AND AS I START MOVING TOWARDS IT THE SILO BECOMES HEAVIER EVERY STEP I

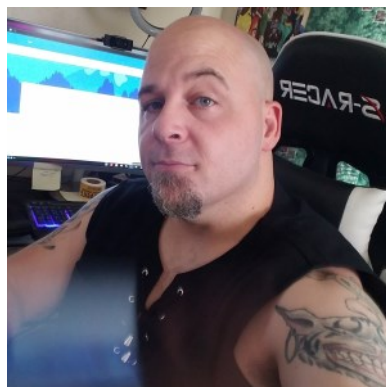
Belial

NOT FOR REPRINT

DLB/acd

I've talked about the fact that TikTok has been a wonderful place to be exposed to new artists and new creators. One such creator, who goes by Instinked on the platform, has taken the following he's built for himself and also decided to share that spotlight with other creators, embodying the spirit of Catalyst.

Shaun Barbour



Did you always want to make comics, or did you come into it more recently in life?

I always loved art as a kid. It's main functionality in my life was a way to escape the world I was growing up in though. To that point, though, I never thought i would legitimately be making comics. The fact that I make them now is strictly because of a promise I had made to my grandmother, as she was passing away, to do something with my art.

Besides Belial, what else have you worked on, or what else might you be working on in the future?

I have been an inker on a lot of different books actually. Over 20 titles have something I have contributed to. My next book though is going to be one I am super stoked to do. It's a horror comic that takes place in an asylum. Definitely going to be a real special book. I am even putting together a book that I am proud to be adapting from a known creepy pasta into a comic book. I would love to give the name of it, but it'll have to be a secret for now. Hopefully your readers give me some support and follow me for what i hope will be a pretty amazing 2022.



Who are your writing and/or artistic influences and why?

The most inspiration that I get really, is from other creators. I know it sounds cheesy, but indie creators are putting out the best stories right now. They are able to generate new ideas and dont have to worry about the constraints of known properties. To that extent...they push me to find my own ground and strive to

make a name for myself. If I MUST pick one though, I would have to pick Dan Schaffer of Dogwitch and The Scribbler. If you haven't read those titles...they are a lot of fun and deserve more attention.



What is the best/most challenging thing about publishing independently?

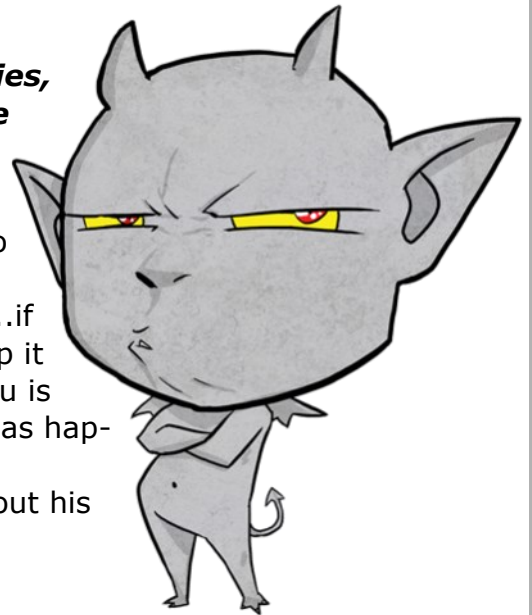
The best thing about publishing independently really is the free range to do what you want. To tell your own story the way YOU want to tell it. It is really liberating to be able to put the raw ideas and emotions into something you create from the ground up. The most challenging thing? Definitely building a fanbase and funding your own books. Without a big publisher standing behind you and funding your story, you really have to rely on your fanbase to help bring every-

thing together. This can be really hard as someone who does it part time, aside from already working a full time job and raising my kids as a single father.

You're still early in the life of the Belial series, but do you have a planned end point, or are you just going with the flow?

The plan for Belial is to get 4 issues done to complete the arc of the original story i set out to tell. So, yeah..with some other things in the works it may meet it's stopping point there. Or...if enough people get behind it I would love to keep it going. The creator i work with on it Chuck Pineau is absolutely hilarious and an incredible writer. I was happy to bring him on as a co-creator. So if he is in it...then I am in it. It wouldn't exist as it is without his flavor.

Check out Belial on [Inst-Inked Comics!](#)



GALLERY

This man is my fucking hero. There's no two ways about it. When I first met him, his art enthralled me like none before had. A gritty, grimy style that I have tried many times to emulate. Subject matter that I could barely grasp at the time but I worked hard as I could to get up on to his level to see the world as he did.

Without realizing it he served as a muse for my budding video production and motion picture storytelling pursuits for more than a decade. I became his one-man production crew, following him across cities and states to record interviews and gallery showings. He persisted with me through all the technical difficulties—and there were many, let me tell ya.

Since those days, he has taken his ink-heavy style and design sensibilities to the corporate world, designing logos, merchandise, labels for beer AND coffee, and even sick decks like the two pictured below.

The man is an award winning designer, y'all, and I'm incredibly proud to call him a friend. I give you a brief look into the art and design of

MATTHEW RYAN SHARP











HARDCORE COFFEE



HARDCORE COFFEE

★ 12 OUNCES Whole Bean

SMUGGLERS COFFEE



THE ANTIHERO

SINGLE ORIGIN COLOMBIAN MEDIUM ROASTED COFFEE



one of us is the killer.

THE CLASSICS PRINCE COMPANY



one of us is the killer.

DRINK COFFEE • CRUSH SKULLS



12 OUNCES Whole Bean



GRIMM OUTLOOK

SINGLE ORIGIN MEXICAN CHIAPAS COFFEE. SMOOTH BODY WITH NOTES OF CHOCOLATE, NUTS & CITRUS

ROASTED & PACKAGED AT SMUGGLERS COFFEE EXCLUSIVELY IN: 797 COMMERCIAL AVE • UNIT 6 • LOWELL, IN 46356

ARROWHEAD
BREWING ALES COMPANY
Draftsman Series



DAWN BREAKER

IMPERIAL MILK STOUT
BREWED WITH RASPBERRY, MAPLE, VANILLA,
BLACK WALNUT & MILK SUGAR
BREWED IN COLLABORATION WITH SONGBIRD CAFE

16
FLUID
OUNCES

DAWN-BREAKER

IMPERIAL MILK STOUT
BREWED WITH RASPBERRY, MAPLE, VANILLA,
BLACK WALNUT & MILK SUGAR
9.5% ALC. BY VOL. (ABV)
52 INTERNATIONAL BITTERING UNITS (IBU)
DARK, RICH, SMOOTH.

BREWED & PACKAGED BY:

ARROWHEAD ALES BREWING COMPANY
2101 CALISTOGA DR.
NEW LENOX, ILLINOIS 60451
WWW.ARROWHEADALES.COM

DRINK FRESH. DO NOT CELLAR.
TO MAINTAIN FRESHNESS, STORE REFRIGERATED

BREWED IN COLLABORATION WITH:

SONGBIRD
CAFE



CT-ME-VT-DE-MA-NY-OR-IA 5¢ ref. MI 10¢ ref.
CA CASH REFUND

GOVERNMENT WARNING: (1) According to the Surgeon General, women should not drink alcoholic beverages during pregnancy because of the risks of birth defects. (2) Consumption of alcoholic beverages impairs your ability to drive a car or operate machinery, and may cause health problems.

ARROWHEAD
BREWING ALES COMPANY
Draftsman Series



BATTLE~CRY UNDER A WINTER SUN

WEST COAST INDIA PALE ALE
HOPPED WITH LOTUS, SULTANA, CITRA, AND CENTENNIAL

16
FLUID
OUNCES

BATTLE-CRY UNDER A WINTER SUN

WEST COAST INDIA PALE ALE
HOPPED WITH LOTUS, SULTANA, CITRA, AND CENTENNIAL
6.7% ALC. BY VOL. (ABV)
45 INTERNATIONAL BITTER UNITS (IBU)
TROPICAL DARK, CITRUS.

BREWED & PACKAGED BY:

ARROWHEAD ALES BREWING COMPANY
2101 CALISTOGA DR.
NEW LENOX, ILLINOIS 60451
WWW.ARROWHEADALES.COM

DRINK FRESH. DO NOT CELLAR.
TO MAINTAIN FRESHNESS, STORE REFRIGERATED

WE MAKE
BEER HERE



CT-ME-VT-DE-MA-NY-OR-IA 5¢ ref. MI 10¢ ref.
CA CASH REFUND

GOVERNMENT WARNING: (1) According to the Surgeon General, women should not drink alcoholic beverages during pregnancy because of the risks of birth defects. (2) Consumption of alcoholic beverages impairs your ability to drive a car or operate machinery, and may cause health problems.



I gave this gallery a few extra pages because I felt that this man's work needed to be shared in its varied forms. This last piece is a picture of the award he received next to some of the designs that earned him that award. The man's work speaks for itself, truly.

As a shameless self promoter, and considering that self for me includes those around me, I will tell you with all bias in mind that you should be drinking Arrowhead Ales beer and especially Smuggler's Coffee. I literally do not buy any other coffee since I started drinking there, so that should be indication of the quality.

If you'd like to join me in my adoration of Matthew's art, check out his [Instagram](#).

TIPS 'N' TRICKS

Every creator has their own process, so I find it enormously helpful to glean any information I can when I can. In this column, I share three tips for up and comers from the featured creators.

From Ben Krieger:

Get to know your collaborators. Building the team to do Tomorrow's Yesterday was undoubtedly the hardest thing I've had to do in terms of self-publishing, and also the most rewarding. Knowing what they're capable of, how they like to work, and what you can do to support them will result in the best possible product.



Don't rush. Sometimes you'll be able to go fast and it will feel great. Other's you'll be crawling and it will feel terrible. Rushing doesn't help and it makes you feel worse.

This is my weakness, but be confident. Be outgoing if you can too. I'm so incredibly proud of Frontier Forever, and the team working on it with me, but it takes work to show the world that.



Shaun Barbour:

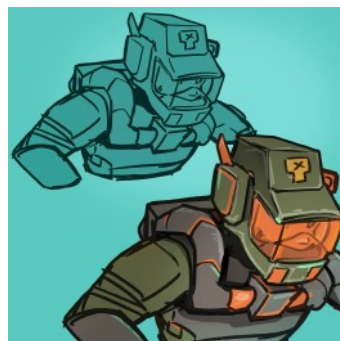
1.) Don't give up. Whatever your passion is. Keep at it. It's always worth it in the end as long as you give it everything you have.

2.) Don't be afraid to kill your babies. WHAAAAT?!?! What I mean by that is...don't be afraid to let something go in the name of something else that makes it better. If you have an idea that just doesn't fit or that someone recommends to make things better. Follow that instinct or insight. Don't pressure things into your story. Adaptation is where growth can take place.

3.) NETWORK!!! Find people in your arena. It's not a competition. Reach out as often as you can for advice and constructive criticism. There is always something to learn, so surround yourself with people a level above your current place and work with those people to level up your creative game.

Jeff Jackman:

Find keyboard shortcuts. I have a couple hotkey commands that help me create layers for me or change my line levels at a button click rather than constantly doing same things over and over. see how you can shortcut places.



Keep your heroes in mind. For instance, Artstation can be tempting to follow a lot of people, but try to narrow it down so you are focused on what it is you are going for, and not distracted by certain artists work that may not help your end goal.

Stick to a side project even if for just 20 minutes a day.

Whoo! I hope you caught all those gems being dropped. I'm absolutely adding them to the master list. Maybe we crowdfund an all tips-n-tricks of the game issue to put in people's hands one day? I like that idea. But I should, it was my idea.

From myself, and especially as I get further along this Catalyst journey, I would emphasize self-promotion. Regardless of how you think you may compare to others (which you shouldn't be anyway) you must promote your work in order to be successful. We are in an era where that's easier and more productive than it ever has been, as we can join groups specific to our tastes and genres, and seek out platforms that cater to our methods best.

Another big one for me is focus - it's absolutely my weakest link, and I constantly find myself getting trapped by whatever trap I have laid for myself. If I come downstairs and my monitors are on the gaming PC, you can bet that I'm probably going to spend (waste?) a lot of time gaming. If it's on the work PC where all my creative work is, I'm far more likely to say "oh I'll do this one thing" and end up working for a couple hours without losing focus. If you can't necessarily make the choice every time, set a trap for yourself if you can. Maybe your sketchbook needs to be on your side table first thing in the morning to get you thinking about that before you grab your phone. Maybe you need to leave your working copy of your script open on your computer so that it's the first thing you see when you sit down. Find the method to the madness.

This third one I'm stealing from a bunch of people since I've been hearing a lot of it in various media I've consumed over the last couple months. Do the hardest work first. The thing you need to talk yourself into the most or that requires the most energy—do that first. The thing you really want to do and don't need your arm twisted for—that will get done easily. It's essentially a way to turn the thing you want to do most into a reward, and if that thing is at the end of the day, even if you are running out of steam, it's something you're far more likely to find a second wind for. So if you really want to write the script but you're dreading sending the emails to clients or collaborators—do the emails first. That way they're done, and you can dive into the script without worrying about the hard thing that's coming.

-Dalibor

NEW HOTNESS

This is a list of indie books I read since the last issue and have loved.



From Constant Hustle Comics, and the mind of Charles Simpson comes Zero Gravity: Enter the Chaos.

In a near future where mankind has learned apparently nothing and kept ruining this planet to the point of barely breathable air and near-toxic water, we push out from this sphere and start settling on other celestial bodies. After the E2 colony is set up on the moon, we come to find out that we're not the only ones out there looking for a new home.

A new evil comes to test mankind.

Check out the first issue of this high-energy series and other great comics at [Constant Hustle Comics!](#)

I want to just spew forth into immense detail about this book because it's incredible in every way. I will try to reserve myself and give you the bare necessities to get you to read it.

Human-piloted transforming mechs, invading alien force, secret cabals, conspiracies, setups, and a leading lady that grows before your eyes into a force of nature.

And I'm only 34 chapters in.

Read this book.

[Kindle](#) — [Hardcover](#) — [Audiobook](#)



Dazel, a young bounty hunter joins the crew of the Cyan after its captain helps her during an altercation. What secrets does the ship hold? What secrets does Dazel?

According to its creator, "An easy way to describe the story would be "Anastasia in Space" with The Legend of Zelda-esque magic system."

If any, or all of that sounds intriguing, go check out [Endless Moons!](#)



A massive colony ship drifts empty. An AssistA robot is activated suddenly, and sets out on a trek to find out where the crew had gone.

There is however something else, nagging at the robot's directives. Some...one else?

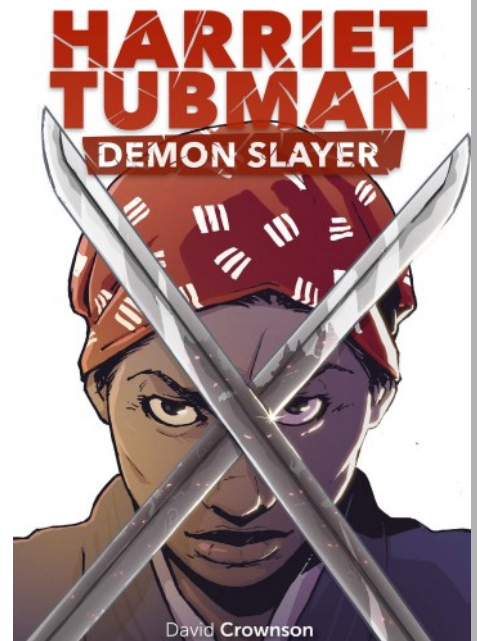
Go along for the journey as AssistA works to find the truth about what happened.

Check out Gone at [Blue Fox Comics](#).

Look between you and I, this speaks for itself.

Harriet Tubman: Demon Slayer is every bit as badass as Abraham Lincoln: Vampire hunter, and just about half as badass as Miss Tubman in real life.

G'on now. Buy it at [Kingwood Comics](#).



Earth is dead.

Humanity's last embers burn on a single vessel in deep space.

The battles are endless, and thus the highest honor is to serve the war effort.

The enemy? Parasitic alien hordes.

Our heroes? Five gifted young pilots who seek glory and revenge against the alien menace compete to lead the charge against the alien menace!

Check out Joystick Angels & more on [RAE Comics](#)!

EDITORIAL

Since this is the first issue of Catalyst that is coming out on the intended date, I wanted to talk about setting—and more importantly sticking to deadlines.

I know that many, if not all reading this are independent creators. We serve no master beyond our own ambitions. However even so, we need to set hard goals in order to get through each step in our journey, and on to the next one.

I started this magazine essentially on a whim. I thought this was a whittled-down version of this grand idea that—in truth—I may still pursue some day. But I also needed an outlet. I didn't want to get lost in the infinite field of the existing platforms like Wattpad, and honestly I couldn't guarantee that I'd do it just for myself. So I created this mechanism which has served me wonderfully so far. Catalyst is a magazine that accepts all comers—artists, writers, poets, photographers—whoever wants to share their work. At the same time it requires me to put in energy into writing. Whether it be editorial content like this, or creative content like the now four chapters of *The Cost of Information*. (That title is still fluid, so don't judge too harshly yet, please.)

In writing *The Cost of Information*, I dove into an area that I didn't even consider I would be going in when I added the romance angle in Chapter 3. That in turn drove the big ask in Chapter 4, and ultimately decides the finale in Chapter 5 next issue. But none of that would have happened if I had not created that framework of "I need to write this chapter for the magazine I am making." Most recently I was able to execute that in record time, because I decided that issue 4 was coming out November 1st. Not "some time in November," not "end of Q4," November 1st. I had that chapter ready October 1 to allow for editing time, and to give myself no reason of my own that would cause a delay. If my chapter was done, All I needed was a few questions answered and some digital artwork and comics from other creators. I can put this magazine out with only my creative and my editorial content, but I want to promote people's work. So I got my work out of the way, and sent emails and confirmations, and follow-ups, and started laying out the magazine.

In the final moments here, I'm finishing up this editorial to export, upload, and schedule for an early morning delivery to your inboxes on November 1st.

Even though we don't (in most cases) have other masters, we must be the masters of our own domain, to paraphrase an episode of *Seinfeld*. For if we do not set the rules, then there are none, and without rules, chaos reigns. You might get the writing done, you might not. Something will likely distract you from writing that script. You'll probably play video games instead of editing that photo shoot.

Set a date and do the work.

If you need help with the date, I'll give you one. January 15. Issue 5 of Catalyst releases. Shoot me an email, and I'd love to feature your work.

- Dalibor

CREATOR INDEX

The whole point here is to get you the reader to interact with, consume, and ideally spend money with the creators I've spotlighted in this magazine. Below you will find a list of everybody's websites and social media tags. Go buy something you bums!

BEN KRIEGER

FRONTIER FOREVER

<https://frontierforever.org/>

[Instagram](#)/[Twitter](#)/[Facebook](#)—FrontierForever

JEFF JACKMAN

<http://www.jeffjackmanart.com/>

[Instagram](#)/[TikTok](#)/[Facebook](#)—4orkast

SHAUN BARBOUR

INST-INKED COMICS

<https://www.instinkedcomics.com/>

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[Facebook](#)—BelialComic

MATTHEW RYAN SHARP

[Instagram](#)—matthewryansharp

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CATALALYST