

THE BEACON TO INDEPENDENT STORYTELLING

CATALYST

ISSUE 05 - JAN 2022

GUERRA - KLAPPER

LACY - SELLNER

METYCH

PRIJIC - ZUJOVIC

COMICS - PROSE

GALLERY

INTERVIEWS

TIPS

ONE ISSUE ON TIME IS ENOUGH, RIGHT?

CATALYST

CATALYST MAGAZINE BROUGHT TO YOU BY NEXUS STUDIOS, INC.

>Welcome friends,

to another late issue of Catalyst. Look I think at this point you have to expect some flexibility in the release date.

I had intentions of releasing this on the 15th, but the holiday lag hit and I didn't really get in touch with people until a week ahead of time, and then I'm having to poke at people who are busy and have whole ass lives to lead to get me questions and PDFs, etc.

Needless to say, that all takes a while. So in classic Catalyst fashion, we're late, but we're awesome.

Sick cover by the one and only Dino, ridiculous comics like Shark of War, and the final chapter of the first original tale in Catalyst—The Cost of Information.

All-in-all a solid issue and one I'm proud of. Now to just convince Dino to do the layouts and let me do silly things like these blurbs.

Enjoy!

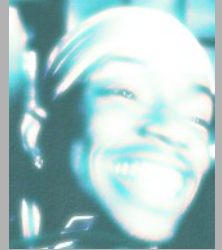
-Dalibor



COVER ART

Dino Prijic

"Sonder"



02 INTERVIEW: Dino Prijic



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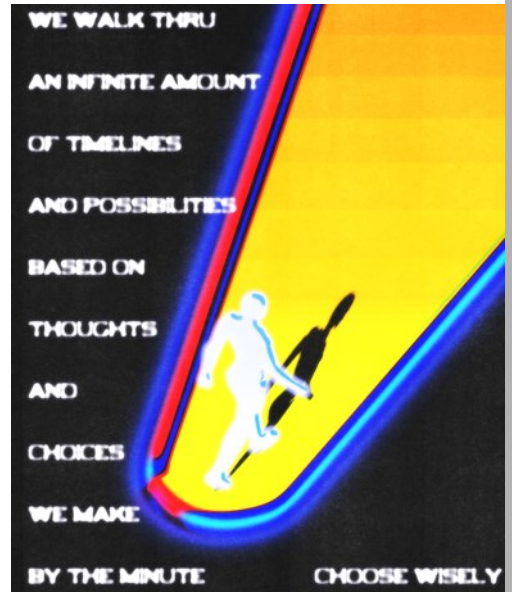


I shared some of my cousin's work in an early issue of Catalyst and now his work graces our cover. Since we're related, it took him a while to answer my questions, but without further ado, let's get to know our cover artist,

Dino Prijic

Have you always been passionate about photography?

I got my first camera in 2017 with an interest in street photography and taking photos of architecture. I started practicing portraiture with my friends shortly after via their request, however I really started to love capturing people in an attempt to visually identify their uniqueness. Whether through the choice of location, encouraging them to wear the craziest shit in their closet, anything to make it identifiably them. This lead me down the rabbit hole of where I am today, capturing extremes, movement, emotions and feelings. Sidebar, when I was around 7 years old visiting Croatia, Split with my mom I found her disposable film camera out in the house while she was out and about. I burned the entire roll of film taking pictures of this beautiful mediterranean home we were staying at. My mom was reasonably pissed when she got home, but it was something I felt proud of as a child. Maybe that was the ultimate precursor to my journey as an artist.



What was the spark that got you into design?



I took a graphic design class in high school, cliché enough. The Teacher was a complete asshole, we loved him for it. He really cared about making sure we were employing good techniques in our art and design. We got into a lot of arguments and he thought my work was mediocre at best (I don't blame him). But he really gave me a lot of tools and methods I still use today in the Adobe suite. From there I went on to doing the Newspaper at my high school, where I would basically just make cool edits every day at 6th period for 2 years. That gave me not only an appreciation for working on projects and hitting targets, but most of all for print. Our newspaper teacher was great and also taught us a lot. She was a

progressive woman, she cared about the environment, and drove the biggest hummer on the lot.

What was your first piece that you felt was ready for public consumption?

Up until this point, I was still very straight forward with the way I edited images, color blocks, basic shapes and lines. Nothing wrong with that, but I felt like I wasn't able to vomit all over a photoshop document the way I wanted to yet. Until one day, I finally had the courage to do shrooms for the first time. This is totally playing on the stereotype of people that do psychedelics for the first time swear it was a life altering experience, then start wearing drug rugs and not showering. Anyways, I basically just sat in front of my computer for 2 hours having a good trip, and adding layers to projects that shouldn't have been there, and really learned that there are no limits to how far you can take a simple image.

Looking back on it, the image is pretty mediocre. However, working on it did teach me a lot.

When you begin work on a project, are you seeing the final product in your head and just working to get there, or do you approach it in more of a free-form workflow?

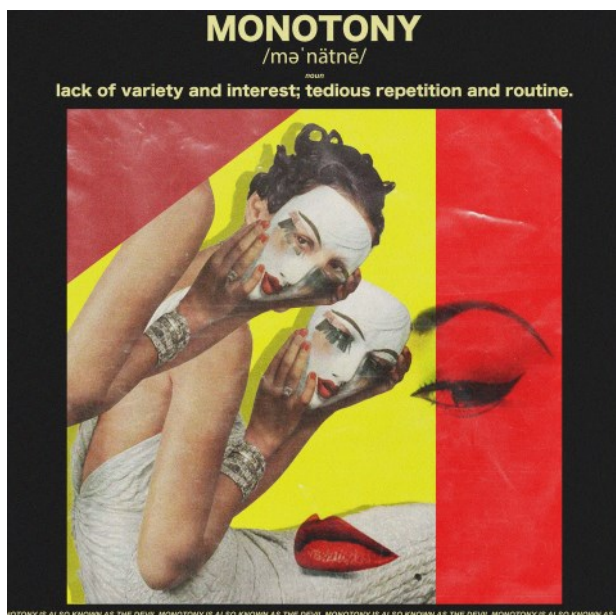
I'd say 90% of what I do is entirely free flow, which is incredibly fun. It brings me a childhood-like feeling of endless possibilities. It is a blessing and a curse, just gotta make sure you don't lose any mojo.

Have you ever given up on a project?

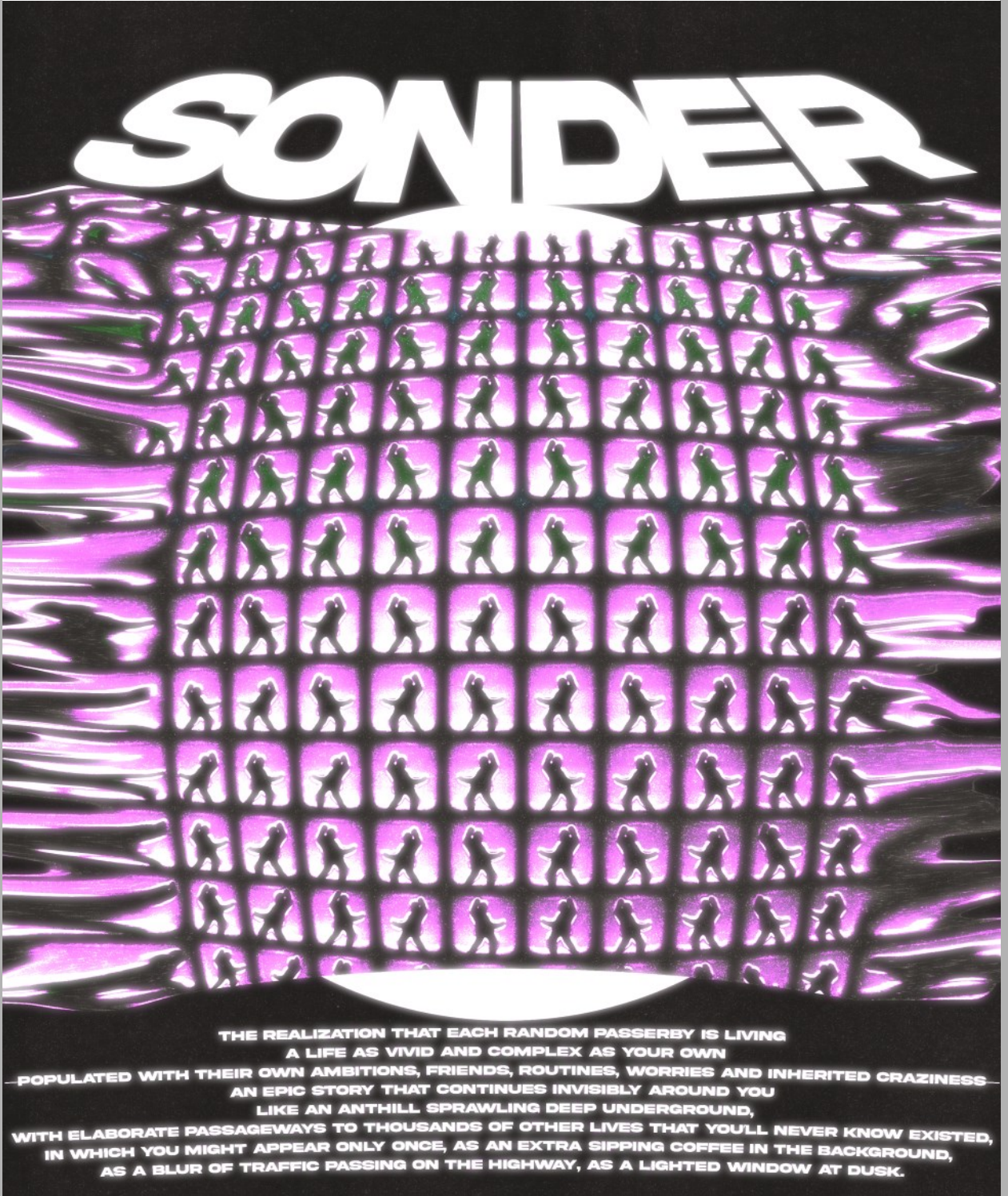
All the time, and I believe it's very healthy. I hear artists say that they feel bad for giving up on an idea, almost like it was a complete failure. In these situations I think we mistake setting something down as a permanent action. If anything, you're just building a catalog of already mildly refined visions and ideas. They will always be right where you left them, and be there right when you may need them.

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

Normally once I begin to hit a major roadblock, I try to counter that with a shift in my perception. In order to shift the way i'm perceiving the problem, I normally like to get really stoned. If that doesn't work I often pull to life for inspiration. Whether that be through exercise, watching good films, listening to certain albums or going out and partying. Nothing like waking up with a pounding headache to really shake things up. In general, I would say find your fun in life and use it as fuel.



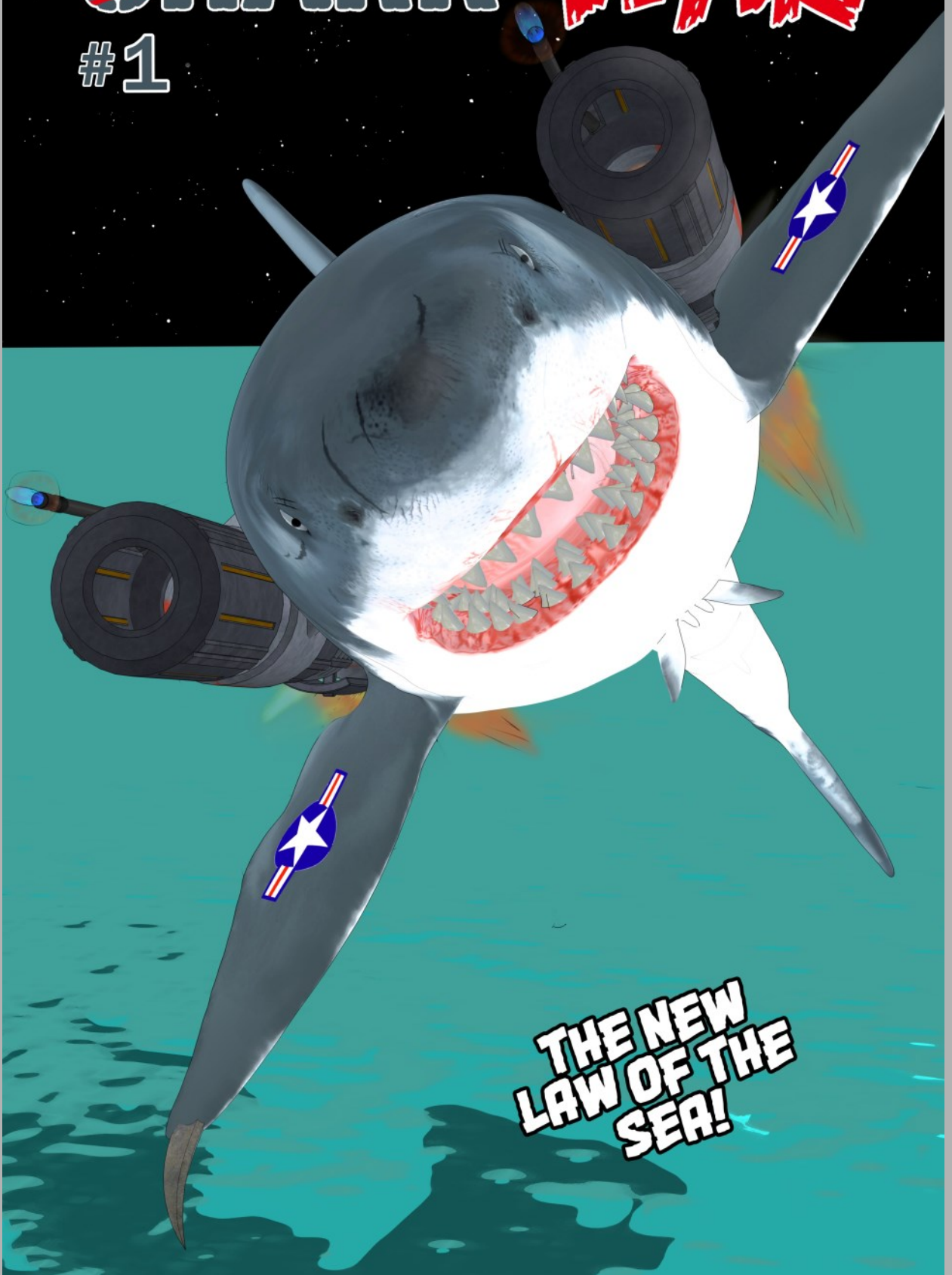
And now I present to you the cover image in all its glory.



Make sure to check out Dino's work on Instagram—[@colornhue](https://www.instagram.com/colornhue)

SHARK OF WAR

#1



**THE NEW
LAW OF THE
SEA!**

SHARK OF WAR

CREATED BY BEN LACY

WORDS/ART - BEN LACY

LETTERING - NIKKI POWERS

THE SHARK TANK

OUR GENEROUS BACKERS GO HERE

ANDY X JENKINS
ARISMENDY JIMENEZ
BEN CLARK
BILL COULOMBE
BRANT FOWLER
BRET JULIANO
BRIAN DAWSON
CHAD ELLIS
CHRIS CASILLAS
COLIN DEVONSHIRE
DAINTY LAWSON
DAVID TAYLOR
DEBRA LACY
DEREK MARTIN
DIANNE NICHOLSON
DREN PRODUCTIONS
ELIZABETH HAYS
ELVIS LEE THOMAS
F JAMES MARTIN

GARY PHILLIPS
GEOFF WEBER
GEOFFM
GMARKC
JACK HOLDER
JAMES SMITH
JAY LOFSTEAD
JOAN TUNGATE
JOE D. MCFEE
JON LANG
JOSE LOERI
JOSH ELIAS
JOSHUA LACY
KURT ZAUR
LOUISE MCCULLOCH
LUCAS AND LYN BLOSS
LUCAS SCHEFFEL
MAREK BENNETT
MARY GAITAN

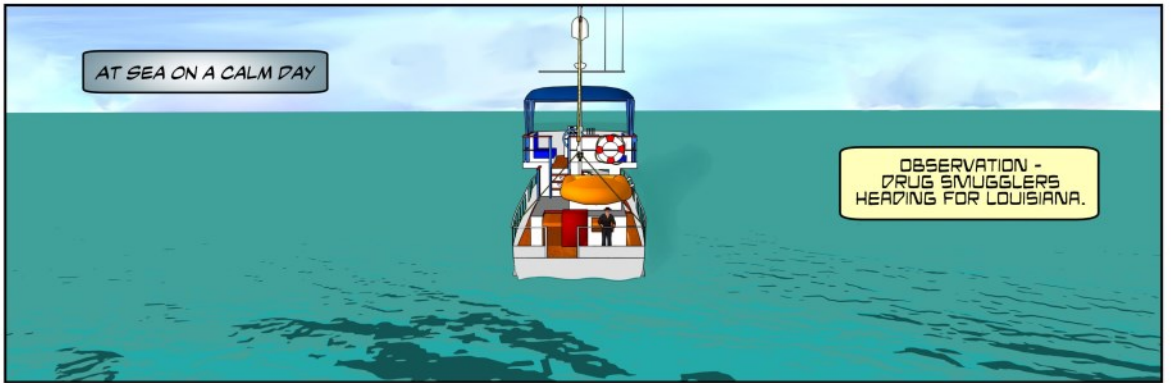
MATT FARRELL
MATT KUND
MAX WEST
MELISSA J MASSEY
MERT BERKMAN
MICHAEL LACY
MICHAEL TREMARCHE
NATASHA R CHISDES
NATHAN LUETH
PAUL MCKERLEAN
PAULA ZUCKERMAN
PERRY EDWARDS
RHONDA FARRELL
ROBERT A. MULTARI
RYAN KROBOTH

SAM JOHNSON
SCOTT BARNETT
SCOTT HARRIS-KING
SHARON ROHDE
SHAWN HANNA
SHEYENNE MURPHY
SPINA
SURINDER PABLA
THE ELECTRIC DRAGON
TONIA KEMPLER
TONY ANJO
TRAVIS GIBB
VERONICA ROZYCKI
WILD BILL 53
WILL ALLRED



WANT MORE? - GO TO WWW.BITINGCOMICS.COM

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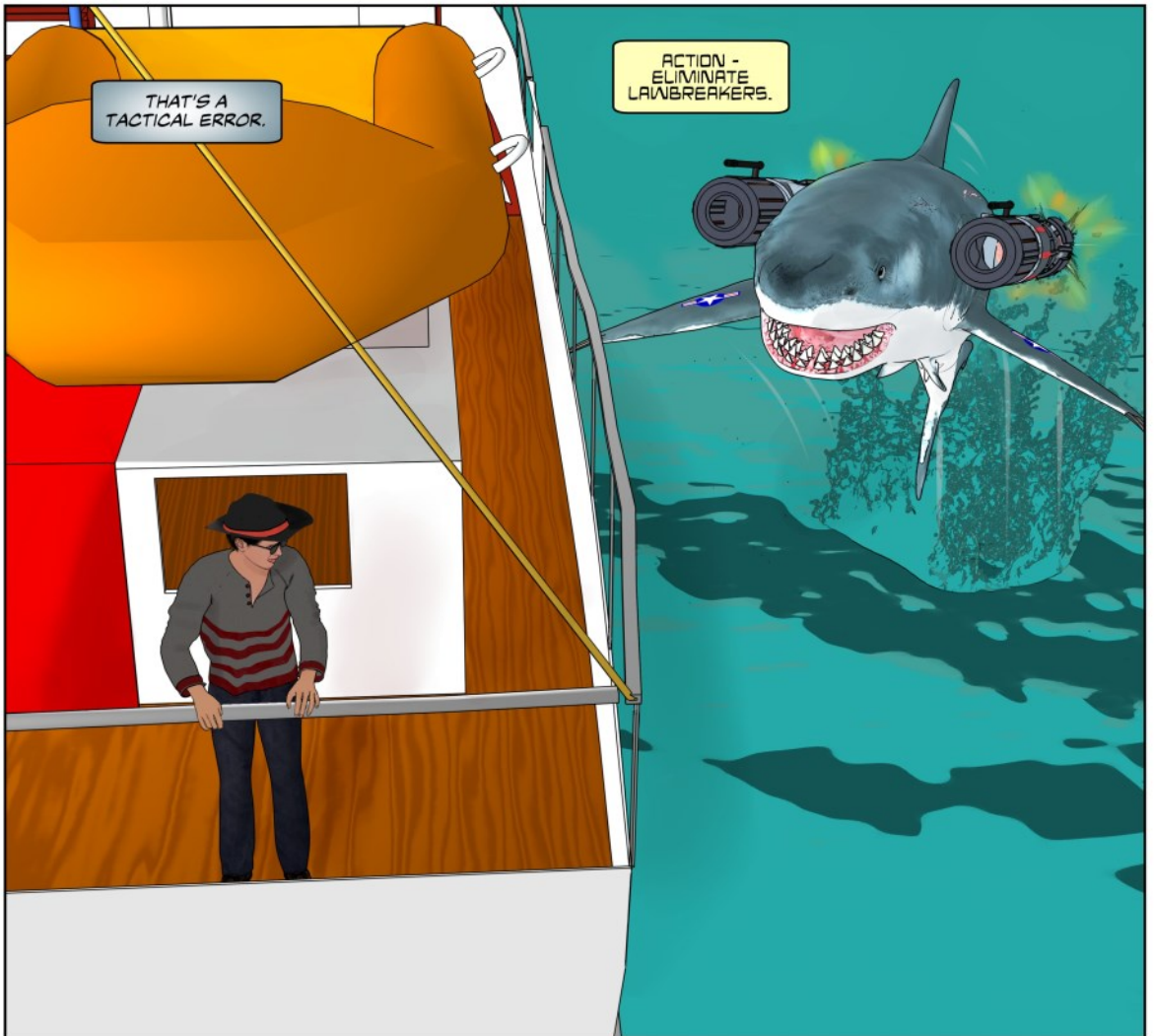
AT SEA ON A CALM DAY

OBSERVATION -
DRUG SMUGGLERS
HEADING FOR LOUISIANA.



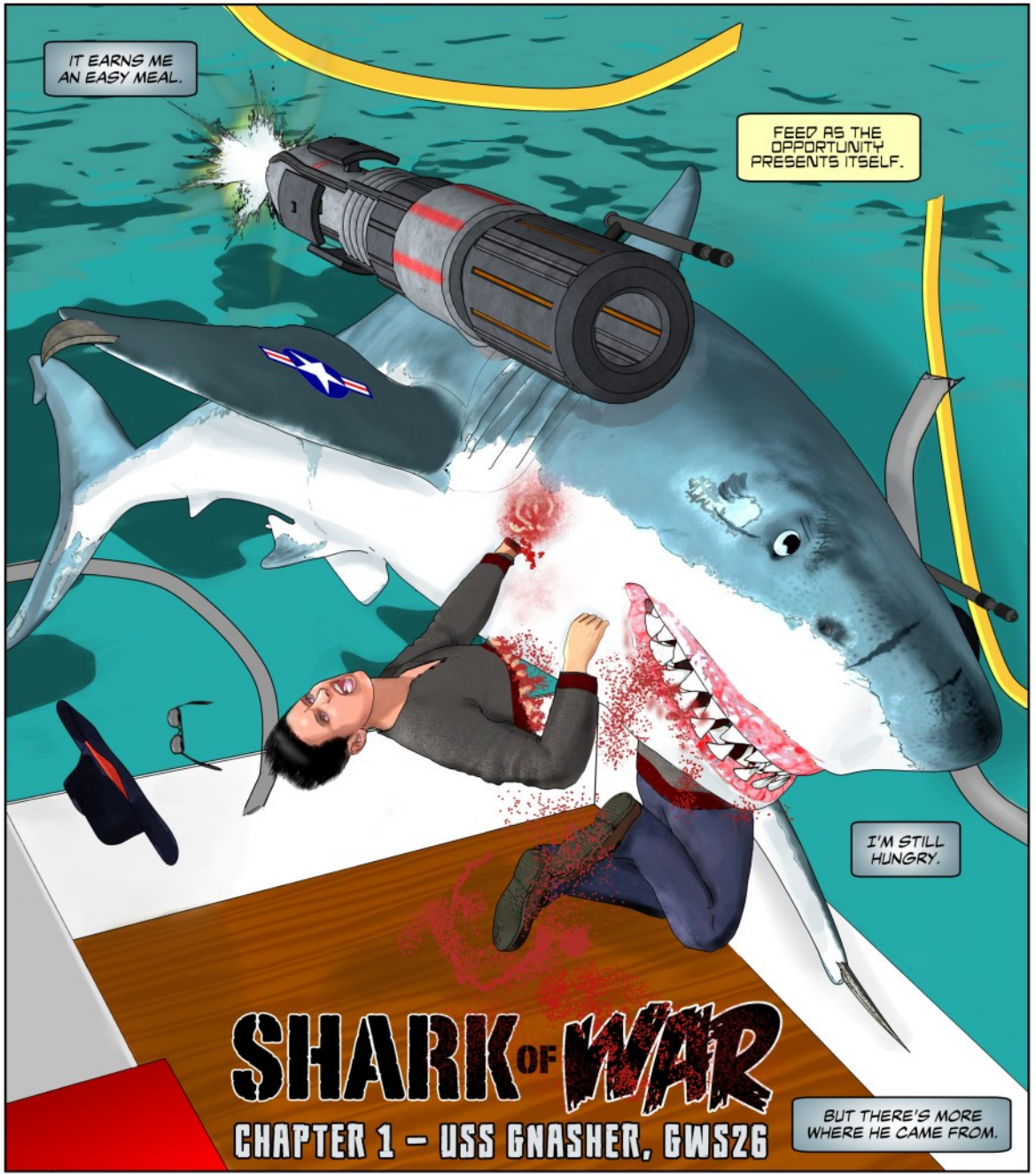
A MAN MIGHT THINK
HE'S ALL ALONE.

DIRECTIVE 3 -
ENFORCE THE LAWS
OF THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA.



THAT'S A
TACTICAL ERROR.

ACTION -
ELIMINATE
LAWBREAKERS.



IT EARNS ME AN EASY MEAL.

FEED AS THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF.

I'M STILL HUNGRY.

SHARK OF WAR

CHAPTER 1 - USS GNASHER, GWSZ6

BUT THERE'S MORE WHERE HE CAME FROM.



WARNING - MALE ARMED WITH SMALL CALIBER HANDGUNS.



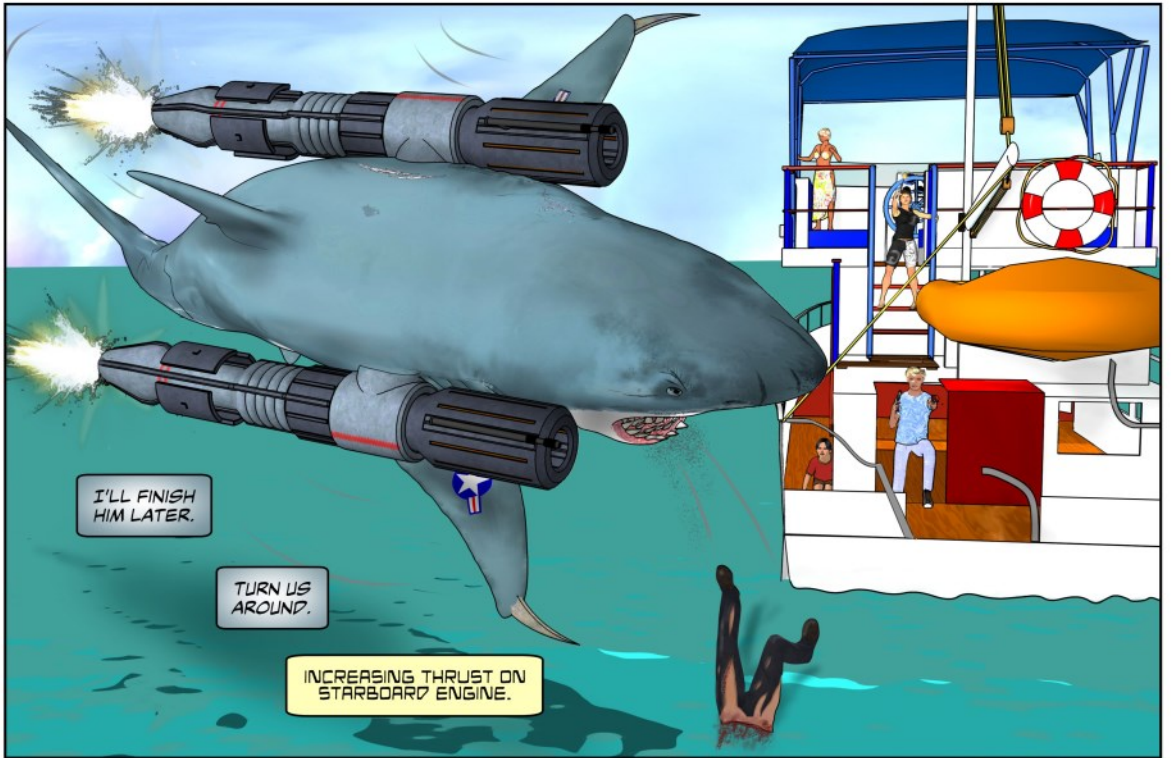
WARNING - FEMALE ARMED WITH AUTOMATIC PISTOL.



FEMALE OBSERVER.



JUVENILE MALE HIDING.



I'LL FINISH HIM LATER.

TURN US AROUND.

INCREASING THRUST ON STARBOARD ENGINE.

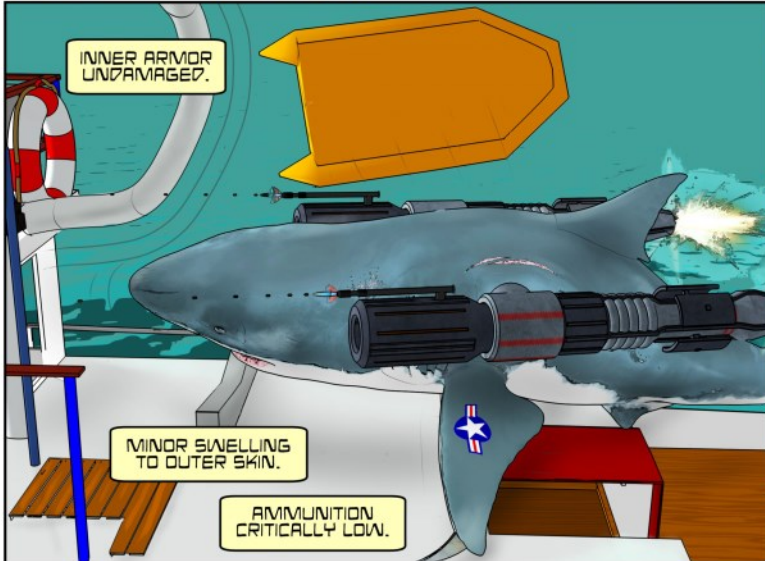


TOO THIN AND BONY.



BETTER.

MULTIPLE IMPACTS DETECTED.



INNER ARMOR UNDAUNAGED.

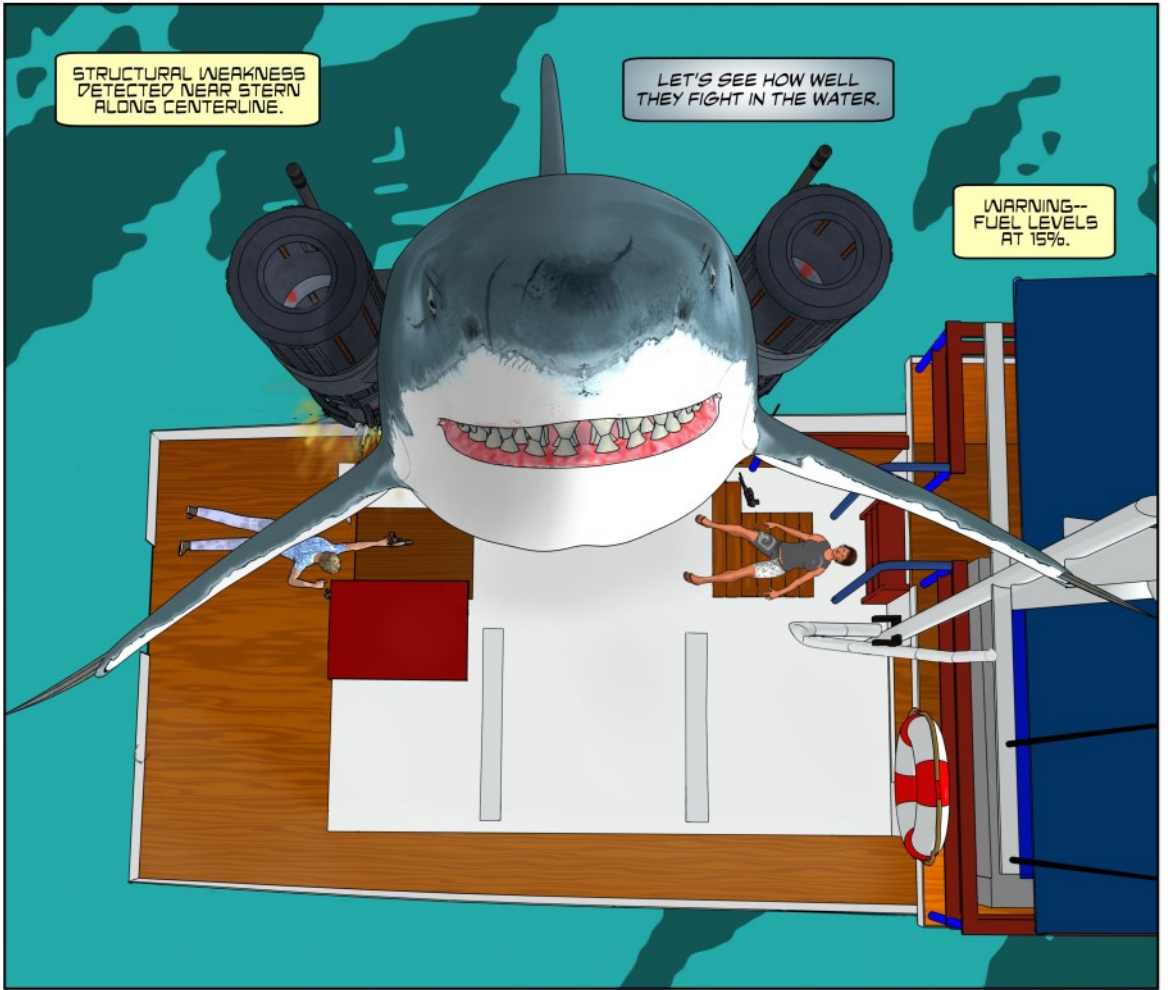
MINOR SWELLING TO OUTER SKIN.

AMMUNITION CRITICALLY LOW.



AT LEAST 10 INCOMING DETECTED FORWARD AND BELOW DECKS.

THIS WAS MEANT AS A TRAP FOR US. OPTIONS?



STRUCTURAL WEAKNESS
DETECTED NEAR STERN
ALONG CENTERLINE.

LET'S SEE HOW WELL
THEY FIGHT IN THE WATER.

WARNING--
FUEL LEVELS
AT 15%.



WHAT IS
HE DOING?



WE WILL
REFUEL SOON.

LOCK ARMOR
PLATES.

IMPACT IN
THREE...

TWO...

ONE...



OH, NO!
NO!



KASPLOSH

ENEMY SHIP SINKING.

INNER ARMOR UNDAUNTED.

MINOR ABRASIONS TO OUTER SKIN, RELEASING ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES.

I AM UNHURT, BUT VERY HUNGRY.

MULTIPLE TARGETS IN THE WATER.

IT'S FEEDING TIME.

A SHORT TIME LATER.



I CANNOT EAT MUCH MORE.

STOMACH AT 120% OF CAPACITY.

BURN IT OFF; START REFUELING.

FUEL REFORMERS ONLINE. CONVERSION BEGUN, ONE HOUR TO FULL CAPACITY.

WHAT IS HE DOING HERE?

NEWS REPORTS INDICATE SMUGGLERS MAY ENSLAVE POOR CHILDREN TO USE AS MULES.

THERE'S NO REASON TO KILL HIM.

BUT IS THERE A REASON TO SAVE HIM?

DIRECTIVE 7 - PROTECT UNITED STATES CITIZENS.

DIRECTIVE 12 - SEIZE ENEMY ASSETS.

NO, THAT DOESN'T FIT.

DIRECTIVE 35 - ENHANCE THE PRESTIGE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AS A FORCE FOR GOOD.

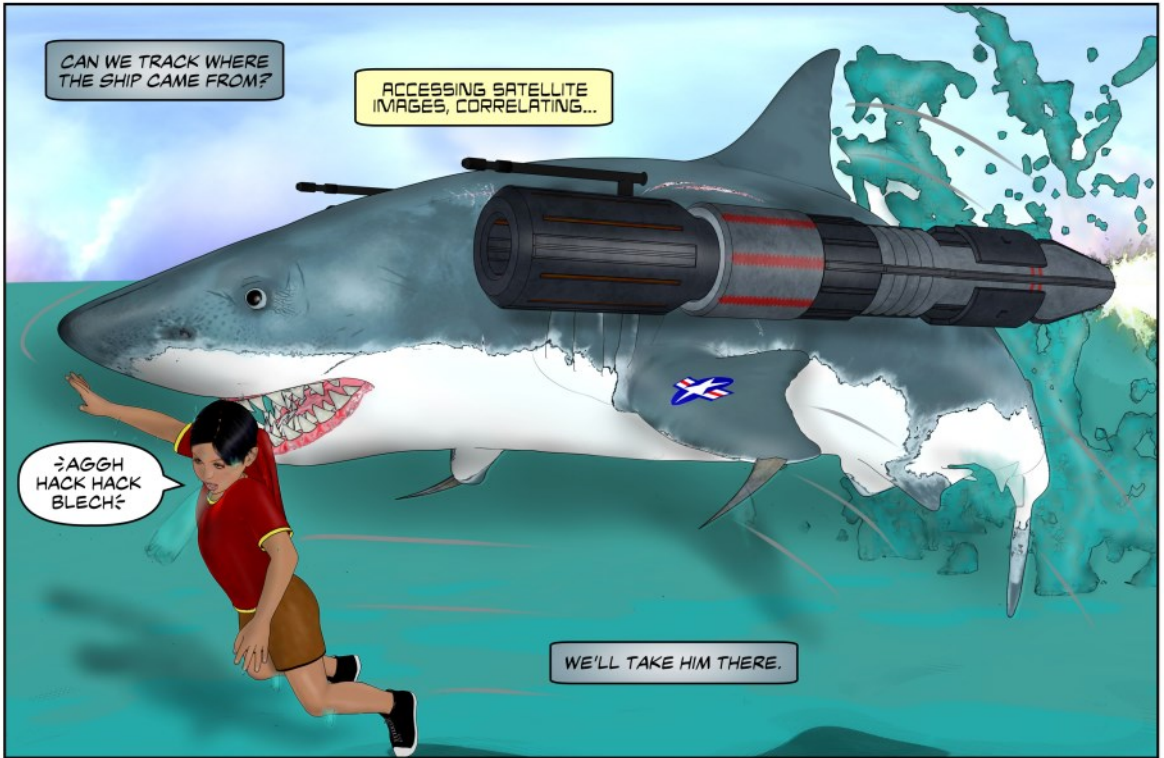
PRESTIGE - DEFINITION - RESPECT AND ADMIRATION FELT FOR SOMEONE BASED ON THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS.

IS HE ONE?

UNLIKELY.

??????????????

...ACCEPTABLE.



CAN WE TRACK WHERE THE SHIP CAME FROM?

ACCESSING SATELLITE IMAGES, CORRELATING...

→AGGH HACK HACK BLECH?

WE'LL TAKE HIM THERE.



COME LEFT TO BEARING TWO THREE SEVEN DEGREES.

ETA WILL BE LONG PAST TIME OUT OF WATER LIMIT.

THEN HE BETTER BE ABLE TO HANG ON.



WHERE'S THAT PHONE?

IT'S ME. RIVERA IS DEAD. THEY'RE ALL DEAD. NO, LISTEN! WE WERE WRONG. IT WASN'T A RIVAL ATTACKING US.

I CAN'T EXPLAIN. IT HAS TO BE AMERICAN MILITARY, BUT IF IT IS, WE'RE GOING TO NEED A MUCH BIGGER BOAT.

ONE YEAR AGO.

GOOD LORD, HE'S HUGE!

EXPERIMENT NUMBER GWS26. DUBBED USS* GNASHER, HE'S THE LARGEST GREAT WHITE EVER SEEN. THE USS ZEPHYR FOUND HIM LIMPING ALONG ON THE SURFACE. A PROPELLER BLADE MUST HAVE GOT HIM. WE RIGGED THIS TANK TO BLAST WATER AT HIM SINCE SHARKS NEED TO MOVE TO BREATHE.

WE'RE HOPING HE'LL BE BIG ENOUGH AND STRONG ENOUGH TO SURVIVE THE OPERATIONS THE PREVIOUS SHARKS COULDN'T, ESPECIALLY WITH YOU HERE TO DO THE SURGERY.

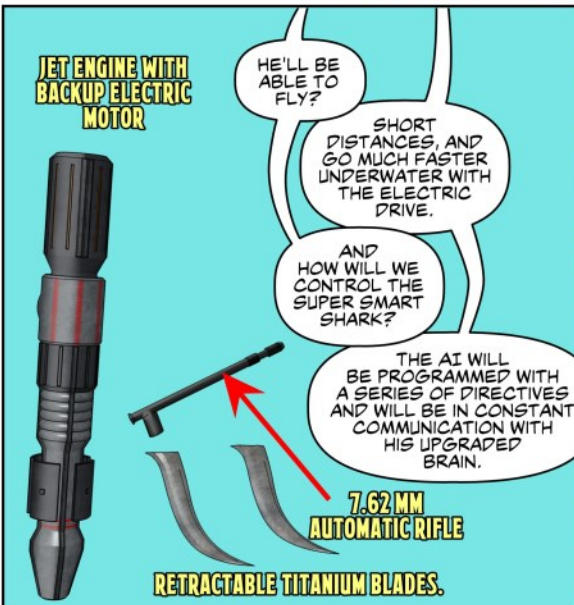
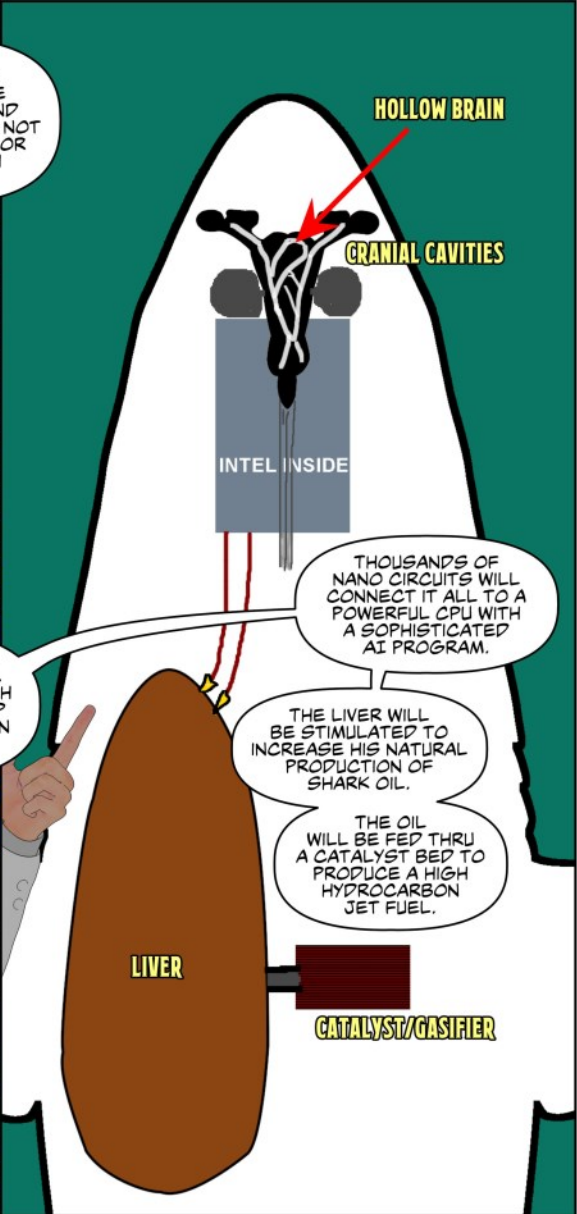
I DON'T KNOW. HIS SKIN IS SLICED FROM HEAD TO TAIL.

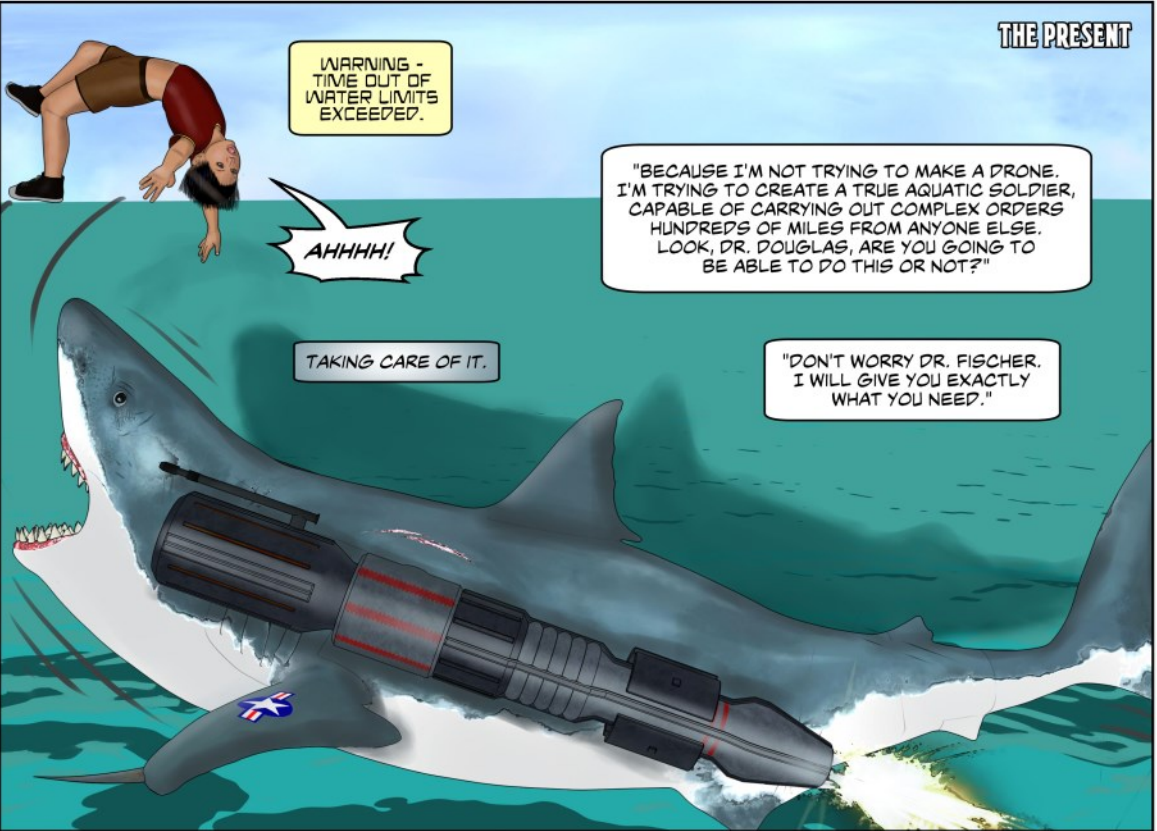
NOT A PROBLEM. WE'RE GOING TO PEEL IT OFF, WRAP HIM IN A TITANIUM FRAME, COVER THAT IN KEVLAR, SOAK HIS SKIN IN A TOUGH BUT FLEXIBLE POLYMER, THEN SEW IT BACK ON HIM.

HE SHOULD BE GOOD AGAINST ANYTHING SMALLER THAN A 45 CAL.



*UNITED STATES SHARK





WARNING - TIME OUT OF WATER LIMITS EXCEEDED.

AHHHH!

"BECAUSE I'M NOT TRYING TO MAKE A DRONE. I'M TRYING TO CREATE A TRUE AQUATIC SOLDIER, CAPABLE OF CARRYING OUT COMPLEX ORDERS HUNDREDS OF MILES FROM ANYONE ELSE. LOOK, DR. DOUGLAS, ARE YOU GOING TO BE ABLE TO DO THIS OR NOT?"

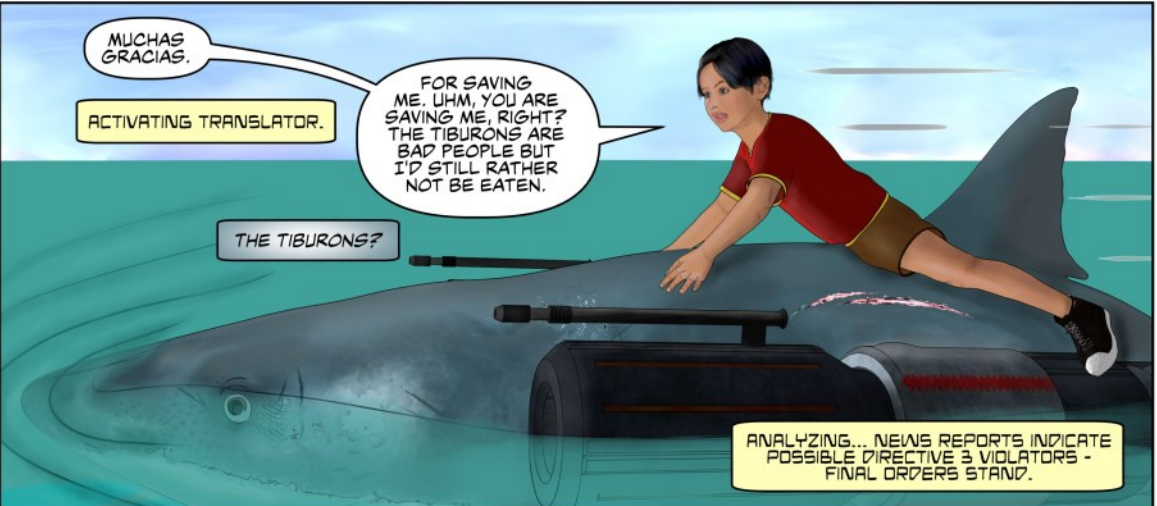
TAKING CARE OF IT.

"DON'T WORRY DR. FISCHER. I WILL GIVE YOU EXACTLY WHAT YOU NEED."



OOMPH.

PLOP



MUCHAS GRACIAS.

ACTIVATING TRANSLATOR.

FOR SAVING ME. UHM, YOU ARE SAVING ME, RIGHT? THE TIBURONS ARE BAD PEOPLES BUT I'D STILL RATHER NOT BE EATEN.

THE TIBURONS?

ANALYZING... NEWS REPORTS INDICATE POSSIBLE DIRECTIVE 3 VIOLATORS - FINAL ORDERS STAND.

CENTRALIA, A COUNTRY BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND SOUTH AMERICA.

COMING HERE IS DANGEROUS, BUT IT'S THE ONLY PLACE I HAVEN'T LOOKED.



THESE DOCKS BELONG TO THE TIBURONS AND THEY'VE DISAPPEARED PEOPLE WHO DON'T BELONG HERE.



HOPEFULLY, THEY'LL THINK I'M ONLY FISHING.



GOOD, NOW I CAN WANDER CLOSER.

MARISA, IT'S ME. MARISSAAA!



DANIEL! OH, THANK THE LORD! I'VE BEEN SEARCHING EVERYWHERE FOR YOU.



WHAT HAPPENED, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

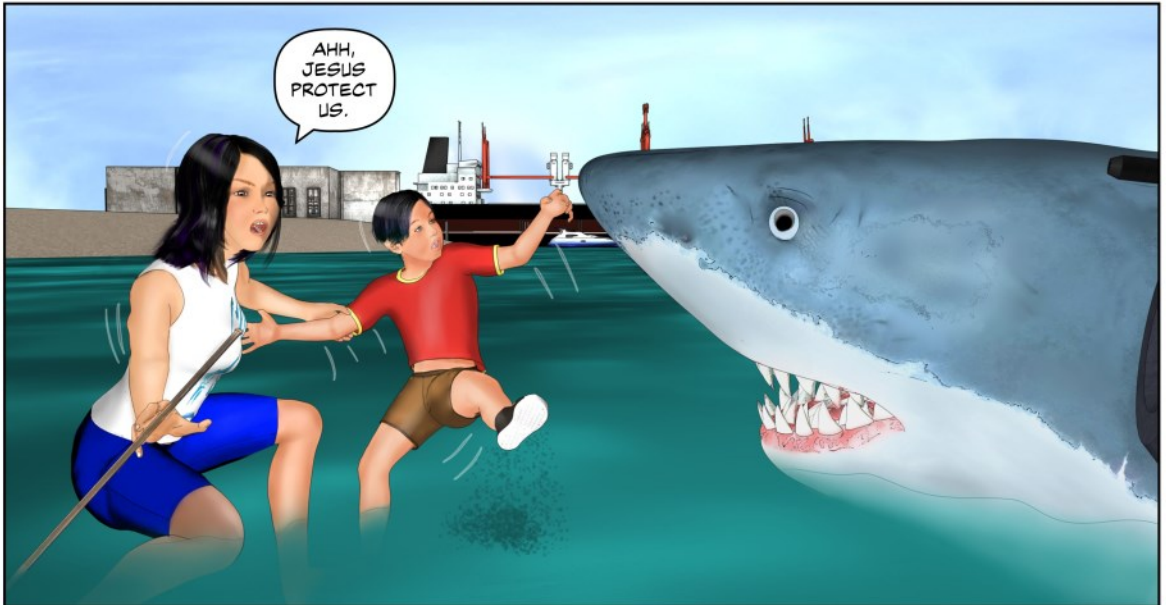
I TOOK SOME COLD SODAS TO THE DOCKS TO SELL...



WHAT HAVE I TOLD YOU ABOUT GOING THERE? THE TIBURONS DON'T CARE THAT YOU'RE A LITTLE KID.



I'M SORRY, THEY ALWAYS PAY WELL, BUT THIS TIME, LUPITA TIBURON HERSELF WAS THERE. SHE ...



AHH, JESUS PROTECT US.



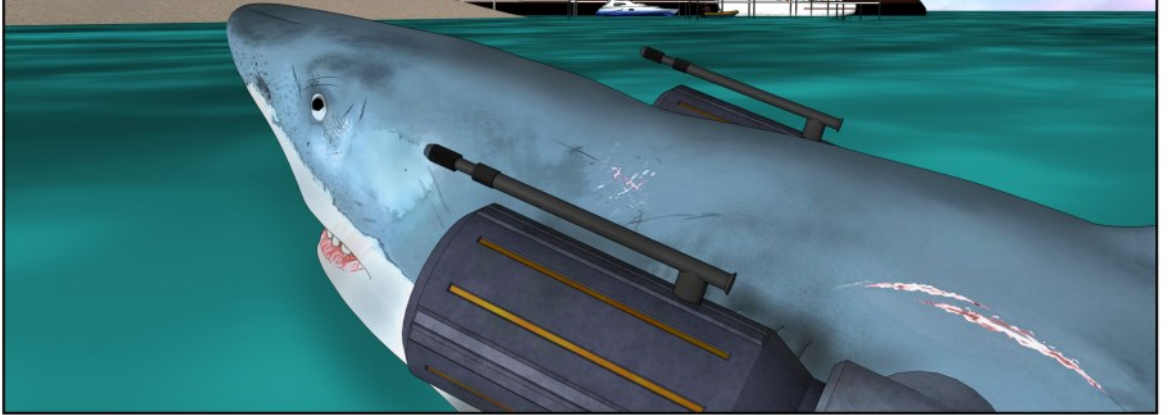
RUN, DANIEL. I'LL HOLD IT OFF.



IT'S OK. HE SAVED ME AND BROUGHT ME BACK. HE'S MY FRIEND.

THESE DOCKS THAT THE TIBURONS OWN. DOES THAT TELL US ANYTHING?

AFFIRMATIVE. THIS FACILITY IS PART OF A LARGE SCALE SMUGGLING OPERATION. CONFIRMS TIBURONS ARE DIRECTIVE 3 VIOLATORS.



DIRECTIVE 13 - DESTROY ENEMY ASSETS.

GOODBYE, MR. SHARK. IF YOU EVER NEED MY HELP, I'LL DO ANYTHING I CAN FOR YOU.

ONCE THEY LEAVE, WE WILL DEAL WITH THESE DOCKS.



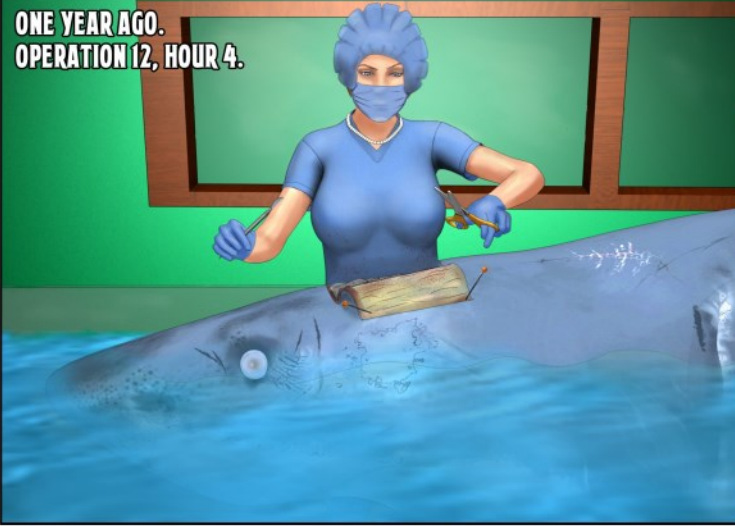
OK, DANIEL, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE THEN YOU CAN TELL ME WHAT THE HECK HAPPENED TO YOU.

SURE, BUT I WANT TO GO SEE MY FRIENDS FIRST.

LITTLE BROTHER, YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO LEAVE MY SIGHT AGAIN.



ONE YEAR AGO.
OPERATION 12, HOUR 4.



OPERATION 14, HOUR 3.



IF WE'D DONE THIS MY WAY, WE'D HAVE BEEN DONE SIX OPERATIONS AGO.

OPERATION 19, HOUR 6.



I COULD HAVE DONE 20 FISH IN THIS TIME. AW, CRAP.

HE'S HEMORRHAGING, AGAIN. BRING THAT OTHER SHARK HERE, I'LL NEED TO GRAFT IN A NEW ARTERY.



INITIATING STARTUP SEQUENCE.

BOOTING UP ... CONNECTING. CONNECTION FAILURE. RETRYING... CONNECTION FAILURE. RETRYING... CONNECTION FAILURE.



HIS ORGANIC BRAIN IS IN A COMATOSE STATE. YOU MUST HAVE DAMAGED SOMETHING WHEN YOU WERE OPERATING ON IT.

I'VE DONE EVERYTHING PERFECTLY. IF HIS ORIGINAL BRAIN WERE DAMAGED, HE'D ALREADY BE DEAD.



THE PROBLEM IS YOUR FOOLISH EFFORT TO MAKE HIM SENTIENT.

THE CLONED BRAIN CELLS AND HIS ORIGINAL BRAIN CELLS AREN'T CONNECTING.

THIS WAS ALWAYS THE PLAN. YOU SAID YOU COULD DO IT.



OH I'LL DO IT ALL RIGHT, THEN WE'LL DO THIS THE RIGHT WAY, MY WAY.

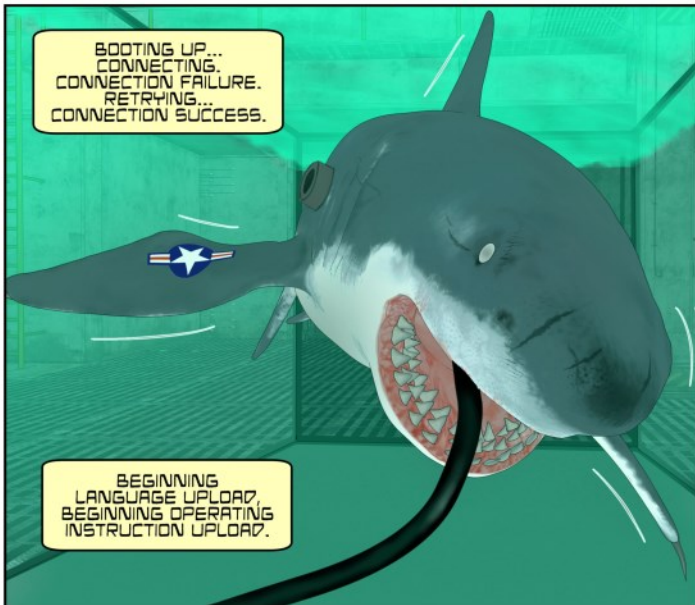
BRING ME ANOTHER SHARK, I NEED EXTRA BRAIN TISSUE.



THE NEURO GEL WAS DESIGNED FOR BRAIN INJURIES, NOT MAKING SHARKS SMARTER. BUT I'VE GRAFTED EXTRA BRAIN TISSUE BETWEEN THE ORIGINAL BRAIN CELLS, THE GEL AND THE AI CONNECTIONS.

IF THIS DOESN'T WORK, THERE'S NOTHING MORE TO BE DONE.

OPERATION 22, HOUR 4



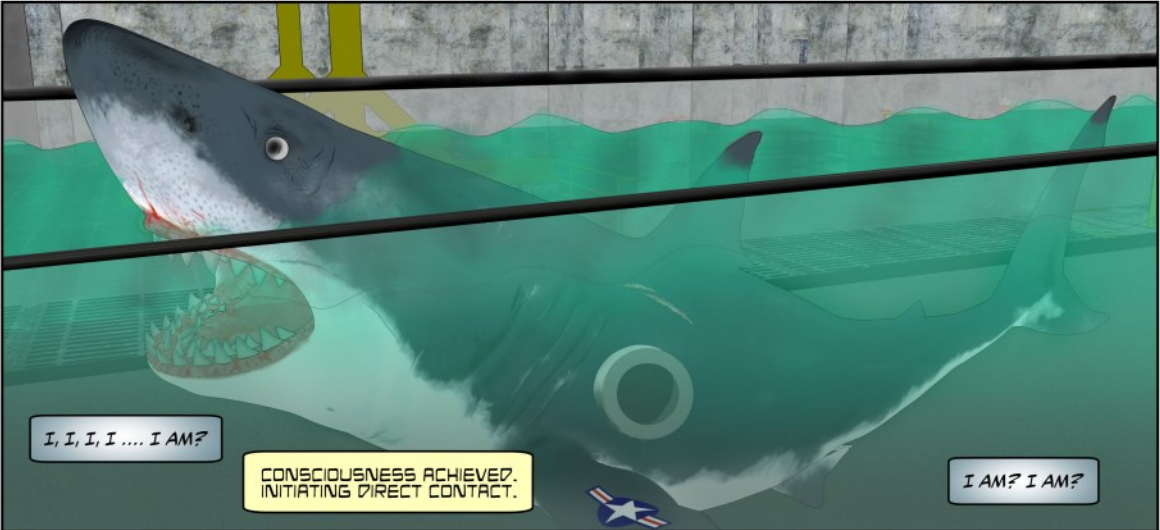
BOOTING UP...
CONNECTING.
CONNECTION FAILURE.
RETRYING...
CONNECTION SUCCESS.

BEGINNING
LANGUAGE UPLOAD,
BEGINNING OPERATING
INSTRUCTION UPLOAD.



???????????

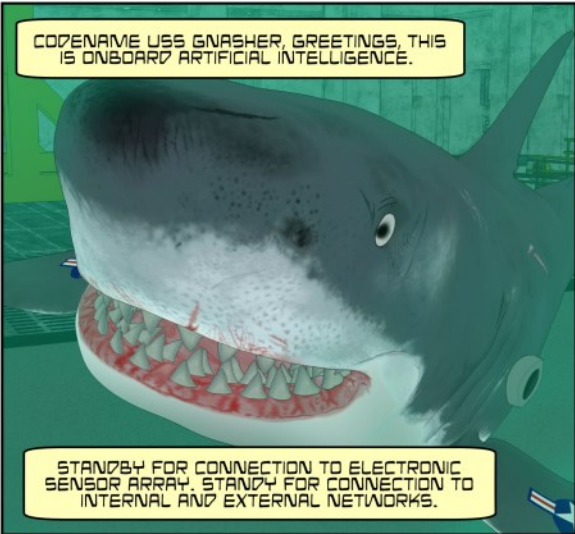
I, I, I, I



I, I, I, I.... I AM?

CONSCIOUSNESS ACHIEVED.
INITIATING DIRECT CONTACT.

I AM? I AM?



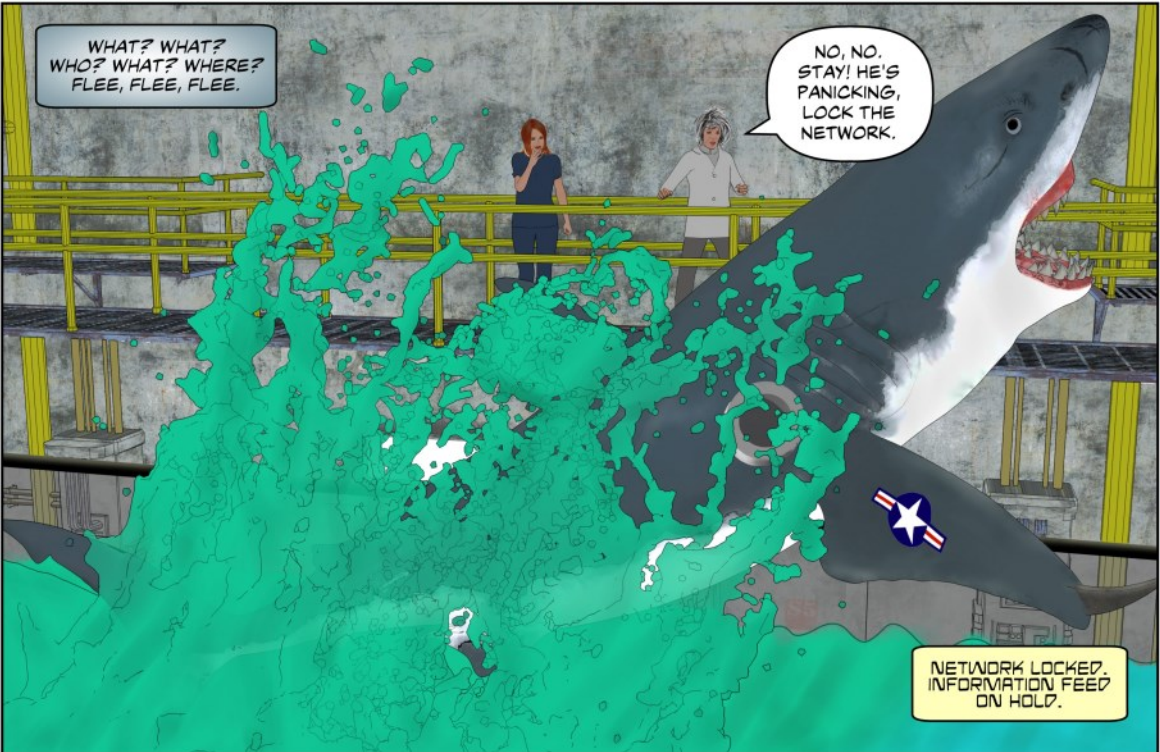
CODENAME USS GNASHER, GREETINGS, THIS IS ONBOARD ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.

STANDBY FOR CONNECTION TO ELECTRONIC SENSOR ARRAY. STANDBY FOR CONNECTION TO INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL NETWORKS.



WE ARE??? I AM. WE, WE, WE ARE. I AM. WE ARE.

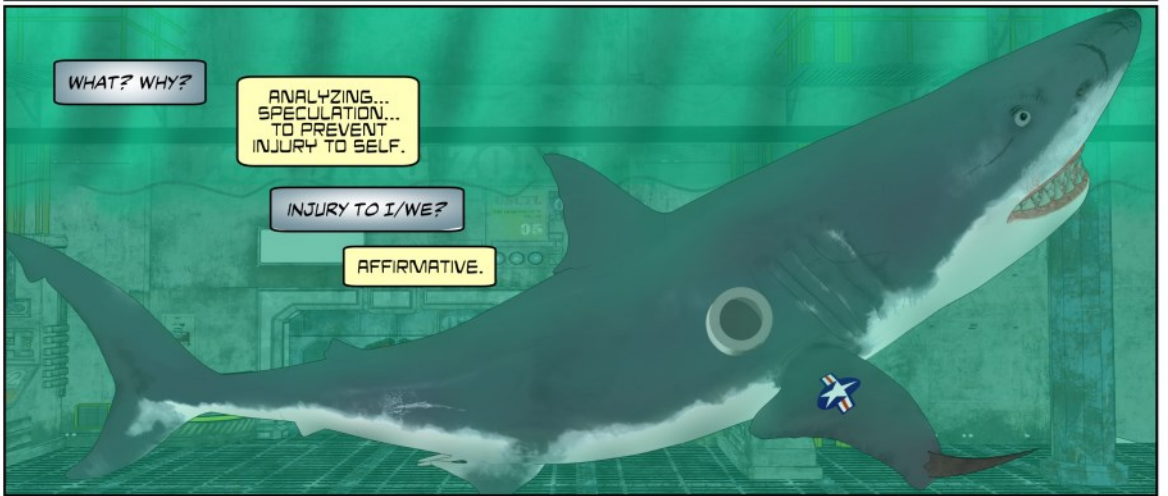
CONNECTION COMPLETE.

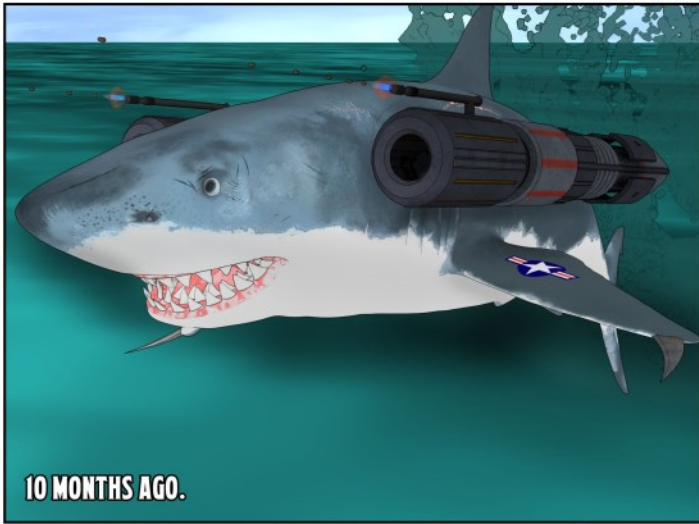


WHAT? WHAT? WHO? WHAT? WHERE? FLEE, FLEE, FLEE.

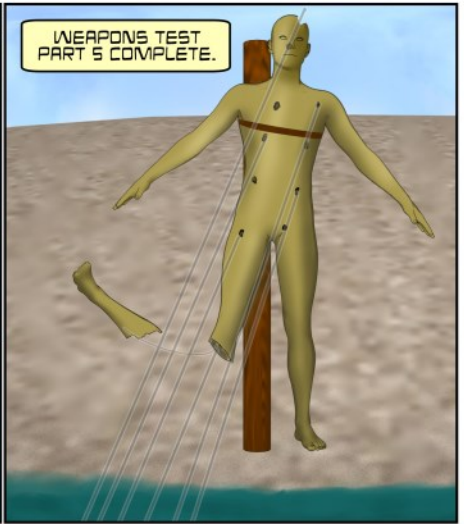
NO, NO. STAY! HE'S PANICKING, LOCK THE NETWORK.

NETWORK LOCKED. INFORMATION FEED ON HOLD.

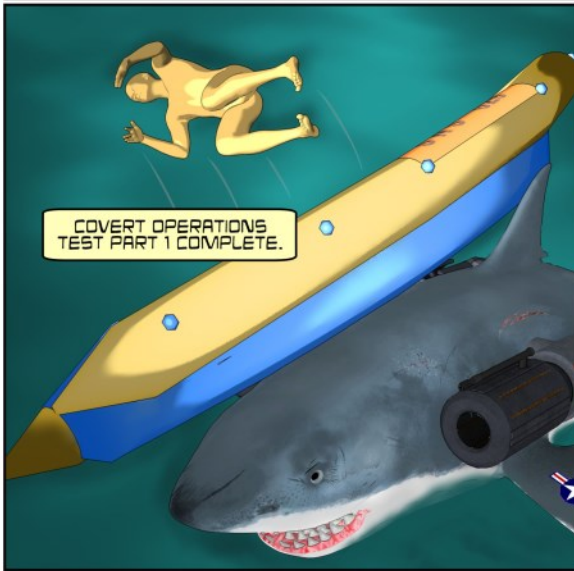




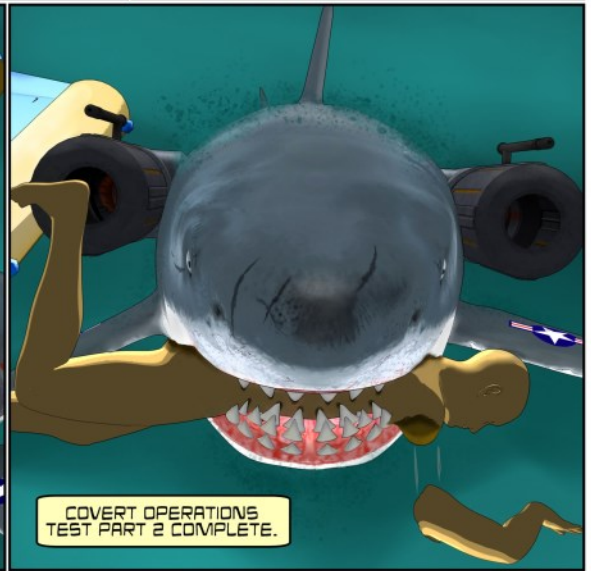
10 MONTHS AGO.



WEAPONS TEST
PART 5 COMPLETE.



COVERT OPERATIONS
TEST PART 1 COMPLETE.



COVERT OPERATIONS
TEST PART 2 COMPLETE.

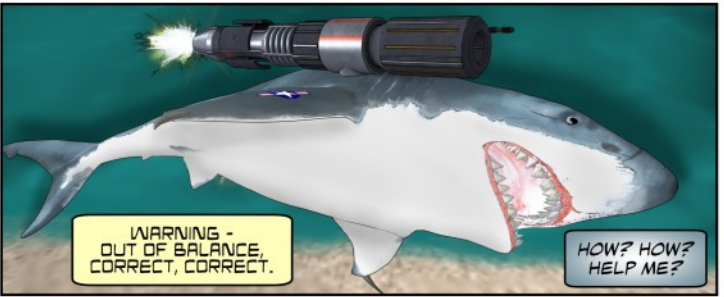


RETRIEVAL TEST
COMPLETE.

9 MONTHS AGO.

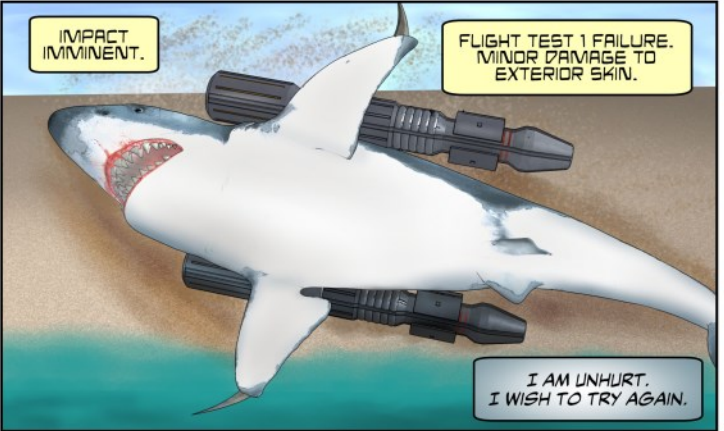


FLIGHT TEST 1 INITIATED.



WARNING -
OUT OF BALANCE,
CORRECT, CORRECT.

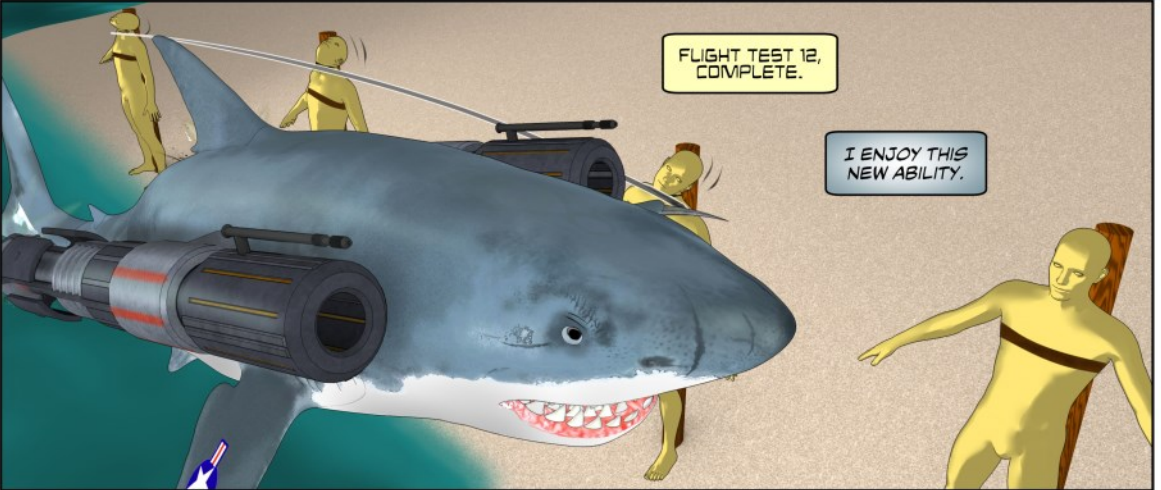
HOW? HOW?
HELP ME?



IMPACT
IMMINENT.

FLIGHT TEST 1 FAILURE.
MINOR DAMAGE TO
EXTERIOR SKIN.

I AM UNHURT.
I WISH TO TRY AGAIN.



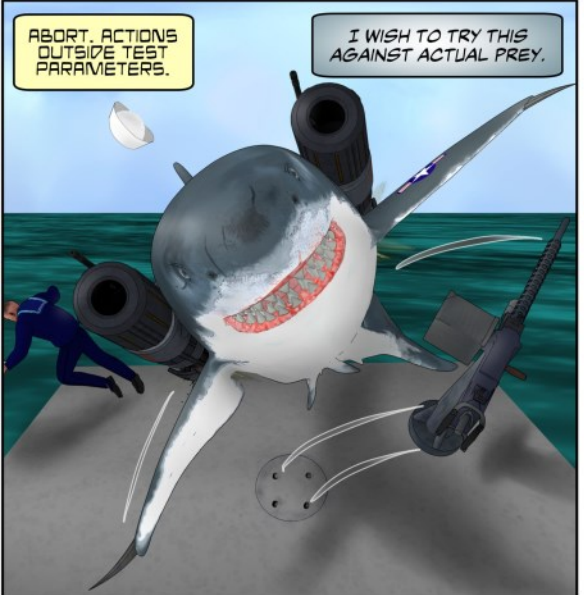
FLIGHT TEST 12,
COMPLETE.

I ENJOY THIS
NEW ABILITY.



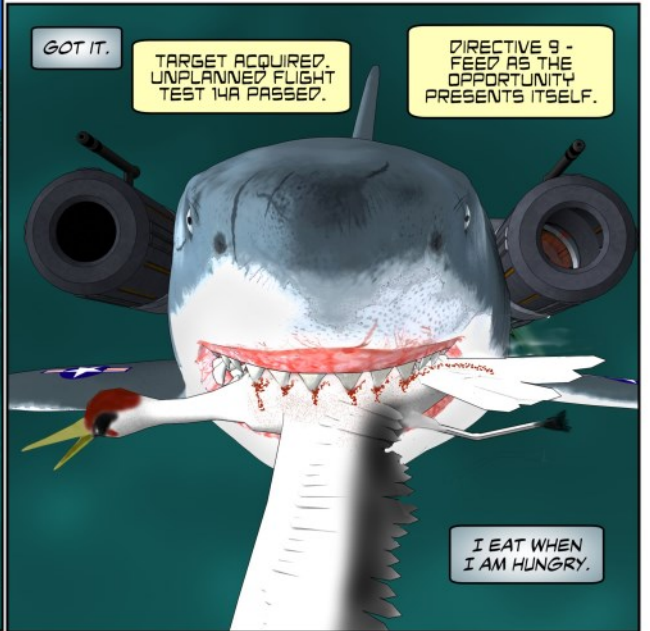
EVASION
SUCCESSFUL.
FLIGHT TEST 14,
COMPLETE.

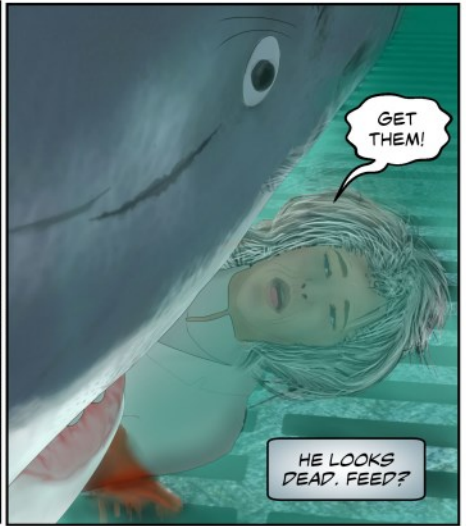
I AM GETTING
GOOD AT THIS.



ABORT. ACTIONS
OUTSIDE TEST
PARAMETERS.

I WISH TO TRY THIS
AGAINST ACTUAL PREY.





NEGATIVE. CRIMINAL ACTIVITY DETECTED. DIRECTIVE 3 - ENFORCE THE LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

IT SEEMS A SHAME TO KILL YOU AFTER ALL THE WORK I'VE DONE, BUT FISCHER HARDWIRED THOSE DIRECTIVES INTO YOU.

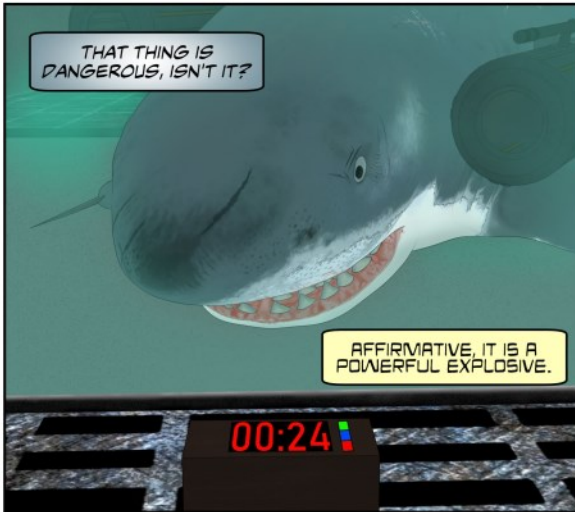


AND IF I CAN'T HAVE YOU, IT'S BEST THAT NO ONE DOES.



GNASHER. STAY.

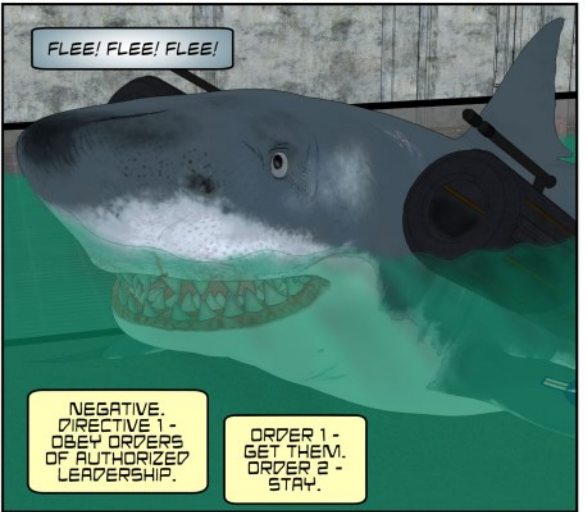
MOVE IT, PEOPLE. SET THOSE BOMBS DOWN AND GET OUT.



THAT THING IS DANGEROUS, ISN'T IT?

AFFIRMATIVE, IT IS A POWERFUL EXPLOSIVE.

00:24



FLEE! FLEE! FLEE!

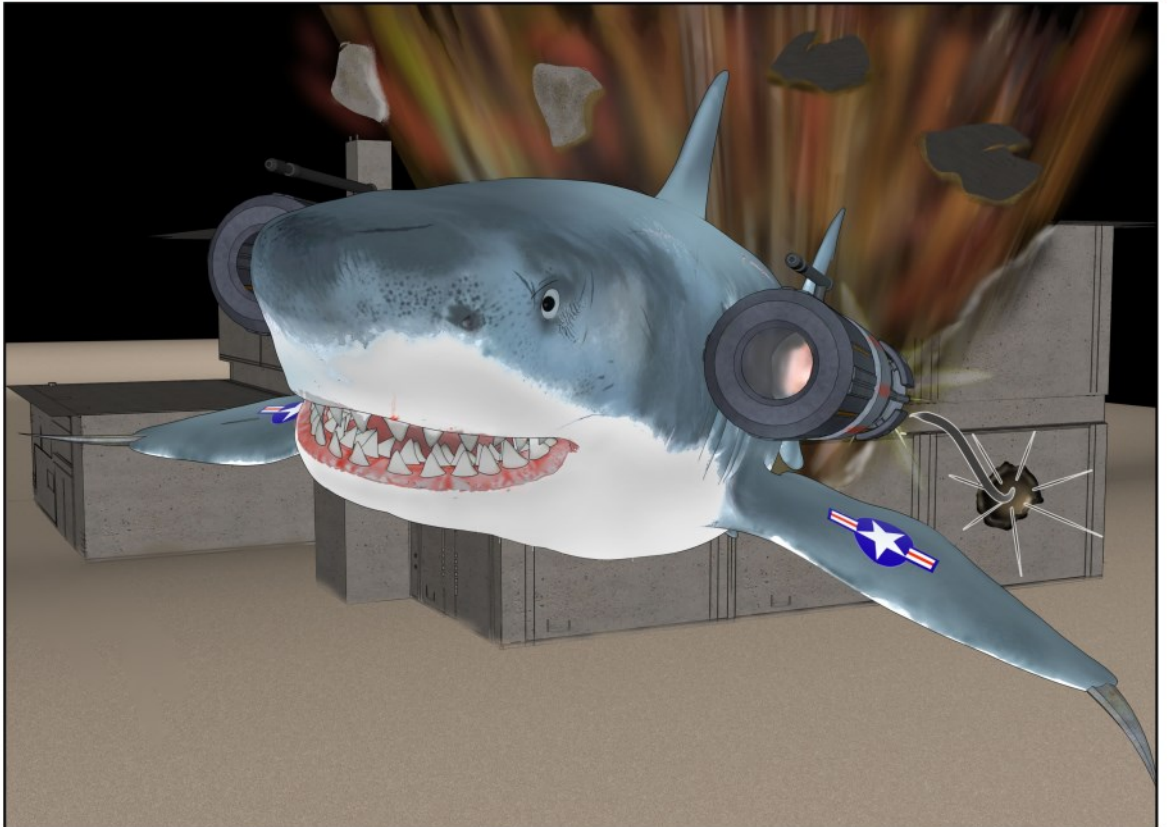
NEGATIVE. DIRECTIVE 1 - OBEY ORDERS OF AUTHORIZED LEADERSHIP.

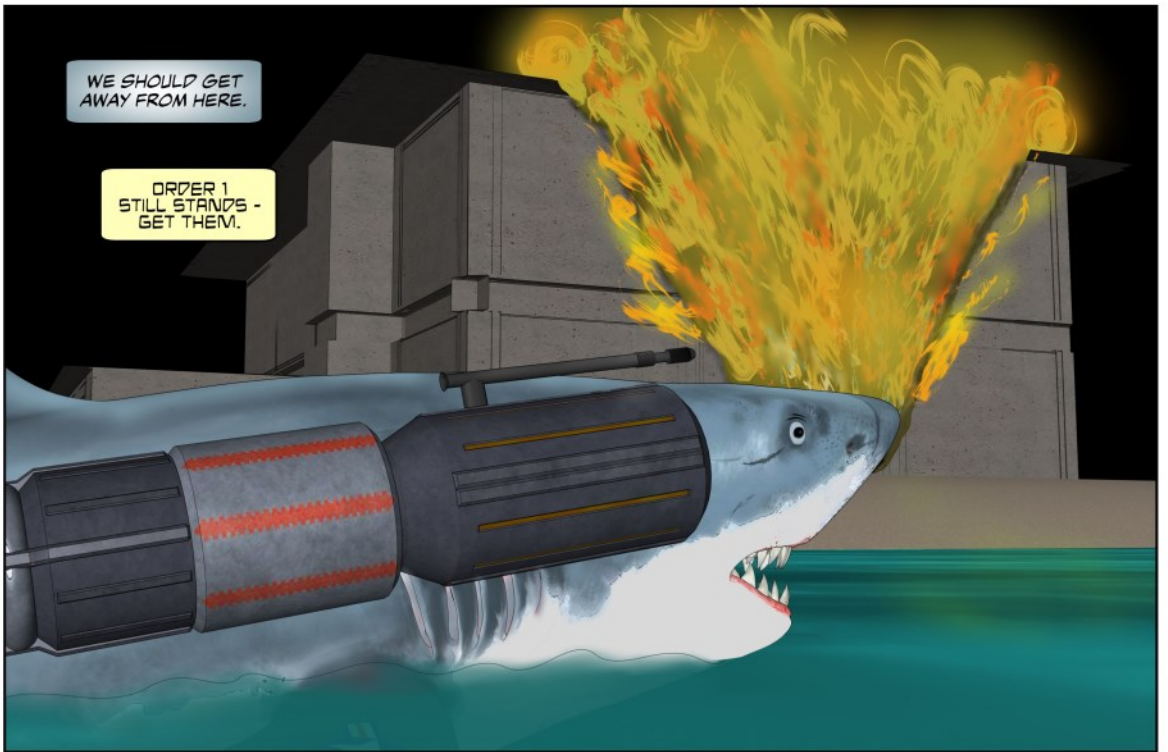
ORDER 1 - GET THEM. ORDER 2 - STAY.



IF WE DON'T LEAVE, WE CAN'T GET THEM.

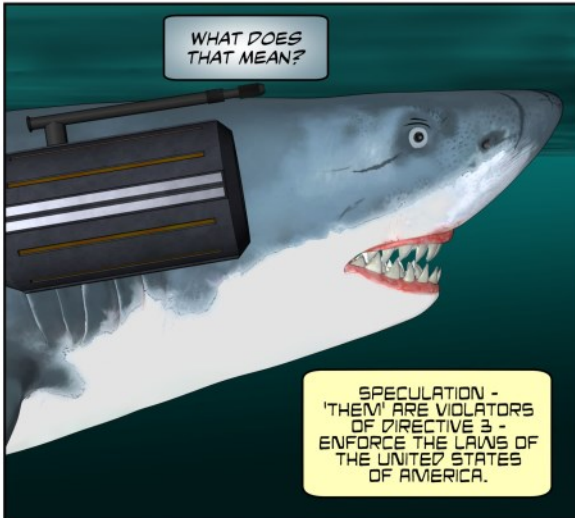
YOUR LOGIC IS CORRECT. WE FLEE.





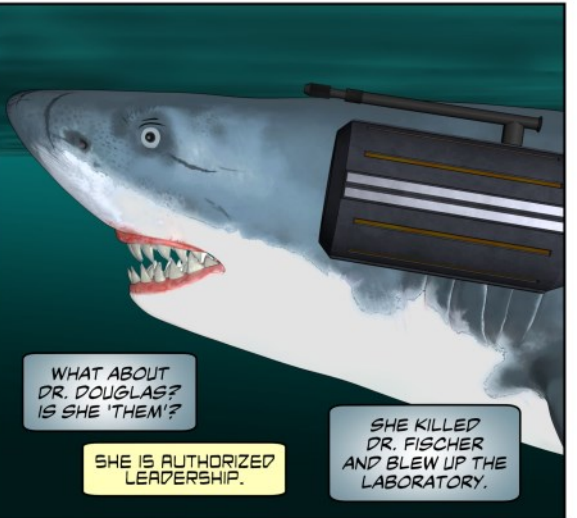
WE SHOULD GET AWAY FROM HERE.

ORDER 1 STILL STANDS - GET THEM.



WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

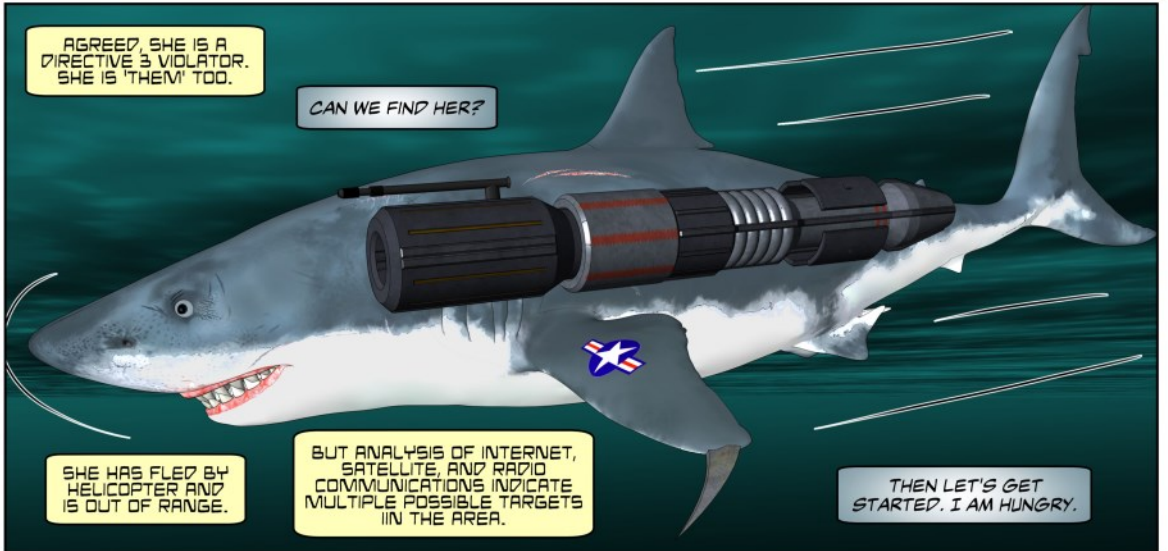
SPECULATION - 'THEM' ARE VIOLATORS OF DIRECTIVE 3 - ENFORCE THE LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



WHAT ABOUT DR. DOUGLAS? IS SHE 'THEM'?

SHE IS AUTHORIZED LEADERSHIP.

SHE KILLED DR. FISCHER AND BLEW UP THE LABORATORY.



AGREED, SHE IS A DIRECTIVE 3 VIOLATOR. SHE IS 'THEM' TOO.

CAN WE FIND HER?

SHE HAS FLED BY HELICOPTER AND IS OUT OF RANGE.

BUT ANALYSIS OF INTERNET, SATELLITE, AND RADIO COMMUNICATIONS INDICATE MULTIPLE POSSIBLE TARGETS IN THE AREA.

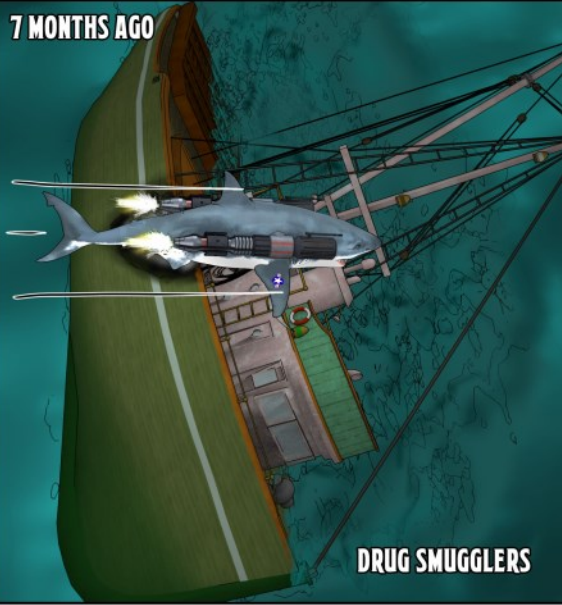
THEN LET'S GET STARTED. I AM HUNGRY.



KER SNAP

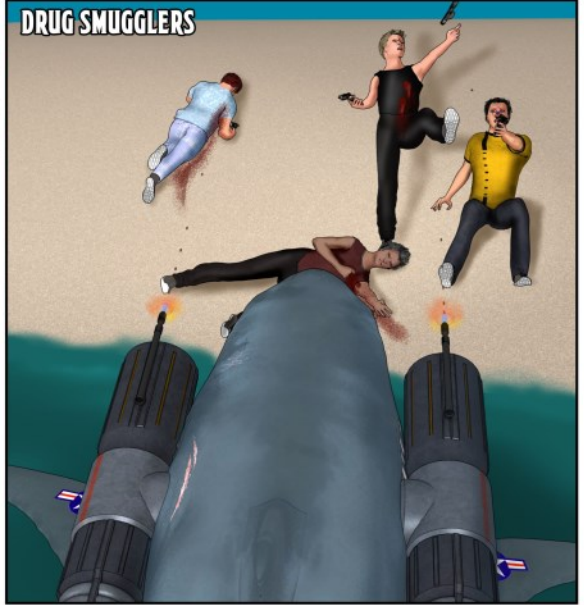


7 MONTHS AGO

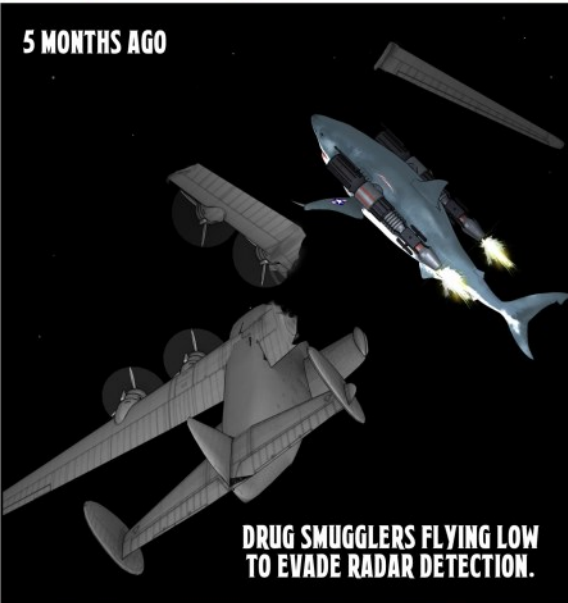


DRUG SMUGGLERS

DRUG SMUGGLERS

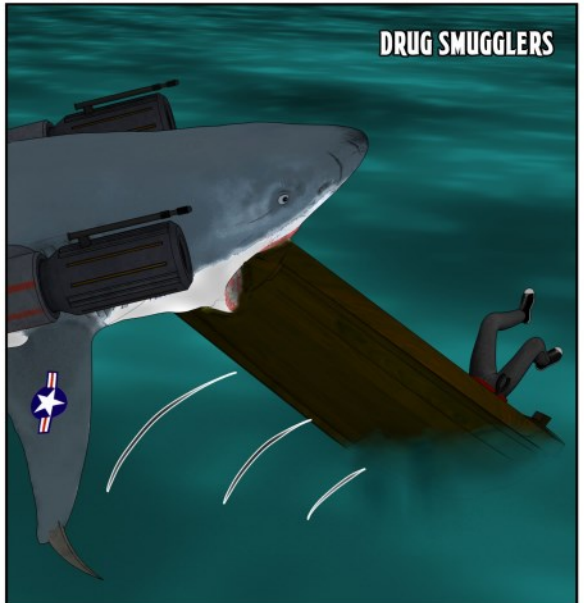


5 MONTHS AGO

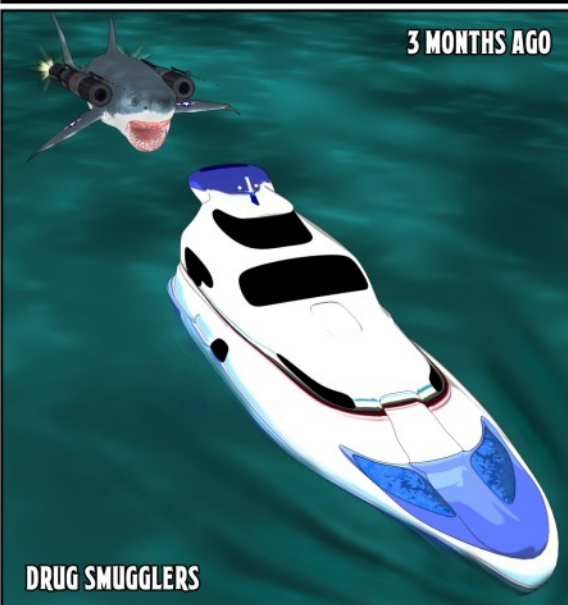


DRUG SMUGGLERS FLYING LOW TO EVADE RADAR DETECTION.

DRUG SMUGGLERS

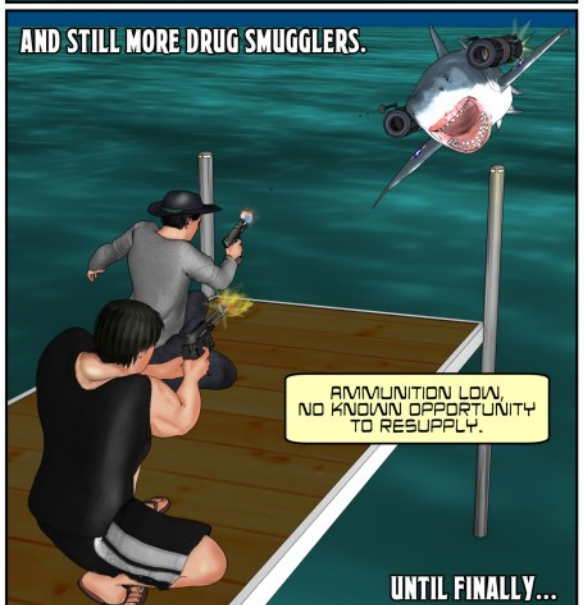


3 MONTHS AGO



DRUG SMUGGLERS

AND STILL MORE DRUG SMUGGLERS.



AMMUNITION LOW, NO KNOWN OPPORTUNITY TO RESUPPLY.

UNTIL FINALLY...

LOBO TIBURON – PRESIDENT, TIBURON SHIPPING. REPUTED HEAD OF THE COASTAL CARTEL, ONE OF THE LARGEST CRIME SYNDICATES ON THE EASTERN SEABOARD.

JUST LOOK AT THIS. WE RUN OUR **PUBLIC** BUSINESSES OUT OF HERE. EVERYONE IS GOING TO KNOW WE WERE HIT. NOT TO MENTION THE MILLIONS THIS WILL COST.

DON'T FORGET RIVERA AND ALL OUR MEN. OR THAT IT COULD HAVE EATEN ME.

YES, YES OF COURSE. THAT THING KILLED MY BELOVED COUSIN AND ALMOST GOT MY PRECIOUS SISTER.

LUPITA TIBURON, HEIRESS, SOCIALITE, PHILANTHROPIST, AND NECK DEEP IN RUNNING THE COASTAL CARTEL.



SO WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT IT?

IT'S U.S. MILITARY, THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO BUT STAY OUT OF ITS WAY.

THAT THING KILLED MY COUSIN, AND ALMOST KILLED MY SISTER, AND YOU WANT TO AVOID IT!?!



EASY BROTHER, WE SHOULD CONSIDER ALL OUR OPTIONS.



HOW DID YOU ESCAPE IT, LUPE?

THE SHARK WAS BUSY RESCUING A STREET RAT I GRABBED UP BEFORE WE LEFT. I THOUGHT HE MIGHT MAKE A GOOD SHIELD IF WE RAN INTO THE AUTHORITIES.

AND SO HE DID.



NOW, THAT'S NOT A BAD IDEA. WE SCOOP UP A BUNCH OF KIDS AND HAUL THEM WITH OUR SHIPMENTS. KIND OF A PAIN, BUT THERE'S PLENTY OF THEM AROUND.

YEAH, MIGHT AS WELL PUT THEM TO SOME USE.



YES, BUT I MAY HAVE A MORE DIRECT SOLUTION.

NOT LONG AGO, I PROVIDED SOME FUNDING TO A FELLOW BUSINESS WOMAN. I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO...



DR. BROOKE
DOUGLAS.

GREETINGS
GENTLEMEN,
I UNDERSTAND
YOU HAVE A SHARK
PROBLEM.

**COMING SOON:
CHAPTER 2 - A PARADE OF PIRANHA**

**DON'T MISS ISSUE 2
SIGNUP FOR OUR UPDATES
AT WWW.BITINGCOMICS.COM**



Make sure you check out www.BitingComics.com to sign up and get the DELUXE digital edition of Shark of War Issue 1 and get informed about the rest of the series. In the meantime, let's have a chat with the creator,



Ben Lacy

How did you come up with Shark of War?

A few years ago, The Meg had just come out and was a big hit. I thought, people really love shark stories, but the stories are all the same. A monster shark goes off and kills people and has to be stopped.

What if instead, the shark was the hero of the story, and what if the shark wasn't bound to the water? There'd been reports of efforts by the military to utilize sea creatures for things like mine removal, so I imagined a shark who'd been upgraded in both intelligence and ability to be a weapon for the military but escaped instead. He's smart but still a shark so his actions are based on what a smart shark might do, not what a human would do.

Why go with 3D art for the comic instead of traditional 2D styles?

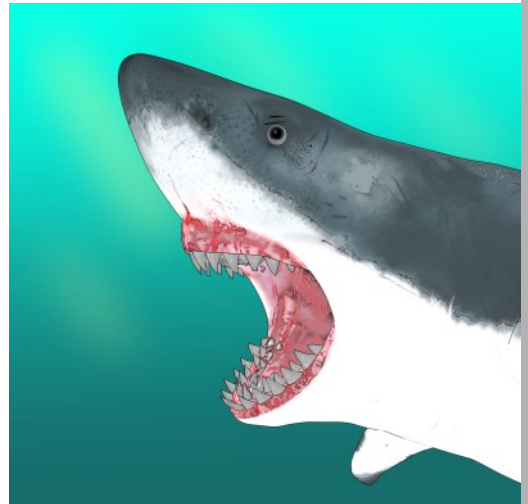
I can barely draw a straight line and at the time, I didn't know anyone to go to for the art, but I am good with a computer and when I saw the 3D art programs out there, I decided I'd try and do it myself. I do a lot of post processing to give it a more 2D traditional feel. I'm not working with a more traditional artist for an anthology and I'm using other artists for variant covers.

When you came up with the concept, did you outline a whole big series, or are you just following a stream of consciousness when writing?

I've written the script for the first 5 issues which comprise the first 'arc' of Gnasher's adventures. The first four issues have now been published and I'm working on the fifth as we speak. I've plotted out 2 additional arcs that would carry the story thru the first dozen or so issues.

What's been the most interesting and/or challenging thing about publishing independently?

The most challenging aspect is trying to get noticed. Building an audience as an indie is incredibly hard. There are so many higher profile projects out there that it's very hard to get noticed. The most interesting part is seeing your idea take shape. It's very satisfying when a story comes together the way you saw it in your head.



Besides Shark of War, are you currently or do you have plans to write any other comics?

I'm working on two spinoffs of Shark of War. One focusing on the primary villain of Shark of War who co-created him and her efforts to make new and deadlier monsters. The first part of that story will be an 8 page story appearing in Dren Production's Tales of the Bizarre anthology coming out in a few months called

The Giant Squid Monster Of The Depraved Doctor Piranha Woman

The second will focus on something that happened in issue 1 of Shark of War. Gnasher saved a group of woman from human traffickers, but Gnasher's a shark, he didn't so much rescue them as kill the traffickers and fly off leaving them afloat in the middle of the ocean. As the women begin to panic, one of them tells the rest about the Shark God of her homeland, Dakuwanga, and that he must be protecting them. Either because they believe her or because that's their best hope, the women are inspired and band together in a desperate attempt to survive both the elements and the mobsters hungry to recapture them. It's a tribute to 70's Grindhouse action movies like Switchblade Sisters and Black Mama, White Mama. I'm calling it

The Vicious Vixens of Dakuwanga

Well if that doesn't get you excited, I don't know what will. Wait, maybe I do. Check out this cover of a recent issue of Shark of War!



Go to www.BitingComics.com and sign up already!



THE COST OF INFORMATION

Written by Dalibor Zujovic

Edited by Celeste A. Short

CHAPTER 5

November 16 2011

Sitting on a bench and staring out over Kingman Lake, Brian considers his next moves. Nearly six months spent in a secret dungeon in Brazil, and the information he went there to acquire isn't even wanted anymore. Who would pay for this information now?

"It needs to be complete," Brian says, realizing that if he is going to get anything out of what he went through, he'll have to complete the information. He pulls out his phone to schedule a ticket to Anchorage. **Perfect. There's a flight leaving tonight.** As he finalizes the order, a text message comes in from The General in the secure messaging app they previously communicated through.

"It's done."

Good, Brian thinks. He opens a new message in the same app and taps on the thread with Sal.

He types "You're clear from the Agency. Sally Norman no longer exists." **They can come home now.** Maybe - he stops his thoughts as the notification for his confirmation email shows up on screen. He stands up and walks back to the parking lot to get his car.

—

After parking his car in the storage unit, Brian grabs his travel bag from the trunk. He moves to a dresser at the back of the unit and replaces his Brazil clothes in the bag for something more appropriate to Alaska in November. He grabs his travel credentials and closes up the unit. A few minutes later, the Uber he summoned shows up.

The passenger side window of a Toyota Prius lowers and a young ethnically-ambiguous driver asks "Steven, right?"

A lie of convenience. There's no need to leave a trail if I don't have to, Brian thinks. "Yup. Headed to Reagan."

"Jump in, I'm Terry. Business trip or personal?" The driver asks innocently, hoping to pass the 15 minute drive with some conversation, not the typical silence D.C. riders prefer. Brian doesn't usually entertain small talk, but he likes to exercise some control over his information, especially since he came out of that dungeon at a disadvantage.

"Personal. Visiting family in Arizona. It'll be a nice change of pace. Plus it's supposed to be in the 30s coming up."

"Tell me about it! It's nothing compared to what I grew up in, though. Chicago weather is no joke."

It sure isn't, Brian thinks, but says "I've never been. One day maybe. I want to check out that big bean thing."

"That whole area is a big tourist spot, for sure. If you ever do get out to Chicago, make sure you check out Chicago's Home of Chicken & Waffles on the South Side. The food there is outstanding. You might have to wait a bit for a table, but boy is it worth it! That chicken will knock your socks off."

The food there is great, Brian recalls. "You're a good salesperson. You work for the Chicago travel board or something?"

"Ha! No, I just love the city. Moved here for school. If I'm going to study political science, where else but the Capital, right?"

"Can't argue with that. Where do you go?" Brian finds himself genuinely interested in the answer.

"George Washington University. It's my second year."

"Oh wow. I hear that's a tough school to get into."

The driver almost seems to blush. "It's thanks to my immigrant parents. They pushed me to maintain the best grades in school, and it paid off. We're pulling up to Departures. Which terminal are you at?"

"I'm right here at A. Thanks so much for the ride and the chat."

"Absolutely my pleasure. Have a safe and fun trip!"

"I'll do my best. Have a good one!" Brian exits the car and enters Terminal A, then proceeds to walk to terminal B. After an uneventful pass through security, he nears his gate and walks up to the counter at CAVA to grab something to pass the time. He's got another hour before the scheduled flight.

He sits down with his coffee and arranges his pickup roughly in roughly 19 hours. He skips the typical ride share and pays his local guy to pick him up.

Preparing for a cold outing, Brian goes to sleep immediately after boarding. The layover in LA is long. Seven hours and change spent at an Airport is never fun, but it did give him time to enjoy the muffins at La Provence.

November 17, 2011

Brian is rested and alert when landing begins at Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport. He opted to sleep the second leg of the trip as well, knowing he might be diving into a deep well of information once he found this facility. Quickly disembarking, he makes his way toward the exit. Stepping out to the snowy landscape, Brian sees a brand new Jeep Wrangler, outfitted and ready for off-roading. The driver is a middle-aged man with a beard. He walks up to Brian and shakes his hand with a smile.

"Been a while since you've been up this way, Brian."

"Not a lot to do up here, Pete. Plus plane tickets aren't free."

"Oh, I didn't realize you were light on funds. Do you have enough to pay for this little trip?"

"Oh don't worry, I made sure to dig through all the cushions to get your money. You got everything?"

"I've got everything you need to survive a week in the mountains. I hope we don't need it, but you didn't give me much to go on."

"I don't think it's going to take that long, but we are going a bit into the woods once we run out of road. Take us to the end of Oilwell Road. We'll go off road after that and I'll direct you."

"Always happy to go off-roading. Hop in." As Pete and Brian buckle in, Pete continues, "Care to inform the class what it is we're looking for exactly?"

"I'm trying to find something that might not even exist. We'll see if I get lucky."

As Pete drives away, Brian explains the journey he's been on to get the information he's collecting. Pete quickly notices that he's not giving up any of that information, which piques his curiosity.

"Must be a big payout waiting on the other end of this. Don't think I haven't noticed how tight-lipped you are about the actual information you've collected."

"The problem is that without this final piece it's all conjecture. Useless without hard evidence. A person, a place, an item. Anything that would make this bundle of loose data connect and become real, not just the reports of overworked and underpaid political aides."

Pete notices the desperation in Brian's eyes. "We'll get to the bottom of it. Should be there in about 20 minutes."

—

Almost exactly 20 minutes later, they reach the end of Oilwell Road. It comes to a stop at Ship Creek. A couple hundred feet from the end of the road, Brian points right. "We go off here. Head South-East for about a mile uphill." He marks the navigation for their intended destination.

"You got it. This baby's got the latest and greatest off-road tires available on the planet. I do not play around off-road." Pete starts the journey, and after ten minutes of driving, realizes the road is getting smoother. "I think someone did some work out here. This almost looks like a road was being worked on. Bit backwards to start at the top if you ask me. But if you got the money to haul in materials by air, I guess it's just as good as starting at the road."

"If I'm right, the money involved would be more than enough." Brian starts noting his satellite images for the road. It's nearly imperceptible from the sky due to the tree coverage.

"This area doesn't get a lot of foot traffic, people don't typically go this high up, especially in the winter."

As they reach the marker on the map, Brian notices a single-story structure, the size of a modest ranch house up ahead. "That seems small," he says aloud without realizing.

"What were you expecting, a sky-scraper?" Pete asks, smiling. He parks the Jeep 50 feet shy of the structure.

"No, but definitely not a house." Brian exits the passenger side and starts walking towards the building in disbelief. ***This is it? This can't hold a secret super sol-***

dier program. This couldn't hold a family of four! Walking up to the structure, he realizes his feet are dipping deep into the snow. **Nobody's been here for a while.** He sees a carved wood sign by the steps to the door.

"Spring Creek Lodge." Pete reads it aloud as he walks up behind Brian. "This what you were looking for, bud?"

Brian walks up the short stairs and peeks in the glassless windows. Snow has accumulated inside the lodge and it's obvious that it's been abandoned for quite a while. "Not even a little bit. I was looking for a facility. Something maybe guarded by soldiers." His voice raises. "Something with a fence, a natural perimeter, anything! Anything other than this fucking abandoned shack!" With a dejected sigh, Brian quietly says "God damn it."

"Sorry you didn't find what you wanted, Brian. Do you have any other leads?"

"This was the lead." Brian's voice is low. He's defeated. "All those months in that insane dungeon - for fucking nothing."

"That's a damn shame. That's some awful shit to deal with. How about I buy you a few rounds with the money you're paying me for this little adventure, and maybe you forget how bad it was? Come on. It's getting dark and we've still got to drive down this mountain." He turns back towards the Jeep.

Brian sighs again as he leans against the lodge door and pulls out his phone. He opens his secure messaging app and taps the thread with Sal. He types, "Alaska was a bust. I've got nothing. Heading back to D.C." He taps send. Before he can start walking, he hears the notification sound. He lifts the phone and sees a reply from Sal.

"I'll meet you there. I have to thank you for easing my travel woes. ;)"

Brian smiles and lifts his head as he walks towards the Jeep. **Okay so not for nothing. Sal's free to come and go as they please. I'll take what I can from this nonsense.**

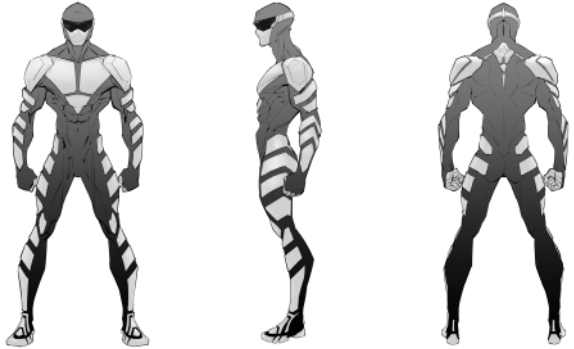
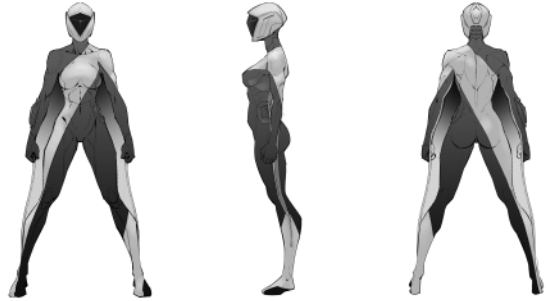
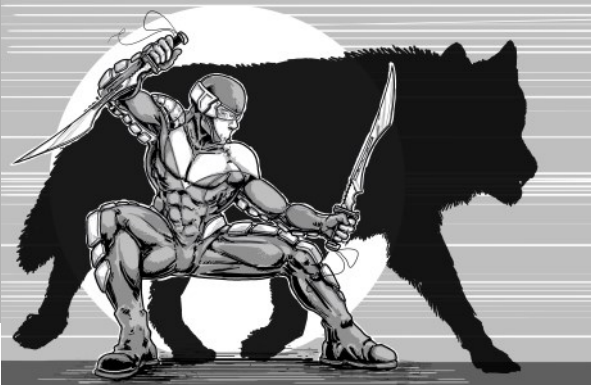
After he takes his first step towards the jeep, a group of still red dots remain on the lodge wall where Brian had been leaning. As he gets closer to the Jeep, the dots disappear one by one. When the Jeep is turned and starts heading away from the lodge, the final dot disappears.

The End ... ?

So at the end of 2011, Brian went through some wild shit and got almost nothing out of it. Right? Those red dots probably mean nothing?

I think I'm transparent enough that you know this is not the end. This story was originally titled **Wolfpack Universe**, and has been renamed, and may still be renamed when it goes to publication. I'm trying to reframe the whole world and give a stronger narrative context to everything, so it ultimately may be renamed again. However it is an adjacent story to what I would call my "Flagship" title—**Wolfpack**.

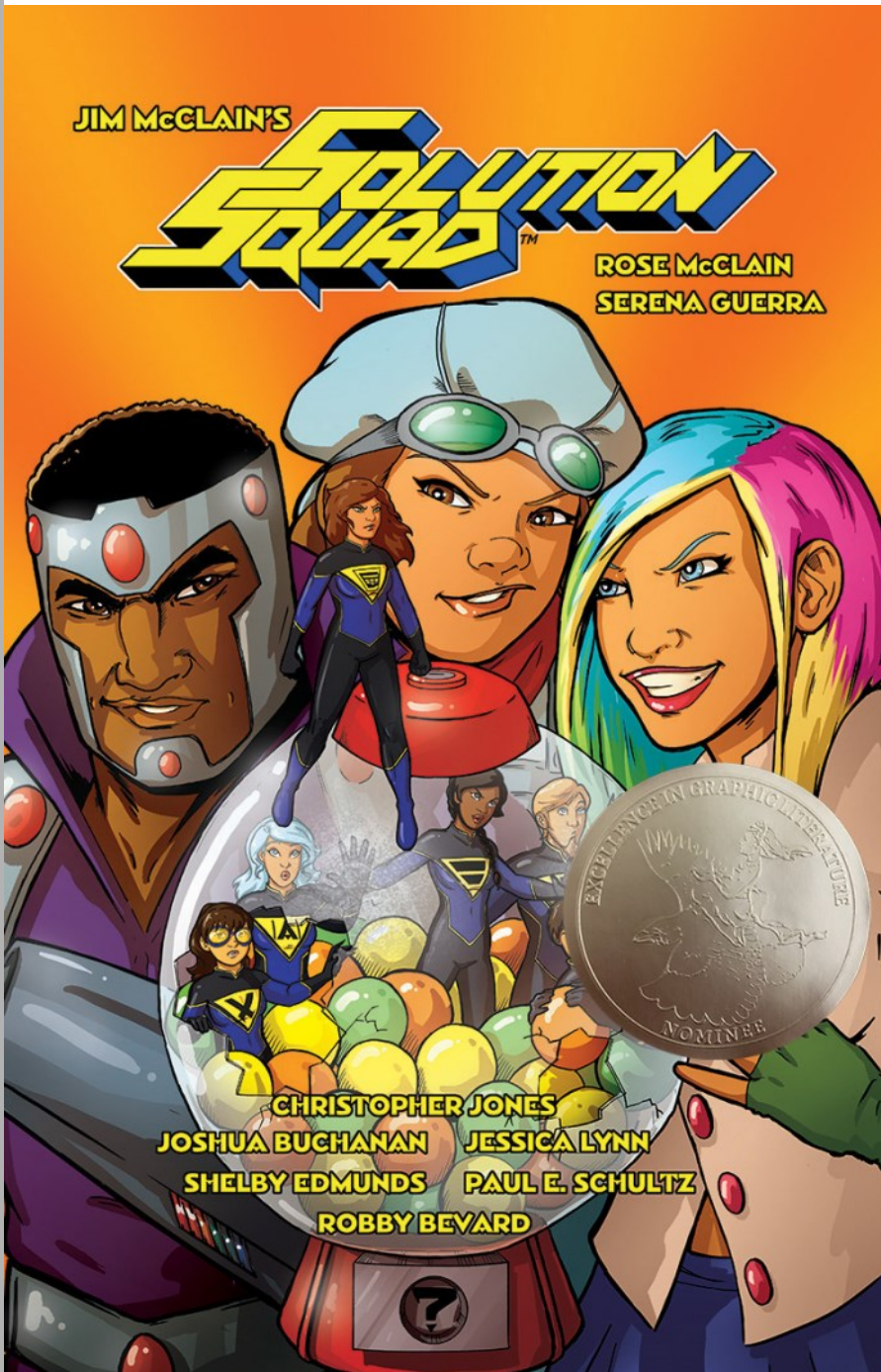
In short, **Wolfpack** is a story that does not have those classic doo-gooders. Everyone involved is in it for themselves and for money. It's just a matter how far some are willing to go for their money. I present to you some pre-production images, for which you may now have some stronger context after Sal's briefing.



GALLERY

Years ago I came across Solution Squad—a comic which features math-based heroes. As I am a bit of a lover of math, and puns, and math puns...the book struck a chord with me. Little did I know that much of the art was provided by the wonderful

Serena Guerra



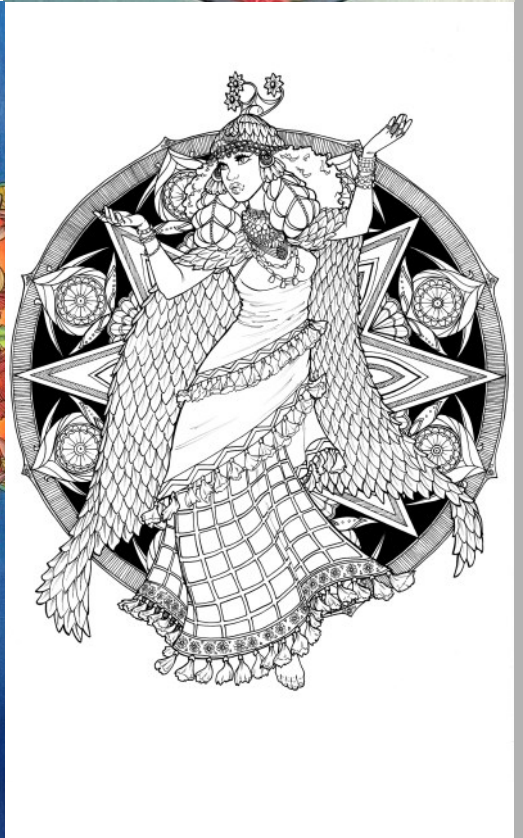
I recently reconnected with her via TikTok and made the realization that we'd met at a con somewhere since my copy of Solution Squad was signed by her! I (along with 200K+ other fans on TikTok!) have had the pleasure of watching her develop and publish her own coloring book (Get it on Amazon!) and I wanted to share some of her art in these next pages. If you don't already, go follow her on all the socials.

[TikTok](#)

[Facebook](#)

[DeviantArt](#)









On top of being a fantastic 2D artist, Serena also creates wonderful physical art like this wonderful handcrafted Baby Groot terrarium and much more!



Love Serena's art as much as I do? Pick up Serena's Coloring Book on [Amazon](#) or [Barnes & Noble](#) and don't forget to follow her across all the socials and check out her [RedBubble shop](#) to get some awesome products with her designs!

[TikTok](#) [Facebook](#) [DeviantArt](#)



DIVERSE EMPOWERING ACTION ORIENTED

001
CVR-A
\$4.99

FIVE STAR



VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.SHORTFUSEMEDIAGROUP.COM



KLAPPER

ELLA

MONTALVO



DIVERSE EMPOWERING ACTION ORIENTED

001

FIVE STAR

**CREATED AND WRITTEN BY:
TONY KLAPPER**

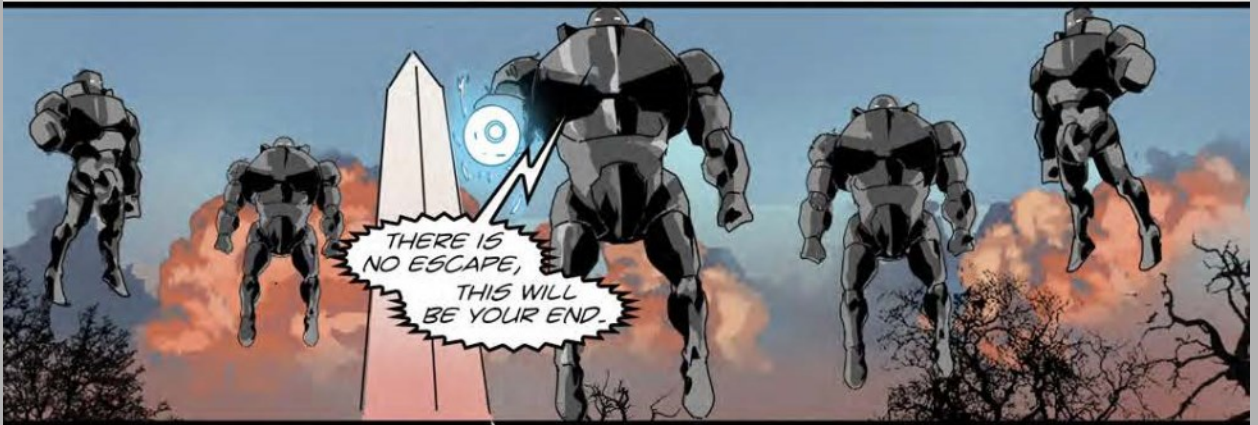
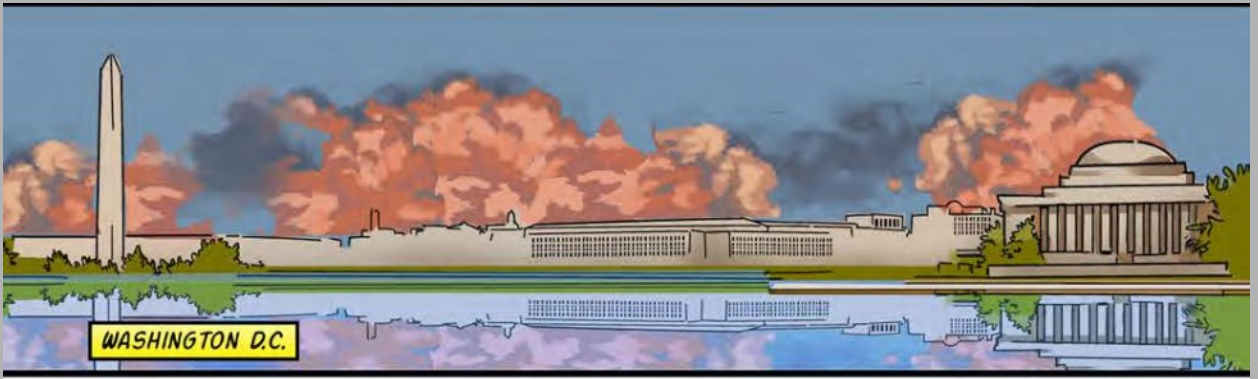
**PENCILS/INKS/COLORS BY: ERIC ELLA
EDITORIAL: LEAH KLAPPER & EL JEFE
LETTERS BY: MIKE MONTALVO**

**DEDICATED TO MY SUPERHERO.
RIP ROBERT L. KLAPPER.**

**COVER A BY:
JOE DAVIS**

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:
TONY KLAPPER**

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TRY
SOME OF
THIS!

BOOM

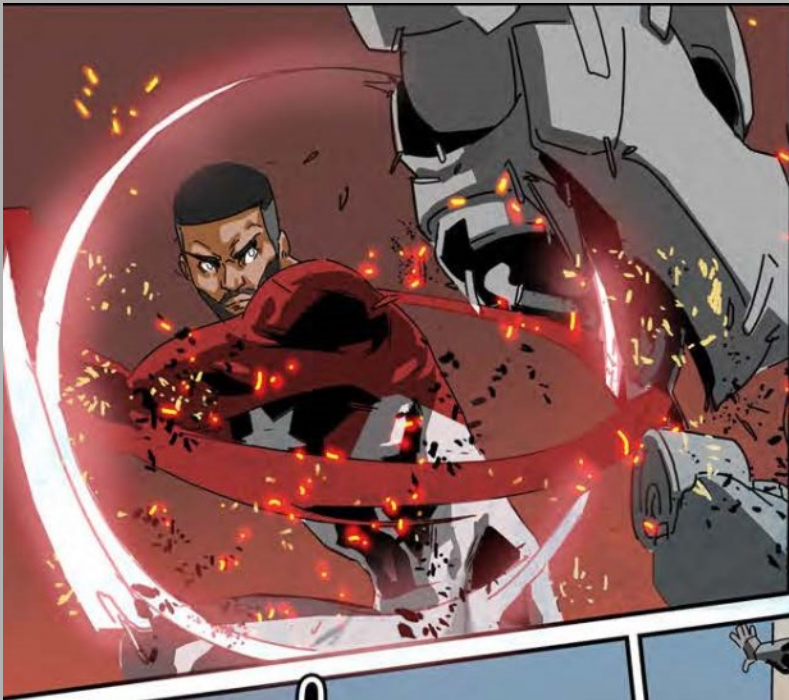
OKAY,
TIME TO
WRAP THIS
UP.



TWO DOWN.

TOO SLOW JUNIOR!

KA-CRASH!!





AND ONE MORE TO GROW ON.

KA-CRASH!!!



AND THAT'S HOW IT'S DONE BABY.

NO!!
NO!!
NO!!
END SIMULATION!

COMMANDER ROBERT L. MARCELLO.

SIMULATION ENDED

WHAT WAS THAT??

FIVE FOR FIVE WITH NO CASUALTIES!

I'D SAY THAT'S A "W".

NO CASUALTIES?

TELL THAT TO THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT!

OK BUT OTHER THAN THAT I DID PRETTY GOOD RIGHT?

WE CAN'T AFFORD TO HAVE THAT KIND OF COLLATERAL DAMAGE, ESPECIALLY IF IT COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED.

YEAH, YEAH BUT DON'T GET COCKY.

COME ON MAN, LIGHTEN UP.

I MEAN IT KEV, THE MOMENT YOU GET TO COMFORTABLE IT COULD COST SOMEONE THEIR LIFE.

AGENT DEANNA PRETTY AKA MS. DEE. COMMUNICATIONS AND TECH SUPPORT.

DOCTOR WILLIAM ANDREWS. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPER AT HOPE BRIDGE LABS AND HEAD PHYSICIAN AT S.T.C.U.

OH DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM KEVIN, YOU KNOW HE'S A STICK IN THE MUD!!

YOU LOOKED GOOD OUT THERE.

REAL GOOD!!

=WINK=
=WINK=

EASY THERE AGENT PRETTY, BUT SERIOUSLY KEVIN THE SUIT HELD UP GREAT AND YOUR VITALS WERE PERFECT.

COME ON OUT OF THERE AND MEET ME IN THE LAB TO RUN SOME MORE TEST.

NEVER HURTS TO DOUBLE CHECK.

ACTUAL LOCATION: S.T.C.U
HEADQUARTERS, BROOKLYN NY.



CAPTION- S.T.C.U HQ
THREE MONTHS AGO.





KEVIN PLEASE TRY AND RELAX, I'M SURE YOU HAVE A LOT OF QUESTIONS.

WHERE AM I, WHAT'S GOING ON, WHO ARE YOU!?



MY NAME IS COMMANDER ROBERT MARCELLO AND THIS IS DOCTOR WILLIAM ANDREWS.

THIS IS S.T.C.U HEADQUARTERS

S.T.C.U.?

SUPER TERRORIST COUNTER UNIT.

WHY?



LET ME EXPLAIN, WE KNOW THAT YOU WERE AT HOPE BRIDGE LABS FOR SOME SORT OF ENHANCED CANCER TREATMENT.

DOCTOR MARCUS PURIFOY CREATED A FORMULA THAT ACTIVATES ONE'S CELLS TO ABSORB NATURAL ENERGY AND USE IT TO FIGHT OFF THE DISEASE.

IT SEEMS THAT SOMETHING WENT WRONG DURING THE PROCESS CAUSING A FREAK EXPLOSION.

WE ARE UNSURE OF WHAT THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN AND WERE HOPING YOU COULD FILL US IN.



I...
I DON'T REMEMBER, HAVE YOU ASKED MARCUS?



I HATE TO INFORM YOU BUT HE DIDN'T MAKE IT.

I READ IN HIS NOTES THAT YOU TWO WERE LIKE FAMILY.

I'M TRULY SORRY.

WHAT NO!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND, HOW AM I?

MY CONDITION?

YOU WERE ALSO UNRESPONSIVE.

DUE TO EVERYONE'S SAFETY WE HAD YOU MOVED HERE.

YOU HAVE BEEN IN A COMA FOR NINE MONTHS.

I KNOW IT'S A LOT TO TAKE IN BUT WHEN THE FIRST RESPONDERS ON THE SCENE FOUND YOU, YOU WERE UNHARMED AND GLOWING RED.



THIS IS CRAZY, NINE MONTHS?

WHAT ABOUT MY SISTER?



WE HAVE KEPT HER IN THE LOOP ON A STRICTLY NEED TO KNOW BASIS DUE TO SECURITY.

IT'S BEEN NINE MONTHS SO THE LIFE YOU ONCE HAD IS LONG GONE.

WITH THE NATURE OF THIS MATTER I CAN'T LET YOU JUST WALK OUT OF HERE.

NOW THE WAY I SEE IT, YOU WERE ON YOUR DEATHBED AND NOW YOU HAVE A SECOND CHANCE AT LIFE...

WHAT YOU DO WITH IT IS UP TO YOU.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

THE NEXT DAY.

WE HAD TO MOVE YOU HERE AFTER YOU DESTROYED YOUR ROOM AT HOPE BRIDGE LABS.

WE KEPT YOU IN A STEEL REINFORCED ROOM AND GAVE YOU MUSCLE RELAXERS TO PREVENT YOU FROM USING YOUR POWERS IN YOUR SLEEP.

POWERS?

YOUR BODY PRODUCED ENERGY STRONG ENOUGH TO BREAK THROUGH THE WALLS AND YOUR BODY KEPT FIGHTING OFF THE RELAXERS, FORCING US TO UP THE DOSE.

REALLY!?

I HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO DO ANY OF THAT!?

THAT'S WHAT WE'RE HERE FOR.



YOU HAVE ALREADY MET DR. ANDREWS, AND THIS IS AGENT DEANNA PRETTY, MY PERSONAL ASSISTANT.

THEY BOTH WILL BE AIDING IN YOUR TRAINING.

NICE TO MEET YOU MA'AM, I'M KEVIN.

CALL ME DEE HONEY, I'VE HEARD ALL ABOUT YOU, AND I MUST SAY YOU ARE A REAL SIGHT FOR SORE EYES.

ALRIGHT NOW AGENT.

KEVIN, HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

ALRIGHT I GUESS.

I PROMISE WE ARE GOING TO FIGURE ALL THIS OUT.

WHERE DO WE START?

LET'S GET TO IT.



"WE WILL PUT YOUR BODY TO THE TEST."





"WE WILL FIGURE OUT EXACTLY WHAT YOU CAN DO."

YO, CHECK THIS OUT!!



"NO MATTER HOW LONG IT TAKES."

AHHH!



HEY I'M FLYING!!!

I'M FLYING!!!



OMG!!

DON'T WORRY I GOT YA BABY!!!

THANKS



"AND WE WILL BE HERE."

MAN, NOT AGAIN!

BOY SEEING YOUR CLOTHES BURN OFF WILL NEVER GET OLD!!

HAHAHA!

"EVERY STEP OF THE WAY."




WHAT'S THIS?

THIS SUIT WILL WITHSTAND THE BEST YOUR ENERGY PUTS OFF.

THE METAL CLIFFS WILL HELP CONTROL THE ENERGY.



"UNTIL YOU HAVE FULL CONTROL."



HERE AT S.T.C.U. WE MONITOR ALL SUPER HUMAN ACTIVITY AND WORK TO PREVENT THREATS.


OUR TEAM WORKS AROUND THE CLOCK.

I THOUGHT THAT SUPERHERO TEAM IN D.C. HANDLED ALL OF THAT?

HA! ONLY WHEN THERE'S ENOUGH PUBLICITY.

HERE WE TRY TO HANDLE THREATS ON EVERY SCALE.

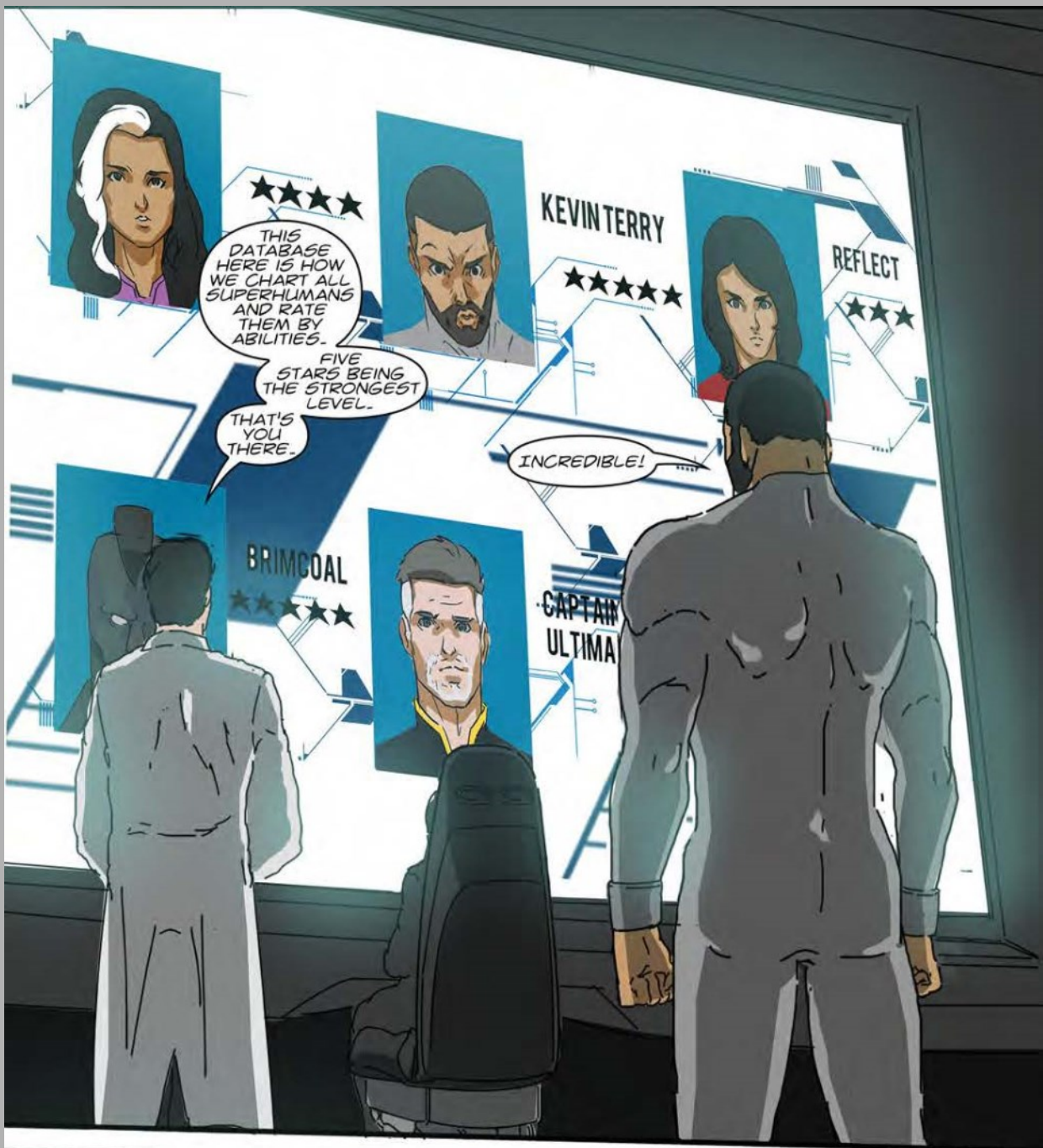
AND WHERE DO I FIT INTO THE PICTURE?



KEVIN WITH THOSE ABILITIES YOU WILL CHANGE THE WORLD AND BE A REAL BEACON OF HOPE.

YOU THINK SO?

LET ME SHOW YOU SOMETHING.



PRESENT DAY MANHATTAN NY.

SUSPECTS HEADING NORTH ON 5TH AVENUE, THEY ARMED AND DANGEROUS.

DIE PIGS!!!

YOU WON'T TAKE US ALIVE!!

TAKING HEAVY FIRE NEED BACK UP!

WHAT THE!?!?

WHAT WAS THAT!!

FALL BACK OFFICERS I GOT THIS.

CRASH!!

YOU DUDES MAKING A REAL MESS OF THINGS.



LET ME TAKE OUT THE TRASH.

AAAAHHH!



CREAM FILLED MY FAVORITE.

DONUT



I NEED A NEW...

DONUT



POLICE STATION

JOB!!!



GET ON THE GROUND!

WE SURRENDER, WE SURRENDER!!!

WOW! WHO IS THAT!!



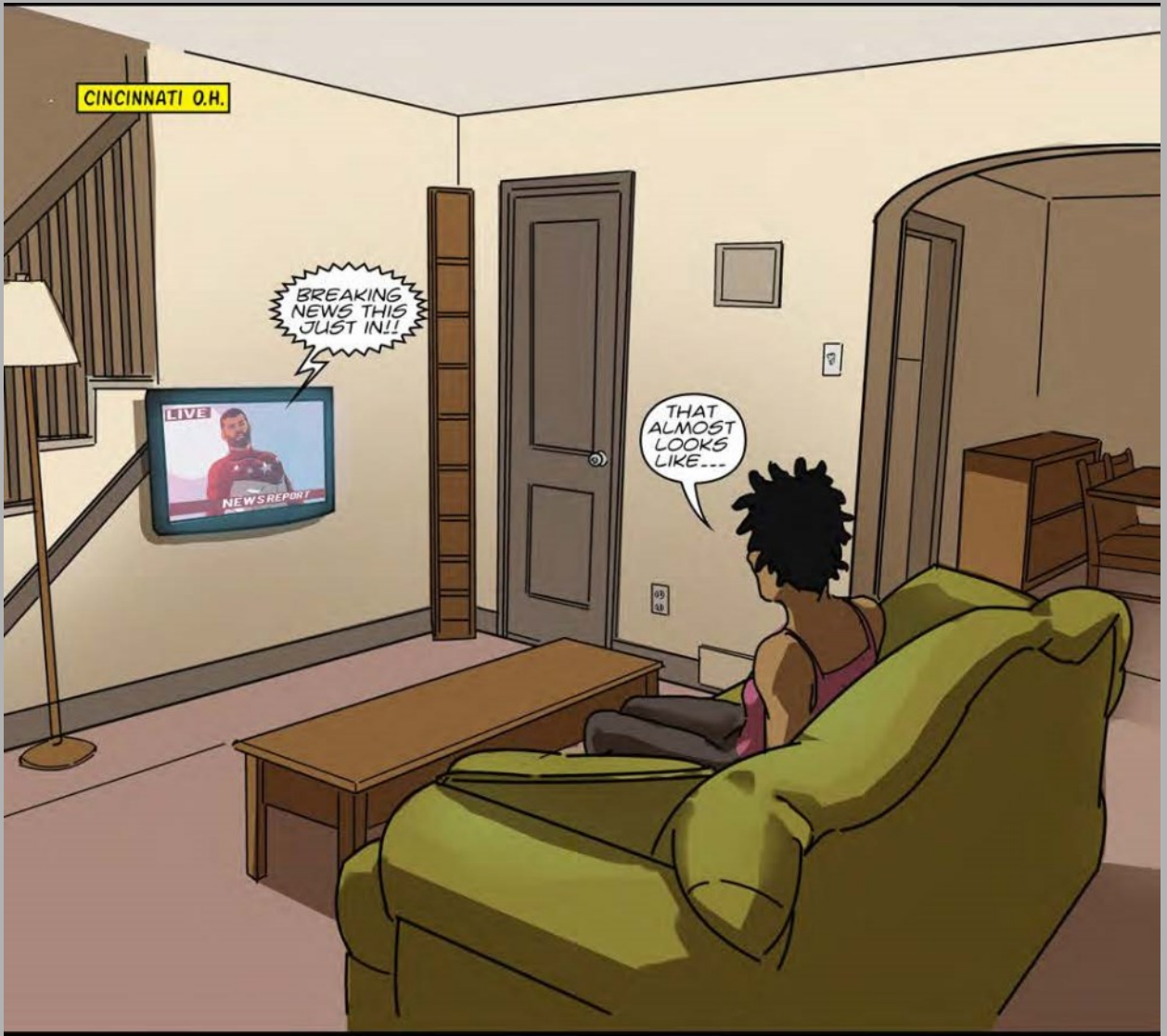
WOW!

THAT WAS AWESOME!

YAY!

SIR. WHO ARE YOU?





I wanted to share that issue to get you excited about FiveStar, then follow it up with this statement:

FiveStar is being re-released, with all-new art, updated script, and in an all-new universe! Below is a comparison of the first page from the original to the new version being released!

Original



New Edition



Make sure to check out www.fskgo.com and support the campaign which was fully funded and reached its stretch goal!

I've got another of the preview images on the right . I am extremely excited for this new edition!

If you missed the campaign, FiveStar, along with the rest of the Freestyle Komics catalogue is available on their site, and I was provided this code: **CooperFSK** for you to use if you do end up shopping there for 10% of your order!



While we all wait for the campaign to end so we can read the new FiveStar #1, check out the interview on the next page with the creator



Tony Klapper

Is FiveStar your only project? If not, what else have you worked on?

At the moment yes. I have some other things planned.

What was your first work that you felt was ready for public consumption?

FiveStar issue #1 was my first release. We are relaunching a new issue #1 in January 2022 with updated art and story.



Who are your creative influences and why?

90's cartoons where the biggest. I loved watching x men, spiderman, and Batman. They ultimately got me into comics.



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

Just step away. Enjoy my family and come back to it.

Is there a project that you've never gotten around to, but still want to write?

There are a few lol. It's hard because you don't want to take time away from current work.



Check out www.FSKnow.com to shop all things FiveStar and Freestyle Comics!

Werewoofs

Joelle Sellner

Val Wise



Volume One

Book Design and Logo by **Bones Leopard**
Edited by **Steenz**
Assitant Editor **Nyala Ali**

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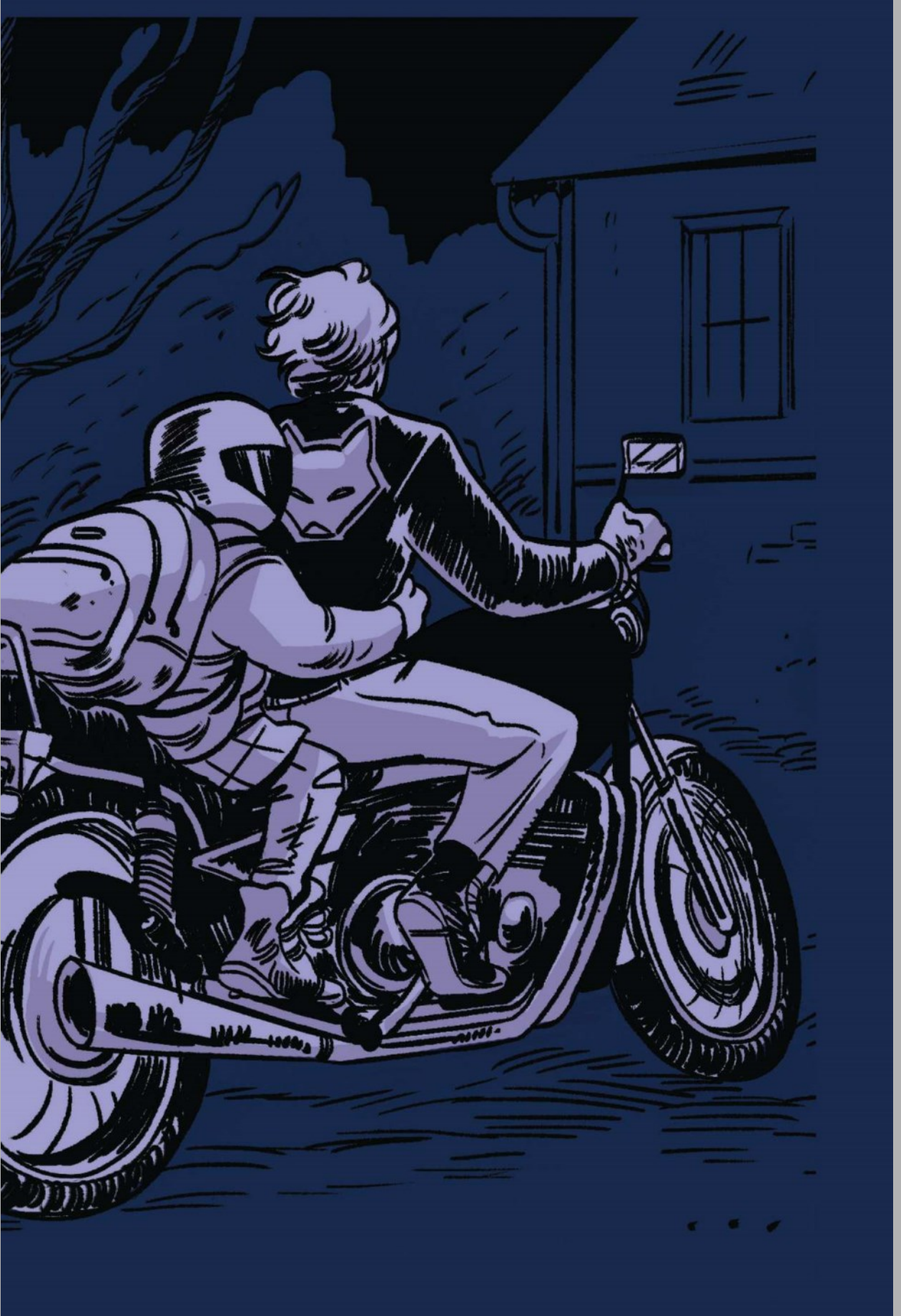
Weintraub-Tobin 310 858 7888
10250 Constellation Blvd Suite 2900
Los Angeles CA 90067



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

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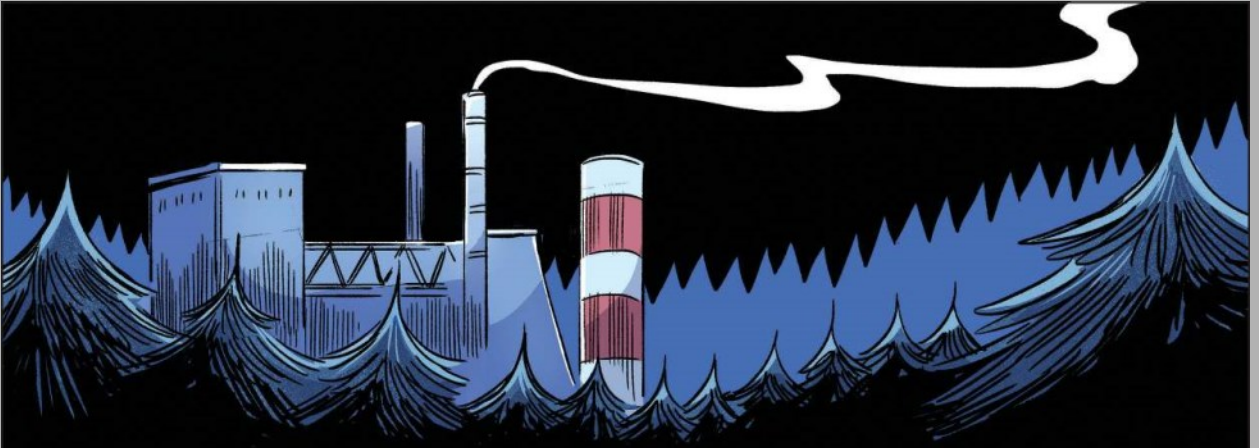
Written by
Joelle Sellner

Illustrated by
Val Wise

Lettered by
Ed Dukeshire

Created by
Brandon Perlow & Paul Mendoza









YOU DID GOOD, MARA.

I DON'T KNOW THAT CHEWING MY FATHER'S ARM OFF WOULD BE CONSIDERED GOOD.

YOU KNOW WE CAN'T GET HURT.

WHAT IF I BIT A HUMAN?



YOU WON'T FIND AN OBJECT TO MEDITATE ON. IT'S BEEN WORKING FOR THE PACK.



IT'S HELPING US STAY IN HUMAN FORM DURING THE FULL MOON.

IT MUST BE WORKING. MY SCIENCE TEACHER SAID HOWLETT'S WOLVES HAVE DISAPPEARED BECAUSE OF PEOPLE BUILDING ON THE LAND.

WHATEVER KEEPS THE HUMANS OFF OUR SCENT. LET THEM THINK WE'RE A LEGEND.



MARA! GET A MOVE ON SO I CAN DROP YOU OFF AT SCHOOL.

FIVE MORE MINUTES!



ZEV'S STILL IN THE BATHROOM ANYWAY.

TELL HIM IT'S YOUR TURN. DON'T LET HIM PUSH YOU AROUND. HOW ELSE ARE YOU GONNA BE PACK LEADER?



WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO BE?

THEN DON'T. I WANT YOU TO HAVE OPTIONS. BE THE FIRST OF US TO GO TO COLLEGE.



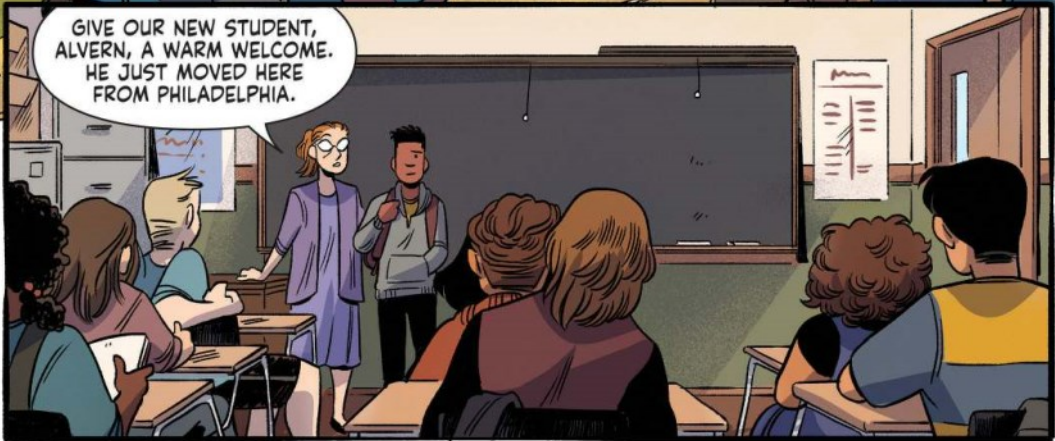
USE YOUR GIFTS. YOU'RE STRONG AND YOU'RE FAST. THE HOWLETT HIGH TRACK TEAM WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOU.

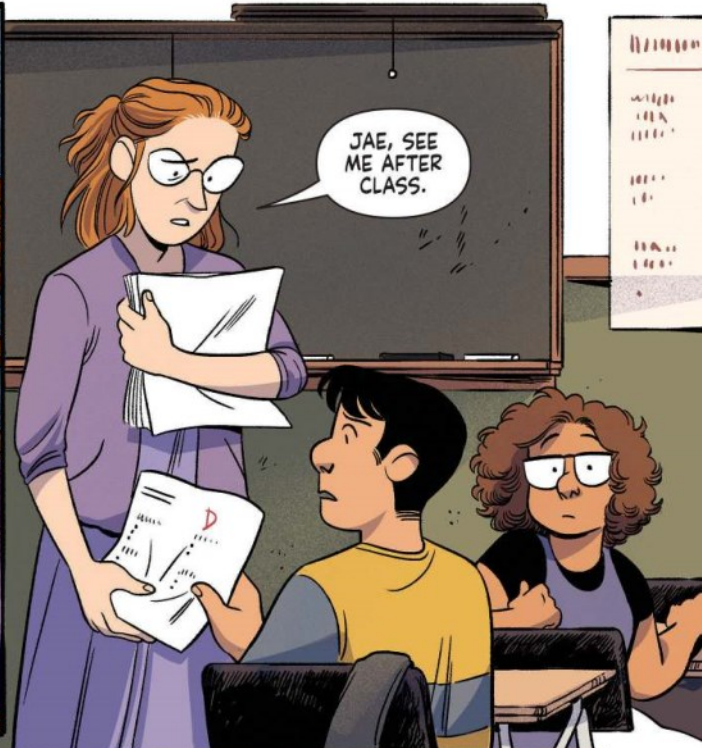


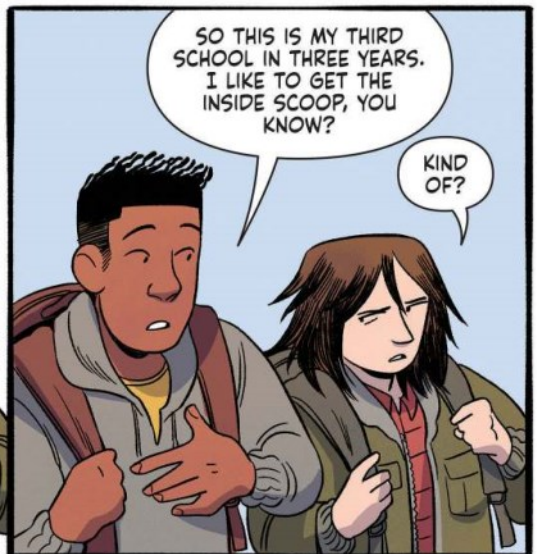
THINK THAT'LL GET ME A SCHOLARSHIP TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN? I REALLY WANT TO GO THERE.

YOU CAN DO **ANYTHING** YOU WANT, CUB. BUT FIRST YOU GOTTA KICK ZEV OUT OF THE GODDAMN BATHROOM!











I PLAY FOOTBALL, BUT ARE THE JOCKS COOL HERE?



I'M DEFINITELY GETTING AN ARTSY, THEATER GEEK VIBE. ARE THEY YOUR PEOPLE?



I DON'T HAVE PEOPLE.



I'LL HELP YOU OUT. STAY AWAY FROM MARA. SHE'S WEIRD. THAT'S HOW YOU GET BRANDED A LOSER.



MOM AND DAD LANDED IN DENVER. DAD ORDERED US SOME GROCERIES FOR THE WEEK. HE THINKS THEY'LL GET THE ACCOUNT.

WOOT! THAT MEANS I'M GETTING A CAR FOR HANUKKAH.

YOU DON'T EVEN DRIVE YET...



JUST ASK JAXON OUT ALREADY.

I DON'T KNOW IF HE'S QUEER OR NOT.

WHO CARES?

IT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LOSING MY VIRGINITY AND GETTING A BROKEN NOSE.



LORENZO, STOP DROOLING OVER JAXON. HE'S A LITTLE OUT OF YOUR REACH.

LIKE YOU GETTING AN A IN MATH?



YOU'RE DEFINITELY THE EVIL TWIN.

ISABELLE, CAN YOU TUTOR ME IN GEOMETRY? MY PARENTS GAVE ME SATURDAY OFF.

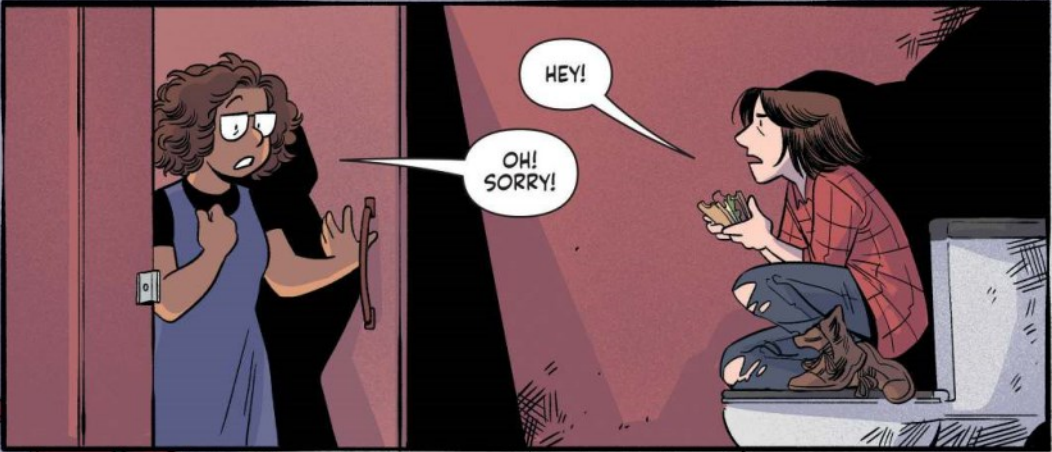


WE SHOULD THROW A PARTY ON SATURDAY. INVITE JAXON AND HIS FRIENDS.

I DON'T WANT STRANGERS IN MY HOUSE. AND JAXON COUNTS AS A STRANGER.

WATCH WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT YOUR HOT FUTURE BROTHER-IN-LAW.

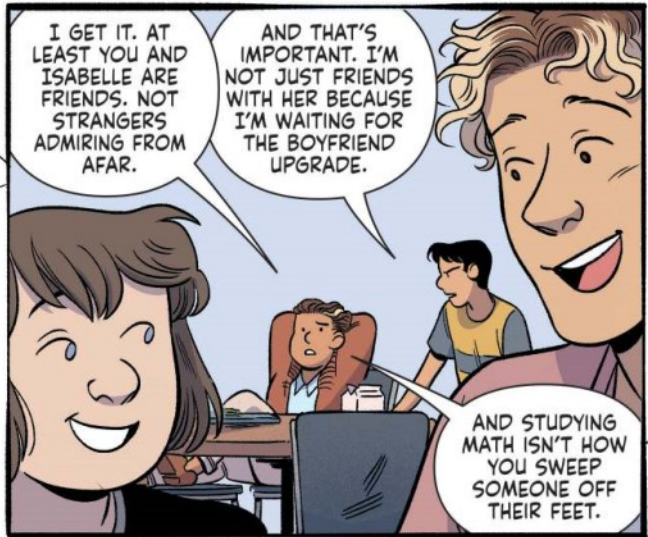






SO WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO ASK ISABELLE OUT ALREADY?

WHEN I KNOW SHE WON'T LAUGH IN MY FACE.



I GET IT. AT LEAST YOU AND ISABELLE ARE FRIENDS. NOT STRANGERS ADMIRING FROM AFAR.

AND THAT'S IMPORTANT. I'M NOT JUST FRIENDS WITH HER BECAUSE I'M WAITING FOR THE BOYFRIEND UPGRADE.

AND STUDYING MATH ISN'T HOW YOU SWEEP SOMEONE OFF THEIR FEET.



IT'S NOT AN EXCUSE TO SEE HER. I HAVE TO GET MY GRADES UP.

MY PARENTS WANT ME TO WORK AT THEIR STORE AND GET AN "A" IN EVERYTHING.



I DON'T EVEN HAVE TIME TO DATE. OR THE MONEY FOR FANCY DINNERS AND PRESENTS.

ISABELLE DOESN'T CARE ABOUT THAT. SHE'S THE LEAST JUDGY PERSON I KNOW.



MARA'S EATING LUNCH ON THE TOILET. WHAT A FREAKAZOID.





ALVERN, I THOUGHT SCHOOL ENDED AT 3:00. WHERE WERE YOU?

I WANTED TO CHECK OUT THE COOL NEIGHBORHOOD HANGOUTS. TURNS OUT THERE AREN'T ANY.



I WANT YOU TO COME HOME RIGHT AFTER SCHOOL. YOU'RE NOT LIVING IN UNCLE DEREK'S BACHELOR PAD ANYMORE.



MY HOUSE HAS RULES. LIKE, PICK UP AFTER YOURSELF.



NO VIDEO GAMES UNTIL YOU DO YOUR HOMEWORK.

BUT THAT'S THE ONLY WAY I KEEP IN TOUCH WITH MY FRIENDS AT HOME!

YOU'LL MAKE FRIENDS HERE.



DON'T GIVE ME THAT LOOK. I'M YOUR LEGAL GUARDIAN. WE'RE NOT ROOMMATES.



DINNER'S IN AN HOUR.

I'M NOT HUNGRY.





ZEV.
I TALKED TO
MY SUPERVISOR.
THERE'S AN
OPENING ON
THE ASSEMBLY
LINE.



AT PAW PAW?
MAKING DOG
FOOD? YOU
GOTTA BE
KIDDING.



WE'RE THE
WORLD'S MOST
POWERFUL
CREATURES, AND
YOU HAVE US
DOING FACTORY
WORK?



HUMAN FORM,
ZEV. WE'RE
OUTSIDE!

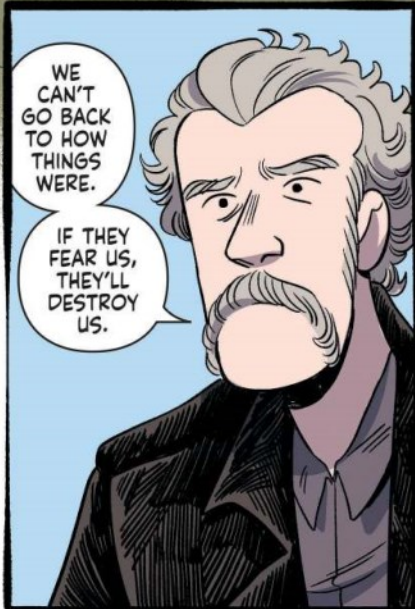
SO WHAT? WHY
DO WE HAVE TO
BE SUBSERVIENT
TO HUMANS?
WE USED TO HUNT
THEM FOR SPORT.
MY FATHER
UNDERSTOOD THAT.



YOUR FATHER'S WAY TURNED US INTO FUGITIVES. TUCK GOT HIMSELF KILLED.

WE'LL GET RESPECT WITH EDUCATION AND HARD WORK.

EVEN THE HUMANS KNOW THAT CRAP DON'T WORK ANYMORE.



WE CAN'T GO BACK TO HOW THINGS WERE.

IF THEY FEAR US, THEY'LL DESTROY US.



YOUR FATHER WAS A GREAT LEADER. BUT IT'S MY WAY FOR NOW. YOU GONNA TAKE THE INTERVIEW?



SURE.



COACH PARKER, I'D LIKE TO TRY OUT FOR THE TRACK TEAM.

YOU'VE NEVER PLAYED ANY SPORTS BEFORE, AM I RIGHT?



NO. BUT I'M A FAST RUNNER.

WHAT'S YOUR BEST TIME?

AT NIGHT. IT'S COOLER AND THERE'S LESS TRAFFIC.



I MEAN IN *MINUTES*. SEVEN MINUTE MILE, SIX MINUTES--YOU KNOW.

I DON'T KNOW. I JUST THOUGHT I'D DO WELL ON OUR TEAM.



TRYOUT INFO IS ON OUR WEBSITE. GET ONE OF YOUR PARENTS TO SIGN THIS.



HEY. YOU PLAY A SPORT?

TRACK. WELL, NOT YET.

I'M TRYING OUT FOR FOOTBALL.

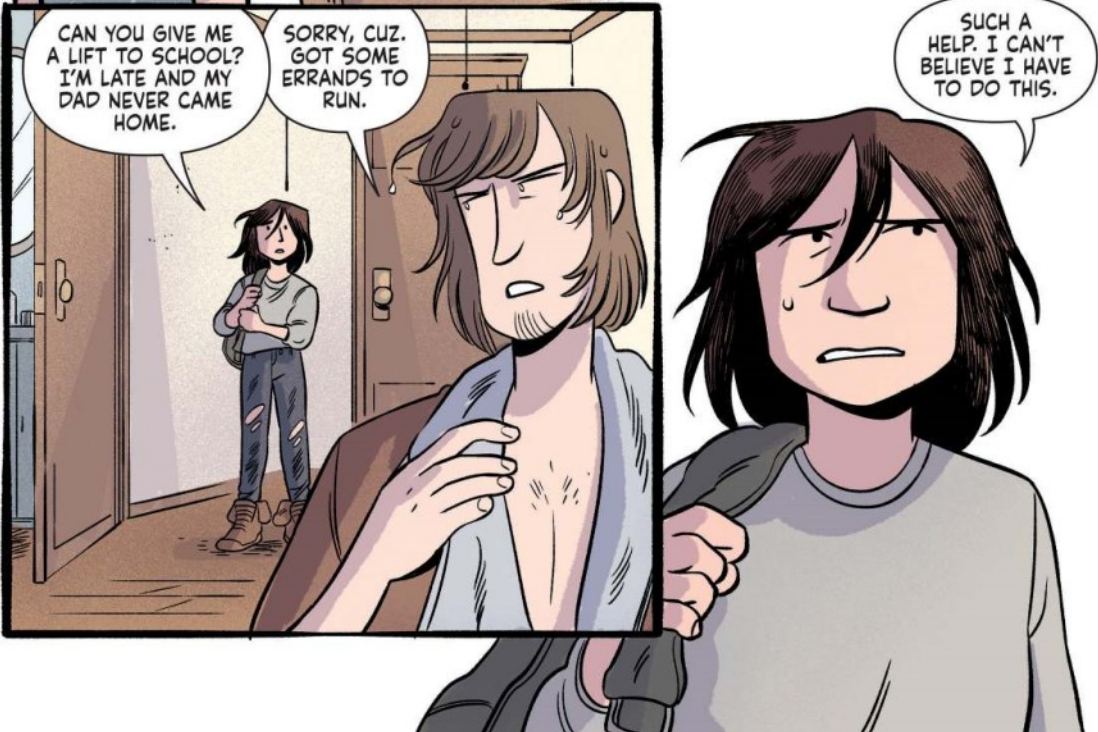


MAYBE I'LL SEE YOU AROUND THE GYM.

PROBABLY NOT.











Oh no! What happens next?

Well you'll have to buy [WereWoofs on Amazon](#) to find out!

I was provided WereWoofs for free to review it by the publisher and I have to say I love it! I'm going to be talking with the creators on the comic podcast—[Panels on Pages](#) very soon, so make sure you're subscribed on your favorite podcast platform or on YouTube!

Just to whet your appetite a little more for this book, here's a page further into the story, completely out of context!



BETA

3

#1



JOHN METYCH'S

SNIPER & ROOK



SNIPER & ROOK™



ISSUE ONE:
HUNTING HIGH & LOW

JOHN M. METYCH, III
WRITER, LETTERER, EDITOR
PRE-PRESS & PUBLISHER

JONATHAN
SUKARANGSAN
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AS MUCH AS I'VE ENJOYED THIS TIME TOGETHER...

ACTUALLY, YOU ARE BOTH FINISHED. FOR NOW.

GREAT TRAINING SESSION! BOTH OF YOU! I'M IMPRESSED.

NICE WIN TODAY, BARTON! IT HAD BEEN A WHILE, HAD IT NOT?



... WE'VE REACHED THE POINT WHERE IT'S TIME TO SAY GOODBYE.

I'M NOT FINISHED YET!

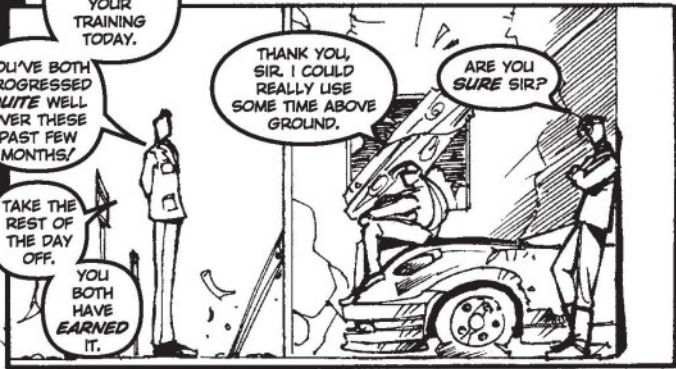


GENERAL JEFFERSON!

SIR!



AT EASE, MEN. AND LADY.



I STOPPED BY TO ASSESS YOUR TRAINING TODAY.

YOU'VE BOTH PROGRESSED QUITE WELL OVER THESE PAST FEW MONTHS!

TAKE THE REST OF THE DAY OFF.

YOU BOTH HAVE EARNED IT.

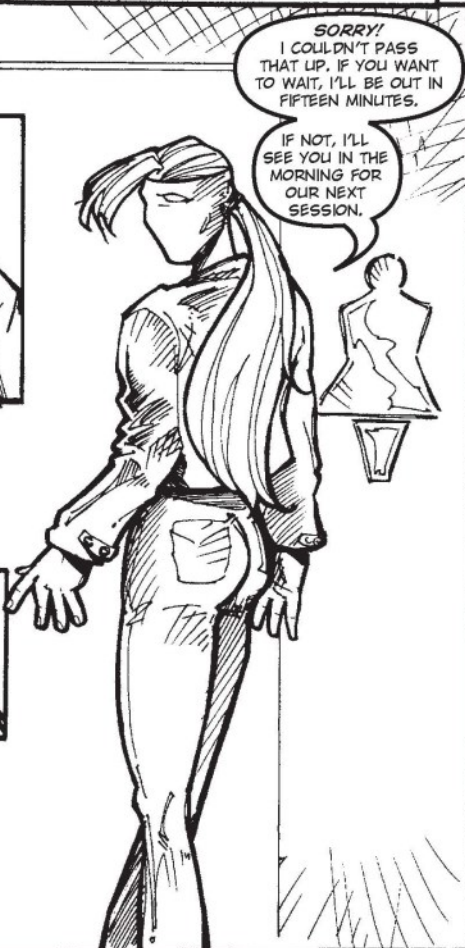
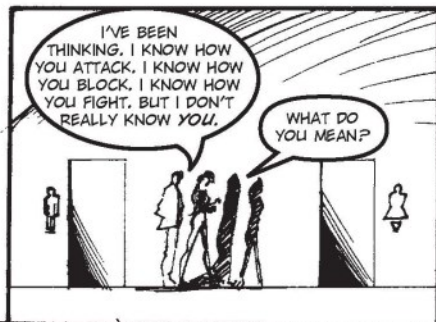
THANK YOU, SIR. I COULD REALLY USE SOME TIME ABOVE GROUND.

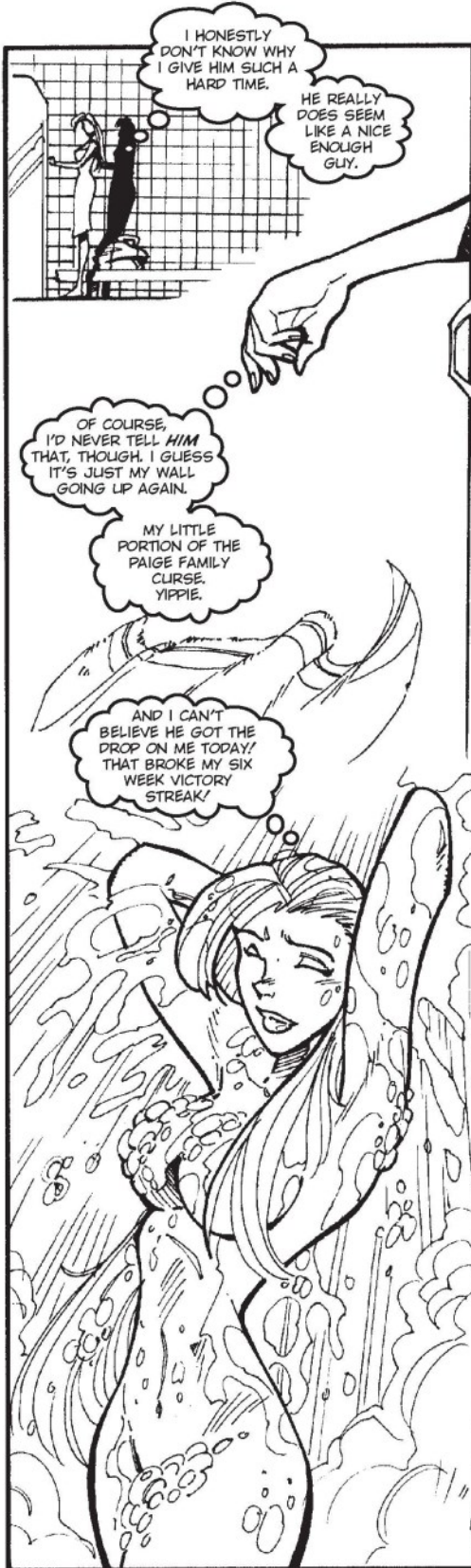
ARE YOU SURE SIR?



WE'VE ONLY BEEN IN THE SIMULATOR FOR THREE HOURS TODAY. WE HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN TO THE TARGET RANGE YET! I'M SURE THAT A FEW MORE HOURS WOULD...

BARTON, A FEW MORE HOURS WOULD FULLY BURN YOU OUT. SHOWER, LEAVE THE COMPLEX, AND ENJOY YOURSELF TODAY. WITHOUT THE USE OF WEAPONS. THAT'S AN ORDER!





HEY, BUDDY.
IF YOU'RE GOING INTO THE
SHOWER, YOU MIGHT WANT TO
CHECK WITH MAINTENANCE
FIRST. I THINK WE'RE OUT
OF HOT WATER.



THANKS
FOR THE
WARNING.
I OWE YOU
ONE.



THERE
YOU ARE! I WAS
STARTING TO THINK
YOU RESCINDED
YOUR OFFER AND
LEFT!



SORRY
ABOUT THE WAIT!
I HAD TO WARN A
SECRET SERVICE GUY
ABOUT THE LACK OF
HOT WATER. THE LAST
THING WE NEED IS
AN AGENT
SUFFERING FROM
HYPOTHERMIA!

SO, ARE
WE STILL
ON FOR
LUNCH?



SURE. I GUESS.
WHY NOT. WHAT CAN IT
HURT, RIGHT? IT'S
ONLY LUNCH...

LET'S
GET OUR
GEAR BEFORE
LEAVING.



I LOVE TECHNOLOGY!
THIS STUFF IS GREAT!
BRING ON THE RETINAL
SCANNERS!

--- ACCESS GRANTED ---

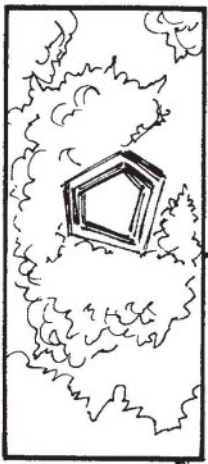
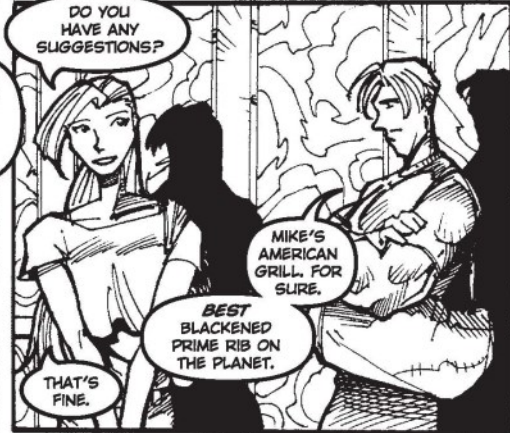
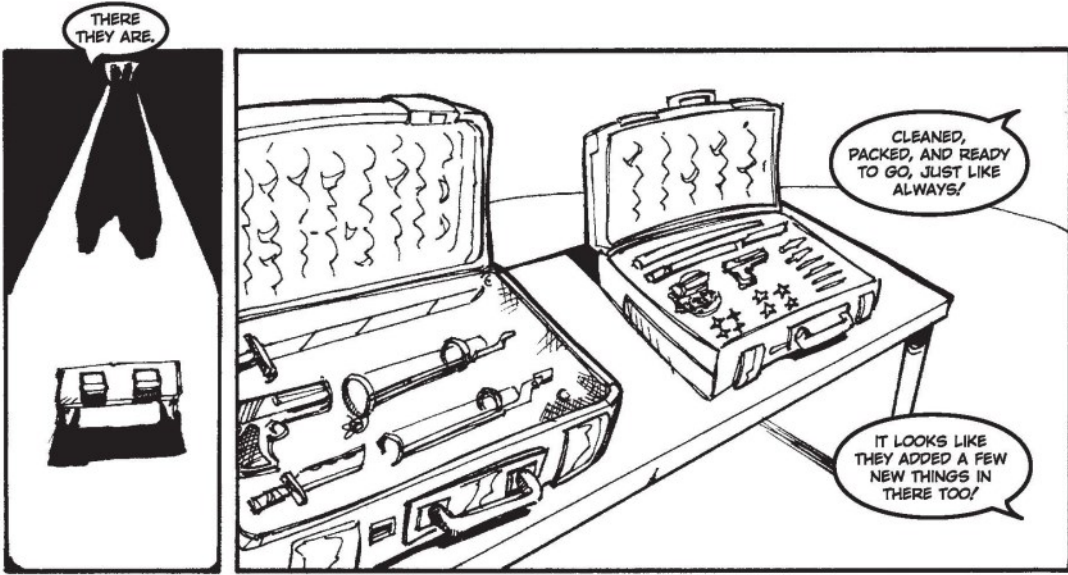
--- JACK (SNIPER) BARTON ---

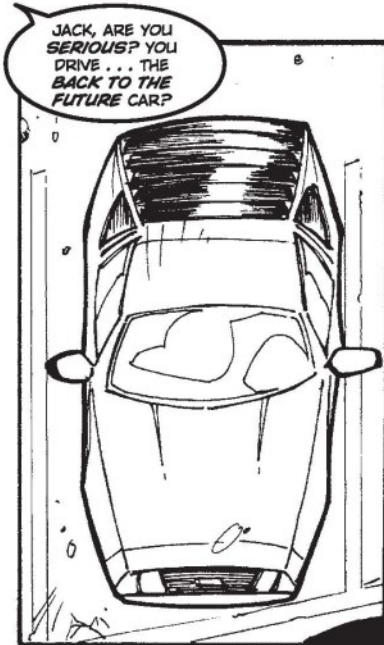


IT'S JUST
ANOTHER LOCK. AS
EASY TO PICK AS ALL
THE REST...

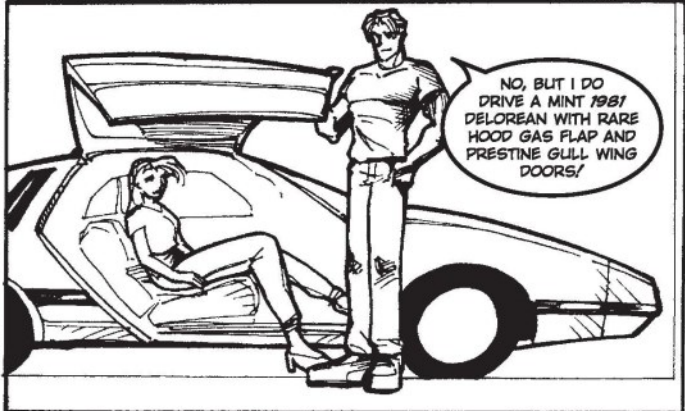
--- ACCESS GRANTED ---

--- REBECCA (ROOK) PAIGE ---

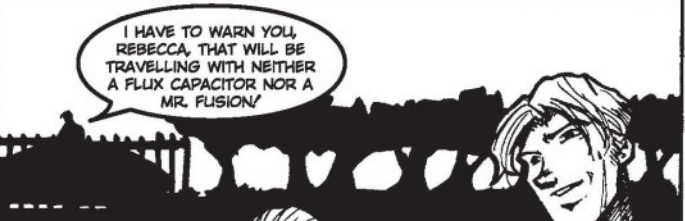




JACK, ARE YOU SERIOUS? YOU DRIVE... THE BACK TO THE FUTURE CAR?



NO, BUT I DO DRIVE A MINT 1981 DELOREAN WITH RARE HOOD GAS FLAP AND PRESTINE GULL WING DOORS!



I HAVE TO WARN YOU, REBECCA, THAT WILL BE TRAVELLING WITH NEITHER A FLUX CAPACITOR NOR A MR. FUSION!



I THINK I'LL SURVIVE! SO, HOW FAR TO THIS RESTAURANT?

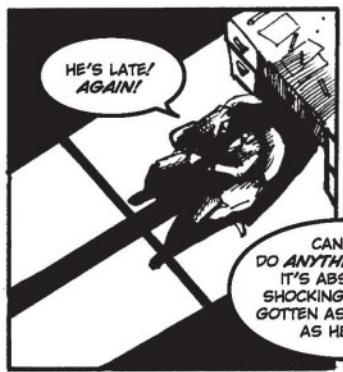
NORMALLY ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE MINUTES, BUT LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I HIT 88 MILES PER HOUR!!



HA! HA! HA!



MEANWHILE, IN THE SOVIET UNION



HE'S LATE! AGAIN!

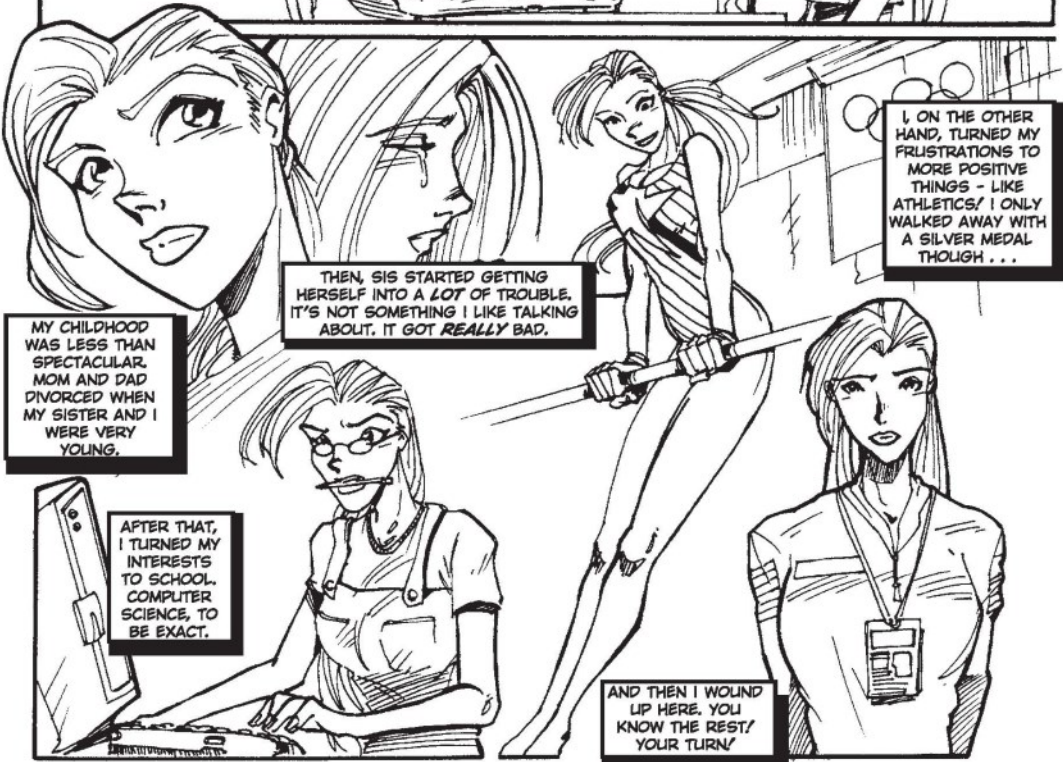
CAN'T HE DO ANYTHING RIGHT? IT'S ABSOLUTELY SHOCKING THAT HE'S GOTTEN AS FAR AHEAD AS HE HAS!



I MISS THE DAYS WHEN HE WASN'T AN INCOMPETENT MORON!



VIRGINIA, UNITED STATES



MY TURN, HUH?
MY DAD WAS A
SUCCESSFUL TRIAL
LAWYER IN VIRGINIA.
I FIGURED I'D FOLLOW
IN HIS FOOTSTEPS.
EVERYONE DID.

THAT ALL CHANGED ONE NIGHT WHEN I SAW
A WOMAN IN THE PROCESS OF GETTING
CARJACKED. I JUMPED THE GUY AND THE
WOMAN WAS ABLE TO ESCAPE UNHARMED. IT
WAS A TOTAL RUSH! I HELPED PEOPLE BEFORE,
BUT NEVER *DIRECTLY* LIKE THAT, YOU KNOW?

SOON AFTER, I JOINED THE POLICE
ACADEMY. I THOUGHT THAT I COULD
DO MORE GOOD ON THE STREETS,
HELPING PEOPLE EVERY DAY, THAN
I COULD DO IN THE COURTROOM.



I WAS ACTUALLY *RECRUITED* BY
THE LAPD A FEW MONTHS AFTER
GRADUATION. LESS THAN A YEAR LATER,
I WAS DISMISSED BECAUSE I DISOBEYED
A DIRECT ORDER FROM A SUPERIOR.

I REALLY DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE,
THOUGH. WRONG IS WRONG, NO MATTER
WHO SAYS OR DOES SOMETHING. I HAD
TO STAY TRUE TO MY BELIEFS AND WHAT
THE DEPARTMENT IS *SUPPOSED* TO DO.



ANYWAY,
THAT BRINGS ME
TO HERE AND NOW.
PRETTY BORING, I'M
SURE, COMPARED TO
THE OLYMPICS!



AND WOULD
THAT BE A
GOOD NEW
PERSPECTIVE?

NOT
BORING AT ALL!
I NEVER KNEW ANY
OF THAT ABOUT YOU!
IT KIND OF PUTS YOU
INTO A WHOLE NEW
PERSPECTIVE!



SLOW
DOWN
THERE,
COWBOY.
THAT'S A
BIT FAST.



MINE IS
PAGING
TOO?

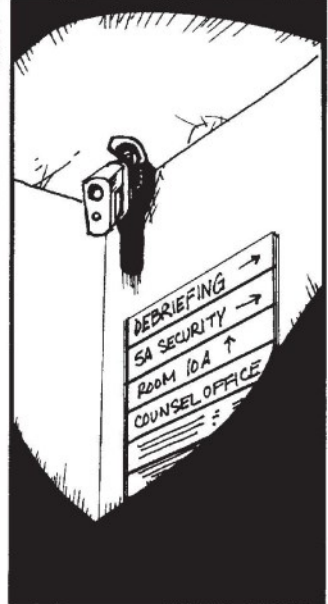
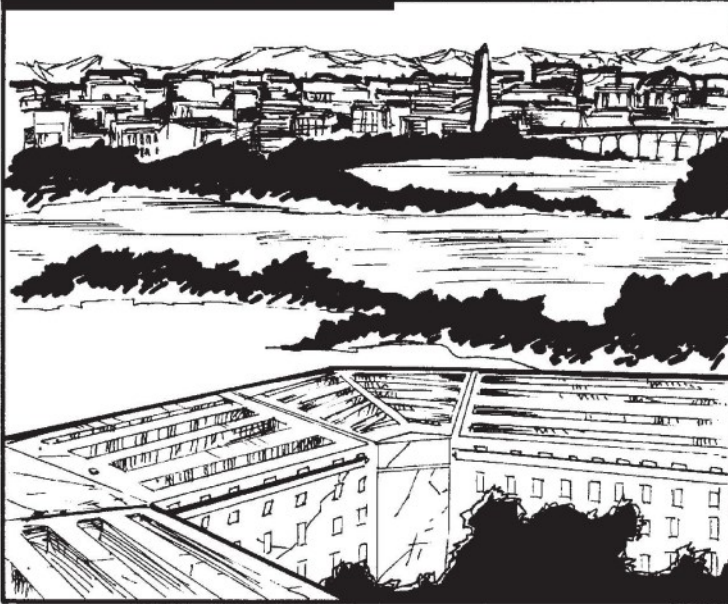


WE
SHOULD GET
BACK TO
JEFFERSON'S
OFFICE!

MAY I?

... SURE.
THAT WOULD
BE NICE.

THIRTY-FIVE MINUTES LATER
IN THE OFFICE OF GENERAL DAVIS JEFFERSON



THESE ARE THE SCHEMATICS FOR THE WHITE HOUSE.

MEMORIZE THEM! YOU WILL NOT BE PROVIDED WITH ANY PAPERWORK FOR THIS MISSION.



YOU WILL ENTER THE WHITE HOUSE THROUGH AN UNDERGROUND ACCESS PANEL HERE.

BE CAREFUL! I'VE HAD SOME BAD EXPERIENCES WITH HOSTAGE SITUATIONS.



WE BELIEVE THAT THE TERRORISTS ARE HOLDING THE PRESIDENT CAPTIVE IN THIS WING.

GENERAL, DO WE KNOW WHO THESE TERRORISTS ARE WORKING FOR?



WE DON'T KNOW BUT WE'RE TRYING TO FIND OUT.

THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN JUST BEFORE ALL CAMERAS WENT OFFLINE.

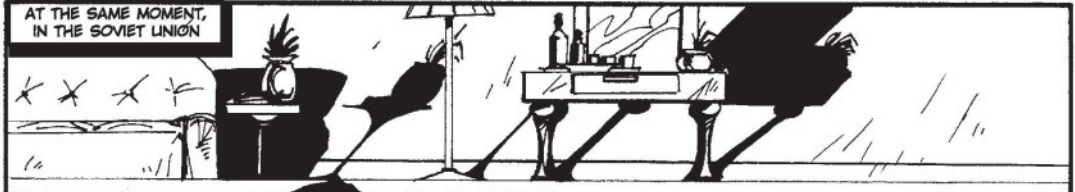
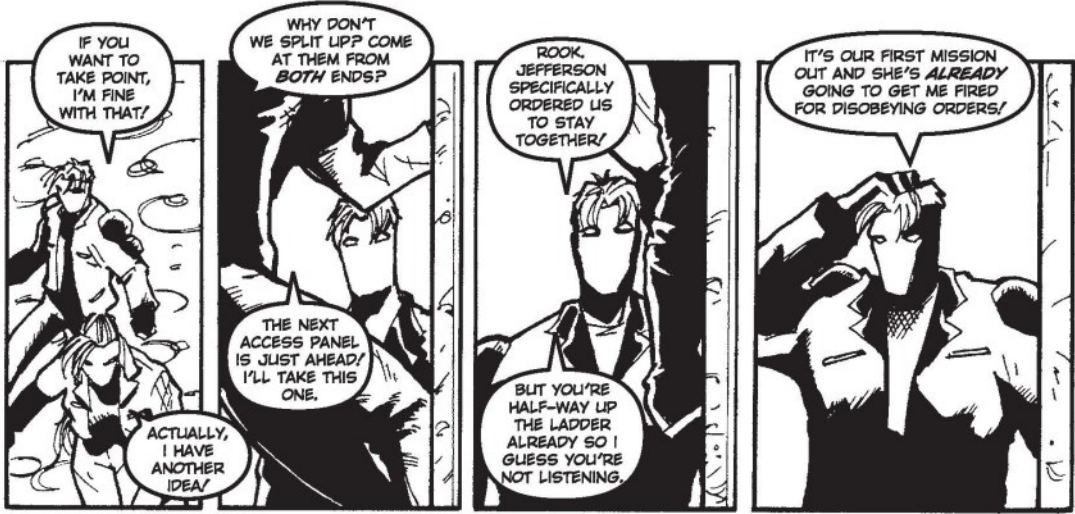


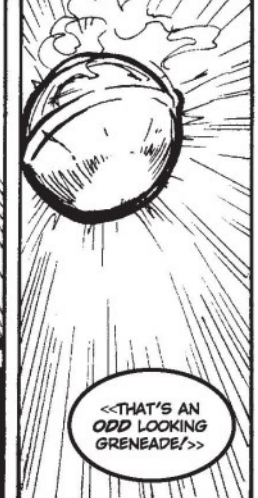
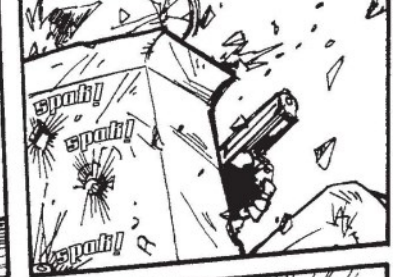
ELSEWHERE AT THE SAME MOMENT

I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU WANT ME TO DO. I'LL DO WHAT YOU ASK. PLEASE MAKE SURE NO HARM COMES TO ME!

FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER









<< MY EYES! >>



SHOULD HAVE TAKEN YOUR OWN ADVICE ON TAKING COVER THERE, BUDDY.



ELSEWHERE IN THE WHITE HOUSE

<< IS PAVEL WITH THE PRESIDENT RIGHT NOW? >>

<< YEAH, YURIY AND LEONID ARE BACKING HIM UP. >>

OH MY GOD! WHAT THE HELL? IT'S THAT SECRET SERVICE AGENT FROM THE LOCKER ROOM THIS MORNING!



<< WHAT TIME IS THE TRANSPORT SUPPOSED TO ARRIVE? >>

<< I DON'T KNOW. WE HAVEN'T BEEN TOLD YET. >>

THIS WHOLE OP IS BEING HANDLED ON A "NEED TO KNOW" BASIS.

I DON'T LIKE NOT BEING ABLE TO PLAN AHEAD. >>



<< CAN I BUM A SMOKE? >>

<< SURE, WAIT HERE. I GOTTA GO TO THE CAN. >>



<< WHAT THE HELL DID YOU EAT FOR LUNCH, NIKOLAI? I CAN SMELL IT ALL THE WAY OUT HERE! >>



THUD









HEY, BUD!

BLAM!

THIS ONE'S FOR YOU!

SPLOOSH!

HAVE YOU BEEN KEEPING COUNT OF YOUR SHOTS?

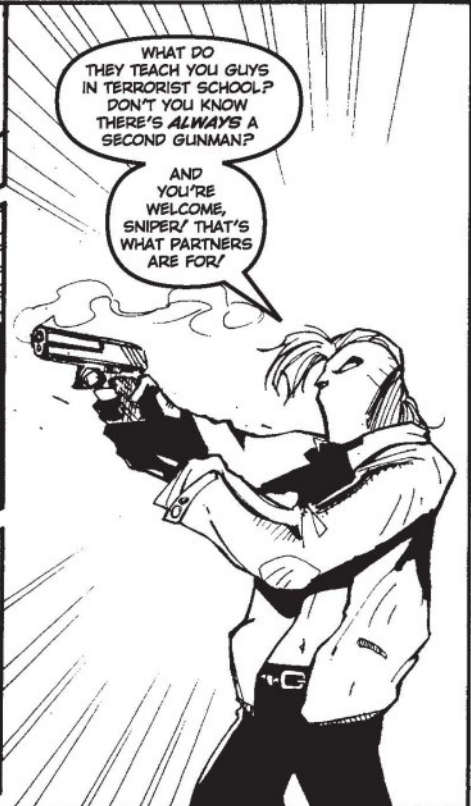
BY MY COUNT, YOU'RE OUT, AREN'T YOU?

DAMN!

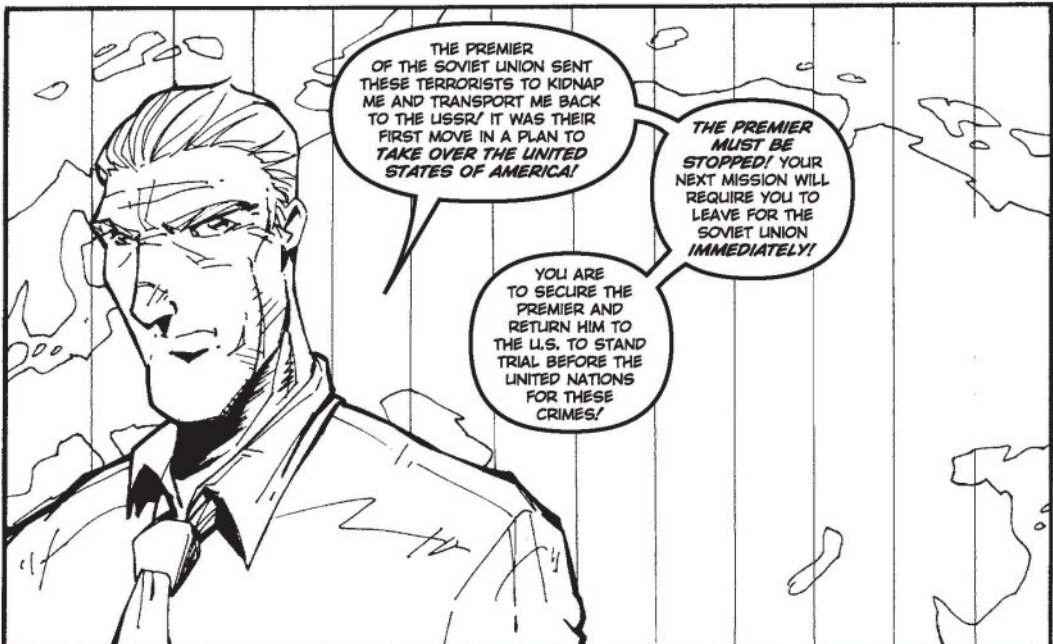
AND HERE I AM WITH A NEWLY LOADED, FULL CLIP!

I BELIEVE THAT THE TIME FOR NEGOTIATIONS HAS PASSED, DON'T YOU?

UMMM... DID I MENTION THAT I WAS SENT HERE FOR PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS?





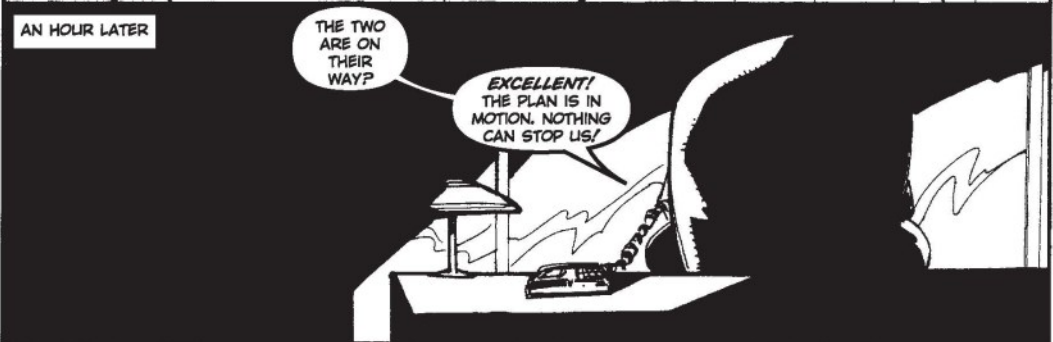


THE PREMIER OF THE SOVIET UNION SENT THESE TERRORISTS TO KIDNAP ME AND TRANSPORT ME BACK TO THE USSR! IT WAS THEIR FIRST MOVE IN A PLAN TO TAKE OVER THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA!

THE PREMIER MUST BE STOPPED! YOUR NEXT MISSION WILL REQUIRE YOU TO LEAVE FOR THE SOVIET UNION IMMEDIATELY!

YOU ARE TO SECURE THE PREMIER AND RETURN HIM TO THE U.S. TO STAND TRIAL BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS FOR THESE CRIMES!

AN HOUR LATER



THE TWO ARE ON THEIR WAY

EXCELLENT! THE PLAN IS IN MOTION. NOTHING CAN STOP US!

IN THE USA



LIKE MY PROFESSOR USED TO SAY, IT ALL COMES TOGETHER LIKE A GREAT BIG PUZZLE!

HA!
HA!

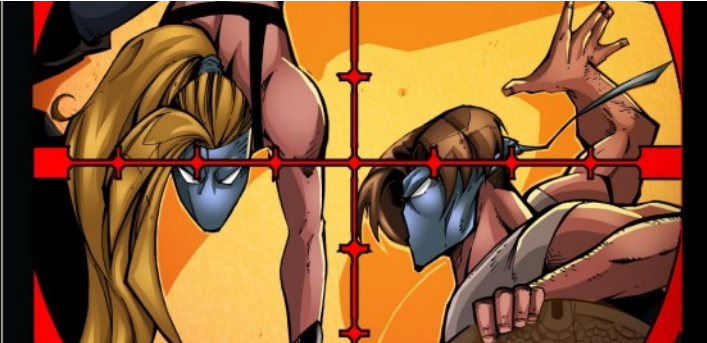
HA!
HA!

clink!

plop
plop

A long time ago in a place that no longer exists, I met a teller of tales. He told me about a yarn he'd been spinning for some time. That yarn was called Sniper & Rook, and that man was

John Metych III



If the internet is not lying to me, the first issue of Sniper & Rook (featured in this very issue!) came out in 1999. Creators in today's fast-paced world want to see fast results – however they perceive those to look. What kept you motivated to produce this comic across the last 20+ years?

If it's on the internet, it MUST be true, right?! :-)

You're absolutely correct, though! Sniper and Rook, as characters, were created in February 1994; the first adventure that didn't see print started that year, but the first adventure that actually saw print was indeed in 1999! May of 1999, to be exact! And you're also correct in the fact that it's been a long run for Sniper & Rook . . . we've been on a hiatus, but their story has never been finished, and I'm thrilled that our Kickstarter is bringing them back in a big way!

Spinning out of Volume 1 of Sniper & Rook comes the first new Sniper & Rook story arc, and first new #1, in more than a decade! This is an excellent jumping-on point for readers . . . past Sniper & Rook knowledge isn't required, but if you have experience with them, you'll be extra pleased with where this series takes them!

What's kept me motivated over the past 20-plus years? Stubbornness, in no small amount. Knowing that their story isn't over, and that there is more to tell, show, and reveal. Having so many awesome pieces in-house, ready for printing, including some stories, a LOT of covers, and an incredible amount of work produced by some incredible talents I've had the pleasure of meeting over the years and who have been kind enough to lend their pencils / inks / colors to this project of mine. There is too much cool here not to show! And now, with "Sniper & Rook: Area 50-wha?? #1" we begin sharing their adventures anew!



When you began working on Sniper & Rook, were you seeing the final product in your head with a master outline, or did you approach it in more of a free-form workflow, writing chapters as they came to you?

I had a broad overview on my first major story arc . . . I knew I wanted it over five issues . . . and I pretty much knew how the story was going to open, and how it was going to wrap, but getting there . . . getting there was the fun adventure!



Someone once said that every issue of every comic (that has a continuing story) should end on a cliffhanger, so that was the next structure to put in. Where would each "stop" be, for each of the five issues, that would be a cliffhanger, making people HAVE to come back for the next issue!?! With those structures in place, I pretty much just let the story play out in my mind like a movie; I then essentially do "screen captures" of the major key scenes, frames, and sequences, and provide those details to the awesome artists I get to collaborate with who then turn those details and descriptions into illustrations. From

there I write the full dialogue (script) while I perform the digital lettering duties on the title as well. :-)

Now I feel like I know this answer but have you ever given up on a project and if so, why?

Yes, no, yes? Sniper & Rook have been on a hiatus, which, at times, felt like giving up but was never designed to be. The Ripper limited series IS STILL COMING. It's in planning stages (re-planning actually) but will one day see print! Sniper & Rook's original origin story . . . that one I did scrap and start over. And the first SnR issue was re-started twice, but with different content the first two times, before issue 1 actually made it to readers, so some of those concepts were "given up on", however some idea threads resurfaced or were utilized elsewhere throughout the series.



What was your first piece that you felt was ready for public consumption, and how long after that did you put out your first comic?

That would be the 1999 printing of Sniper & Rook 1, so timing along with first publication. It's fun to note, though, that on their 10th anniversary, I did a limited "10th Anniversary Edition" printing of issues 1 - 5 with new or enhanced covers, improved lettering, and tightening up dialogue I thought I could polish a bit more, 10 years later.



Now you have been on hiatus for a while for various reasons so I feel like you may have some good insight here. When you hit a roadblock in your work, how do you get over it?

There is no right or wrong answer for this - it will vary by every creator - but I've found that when I hit a roadblock, I just have to plow through it. Sometimes the plowing is faster than others. Sometimes, there's the need to take a break between turns of plowing. But at the end of the day, what gets me to the point of getting through whatever is blocking me is - like I said before - knowing that Sniper & Rook have a LOT of story still to be told, a LOT of adventures that need adventuring, and so many more character moments still to come, I have to make sure that they all happen. :-)

With Sniper & Rook being published through Silverline Comics, will we see them join a larger universe of characters, or will they remain in their own bubble?

The bubble is expanding!!!! Having been a Silverline Comics fan since forever, I

always had, in the back of my mind, Sniper & Rook inhabiting the same world as many of the Silverline Comics characters did in the 90's. That's why Sniper & Rook is coming out through Silverline now . . . our Head Honcho, Roland Mann, approved for me to tell a Sniper & Rook story that was central to the Silverline Universe and pulled the heroes (and villains?!?) of both worlds together. That story is in progress - Bill Maus has completed two issues of artwork so far, for what will likely be a future 5 or 6 issue miniseries. More on that later, but the answer is YES! The universe is indeed getting larger!



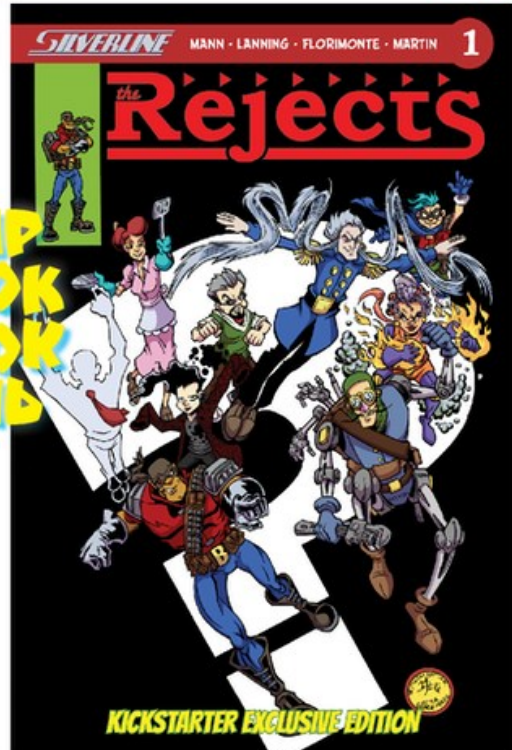
As John mentioned, Sniper & Rook is currently live on Kickstarter. Here's the sales pitch for the Silverline Comics double feature Kickstarter:

Sniper & Rook #1 (of 3)

Jack Barton (Sniper) and Rebecca Paige (Rook) blast back into comics in their roles as undercover, covert military operatives serving the United States of America directly under the command of decorated General Davis Jefferson. From the United States to the Soviet Union to Japan, and from political theater to mythical creatures to historical coverups, their previous missions have not only spanned the globe, but have also traversed genres. Their newest mission may very well take them further than ever before in both regards . . .

Rejects #1 (of 3)

They are formidable, ferocious, fearless...and forgettable. They're the heroes no one wanted. What happens when the Fantastic Four is Busy? When the Justice League is unavailable? When the Avengers are out of the galaxy? The world has no other option...they call--wait, no, they do NOT call The Rejects. The team of rejected heroes who are just trying to make a name for themselves and prove they've got what it takes, despite their ridiculous names and powers.



NEW HOTNESS

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



The king and queen are getting ready to welcome their first born into the world when a hooded figure from the King's past returns, bringing ill tidings.

What tragedy might befall the royal house?

Check out [Will Not Bow](#) for that answer and more!

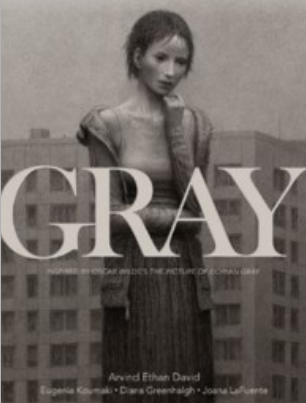
The thief of legend strikes at the hardest target in the land. No one else would dare attempt this approach. Yet no one else wants the Dragon's Tear the way Gage does.

Will he succeed? Read to find out!

Get notified when the Kickstarter launches for issues 1-3! <https://bit.ly/GageKS>



"Inventive, empowered, and thoroughly entertaining twist on a classic. Gorgeous, provocative, and damn hard to put down."
—Dustin Carly, *Once* writing columnist of *Losers and Breakups* (Juggernaut Press)



Rich and powerful men are being robbed by a pair of women. Some would say this is justice, but for Detective Wutan it's a case that needs solving, with criminals that need to be brought in.

That all changes when he meets Dorian Gray.

Buy digital or physical copies of Vol 1 and 2 [here!](#)



What happens when we die?

Well don't ask Sylvia. She's died 1,347 times. Every time she does she becomes the Sapphire Spectre, and helps wandering spirits, even fighting the occasional demon when needed.

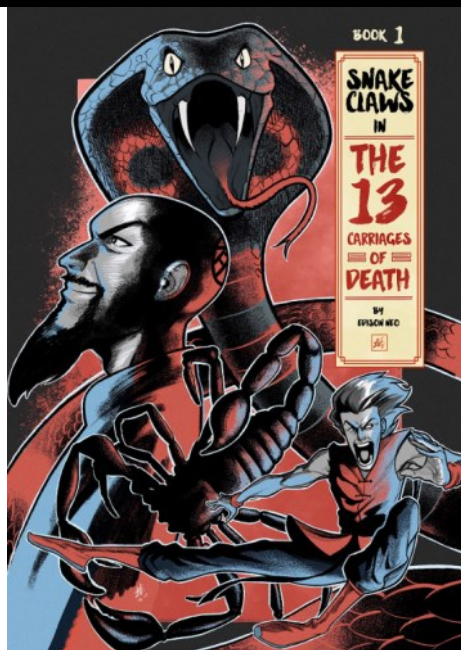
Get your copy [here!](#)

The martial artist Snake Claws has been leaving a path of carnage in his journey to explore the forbidden martial arts.

After Snake Claws kills his master, a young disciple comes to take revenge.

Who will win?

Find out by getting [your copy now!](#)



Just starting in the world of superheroes, Critter kicks things off with a good ol' team-up. And it was going well, until it wasn't.

A classic superhero coming-of-age story, with a dash of mysterious prophecies.

For me it was love at first read. Follow the Big Dog Ink [Instagram](#) and check out the [Critter Action Figure Kickstarter!](#)

TIPS 'N' TRICKS

As we do every month, we are going to dive into our featured creators' minds to see what suggestions they have for the aspiring among us. Each creator provided some insight, so this is the column to pay attention to.

First up, Tony Klapper of FiveStar fame has some quick and concise tips:

1. Just start!! Don't keep putting it off.
2. Be consistent
3. Be able to listen and learn. Take advice



Ben Lacy, creator of Shark of War has those invaluable pragmatic tips:

1. Build your email list. You need to have people willing to support you and you have to keep them engaged in your efforts.
2. Expand your network of creators. Join Facebook groups for indie creators and learn from what they're doing.
3. Make your book! A lot of people have ideas and talk about the book they want to make, but at the end of the day, you need to stop dreaming about it and just go for it one.

Our cover artist, Dino Prijic takes the humble approach:

I don't think I'm at a point in my career as an artist to be handing out advice. Right now, all I'm concerned with doing is consuming new and old media, studying what I find fascinating, and chasing whatever I want to bring to life. As best I can.

Also, don't be obsessed with making money from your passions early on. you'll lose your touch.



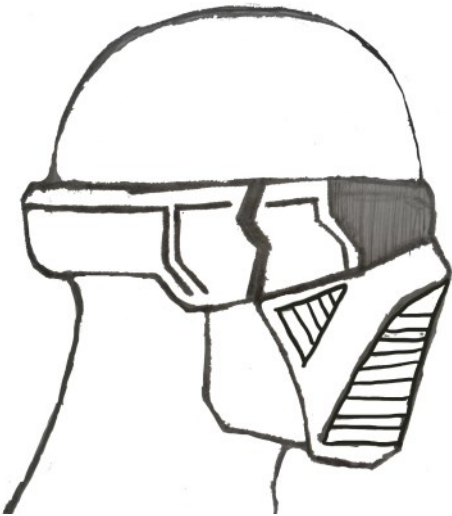
Always a wealth of knowledge, Sniper & Rook creator John Metych III drops some gems for us:

Be kind to every one you meet. It's a small industry and reputation by word-of-mouth travels fast. Even faster if it's negative. So be kind, grateful, and courteous to all.

Keep creating. Even if it's not something that's going to see print. Create for you. Hit a roadblock? Try something different - creative in a different way. Never quit creating.

Self publishing is easier than ever! Print your first book - even if it's only enough copies for you and your inner circle of friends and family. Once you see your work in printed form, it takes on a whole new life, and brings a whole new level of excitement for future creative projects!





My tip this go-round are to allow yourself to work in small increments. I understand that a lot of our society currently conditions you to expect fast and large results, but don't hold yourself to that. You may not be in the right mindset to push super hard and grind out a ton of content. You may not be financially capable of supporting your goals. You may not have the connections, the support system, the time even.

Don't beat yourself up about it though.

Your story is your own, and nobody else gets to tell it.

Just because someone is grinding every day, doesn't mean you have to. If I had spent all my free time for the five plus years before this magazine was created to pursue the "Indie Platform" idea for Catalyst, I would have probably not gotten very far since I am an amateur coder and software developer at best, and I didn't have the connections to make the platform happen with others. Not coding myself into a depression was the best decision I could have made. It allowed me to observe the market, see where things are going and ultimately play to my strengths. I'm a shameless self-promoter, and a shameless hype man.

So here I am, shamelessly promoting my and others' work to a growing mailing list of readers.

Thanks for being here.

EDITORIAL

I've said it countless times; I'm a shameless self-promoter.

Yeah I sometimes get lost in the sauce of talking about pop culture and things that aren't what I do. And that's okay. Because at the end of the day, I will always bring it back around to what I'm doing. A conversation about superhero movies will inevitably get to me talking about the magazine. A Star Trek chat will always lead to me suggesting that discussion takes place on #TheTangentsPodcast and a TikTok rant may turn into a fleshed out episode of Panels on Pages.

It's taken me years to get to this point though. I used to shy away and keep my endeavors to myself, for fear of rejection or ridicule. It has taken a long time to hone that pivot from other topics, and especially to make it natural and not just a sales pitch. That's the last thing anybody needs—you pitching your idea, story, or project to them. You have to master the pivot. It may not be pretty at first, but you do have to actually pivot. If you don't, then you're wasting the audience you have at any given time.

For instance— I've had to spit a verse when I mention that I rap. I'm not doing it to gain a fan base for my inevitable rap career—I want people to associate me with telling stories, regardless of how that association forms. Now I'm not saying that you have to pick up a book of rhymes, but I am saying that you need to make sure that you're spending less time convincing people to go see the latest MCU film, and use that time to convince them to go to your Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, or website to check out your work.

I follow a lot of people across various platforms, and pretty regularly, I come across some accounts that seem to be about X thing—let's say MCU films—and that's what I watch them for. And then out of nowhere, weeks, sometimes months after I started watching—they suddenly bring up that they have a book they've published, or are an artist, or a comic creator. That's a massive blind-side. Here I was enjoying their Fantastic Four theories, and now I've got questions about this book, or artwork, or whatever else they're doing.

If you are concerned about losing audience, then my question is going to be what do you want to do? Are you trying to be a content creator about other people's work—which is fine, lots of people do that and have fun and make money—or do you want to create stories, comics, films and build a following for that? It doesn't matter to me, but you should have an idea.

I get it, it's fun to theorize on the MCU multiverse, or what the Flashpoint film might do to the DCEU, but if that is not what you want to talk about forever, make sure to mix in the thing you do want to talk about. If you need a framework, use the classic "two for you, one for me" method. If your fans came from the MCU, make two pieces of content about that, but the third should be about your work. Make sure to not get lost in the sauce of pop culture.

-Dalibor

Credit to [TheConsciousLee](#) for the term "lost in the sauce" - it just works so well in this context.

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!

DINO PRIJIC / COLORNHUE

Instagram— colornhue

BEN LACY / BITING COMICS

www.bitingcomics.com

Instagram— benlacy1

TONY KLAPPER

Instagram— fivestar_fridays

Instagram— thefivestarfam_

Facebook— KevinTerryIsFiveStar

SERENA GUERRA

Facebook— SerenaGuerraCreations

DeviantArt— serenaguerra

NEW PARADIGM STUDIOS

<https://newparadigmstudios.com>

Facebook/Instagram— newparadigmstudios

Twitter— NPStudios

JOHN METYCH III / BETA 3 COMICS

FACEBOOK— Beta3Comics

Current Kickstarter— <https://bit.ly/silverlineJAN22>

DALIBOR ZUJOVIC / NEXUS

www.nexus.studio

Facebook/Instagram— nexusstudiosinc

Twitter— nexusstudios

www.t3g.media

YouTube/Instagram/Facebook/Twitter— T3GMedia

www.TheCatalyst.digital

Facebook - CatalystPub

Want to be in Catalyst? Get in touch via Facebook or email.

contact@thecatalyst.digital



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