

Elsewhere in Washington, DC

KNOW THAT YOU KNOW NOTHING, THOMAS.

YES, SIR

FOR WHEN YOU CLEAR YOUR MIND OF ALL WASTE, YOU LEAVE MORE ROOM FOR ENLIGHTENMENT.

YES, SIR

OF COURSE YOUR MIND WAS CLEARED WHEN I FOUND YOU. ONE GOVERNMENT AGENCY'S TRASH IS ANOTHER MAN'S TREASURE.

YES, SIR.

CLEAR THE MIND OF CONSCIENCE, OF MORALS. FUCK HEREDITARY. FUCK ENVIRONMENT. NO ONE KNOWS WHAT HE OR SHE HAS IN THERE ANYWAY. SOMEONE HAS TO GET HIS OR HER HANDS DIRTY. YES THOMAS?

YES, SIR.

UNDERNEATH. BEHIND. WITHIN. NEVER STOP THE PROCESS. CLEAR WASTE. CUT USELESS ATTACHMENTS, EMOTIONS, ETC. THE SUBJECT IS YOUR TEST TUBE. LITTLE OF THIS. LITTLE OF THAT. SEE WHAT YOU GET. PRIEST OR PEDOPHILE? OR BOTH.

YES, SIR.

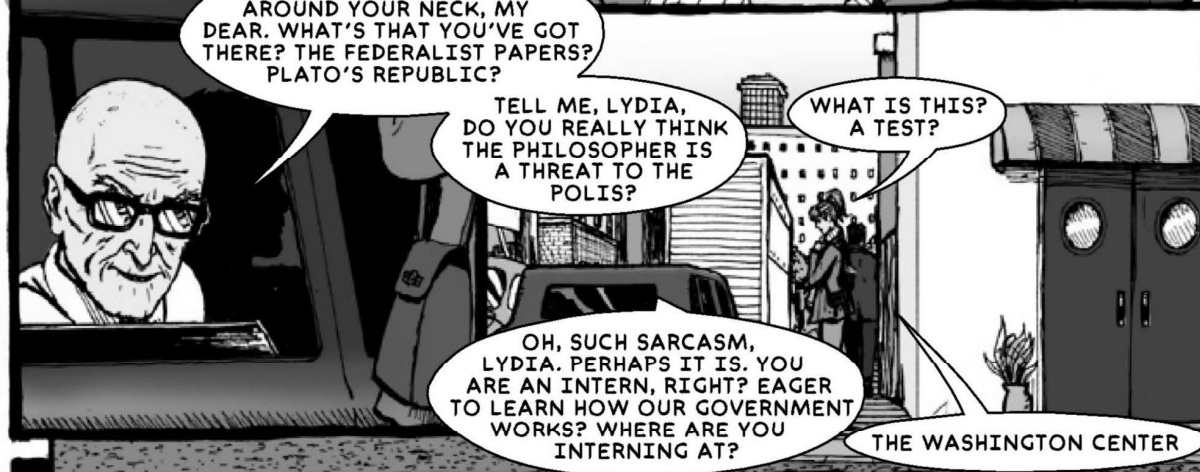


TIME FOR A FIELD TEST, THOMAS. STOP.

PARDON ME, LYDIA? HUGO RAMSEY, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.



DO I KNOW YOU? HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?



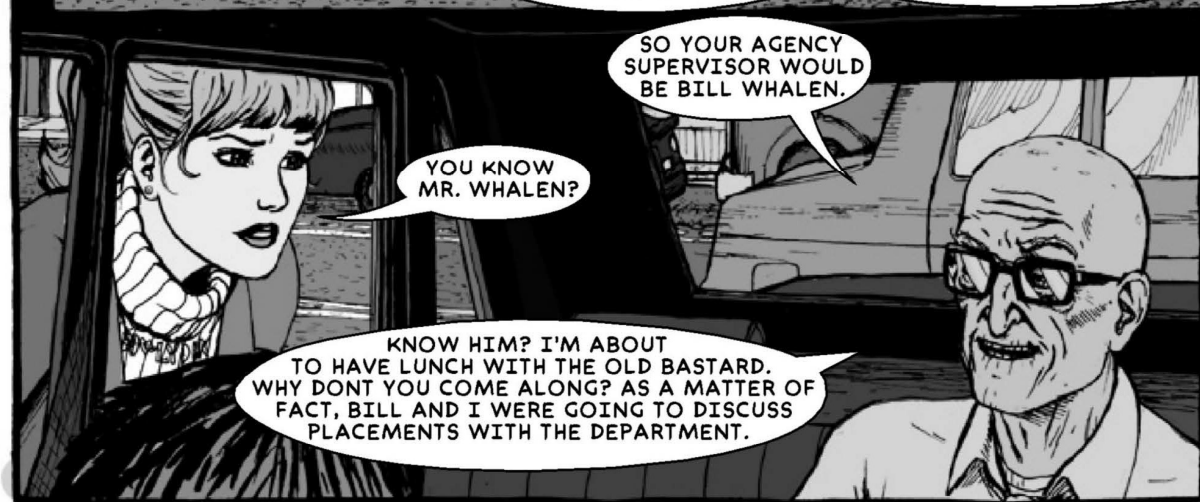
YOU'VE HUNG IT AROUND YOUR NECK, MY DEAR. WHAT'S THAT YOU'VE GOT THERE? THE FEDERALIST PAPERS? PLATO'S REPUBLIC?

TELL ME, LYDIA, DO YOU REALLY THINK THE PHILOSOPHER IS A THREAT TO THE POLIS?

WHAT IS THIS? A TEST?

OH, SUCH SARCASM, LYDIA. PERHAPS IT IS. YOU ARE AN INTERN, RIGHT? EAGER TO LEARN HOW OUR GOVERNMENT WORKS? WHERE ARE YOU INTERNING AT?

THE WASHINGTON CENTER



SO YOUR AGENCY SUPERVISOR WOULD BE BILL WHALEN.

YOU KNOW MR. WHALEN?

KNOW HIM? I'M ABOUT TO HAVE LUNCH WITH THE OLD BASTARD. WHY DONT YOU COME ALONG? AS A MATTER OF FACT, BILL AND I WERE GOING TO DISCUSS PLACEMENTS WITH THE DEPARTMENT.



LOOK WHO'S BACK.

W-WHAT DID HE DO THIS TIME?

FIVE KIDS. MOTHER. FATHER. THE DOG--

J-JESUS. HOW'D THEY CATCH HIM?

I'M NOT FINISHED.

ANYHOW, THREE CARS COVER THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE. LOCAL BOYS, FIVE WITH THEIR ISSUES OUT AND ONE WITH A SHOTGUN. OUR BOY HERE IS TOSSING BODY PARTS OUT THE FRONT WINDOW, ONE BY ONE. THE WHOLE

TIME, THE COP IS GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS WITH THE BULLHORN. THE ROOKIE THAT'S WITH HIM HAS ALREADY LOST HIS LUNCH.



SO, NOW THE WHOLE FAMILY, AND THE DOG, ARE OUT ON THE FRONT LAWN, IN A STATE OF DISARRAY TO SAY THE LEAST. LT. BULLHORN BARELY FINISHES GIVING OUR BOY THE ULTIMATUM WHEN THE CRAZY FUCK SMASHES THROUGH THE FRONT BAY WINDOW. SIXTY-SOMETHING SHOTS AND SIX BUCKSHOTS.

IT T-TOOK ALL THAT TO T-TAKE H-HIM DOWN?



NAH HE GOT HIT BY A BUS. THE COPS ARE ALL DEAD EXCEPT ONE. HE SHIT HIMSELF.

WHO-WHOSE PROJECT WAS H-HE?



THE GUY WHO OWNS HIM? COULDN'T TELL YOU A THING EVEN IF I KNEW. BUT I KNOW THE FULL CREDIT FOR THIS MASTERPIECE CAN BE SPREAD AROUND.



THIS KIND OF WORK WAS OUTSOURCED UP THE WAZOO. EVERYONE'S HAD THEIR HANDS ON THIS KID. NO ONE WILL ADMIT IT THOUGH. ALL I KNOW IS THE "OWNER" STILL KEEPS TABS ON HIS KID HERE. EVEN IF HE'S NOT ON THE PAYROLL ANYMORE.

HELLO, RX...



...SO STEVE AND I JUST HAD DIFFERENT PRIORITIES. I WANTED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

LYDIA?



I'VE RECEIVED AN URGENT PHONE CALL. I'M AFRAID I HAVE TO CANCEL THE FESTIVITIES...



THOMAS, LET'S SEE IF WE CAN REIGN IN SCORPIUS ONE LAST TIME.

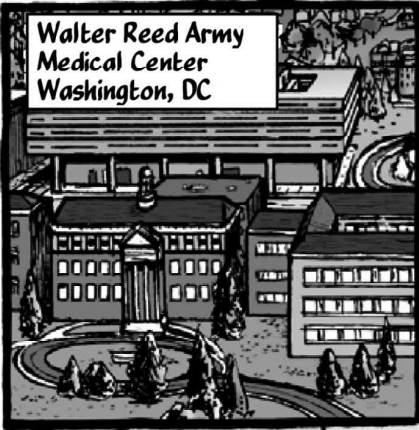
MY FUNTIME MAY BE SPOILED BUT NO ONE STEALS MY TOYS!



STOP FEELING SORRY FOR YOURSELF JACK, SOME PEOPLE HAVE IT MUCH...



Walter Reed Army
Medical Center
Washington, DC



THE MP'S GIVE US CLEARANCE BUT MY GUT STILL MANAGES TO TIE UP LIKE THE BOY SCOUT KNOT FROM HELL.



I'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE...

I ACT WITHOUT THINKING. IT'LL COST ME. ALWAYS DOES...



ALREADY, A FAMILIAR FACE.



I'VE GOT SECONDS BEFORE THE BOYS IN WHITE ARMBANDS AND TIN HATS NOTICE I'M GONE.



BUT AFTER THE DAY I'VE HAD, I'M STILL CURIOUS.





THAT'S MY GATE...

DING

BANG!

BRRACK



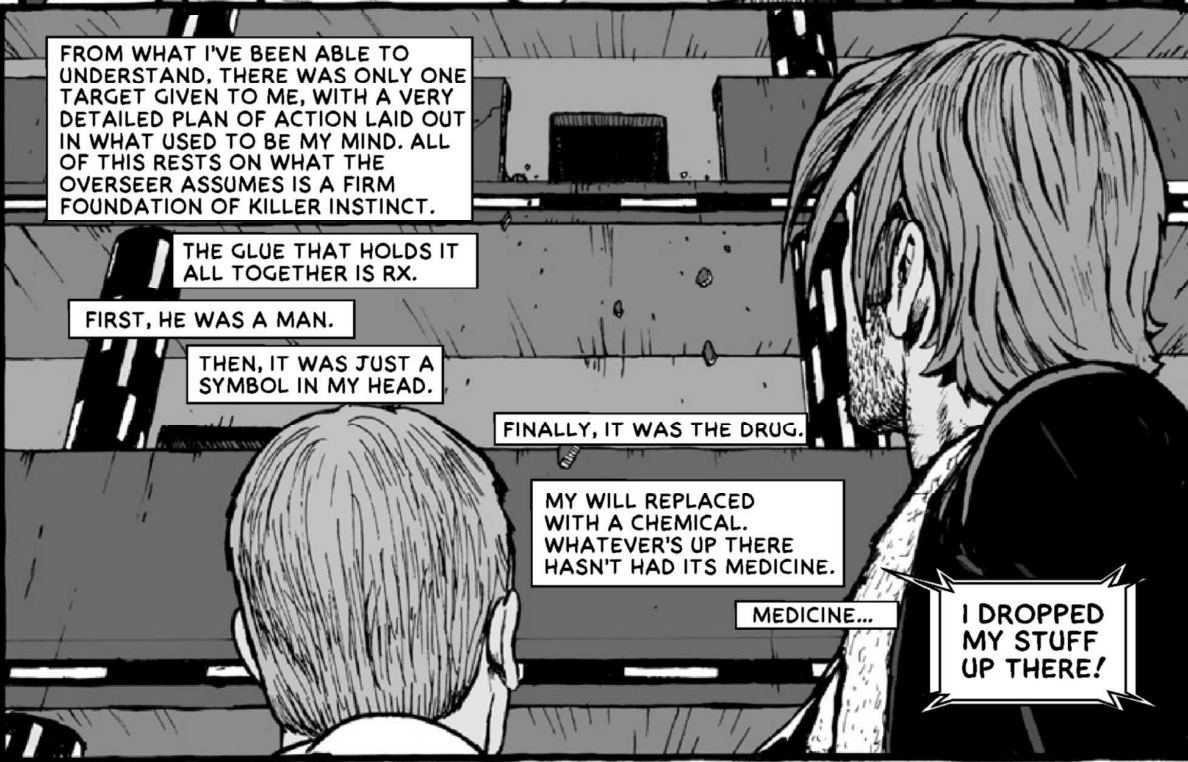
AFTER ALL, I'M NOT
WHAT HE CAME FOR

BLACKED OUT FOR A
SECOND. SLIPPERY
BASTARD IS ALREADY
MAKING HIS ESCAPE



WE WERE
AWAITING *INSTRUCTIONS!!*
HE'S A BLANK SLATE!!
RANDOM!

WHAT
WAS IT?



FROM WHAT I'VE BEEN ABLE TO
UNDERSTAND, THERE WAS ONLY ONE
TARGET GIVEN TO ME, WITH A VERY
DETAILED PLAN OF ACTION LAID OUT
IN WHAT USED TO BE MY MIND. ALL
OF THIS RESTS ON WHAT THE
OVERSEER ASSUMES IS A FIRM
FOUNDATION OF KILLER INSTINCT.

THE GLUE THAT HOLDS IT
ALL TOGETHER IS RX.

FIRST, HE WAS A MAN.

THEN, IT WAS JUST A
SYMBOL IN MY HEAD.

FINALLY, IT WAS THE DRUG.

MY WILL REPLACED
WITH A CHEMICAL.
WHATEVER'S UP THERE
HASN'T HAD ITS MEDICINE.

MEDICINE...

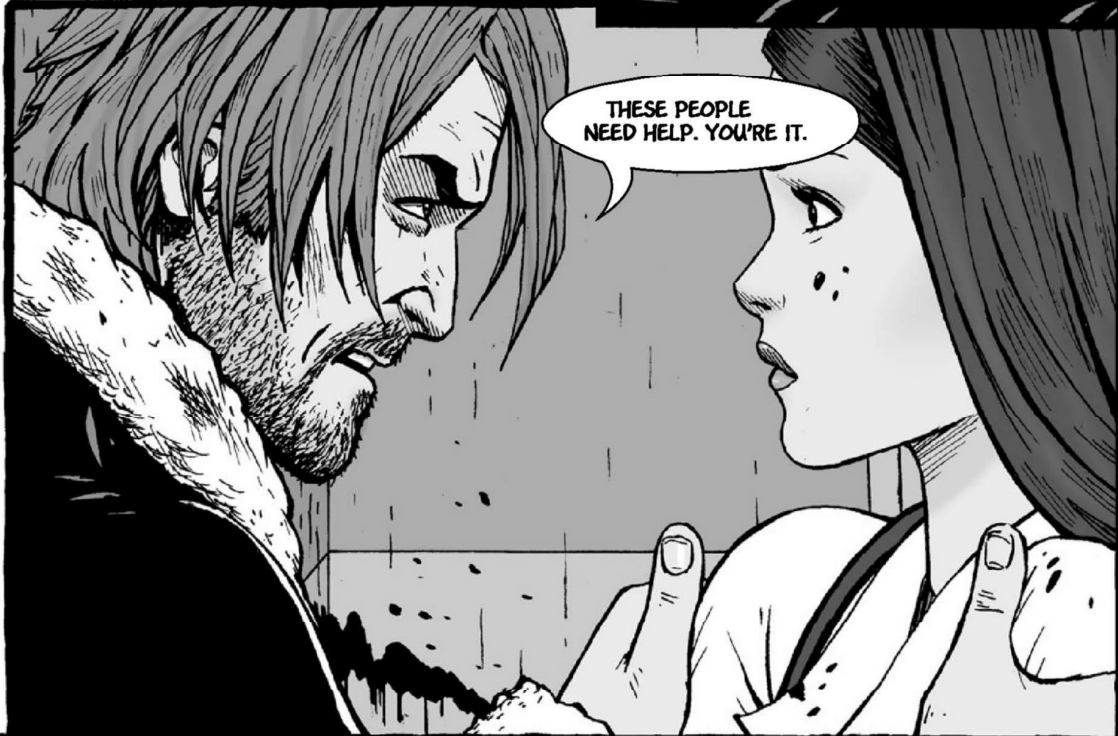
I DROPPED
MY STUFF
UP THERE!



DEATH IS A CONDITION OF LIFE, EXPERIENCED ONLY BY THE LIVING.

THAT WAS THE FIRST LINE OF A NOVEL I HAD STARTED TO WRITE. IT'S THE LAST THING I REMEMBER WRITING. LOOK AT ME NOW. EXPERIENCING DEATH ON AN OPERATIC SCALE.

BUT AM I ONE OF THE LIVING WHEN I NEED SOME 'SUPER-SOLDIER SERUM' TO FEEL ALIVE? AM I ONE OF THE LIVING WHEN IT'S ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT AS I WATCH INNOCENT PEOPLE BEING MASSACRED LIKE IT'S JUST A TV SHOW?



THEN I SEE HIM. "THE KID", SHARING THE BOUNDLESS PAIN HE HAS CARRIED WITH HIM THROUGHOUT HIS SHORT LIFE. SO I DUCK AND COVER.



THE KID AND I SHARE A CRAVING. I ONLY HAVE ONE SYRINGE. I LOST MY BAG IN THE SCUFFLE

ONE FOR ME.

ONE FOR THIS SICK BASTARD.



HE TURNS AND GAUGES ME THE SECOND I'M OUT IN THE OPEN.





I'M REALLY NOT CUT OUT FOR THIS HERO SHIT.

THIS ISN'T EVEN REALLY A CLEVER IDEA.



STILL, I GO FOR BROKE AND PUMP HIS ASS FULL OF CLEANING FLUID.



IT'S PROBABLY THE NICEST THING ANYONE'S EVER DONE FOR HIM.



I GUESS I'M NOT SURPRISED WHEN NOT A SINGLE COP SHOWS.

CIVILIAN LAW DOES NOT APPLY HERE. NOT MUCH DIFFERENT FROM THE EXPORT ZONE, WHERE LABOR COMES CHEAP AND YOUNG KIDS DIE FROM THE CONDITIONS OR GET THEMSELVES KILLED TRYING TO ORGANIZE. THE CORPORATIONS GET THEIR PRODUCT AND LOOK THE OTHER WAY.

IT WAS ON A FACTORY FLOOR IN ONE SUCH ZONE, LOCATED IN MALAYSIA, THAT I FINALLY GOT HIS VOICE TO STOP. I FREAKED OUT AND BURNED THE PLACE TO THE GROUND. THIS MAN TRIED TO REPLACE MY LIFE WITH DEATH. HE BUILT A CAREER ON REPLACING WILLS OF MEN WITH HIS OWN. MY WILL JUST HAPPENED TO COME FROM A PLACE HE DID NOT HAVE ACCESS TO.